

# ROSLINDALE NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIC • PLAN



**CITY OF BOSTON**  
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SEPTEMBER 2007



Thomas M. Menino, Mayor of Boston

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Roslindale Neighborhood Strategic Plan was the result of a collaborative effort with the dedicated members of the Advisory Group and the community. We thank all of the participants for their generous contribution of time and insight.

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Home for Little Wanderers	Roslindale House	Stony Brook Commons
Knights of Columbus	Sacred Heart School	Temple Vietnam

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CITY OF BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS  
Office of the Mayor  
**Thomas M. Menino**

September 2007

Dear Friends of Roslindale:

It gives me great pleasure to present the Roslindale Neighborhood Strategic Plan. This community-based plan is the product of a two-year partnership with community members, Boston Redevelopment Authority and City of Boston staff, and elected officials. It establishes the overall vision for Roslindale.

Roslindale's "village" feel with its revitalized commercial center and quiet residential character makes the neighborhood one of the city's best-kept secrets. As the Square continues to evolve, exciting and thoughtful opportunities for economic and residential development are created. The Plan aims to preserve the family-friendly qualities and existing character of Roslindale that make it such a unique and desirable neighborhood.

Thank you for all of your long hours at community meetings, thoughtful public comments and willingness to work together – as a community – for the greater good. I look forward to continuing our work together and ask that you please remain involved in this important process. Our next step is to draft and finalize new zoning for Roslindale. Your dedication and continued commitment to the preservation and revitalization of your neighborhood will assure the successful implementation of the Plan and in turn the continued success of the neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Thomas M. Menino  
Mayor of Boston

# ROSLINDALE NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIC • PLAN

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2004 community members approached Mayor Thomas M. Menino and Boston City Councilor Rob Consalvo, and in early 2005 Mayor Menino directed the Boston Redevelopment Authority to undertake a planning and rezoning process for Roslindale.

The three major components to this planning process are:

- Interim Planning Overlay District (IPOD)
- Strategic Neighborhood Plan
- Neighborhood Zoning Article

This report documents the results of the planning process. The plan provides a blueprint for future development; identifies and prioritizes infrastructure projects such as transportation, open space and streetscape improvements; and includes recommendations for the development of the new zoning article. See Chapter VIII. Implementation for a complete list of recommendations.

### The Vision

Through community meetings and discussions with the Advisory Group, the following community vision was developed:

Roslindale should be an attractive, safe, family-friendly and (economically and ethnically) diverse neighborhood that:

- Provides a wide range of housing options (including unit sizes, building types and pricing) for new and existing residents.
- Preserves the historic resources and existing “village” character.
- Supports Roslindale Square as a vibrant commercial district that provides a wide variety of services, shopping and entertainment opportunities that have local character and also are attractive to patrons from outside the neighborhood.

- Promotes protection of open space resources, additional tree planting and improved connections to open spaces.
- Provides improved transportation options: transit, pedestrian, bicycle and automobile.
- Encourages “green” development standards.

The recommendations in this plan were developed to achieve this vision.

### Land Use and Zoning Recommendations

#### *Residential*

The density of residential development was identified as a key issue by the community during the earliest IPOD discussions.

Concerns centered around:

- New projects developed at higher densities and out-of-scale with existing development.
- Potential loss of open space resulting from:

# ROSLINDALE NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIC • PLAN

- Property owners paving over existing yard areas
- New projects “shoehorned” onto small lots
- New projects with minimal setbacks and on-site open space
- Increased demands for already tight on-street parking.

The recommended zoning changes preserve the existing density, scale and character of the neighborhood subdistricts and maintain or increase required open space on individual lots.

Recommendations regarding lot coverage, minimum open space, setbacks and parking were developed to address the issues of density, scale and loss of open space. Other recommendations focus on creating housing to serve a diverse community.

## *Commercial Use*

The recommendations are designed to maintain the small, local store character, while encouraging development of larger parcels and allowing opportunities for some development of residential uses on upper

floors. Around Roslindale Square, on American Legion Highway, and at the southern end of Washington Street, it is recommended that a density bonus be provided for mixed-use development, with ground floor retail and residential use on the upper floors.

## *Open Space*

Protecting existing open space was one of the key concerns identified by the community. Recommendations fall into the following categories:

- Changes in ownership to appropriate open space agencies for greater protection.
- Changes in zoning to create 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.
- Access improvements to sidewalks, underpasses, bicycle routes and wayfinding signage.
- Provisions for maintaining or increasing front, rear and sideyard

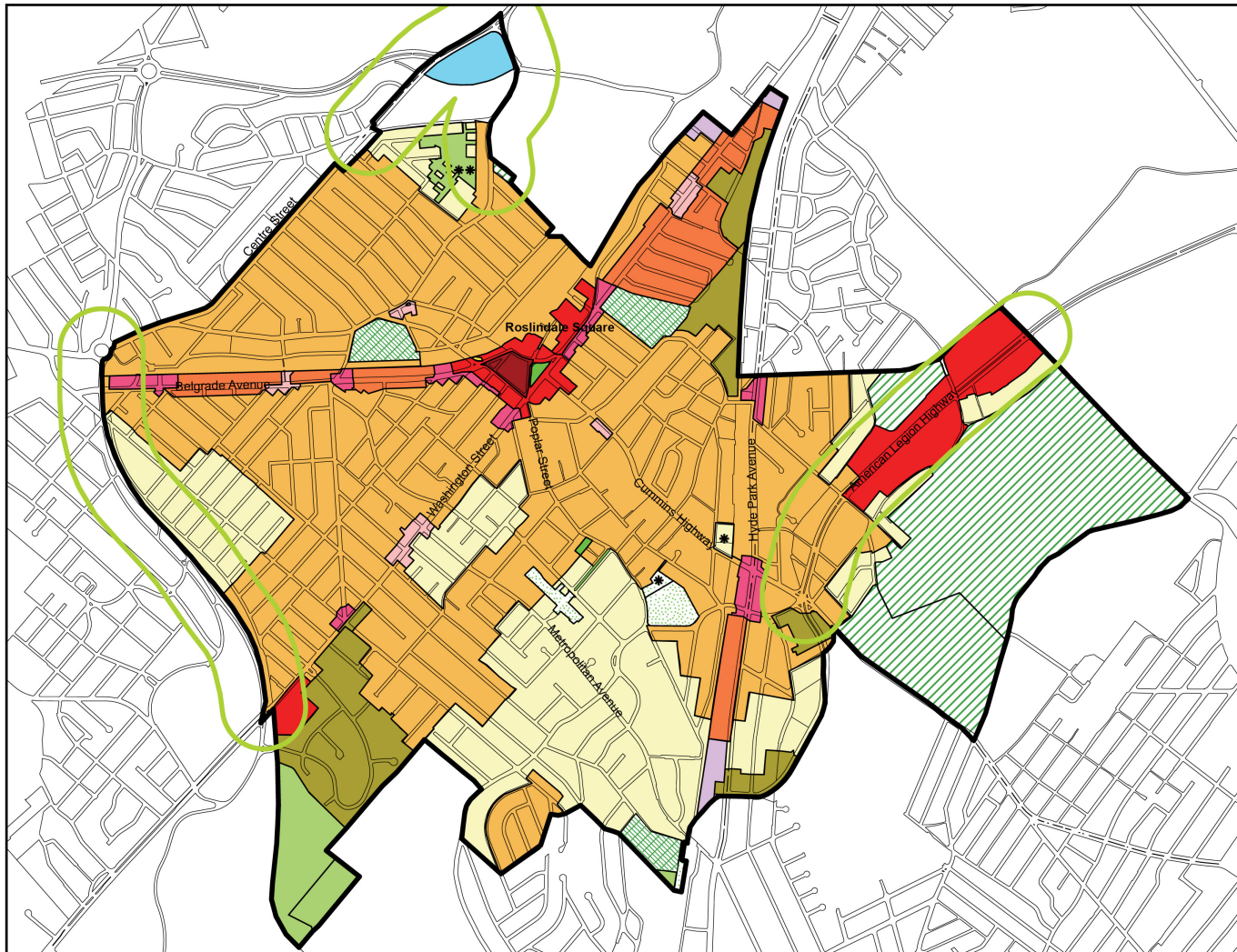
setbacks, and increasing minimum open space requirements on residential parcels, are included in the residential zoning recommendations.

## *Institutional Use*

It is recommended that the large Hebrew Senior Life parcel be rezoned as an Institutional Subdistrict. The institution has begun preliminary discussions with the BRA regarding potential minor changes to its facility. Any significant changes will require an Institutional Master Plan (IMP).

The Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University has proposed an Institutional Master Plan for the Harvard-owned Weld Hill parcel north of Weld Street and east of Walter Street. That Institutional Master Plan is currently being reviewed through a separate community process. Because the IMP will set permanent zoning for the parcel, planning for that parcel has not been part of this Strategic Plan. In the event that the IMP has not been finalized by the final stages of this rezoning process, residents have recommended that the parcel be temporarily rezoned as a Conservation Protection Subdistrict.

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## Recommended New Zoning Subdistricts

### Residential Subdistricts

- 1 Family
- 2 Family
- 3 Family
- Multifamily

### Business Subdistricts

- Community Commercial Subdistrict 2
- Community Commercial Subdistrict 1
- Neighborhood Shopping Subdistrict
- Local Convenience Subdistrict

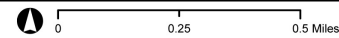
### Open Space Subdistricts

- Cemetery Open Space (OS-CM) Subdistrict
- Parkland Open Space (OS-P) Subdistrict
- Recreation Open Space (OS-RC) Subdistrict
- Urban Plaza Open Space (OS-UP) Subdistrict
- Urban Wild Open Space (OS-UW) Subdistrict
- Greenbelt Protection Overlay District (GPOD)

### Other Subdistricts

- Conservation Protection Subdistrict (CPS)
- Institutional
- Local Industrial

- \* Zoning could change in the long term, following transfer of the property
- \* \* Publicly-owned parcels zoned OS-UW. Privately owned parcels meeting criteria zoned CPS



# ROSLINDALE NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIC • PLAN

## Proposed Zoning Subdistricts for Roslindale IPOD Area (changes from existing IPOD shown in *bold italics*)

Subdistrict	Minimum Lot Size	Bldg. Height	FAR*	Front Setback**	Side Yard Setback	Rear Yard Setback	Max. % Lot Coverage	Min. Open Space Requirement
<b>Single Family - 1F</b>	6,000 sf	35'/2.5 floors	.5 max	25' (or consistent w/ adjacent bldgs.)	12-15'+	40' (or consistent w/ adjacent bldgs.)	<b>40</b>	<b>1800 sf</b>
<b>Two Family - 2F</b>	8,000 sf	35'/2.5 floors	.5 max	20' (or consistent w/ adjacent bldgs.)	12-15	40' (or consistent w/ adjacent bldgs.)	<b>40</b>	<b>1750 sf</b>
<b>Three Family - 3F</b>	8,000 sf	35'/3 floors	.8 max	20' (or consistent w/ adjacent bldgs.)	12-15	40' (or consistent w/ adjacent bldgs.)	<b>40</b>	800 sf/unit
<b>Multi Family - MF</b>	5,000 sf+ 1,000 sf/ add'l. unit	35'/3 floors	1 max	20' (or consistent w/ adjacent bldgs.)	10'	40' (or consistent w/ adjacent bldgs.)	<b>40</b>	<b>400 sf/unit</b>
<b>OS Open Space</b>	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>Local Convenience</b>	none	35'/2.5 floors	.5	15' (or consistent w/ adjacent bldgs.)	none	20'	none	none
<b>Neighborhood Shopping</b>	none	35'/3 floors	1	10' (or consistent w/ adjacent bldgs.)	none	20'	none	none
<b>Community Commercial-1</b>	none	35'/3 floors	<b>1 (1.5 w/ mixed use)</b>	0' (or consistent w/ adjacent bldgs.)	none	10'+	none	none
<b>Community Commercial -2</b>	none	35'/3 floors	2	0' (or consistent w/ adjacent bldgs.)	none	10'+	none	none
<b>Institutional</b>	<b>none</b>	<b>65'/6 floors***</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20'</b>	<b>none</b>	<b>none</b>	<b>none</b>	<b>none</b>
<b>Local Industrial</b>	none	35'	1	none	none	20'	none	none

\* 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.

\*\*\* Provided that the Maximum Building Height shall be thirty-five (35) feet for buildings and structures located within fifty (50) feet of a Residential, Open Space, or Conservation Protection Subdistrict and forty-five (45) feet for buildings and structures located between fifty and one hundred (50-100) feet from such a Subdistrict.



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**Recommended Off-Street Parking Ratios for New Roslindale Zoning**

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<b>District</b>	<b>Spaces per Dwelling Unit</b>
1 F (Family)	2.0
2 F	2.0
3 F	2.0
MFR (Multi-family residential)	2.0
Roslindale Square Community Commercial Subdistricts 1 and 2 (which are in close proximity to the stores and services in the Square, as well as to numerous bus lines and the Commuter Rail)	1.5

<b>District</b>	<b>Spaces per 1,000 Square Feet of Gross Floor Area</b>
Neighborhood Shopping Subdistricts	1.0 – 2.0*
Local Convenience Subdistricts	1.0 – 2.0*
Community Commercial Subdistricts 1 and 2 with exception of Roslindale Square	1.0 – 2.0*
Roslindale Square Community Commercial Subdistricts 1 and 2 (which are in close proximity to the stores and services in the Square, as well as to numerous bus lines and the Commuter Rail)	1.0 – 2.0*
Industrial	0.5

\* Parking ratios to be further broken down by specific uses within the Subdistricts in the Zoning Article.

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*Industrial Use*

It is recommended that existing industrial properties be designated as Local Industrial Subdistricts, and that the districts be reconfigured to include only those parcels currently in industrial use.

**Urban Design**

In discussions with the community, there is strong consensus that residents want to preserve “the character” of the neighborhood.

The Urban Design recommendations are focused on Roslindale Square and the key commercial roadways, and are aimed at creating an identity for the neighborhood that announces Roslindale to drivers and pedestrians on the major streets.

Design guidelines for residential districts are aimed at reinforcing the existing cohesiveness of the residential neighborhoods.

*Design Review Process*

The community would like to see the following items incorporated into the new permanent zoning for Roslindale:

1. Continue some type of abutter/ community notification of ZBA cases and As-of Right projects requiring BRA design review coordinated between ISD and ONS and the District City Councilor's office (currently Councilor Consalvo).
2. Continue some degree of BRA design review on As-of-Right projects beyond a threshold (to be determined).

## TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING

This Strategic Plan did not include a detailed traffic study. The analyses identified problem areas and recommendations for some improvements. They also provide background information to support more detailed studies in the future. Because traffic issues are greatest in Roslindale Square, traffic analysis tasks were focused there, with recommendations for further study in other areas.

### *Roslindale Square Roadways and Traffic*

Recommendations include:

- A detailed study of the Washington/ Corinth/Poplar Streets intersection to

ensure the safe movement of pedestrians and traffic through Roslindale Square.

- A study of the entire length of Washington Street from Forest Hills to West Roxbury Parkway to include synchronization of lights, pedestrian crosswalks and left turn lanes in strategic locations.
- Studies for approximately 25 other intersections and roadways identified by the Advisory Group and the community should be prioritized.

### *Pedestrians*

Recommendations include:

- Study the possible benefits of relocating the mid-block crosswalk across South Street at Adams Park to the corner of the park by Taft Hill Terrace with a new pedestrian signal, in conjunction with the recommended detailed study of the Washington/ Corinth/Poplar Streets intersections.

### *Public Transportation: Buses and Trains*

Changing bus stop locations and increasing frequency of service may enhance bus ridership; these changes require working with both the MBTA operations group and the Boston Transportation Department.

### *Public Parking in Roslindale Square*

Recommendations include:

- Re-stripe Taft Hill Terrace Parking Lot and improve pedestrian connections to/from the Parking Lot and major intersections.
- Convene stakeholders to develop parking plan for owners and employees.
- Explore shared-use of the lower MBTA lot to allow merchants and employees to use the lot for reduced fees.
- Reduce the time limits on parking at the Post Office and provide a commercial loading space and 15 or 30-minute parking spaces on South Street between Taft Court and Poplar Street.

- Explore the installation of two hour meters in the Taft Hill Lot in order to minimize their use by commuters.
- Explore the construction of a two or three-level parking deck on the Taft Hill Terrace Parking Lot as a long-term possibility.

### *Bicycling*

Recommendations include:

- A number of routes have been proposed for inclusion in the City’s overall long-term strategy.
- Bicycle route signs should be installed and bicycle racks should be required at transit stations and for some larger-scale new construction.
- It is also recommended that the City install bicycle racks at several identified locations in Roslindale Square.

### **SUSTAINABILITY**

The terms Sustainability and Smart Growth encompass many topics, including the density, scale and location of development;

building and landscaping design and materials; design of sidewalks and other infrastructure; and the availability of multiple transportation options.

Roslindale is, in many ways, just the kind of community that those Sustainable and Smart Growth principles describe.

Key sustainability concepts that have been incorporated into this plan include:

1. Mixed commercial and residential use
2. Concentrated development around transit
3. Diversity of housing types, including sizes, income levels
4. A focus on the Square, creating a sense of place
5. A variety of open space types
6. Neighborhood activity over many hours of the day and night
7. A variety of transportation choices with fully connected pedestrian and bicycle routes
8. Preservation of natural terrain and vegetation and maintenance of natural drainage

9. Initiatives to support public health
10. Citizen and stakeholder participation
11. Predictable, fair, cost-effective development decisions
12. Green building principles

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

Implementation of the recommendations from this Strategic Plan will be an ongoing process that could extend over the next 15 to 20 years. The BRA will coordinate implementing the plan. An initial and key implementation component will be the adoption of new, permanent zoning for the neighborhood.

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 Roslindale Neighborhood Strategic Plan will help to provide justification for placing Roslindale projects on the priority list for programs with these various agencies.

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For each plan recommendation, the parties that will be involved in implementation have been identified, and the time-frame in which implementation can be expected to occur has been specified.

As described previously, the implementation of this plan will occur incrementally over a number of years. However, many positive changes can happen in the short-term. 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 longer-term measures will be needed to more fully achieve the goals of the Plan.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Originally part of Roxbury, Roslindale was a farming center until late into the 19<sup>th</sup> century (as late as the 1880s). Six miles south of downtown Boston, the area was annexed to the City in 1874. At the time, it was an isolated part of the town of West Roxbury, which included the present-day neighborhoods of West Roxbury, Roslindale, and Jamaica Plain. Long considered a “garden suburb” of Boston, Roslindale experienced significant residential booms in the 1890s, and then later in the 1920s and 1930s.

Construction of the Providence Railroad in 1834 opened the area to residential development. Subsequently, the farms were sold and divided into land parcels for single-family and multi-family housing. Washington Street, built in 1804, became the main thoroughfare of the community, connecting the area to Boston and Rhode Island.

Roslindale Square, also known as Roslindale Village, was an important commercial center for the entire southwest area of Boston until construction of suburban shopping centers siphoned customers away.

### Roslindale Today

Today, Roslindale is still a strong, stable residential community with long-time residents and families that have lived in the neighborhood for several generations, as well as newer residents that are helping to strengthen the diversity and vitality of the community. Since the 1980s, Roslindale has experienced steady revitalization and recently received a

“Main Street” award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. This award acknowledges the efforts in Roslindale Square toward historic and aesthetic preservation as well as local economic revitalization.

Roslindale Square is the heart of the community. Visit the Square on a Friday morning and you’ll run into the regular coffee group at Fornax Bakery – the bakery,



*Many of the major roadways and the railroad lines through the neighborhood were in place by the time of this 1888 map.*

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and the Square, are bustling. Live jazz draws visitors to the Square for dinner and music several nights a week, and Adams Park hosts a farmer's market from June to October, as well as summer concerts in July and August, and other special events throughout the year.

Recent improvements encompass both rehabilitation and new construction, including the new home of the Greater Roslindale Medical and Dental Center on Washington Street which opened in 2005. There have also been ongoing renovations to the Municipal Building located at the corner of Washington Street and Cummins Highway.

There are potential opportunities for redevelopment and reuse as significant commercial parcels around Roslindale Square have remained vacant for extended periods of time. New development has been primarily residential, including infill development on vacant lots, condominium conversions of existing buildings, and the addition of new units (either as new construction or within the existing structure) to existing buildings.

There are several ongoing projects within Roslindale. The Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University is undergoing an Institutional Master Planning process that includes Harvard-owned property at the northern end of the Roslindale neighborhood. In addition, the MBTA has been involved in the disposition and redevelopment of several of its parcels south of the Forest Hills Orange Line station and just north of the Roslindale Interim Planning Overlay District (IPOD) area.

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## THE ROSLINDALE STRATEGIC PLANNING STUDY AND REZONING PROCESS

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In 2004, community members approached Mayor Thomas M. Menino and Boston City Councilor Rob Consalvo about concerns regarding development activity in their neighborhood. In early 2005, Mayor Menino directed the Boston Redevelopment Authority to undertake a planning and rezoning process for Roslindale.



*New developments include the Greater Roslindale Medical and Dental Center (top) and residential buildings.*

The three major components to this planning process are:

- Interim Planning Overlay District
- Strategic Neighborhood Plan
- Neighborhood Zoning Article

### Interim Planning Overlay District

As a first step, the BRA met with community leaders, City officials and staff, and Councilor Consalvo's Office. Subsequently, a community meeting was held to introduce the Interim Planning Overlay District (IPOD).

The language for the Roslindale Interim Planning Overlay District was adopted in April 2005. It is intended to protect the neighborhood from inappropriate development during the planning process and until permanent zoning regulations can be prepared and adopted. The IPOD requires that all new development meeting specific thresholds obtain an IPOD permit from the Zoning Board of Appeal in order to conform with the standards and provisions of the IPOD Article (Article 27R of the Boston Zoning Code). Additionally, as-of-

right projects over 150 square feet in size and located within the Roslindale IPOD, which are not typically reviewed by the BRA, are required to undergo a 14 day public comment period and design review with the BRA. The IPOD will be in effect for up to 36 months or until the adoption of new zoning regulations.

### Strategic Neighborhood Plan

The BRA held a community workshop in June 2005, at which participants identified and prioritized the top three issues in Roslindale to be addressed as part of the

Strategic Planning Process:

1. Development Density
2. Transportation, Traffic and Parking
3. Open Space and Institutional Encroachment

The BRA then solicited nominations for an Advisory Group to help guide the Strategic Planning Process. Following the nomination process, Mayor Menino appointed 15 community members in September 2005 to serve on the Roslindale Neighborhood Strategic Planning Advisory Group (Advisory Group). The Advisory Group has



*At the community meetings, residents gathered around maps and diagrams to discuss specific issues.*

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assisted the BRA, City staff and the consultant team throughout the planning process. In addition, a series of four community-wide meetings and workshops was held to solicit broader input to the planning process.

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

## **Neighborhood Zoning Article**

With the completion of the Roslindale Strategic Neighborhood Plan, the Roslindale Neighborhood Zoning Article will be prepared by the BRA staff, starting with the recommendations from this plan. The BRA will conduct a series of community and Advisory Group sessions to review the draft,

resulting in a final draft to be approved by the BRA Board and Zoning Commission.

Upon adoption of the new permanent zoning, the IPOD will expire. The new zoning will include land use controls such as regulations regarding land use, size, density and parking, and will incorporate design guidelines.



## II. CONTEXT

The Roslindale IPOD covers approximately 2.4 square miles on the southwest side of Boston, roughly bounded by Centre Street and West Roxbury Parkway to the west, Stony Brook Reservation to the south, Calvary and Mount Hope Cemeteries to the east, and the Arnold Arboretum and Forest Hills to the north.

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### LAND USE

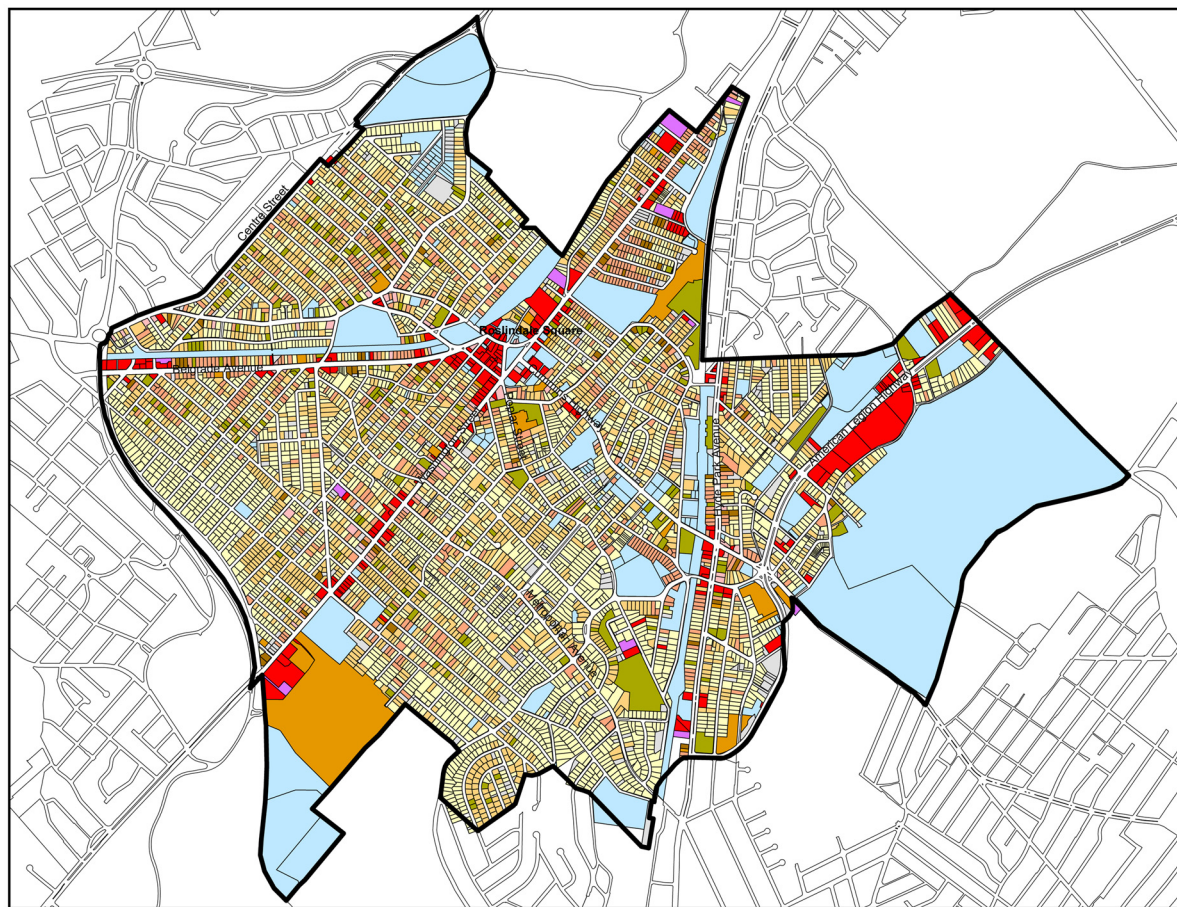
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Roslindale is primarily a residential neighborhood with over 53% of the total land area in residential use, while only 3.6% is in commercial use and 0.4% is in industrial use. The remaining 43% is classified as exempt. Exempt land represents the large open space and institutional uses, including church-owned properties, schools, the Weld Hill tract of the Arnold Arboretum, Hebrew Senior Life, a portion of Stony Brook Reservation and Mount Hope, Calvary and St. Michael's cemeteries. The neighborhood, for the most part, is fully developed, with only 3.2% of the total land area classified as vacant (almost half of the



*Roslindale (shaded red) is located in the southwest part of the City of Boston.*

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## Land Use

Single Family	Residential (4 to 6 units)	Mixed Use (residential/commercial)	Exempt
Two Family	Apartment	Commercial	Other
Three Family	Condominium	Industrial	

*Existing land use*

vacant land is undevelopable due to environmental and/or access issues, or other constraints).

Commercial uses are concentrated in Roslindale Square and at key intersections along Washington Street, Belgrade Avenue, Hyde Park Avenue and American Legion Highway with a few small commercial pockets in other areas. As shown on the land use map at left, the commercial uses are interspersed with long stretches of residential use.

The key commercial area is Roslindale Square, with a broad range of stores offering groceries, books, paint, baked goods, clothes and specialty items. There are also numerous restaurants of varying types and community services such as the Greater Roslindale Medical and Dental Center, the Roslindale Branch Library, the Roslindale Post Office, and the Municipal Building (currently undergoing renovation scheduled for completion in Autumn 2007), which houses the Roslindale Community Center and a satellite Registry of Motor Vehicles.

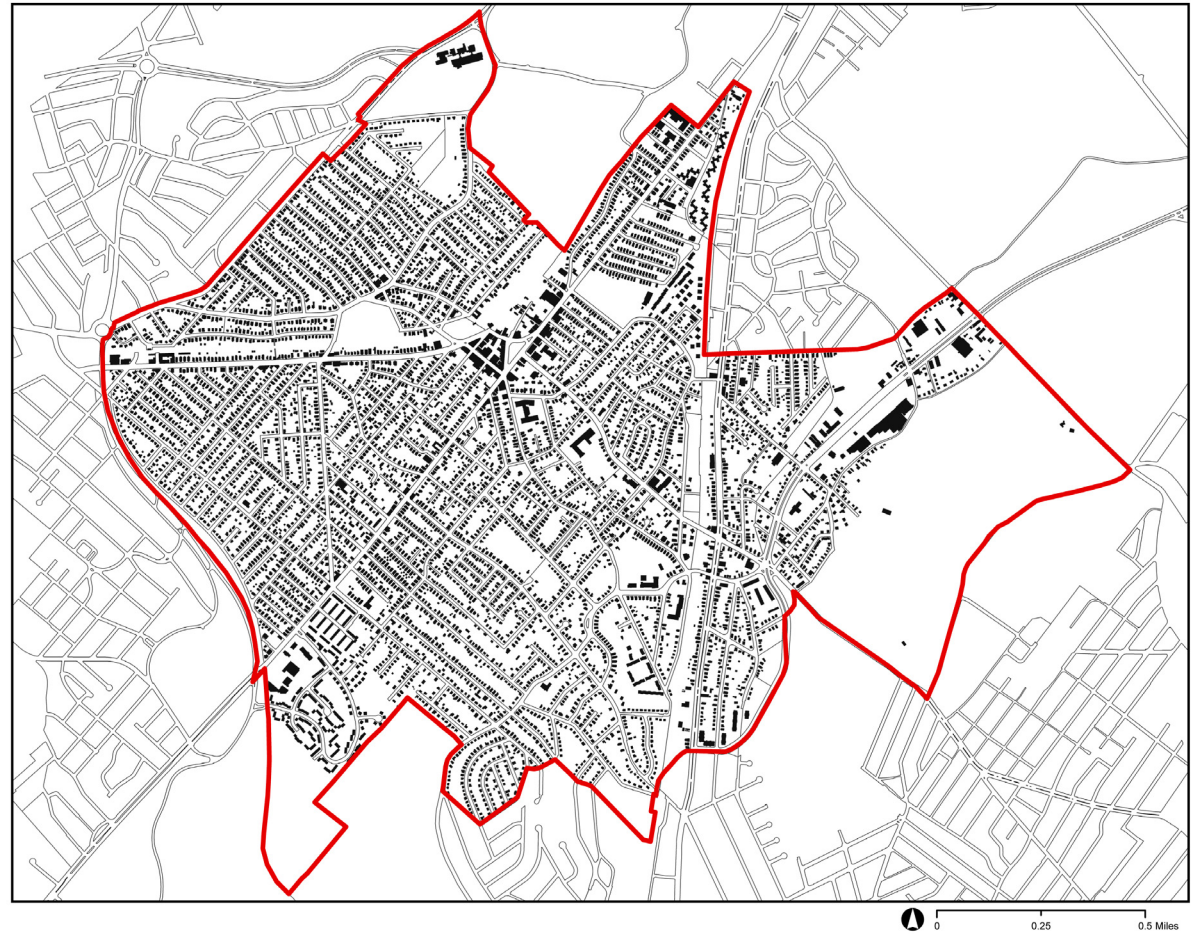
Washington Street has commercial clusters at the southern end near Enneking and

West Roxbury Parkways, at Beech/Walworth Streets, between Metropolitan Avenue and Wellsmere Road, and between Whipple Avenue and Archdale Road.

Belgrade Avenue begins with a commercial cluster at Roslindale Square. Leaving the Square, there are commercial clusters at Walworth Street and at Colberg Avenue by the MBTA commuter rail station. A number of auto-related uses are located at the western end by West Roxbury Parkway. In between these clusters, Belgrade Avenue has a mix of two and three-family residential buildings.

Hyde Park Avenue has commercial clusters at Cummins Highway and at Mount Hope Street. These commercial areas include many auto-oriented uses such as repair shops and used car dealers. The rest of the street is lined with residential uses.

American Legion Highway has a large shopping center on the east side, north of Mount Hope Street. The Army Reserve Center is located across American Legion Highway. Several institutional uses, including churches, schools and The New England Home for Little Wanderers, are



*As shown in the diagram of existing buildings above, there is very little vacant land remaining in Roslindale.*

scattered throughout the length. The southern end is lined with single family homes.

There is another small commercial cluster of primarily neighborhood convenience stores located at the intersection of Walter and South Streets, near Fallon Field and the Longfellow House.

The neighborhood is surrounded by large open spaces and institutional uses. Open spaces include Stony Brook Reservation and the George Wright Golf Course to the south, and Arnold Arboretum and Allendale Woods to the north. A number of cemeteries - Mount Hope, Calvary, Saint Michaels and Forest Hills – and the Boston Nature Center provide a large swath of green space on the eastern edge of the neighborhood. Within the interior of the neighborhood, there are only a few playing fields. Small backyards on most residential lots provide some additional private open space.

A few small industrial properties are located just off Washington Street at the very northern end of the neighborhood. Another small cluster of industrial properties is

located on Hyde Park Avenue at the southern end of the IPOD district.

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## HOUSING

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Residential development is primarily one, two and three-family homes, with some larger, multi-family developments scattered throughout the neighborhood. Houses in Roslindale are typically 1 ½ to 2 ½ stories.

About 55% of the Roslindale housing units were built in 1939 or earlier, and over 75% of homes were built earlier than 1960 (these figures were 51.4% and 78.6%, respectively, for Boston). New housing construction is progressing at a slower rate than for the City as a whole - only 1.4% of Roslindale's housing units were constructed between 1999 and March 2005 (3.9% of the units in Boston were constructed during this same period).

Roslindale is a very stable neighborhood with a high rate of home-ownership; 52% of the housing units were owner-occupied in 2005 and 48% were renter-occupied (compared to the 39.1% owner-occupancy

rate in Boston). The average tenure of owner-occupied homes was 12 years, compared to 10 years for Boston.

Many streets and blocks have a range of housing types and sizes. Most houses have small front yards and narrow side yards. Although driveways are prevalent, there are a number of residences without driveways. Many homes have enclosed garages. On a number of newer buildings on sloped lots, enclosed garages form the ground floor. This allows the first habitable floor to be above-grade in the back. Most houses in Roslindale have a clapboard or cedar shingle exterior, although there are some brick and stone houses, and a number of homeowners have covered wood clapboards with vinyl or aluminum siding.

There are a few larger condominium or apartment developments, including Conway Court on Conway Street, the Cliffmont Condominiums on Grew Avenue, Dale Village at Florence Street, and several multi-story apartment buildings near the intersection of American Legion Highway and Hyde Park Avenues.

Roslindale is home to two Boston Housing Authority low-income housing developments. Archdale Village is located at the end of Archdale Road at the northern end of Roslindale. It was built in 1953 and includes 283 one to five-bedroom units in six three-story walkup buildings. Washington-Beech is the second lower-income housing development, and it is located at the southern end of the neighborhood. This development was built in 1952. It has 265 total units enclosed in 16 three-story buildings. Unit sizes range from one to seven bedrooms.

Roslyn on Cliffmont Street is one of the BHA's newest developments. Roslyn offers a variety of living arrangements for low and moderate-income elderly and disabled persons. The development has 118 one and two bedroom apartments in a six-story building.

Until recently, the community also had two large Section 8 housing developments that provided affordable housing to lower-income families. These developments have reached the end of their required terms for meeting low-income affordability guidelines. High Point Village (now called Stony Brook

Commons) on Blue Ledge Drive near the southern end of the project area is undergoing renovation. While the units are being shifted to market rate as existing tenants leave, a certain percentage of units will remain available for lower-income households.

The Florence Apartments are located off of Florence Street at the northern end of Roslindale. The owner is remodeling vacant

units but not releasing them, and it appears that these units will eventually become market rate.

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## DEMOGRAPHICS

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The population within the IPOD area was 27,363 in 1990 and reached 28,642 by 2000 (a 4.7% increase). Between 2000 and 2005, the population decreased slightly (0.5%) to



*Condominiums are becoming more prevalent in the community.*

# ROSLINDALE NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIC • PLAN

28, 491 (the City of Boston experienced a 1.3% population increase during the same period).

Roslindale continues to be a family-oriented community. Of the 10,128 households in 2005, 63% were family households and 37% were non-family households (48% of the City of Boston households are family households).

The average household size within the IPOD was 2.64 in 2005 (compared to 2.3 in the City of Boston). As shown in the table below, over 56% of the households in 2005 were one or two person households (one and two person households represent 67% of the total households in the City of Boston).

Although the average household income in Roslindale is very close to that of the City of Boston as a whole, the median income is significantly higher. The estimated average household income was \$66,109 in 2005 and the estimated median household income was \$55,340. These figures were \$65,992 and \$46,362, respectively, in the City of Boston.

## Household Size in Roslindale and City of Boston

Household Size	Roslindale	City of Boston
1-person households	27.1%	37.8%
2-person households	29.1%	29.1%
3-person households	17.8%	14.3%
4-person households	14.1%	9.7%
5-person households	7.0%	5.2%
6-person households	3.0%	2.3%
7+ person households	2.0%	1.6%
Average household size	2.64	2.3

Of those employed in 2005, an estimated 63.7% held white collar jobs, 19.5% held service jobs, and 16.9% held blue collar jobs (these figures were 68%, 18% and 13.4%, respectively, in the City of Boston).

Of those traveling to work in 2005, driving (alone) in a personal vehicle was the principal mode of transportation (58.3% of workers in Roslindale, 41.4% of workers in the City of Boston). The second most dominant mode was public transportation (24.1% of workers in

Roslindale, 32.5% in the City of Boston). The average travel time to work was 34.18 minutes, with 46% traveling for less than 30 minutes.

In 2005, 20% of the households had no vehicle, 45% had one vehicle, and 28% had two vehicles; in Boston these figures were 35%, 44% and 17%, respectively. The average number of vehicles per household was approximately 1.26 in Roslindale versus 0.92 in the City of Boston.



*Classic Boston triple-deckers are found along many of the major roads in Roslindale.*

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## THE REAL ESTATE MARKET

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As part of this strategic planning process, a market overview was conducted to answer several important questions:

1. Where is the marketplace heading?
2. What is motivating the development world currently?
3. What types of development is the community looking for and what types of development does the community not want?

The answers to these questions helped to inform conceptual redevelopment alternatives for key parcels (see Chapter IV) as well as proposed new zoning for commercial areas.

### Residential Market

Residential use is the driving market force in Roslindale, with developers viewing Roslindale as primarily a residential community. The residential market moves westward as neighborhoods closer to Boston become less affordable. Roslindale is currently affordable by Boston standards, and has become more popular with developers as

the inner Boston neighborhoods have become increasingly more expensive. This trend is likely to continue in the future. Development pressure will remain in Roslindale for at least the next five to ten years. Residential markets are going to expand in Roslindale in the near future.

Ten years ago, families were attracted to Roslindale's household composition and the

fact that more space was available for less money than in the neighborhoods closer to downtown. Demand pressures have been growing in the smaller households market and developers will most likely react by building smaller residential units aimed at individuals making between 80 and 120% of the area's median household income.



*New single family housing on Grew Court.*



*Commercial development throughout most of the neighborhood consists of small stores and service establishments.*

Although there is a lot of development pressure, new housing development is unlikely to change Roslindale's character – development opportunities in the neighborhood are limited.

There is some demand for rental housing, but new development will be mostly for home-

ownership units. The number of rental units will continue to decline as more triple-deckers are converted to condominium units.

In general, housing development is most likely to be in the three to four-story range, allowing for "stick built" rather than steel construction.

### Commercial Market

In Roslindale Square, much of the retail is operated by local entrepreneurs. The scale and diversity of retail make the Square very attractive to consumers. It is important to preserve this character in order to maintain the vitality of the Square. Floor plates of more than 10,000 to 15,000 square feet begin to attract larger retail establishments, but there are very few lots where these larger floor plates could be accommodated.

Additional housing in the Square could positively affect the character in the Square by increasing the number of pedestrians and potential customers, and by keeping the streets active later into the evening.

There is very limited market for office space, except for small service-type establishments (insurance sales, law offices, etc.).



### III: THE VISION

Through community meetings and discussions with the Advisory Group, a community vision for the future of Roslindale, and a series of Goals and Objectives for achieving that vision, was developed. The Vision, Goals and Objectives detailed below provided the framework for the analysis and specific recommendations of this Strategic Neighborhood Plan.

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#### THE VISION

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Roslindale should be an attractive, safe, family-friendly and (economically and ethnically) diverse neighborhood that:

- Provides a wide range of housing options (including unit sizes, building types and pricing) for new and existing residents.
- Preserves the historic resources and existing “village” character.
- Supports Roslindale Square as a vibrant commercial district that provides a wide variety of services, shopping and



*The historic Roslindale Baptist Church on Cummins Highway.*

entertainment opportunities that have local character and also are attractive to patrons from outside the neighborhood.

- Promotes protection of open space resources, additional tree planting and improved connections to open spaces.
- Provides improved transportation options: transit, pedestrian, bicycle and automobile.
- Encourages “green” development standards.

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## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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### Land Use

*Goal: Maintain and strengthen the existing land use character of each particular area of the neighborhood.*

Objectives:

- Maintain existing residential densities, scale and character in residential neighborhoods.

- Adapt zoning requirements to respond to the specific needs of local uses.
- Concentrate retail uses in Roslindale Square and in smaller, mixed-use nodes along major thoroughfares.
- Limit commercial uses adjacent to residential neighborhoods to those compatible with the character and scale of the street and the neighborhood.
- Encourage mixed-use, sustainable development that incorporates compact and “green” building design, with adequate transportation options to reduce reliance on cars.
- Develop zoning that reflects existing development patterns and supports appropriate infill development.

*Goal: Improve the vibrancy of Roslindale Square by providing a wide variety of services/shopping/entertainment opportunities with local character but appealing to patrons from outside the neighborhood.*

Objectives:

- Create zoning that encourages a mix of commercial and residential uses with appropriate parking in order to animate the Square.
- Improve the visibility and attraction of the Roslindale Square commercial district through signage, streetscape improvements and gateways.
- Encourage the development of commercial uses serving the whole population, including children and teenagers.

*Goal: Maintain “local character” while expanding retail/commercial diversity.*

Objectives:

- Encourage locally-owned retail and commercial venues.
- Discourage development of “chain stores/restaurants”.

*Goal: Enhance open space and parks.*

Objectives:

- Retain open space where possible in residential districts.

- Improve pedestrian and bicycle connections to parks and open space.
- Prohibit paving of yards.
- Use zoning to protect Urban Wilds and other publicly-owned open space areas.
- Use conservation protection subdistrict zoning to protect valued natural resources on privately-owned areas within Urban Wilds.

### Housing

*Goal: Support development of housing affordable across a broad range of incomes.*

#### Objectives:

- Maintain diversity of income in residents.
- Define affordable housing as housing for moderate-income households (earning between 80 and 120% of the median income).
- Market home-ownership programs.
- Encourage diversity of property ownership.

- Work with expiring use developments to maintain some affordable units for lower-income households.
- Enhance or redesign public housing developments to better blend with the character of the adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- Maintain current supply of units affordable to households with incomes under 120% of median, including those households with incomes under 50% of the median income.

*Goal: Diversify types of housing.*

#### Objectives:

- Encourage development of a variety of unit sizes from one bedroom to three or more bedrooms to accommodate families.
- Encourage the development of housing suitable for children.
- Encourage the development of both rental and home ownership units.

### Urban Design

*Goal: Retain and preserve the historical and architectural features of the neighborhood while encouraging progress and development.*

#### Objectives:

- Set an appropriate scale and density for future development.
- Use zoning to influence the design of new developments and encourage appropriate infill.

*Goal: Beautify the neighborhood.*

#### Objectives:

- Implement consistent neighborhood lighting in commercial areas.
- Locate, plant and maintain more street trees where feasible and desired by abutters.
- Encourage the use of high quality construction and building materials.
- Beautify businesses on major streets.
- Discourage the use of chain link fencing, opaque glass and external protective grates on store windows.

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- Require landscape buffer areas to screen parking lots.
- Continue and extend the Main Streets façade and signage improvement program.

*Goal: Protect and enhance the underlying historic character of the area.*

## Objectives:

- Preserve the special character of buildings and places through zoning and design guidelines as well as National Register listing or Boston Landmarks designation for certain properties and/or districts as recommended by the Boston Landmarks Commission.
- Incorporate local cultural and historic themes into the design of streetscape and signage elements particular to the neighborhood.
- Maintain views to important historic buildings, to major open space resources and to downtown Boston.

*Goal: Maintain the “village feeling” within a large city.*

## Objectives:

- Seek community input on large-scale plans early in the development proposal process.
- Seek reasonable zoning limits to the potential “build-out” in residential areas.
- Identify areas where new housing could be developed without negatively impacting the character of the existing urban fabric.

*Goal: Develop and implement a neighborhood orientation program.*

## Objectives:

- Identify and enhance “gateways” to the neighborhood.
- Provide “wayfinding” signage for pedestrians and drivers that show important links, such as from the Arboretum to Roslindale Square.

## Transportation

*Goal: Increase pedestrian safety, especially for the elderly, disabled, and children.*

## Objectives:

- Improve conditions at pedestrian crossings, including improvements to signal phasing and compliance with the American Disabilities Act regulations.
- Construct or improve sidewalks where feasible to improve pedestrian access to recreational areas.

*Goal: Improve transit access and level of service*

## Objectives:

- Increase frequency of bus service along American Legion Highway.
- Improve bus service.
- Encourage the MBTA to study extending commuter rail and/or Orange Line service.

*Goal: Develop neighborhood parking solutions.*

## Objectives:

- Enforce parking laws and restrictions, particularly in places where double-parking often occurs.

- Explore shared-use of the MBTA parking lot, particularly on weekends.
- Improve use of all available parking, both public and private.
- Use parking regulations and enforcement to discourage parking by commuters and shoppers on residential streets surrounding the Square.
- Improve signage to direct shoppers to all of the available parking in and around the Square.
- Develop parking location maps for distribution to shoppers in the Square.

*Goal: Improve traffic circulation.*

Objectives:

- Identify potential changes in circulation patterns and signalization to improve traffic flow and promote implementation of those changes.
- Identify and prioritize congested intersections for further study as funding becomes available.
- Resolve conflicts between buses, automobiles and pedestrians, particularly around Roslindale Square.

*Goal: Encourage use of alternative modes of transportation.*

Objectives:

- Implement bike lanes where feasible on major thoroughfares.
- Provide protected bike racks at transit stations, institutions, commercial areas where appropriate, and other destinations.
- Require bike racks at new housing developments.

#### **Sustainability**

*Goal: Encourage the incorporation of sustainability principles into both private development and public infrastructure projects.*

Objectives:

- Encourage “green” development.
- Encourage universal design to be integrated early on into any public or private development.
- Reduce impervious surface areas and encourage the use of “green” roofs.

- Encourage transit, pedestrian and bicycle-friendly development and roadways.
- Use zoning to encourage mixed-use developments in appropriate areas such as in and around the Square and at major intersections in order to encourage walking.

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## IV: LAND USE AND ZONING

The final product of this Strategic Planning and Zoning Process will be the development of new zoning regulations for Roslindale. The recommendations in this chapter will provide the basis for the new zoning.

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### RESIDENTIAL USE

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The density of residential development was identified as a key issue by the community during the earliest IPOD discussions. In more detailed discussions at Community Meetings and with the Roslindale Advisory Group, it became clear that density concerns are, for the most part, related to newer development and to development that does not comply with existing zoning. Residents like the existing scale and character of the older, established residential streets. Meeting participants were generally satisfied with densities and setbacks illustrated in diagrams or photos of existing development that meets requirements for existing zoning.

Concerns centered around:

- New projects developed at higher densities and out of scale with existing development.
- Additions to existing housing.
- Potential loss of open space resulting from:
  - Property owners paving over existing yard areas
  - New projects “shoehorned” onto small lots
  - New projects with minimal setbacks and on-site open space.
- Increased demands for already tight on-street parking.

The 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 are described on the following pages.

### Zoning Districts

Consistent with updated zoning in other Boston neighborhoods, residential subdistricts should be classified as:



*Older residential street (above), and new housing (below).*

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- One-Family Residential Subdistrict
- Two-Family Residential Subdistrict
- Three-Family Residential Subdistrict
- Multi-Family Residential Subdistrict

The boundaries of these districts and a summary of dimensional requirements are shown on the following pages. The boundaries and dimensional requirements are similar to existing residential zoning districts, but have been modified to address the concerns previously described.

## *Density, Scale and Open Space*

The following recommendations were developed to address the issues of density, scale and loss of open space:



*New development on Whipple Street.*

- ***Introduce a maximum allowable lot coverage.*** Lot coverage is defined as *the building footprint and paved areas expressed as a percentage of total lot area.* The recommended maximum allowable lot coverage is in the 30-40% range. Regulating lot coverage has less effect on small lots because setback requirements already limit the size of building footprints.
- ***Introduce a minimum useable open space requirement.*** This requirement already exists for some residential uses in the H-1, R-.5 and R-.8 districts. The minimum useable open space requirement should be based on the number of dwelling units, for consistency with existing requirements in other neighborhoods. Requiring usable open space would help to ensure that each lot has some green space, and would limit the ability of property owners to pave their yards for parking.
- ***Introduce thresholds for paving and other surfacing.*** This would limit the amount of impervious surfaces allowed on parcels, while allowing potential alternatives that are environmentally acceptable and of permissible design. It is recommended that the allowable location for driveways be limited to the side yard.
- ***Increase side setbacks.*** A review of existing side setbacks on various blocks around the neighborhood showed that many do not meet the existing 10' minimum requirement (the minimum increases to 12' and 15' in the existing S-.3 and S-.5 zones, depending on the number of units). Existing setbacks are very inconsistent, with some houses having almost no setback on one side. The narrow width of many lots precludes the ability to greatly increase this minimum setback requirement without rendering many lots undevelopable, but minor increases (from 10' to 12-15') might be possible.
- ***Require two off-street parking spaces per unit.*** Requiring two parking spaces per unit minimizes the impact of new development on the



# ROSLINDALE NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIC • PLAN

## Recommended New Zoning Subdistricts

### Residential Subdistricts

-  1 Family
-  2 Family
-  3 Family
-  Multifamily




### Business Subdistricts

-  Community Commercial Subdistrict 2
-  Community Commercial Subdistrict 1
-  Neighborhood Shopping Subdistrict
-  Local Convenience Subdistrict

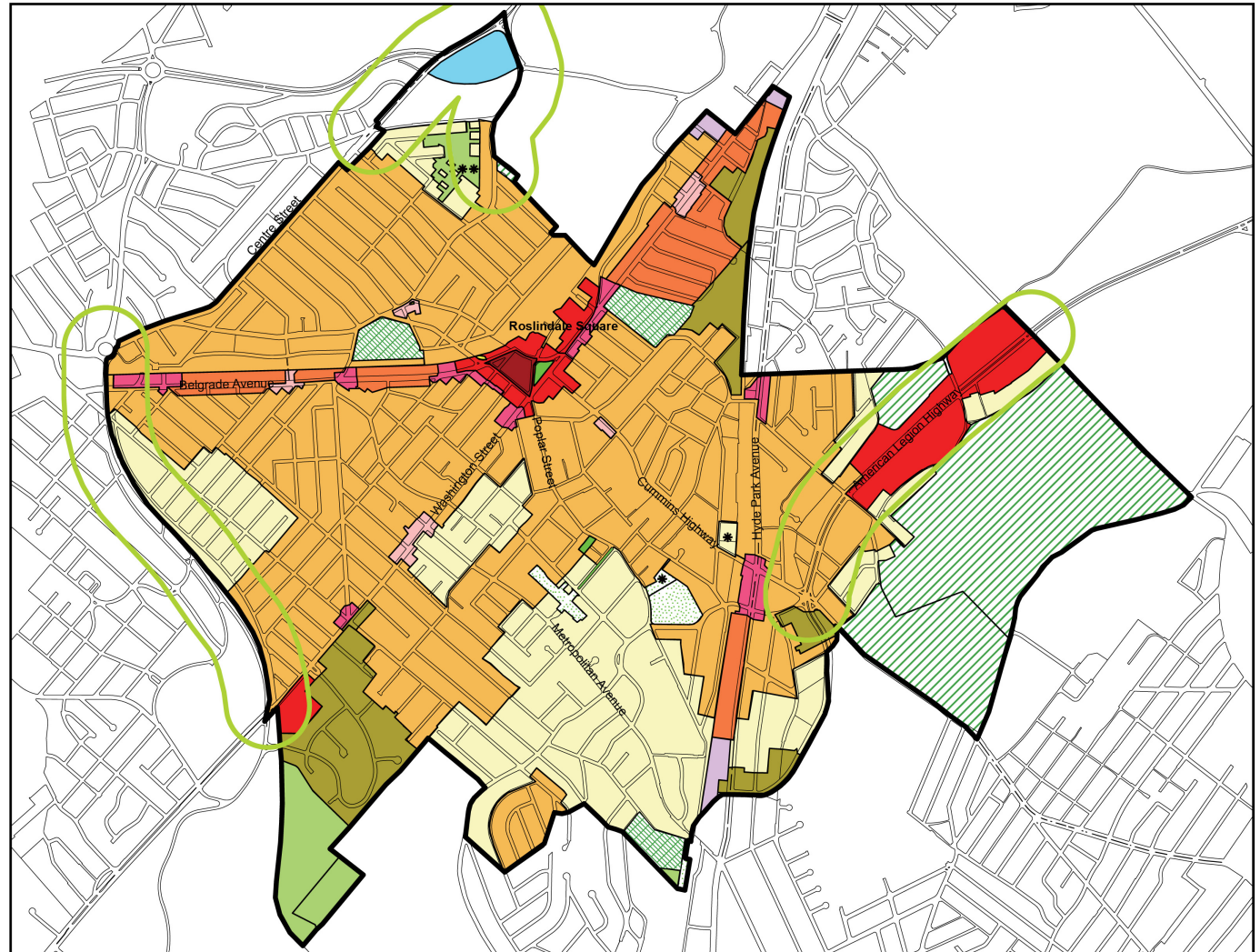
### Open Space Subdistricts

-  Cemetery Open Space (OS-CM) Subdistrict
-  Parkland Open Space (OS-P) Subdistrict
-  Recreation Open Space (OS-RC) Subdistrict
-  Urban Plaza Open Space (OS-UP) Subdistrict
-  Urban Wild Open Space (OS-UW) Subdistrict
-  Greenbelt Protection Overlay District (GPOD)

### Other Subdistricts

-  Conservation Protection Subdistrict (CPS)
-  Institutional
-  Local Industrial

- \* Zoning could change in the long term, following transfer of the property
- \* \* Publicly-owned parcels zoned OS-UW.
- \* \* Privately owned parcels meeting criteria zoned CPS



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demand for on-street parking. This requirement would also apply to the addition of units to existing buildings.

Design Guidelines described in Chapter V: Urban Design further



Roslindale has a wide variety of housing types.

address issues of density and character, as well as the siting of garages to minimize their visibility.

## Other Recommendations

Roslindale is home to a diverse community, including economic and household size diversity in addition to ethnic diversity. The following recommendations are aimed at ensuring that the community continues to accommodate this diversity.

### *Unit Size*

- ***Encourage diverse unit sizes, including units with 3 or more bedrooms.*** One of the goals expressed by many residents is maintaining or improving Roslindale’s family-friendly character. In order to meet this goal, it is important that new residential development includes units that accommodate families with children. It is recommended that residential developers be encouraged to include units with three or more bedrooms. This priority should be reiterated during BRA review meetings with developers.

### *Affordability*

- ***Encourage development of housing affordable to “middle-income” residents.*** Middle-income households are defined as those households earning 80% to 120% of the Boston Metropolitan Area Median Income. Maintaining existing allowable densities, in most locations, and allowing some increase in residential densities for mixed-use development around Roslindale Square and other key locations will allow developers to create new housing units at prices affordable to this middle-income bracket.

New residential development also will be required to comply with the Mayor’s Executive Order of 2000 (as it is modified through new policies) that requires the creation of affordable housing units for new residential housing projects of ten units or more. These affordable units are targeted to middle-income residents. This priority should be reiterated during BRA review meetings with developers.

**Proposed Zoning Subdistricts for Roslindale IPOD Area (changes from existing IPOD shown in *bold italics*)**

Subdistrict	Minimum Lot Size	Bldg. Height	FAR*	Front Setback**	Side Yard Setback	Rear Yard Setback	Max. % Lot Coverage	Min. Open Space Requirement
<b>Single Family - 1F</b>	6,000 sf	35'/2.5 floors	.5 max	25' (or consistent w/ adjacent bldgs.)	12-15'+	40' (or consistent w/ adjacent bldgs.)	<b>40</b>	<b>1800 sf</b>
<b>Two Family - 2F</b>	8,000 sf	35'/2.5 floors	.5 max	20' (or consistent w/ adjacent bldgs.)	12-15	40' (or consistent w/ adjacent bldgs.)	<b>40</b>	<b>1750 sf</b>
<b>Three Family - 3F</b>	8,000 sf	35'/3 floors	.8 max	20' (or consistent w/ adjacent bldgs.)	12-15	40' (or consistent w/ adjacent bldgs.)	<b>40</b>	800 sf/unit
<b>Multi Family - MF</b>	5,000 sf+ 1,000 sf/ add'l. unit	35'/3 floors	1 max	20' (or consistent w/ adjacent bldgs.)	10'	40' (or consistent w/ adjacent bldgs.)	<b>40</b>	<b>400 sf/unit</b>
<b>OS Open Space</b>	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>Local Convenience</b>	none	35'/2.5 floors	.5	15' (or consistent w/ adjacent bldgs.)	none	20'	none	none
<b>Neighborhood Shopping</b>	none	35'/3 floors	1	10' (or consistent w/ adjacent bldgs.)	none	20'	none	none
<b>Community Commercial-1</b>	none	35'/3 floors	<b>1 (1.5 w/ mixed use)</b>	0' (or consistent w/ adjacent bldgs.)	none	10'+	none	none
<b>Community Commercial -2</b>	none	35'/3 floors	2	0' (or consistent w/ adjacent bldgs.)	none	10'+	none	none
<b>Institutional</b>	<b>none</b>	<b>65'/6 floors***</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20'</b>	<b>none</b>	<b>none</b>	<b>none</b>	<b>none</b>
<b>Local Industrial</b>	none	35'	1	none	none	20'	none	none

\* 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.

\*\*\* Provided that the Maximum Building Height shall be thirty-five (35) feet for buildings and structures located within fifty (50) feet of a Residential, Open Space, or Conservation Protection Subdistrict and forty-five (45) feet for buildings and structures located between fifty and one hundred (50-100) feet from such a Subdistrict.

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## Recommended Off-Street Parking Ratios for New Roslindale Zoning

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<b>District</b>	<b>Spaces per Dwelling Unit</b>
1 F (Family)	2.0
2 F	2.0
3 F	2.0
MFR (Multi-family residential)	2.0
Roslindale Square Community Commercial Subdistricts 1 and 2 (which are in close proximity to the stores and services in the Square, as well as to numerous bus lines and the Commuter Rail)	1.5
<b>District</b>	<b>Spaces per 1,000 Square Feet of Gross Floor Area</b>
Neighborhood Shopping Subdistricts	1.0 – 2.0*
Local Convenience Subdistricts	1.0 – 2.0*
Community Commercial Subdistricts 1 and 2 with exception of Roslindale Square	1.0 – 2.0*
Roslindale Square Community Commercial Subdistricts 1 and 2 (which are in close proximity to the stores and services in the Square, as well as to numerous bus lines and the Commuter Rail)	1.0 – 2.0*
Industrial	0.5

\* Parking ratios to be further broken down by specific uses within the Subdistricts in the Zoning Article.

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*The Boston Housing Authority's Archdale housing is shown above (top photo). The Washington-Beech development, recently designated for redevelopment, is shown in the bottom photo.*

- ***Encourage renovation of public housing developments:*** As discussed in Chapter II, Roslindale is home to two large public housing complexes operated by the Boston Housing Authority (BHA) – Archdale and Washington-Beech. These complexes are much denser than the surrounding neighborhood.

Archdale appears to have been more recently renovated. The landscaping is in good condition with attractive fencing, benches and play equipment. Doorway awnings with peaked roofs help to add interest to the buildings.

Washington-Beech has almost no landscaping, and the very limited on-site play areas are in need of rehabilitation. The buildings are also in need of rehabilitation. Façade improvements to provide awnings or other articulation at entryways, paint, landscaping around the buildings and decorative fencing in place of the chain link style would help to improve the overall appearance of the development. Improved landscaping and façade

improvements would not address the issue of density, but would have a strong positive impact on the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

The BHA has recently announced that Washington-Beech has been included on the Authority’s list of developments to be redeveloped with new, mixed-income housing. Washington-Beech has been designated as a key priority site based upon need, feasibility and location, and the BHA plans to seek federal, state and City funds to aid its revitalization. The BHA plans to initiate an inclusive planning process for this site in late 2007, with a goal to break ground by 2010. In the short-term, the BHA plans to perform Energy Performance upgrades to the existing buildings.

- ***Encourage preservation of some affordable units in Section 8 expiring use housing developments:*** As described in Chapter II, the two large Section 8 housing developments – the Florence Apartments and High Point Village (now called Stony Brook Commons) - are both at the end of their

affordability contracts and are being converted to market rate housing. The City has worked with the owners of these two properties to preserve a number of units that are affordable to lower-income households. The City should continue to monitor the affordability of these units. Renovations at Stony Brook Commons include interior and exterior improvements with new landscaping, sidewalks and internal roads. These improvements will help to improve the appearance of the development and compatibility with the adjacent neighborhood. The owner of the Florence Apartments should be encouraged to make exterior building and landscaping improvements as part of the ongoing renovations at that development.

- ***Encourage participation in homeownership and home improvement programs sponsored by the City of Boston Department of Neighborhood Development (DND).*** The DND offers City residents

a variety of programs that provide technical and financial assistance in helping homeowners buy, build, maintain, repair, and pay for their homes. A number of programs have had participation from Roslindale residents and are very relevant to these homeowners' needs. Information about these programs should be available at local realtors, the Roslindale Main Streets office, and at public buildings such as the Roslindale Library, Municipal Building, Archdale Community Center and the Greater Roslindale Medical and Dental Center. These programs are described in Appendix A.

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## COMMERCIAL USE

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Commercial uses are concentrated in Roslindale Square and in pockets along Washington Street, Belgrade Avenue, Hyde Park Avenue and American Legion Highway. The Square and these four corridors are described in more detail on the following pages.

### Roslindale Square

As described in Chapter III: Goals and Objectives, residents are concerned with maintaining the character of the Square, while increasing its vitality. There currently are a number of vacant retail storefronts, as well as several new stores. There is strong interest in attracting patrons from outside of Roslindale and in expanding the retail offerings in and around the Square. The recommendations support these objectives.

Much of the Square's vitality and character come from the "village" or town center feel, and the wide range of commercial offerings, including paint and wallpaper, books, baked goods, a butcher shop, a pharmacy, a grocery store, a cheese shop, a wine store, a liquor store, and clothing stores. Restaurants range from fast food such as pizza and burritos to full service restaurants including sushi, Italian food and bistros. Services include hair salons, insurance brokers, realtors, the Greater Roslindale Medical and Dental Center, banks, a post office, the Roslindale Branch Library, and the Registry of Motor Vehicles.

There are a few large development parcels around Roslindale Square, but it is, to a great extent, built-out with primarily small, one and two-story retail buildings. Typical floor plates range from 1,000 to 6,000 square feet, with the Village Market and adjacent commercial building on Corinth Street closer to 10,000 square feet. Although three-story buildings are allowed in the Square, buildings above two floors are rare, with the exception of some of the newer buildings, such as the mixed retail/residential building on Lee Hill Road, and the Emack & Bolios building on Belgrade Avenue. The existing small floor



*Roslindale Square offers a wide variety of stores, restaurants and services.*

plates in the Square greatly limit the economic feasibility of adding floors to existing buildings, and disaggregated ownership patterns minimize the likelihood of assembling multiple buildings or parcels either to add floors or for redevelopment.

The recommendations are designed to maintain the small, local store character, while encouraging development of larger parcels and allowing opportunities for some development of residential uses on upper floors.

- ***Encourage mixed-use development.*** One technique for increasing vitality in the Square is the introduction of more residential use. Residents would increase the number of people available to patronize local shops, add pedestrian activity in and around the Square and extend that pedestrian activity over a longer daily time period. Residents also would increase safety in the Square by providing “eyes on the street” over many hours of the day. At the same time, active ground floor uses are important to the pedestrian environment. It is recommended that

the development of residential space be encouraged above ground floor retail uses, and that a density bonus (higher Floor Area Ratio) be given to developers for this type of mixed-use in portions of the Square.

- ***Limit the floor plates of retail buildings.*** One of the key positive aspects of the Square’s character is the number of small local establishments, and the almost complete absence of chain stores. A number of residents expressed interest in maintaining this character. Many chain stores look for larger buildings than are currently found in the Square. Limiting the size of retail floor plates allowable as-of-right to 15,000 square feet would help to limit the development of larger chain stores.

#### *Specific Development Opportunities*

There are several large vacant or underutilized buildings and parcels in Roslindale Square. Major potential development sites include the block of parcels bounded by Cummins Highway, Washington



*Stores in the Square offer a variety of both everyday needs and specialty items.*



*A courtyard off of Birch Street provides patio dining for several restaurants in Roslindale Square.*

# ROSLINDALE NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIC • PLAN

Street and Poplar Street, anchored by the former MBTA substation on the north and the Roslindale Public Library on the south; and the former Ashmont Store parcel on Washington Street on the north end of the Square. Conceptual redevelopment alternatives were developed for these two key sites. **The intent of developing these concepts was to ensure that the new zoning requirements accommodate and encourage the desired types of development in the future. Concepts examined for both sites include residential, retail and mixed residential/retail uses.**



*The former Ashmont Store on Washington Street has been vacant for many years.*

This Strategic Neighborhood Plan does not envision or recommend public acquisition of any privately-owned parcels. The concept plans illustrate potential build-out of the sites, but any actual development of the sites will be determined by the property owners in accordance with zoning developed as part of the Roslindale Strategic Neighborhood Plan and Rezoning Process. Illustrations of the Concept Plan are shown in Chapter V: Urban Design.

The **Ashmont Site** includes the two parcels housing the vacant Ashmont Store and the Dunkin Donuts. Conceptual redevelopment alternatives explored the use of both parcels as well as the use of only the Ashmont Store parcel. Some of the development concepts using both parcels include space for a Dunkin Donuts within the footprint of a new building. An important component of all of the concepts was the placement of a building along the Washington Street frontage to create a street edge, with parking in the rear or on the side.

Alternatives include:

- Residential use only, such as three-story residential buildings built on three sides of a forecourt opening onto

Washington Street to provide some green space around the Square.

- Ground floor retail space with two floors of residential units above.
- A larger (15,000-20,000 square foot) single story retail space.

A development proposal for a new one-story Staples store is currently being reviewed by the BRA.

The recommended zoning would accommodate any of the three alternatives. Design guidelines (see Chapter V: Urban Design) will emphasize the importance of orienting the buildings to Washington Street, with attractive landscaping on Washington Street and parking in the rear.

The **Roslindale Square Site** includes four distinct lots:

- ***The MBTA substation building:*** The reuse of the MBTA substation building has been discussed for over 20 years within the neighborhood. Theater, office, housing, health club and library uses have been suggested by members of the community. The limited entrances (there is currently only a



small side entrance from a stairway off of Washington Street and a rear entrance), very high ceiling heights, and out of date building systems make reuse of the building somewhat difficult and expensive. The BRA is in the process of acquiring the MBTA substation and will be working with the community to develop and issue an RFP for its redevelopment. There is also a move by the Boston Landmarks Commission, and supported by residents, to have the Substation placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Substation was built in 1911 as part of the Boston Elevated Railway Company's then revolutionary alternating electric current power system.

- **Higgins Funeral Home** and two additional parcels used for funeral home parking: With no current plans for any change, Higgins Funeral Home may become available for redevelopment in the long-term.
- **The gas station site:** This site has been vacant for several years and is

currently for sale. The City of Boston's Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services, Inspectional Services Division, Boston Police Area E-5 and Councilor Rob Consalvo recently coordinated to have the building secured and the lot cleaned. The building was boarded up, posted by ISD "Clean It or Lien It" and "No Trespassing," and the lot will be secured with City locks. The City's Graffiti Busters also removed spray painted messages from public view.

- **The Roslindale Public Library:** Some residents have expressed an interest in expanding or replacing the Roslindale Branch Public Library, as well as in providing off-street library parking. The Roslindale branch library is not scheduled for significant renovation at this time.

Although the individual parcels may be redeveloped on very different time frames, and some, like the library parcel, may not be redeveloped for a long time, there is the possibility that a developer could assemble all of these parcels and redevelop the entire site. It was felt that it was important to consider



*The two story MBTA substation building has been vacant since the 1970's.*



*The abandoned gas station is an eyesore on Washington Street.*

# ROSLINDALE NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIC • PLAN

this larger redevelopment opportunity when determining the appropriate zoning for the site.

Concepts were developed to include both retaining and reusing the MBTA substation, as well as demolishing the building should no viable reuse option be found; retaining the Library as well as demolishing it and relocating the Library into a new building on this block or into the MBTA substation; and developing a new three-story building or buildings with either ground floor retail and upper floor residential uses or all residential use.



*Some residents would like to see the Roslindale Branch Library expanded.*

Concepts include at-grade and/or underground on-site parking to accommodate all of the new development, as well as potentially to provide some parking for the Library (underground parking may be limited due to a brook running under a portion of the parcel). An important component of all of the concepts was the placement of a building along the Washington Street frontage to create a street edge, with parking in the rear and/or underground. The importance of landscaping and preservation of significant views (such as from the Square to the historic Congregational Church) are described in Chapter V: Urban Design.

Depending on the mix of uses, the treatment of the Library and MBTA substation building, and the provision of parking above and/or below grade, alternatives accommodated between 16 and 36 residential units and up to 13,000 square feet of retail space. In one concept, a mixed-use building along Washington Street is set back to provide an outdoor seating area for a ground-floor restaurant, enlivening the street and providing an attractive connection between public uses such as the Library and the municipal building.

One concern mentioned by residents is the image of Washington Street and the Square for motorists on Washington Street. It is felt that improving the image would help to attract more regional patrons to the many retail stores and restaurants. This increased patronage would in turn help to enliven the Square and attract new businesses. The Roslindale Village Main Streets program has an ongoing signage and façade improvements program and the City should continue to work with RVMS to encourage business owners to participate. Other design and streetscape improvements are described in Chapter V: Urban Design.

## *Economic Development*

As described earlier, increasing the vitality of the Square is a key goal for many residents. The following recommendations all support economic development.

- Redevelopment of key parcels, including Ashmont, the MBTA substation and the gas station will create new activity in the Square.
- Recommended streetscape and signage improvements (see Urban Design) will

help to create an identity for the Square and the neighborhood, attracting developers and businesses, new residents, and patrons for area businesses.

- Encouraging mixed-use development will bring new residents and pedestrian activity into the Square.
- Continuing to encourage and support a healthy mix of basic goods and services, as well as specialty items, will bring a wide spectrum of shoppers into the Square.
- Encouraging businesses to stay open in the evenings will help to enliven the Square and provide increased business for local stores. The RVMS should work with the businesses to extend evening hours, at least on specific nights.
- There are a number of programs available that provide technical assistance to small businesses. Information on these programs should be made available to new and existing businesses in and around the Square. Information on these programs is included in Appendix A.

- Requiring that new development meet “senior friendly” and universal design guidelines also will help to increase the potential customer base for area stores.
- Construction of a two or three-story parking deck on the site of the existing Taft Hill Terrace Parking Lot would greatly increase the supply of parking in the Square. This additional parking would reduce the need for maximizing the provision of off-street parking on individual development parcels, thus increasing achievable development densities and reducing the number of driveways. Although the City of Boston does not currently have a capital program for the construction of public structured parking, the neighborhood should pursue structured parking as one of several possible long-term parking solutions.

### Washington Street

Although some residents also expressed an interest in creating a continuous retail zone along Washington Street, the market assessment done as part of this Strategic

Planning Study determined that the retail districts should not be expanded, and that in fact, some consolidation of retail districts might strengthen the viability of the remaining retail areas.



*Many auto-oriented uses have large driveways and parking lots that detract from the pedestrian environment.*

# ROSLINDALE NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIC • PLAN

With the exception of Roslindale Square and Stony Brook Plaza at the southern end of the IPOD area, commercial clusters along Washington Street comprise primarily small buildings on small lots. These small stores tend to have no off-street parking. The small lot sizes would make redevelopment with off-street parking very difficult, which may discourage their redevelopment.

One exception is the Pleasant Café near the corner of Washington and Beech Street. Parking for the Café is located across Washington Street on a series of parcels zoned for residential use. Recognizing that the parking lot is currently widely used, this parking lot could provide parking for a larger



*Three-story mixed use buildings provide opportunities for upper level residential use.*

building should the café parcel be redeveloped for a use with lower per square foot parking requirements at some point in the future. Alternatively, the parking lot could be redeveloped for residential use.

There are a number of auto-oriented uses along Washington Street which tend to have large and/or multiple driveways and large, unattractive parking lots that detract from the character of the street and negatively affect the pedestrian environment. It is recommended that new zoning prohibit new auto-oriented uses that require outdoor storage of cars, multiple garage bays and/or multiple driveways, although the existing auto-oriented businesses may remain until the property owner decides to redevelop the property. Recommended design guidelines (see Chapter V: Urban Design) limit the size, location and number of driveways, prescribe the placement of buildings to create a continuous streetwall and detail requirements for landscaping of parking lots for all commercial uses.

## **Belgrade Avenue**

Retail establishments on Belgrade Avenue primarily serve the neighborhood and are in small retail clusters at corners, with the exception of the large auto uses at Belgrade Avenue and West Roxbury Parkway. Similar to Washington Street, these small stores tend to have no off-street parking. The small lot sizes would make redevelopment with off-street parking very difficult which may discourage redevelopment because new development would have to meet off-street parking requirements.

There is consensus among the community that the number of auto-oriented uses along Belgrade Avenue should be reduced. These uses tend to be on slightly larger parcels because of the parking and circulation requirements and therefore provide more likely redevelopment opportunities. As on Washington Street, it is recommended that the new zoning prohibit new auto-oriented uses that require outdoor storage of cars, multiple garage bays and/or multiple driveways.

It is recommended that the zoning allow residential uses above retail at key corners such as at Walworth, Iona and Bradwood Streets.

#### Hyde Park Avenue

Commercial uses on Hyde Park Avenue tend to be in small retail clusters that serve a slightly larger community than do those on Belgrade Avenue. Issues related to small lot sizes and auto-oriented uses are similar to those on Belgrade Avenue and it is recommended that new auto-oriented uses be prohibited on Hyde Park Avenue.

#### American Legion Highway

The large shopping area that stretches from Bourne Street to Mount Hope Street attracts patrons from a larger area. The tenant mix may change over time as a result of Olmsted Green, a large new residential development just to the north, but this area is likely to remain a commercial strip. The existing build-out maximizes the economic potential of the site under existing zoning; the allowable density would have to be greatly increased to entice the property owners to redevelop the

site. The recommended zoning would allow a density bonus for a mixed-use development with retail and residential uses.

It is recommended that the commercial zone be expanded to include the Army Reserve Center. The facility occupies over two acres on the west side of the street, across from the shopping center. Although there has been no mention of the Army moving from this facility, the rezoning recommendation ensures that the parcel will be appropriately zoned, if it ever becomes available. As with the commercial area described above, the Community Commercial Subdistrict would allow a three-story mixed-use development on this site.

The BRA should encourage aesthetic improvements such as increased landscaping and screening in the existing parking lots if the shopping area is upgraded over time. Streetscape improvements being constructed soon by NStar will improve the character of the street.

The existing large shopping center and other commercial uses with large parking lots make this street a more appropriate location than

Washington Street, Belgrade Avenue and Hyde Park Avenue for auto-oriented uses. American Legion Highway is therefore recommended as the location for consolidating those uses. It is recommended that auto-oriented uses continue to be allowed as conditional uses with site plan approval required to ensure that landscaping and screening of work and storage areas are incorporated into site design.

#### Zoning Recommendations

A key component of the recommendations for commercial land use is the creation of new



*Additional landscaping would provide an aesthetic improvement to this shopping center on American Legion Highway.*

# ROSLINDALE NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIC • PLAN

commercial zoning subdistricts based on desired future development patterns, including both scale (building and store size, height, dimensional requirements) and allowable uses. The existing commercial districts have been divided into three categories:

- Local Convenience Subdistricts
- Neighborhood Shopping Subdistricts
- Community Commercial Subdistricts

**Local Convenience Subdistricts** provide convenience retail and services (for example, a small market or shoe repair shop) for the immediate neighborhood and pedestrians.

Recommended LC Subdistricts include:

- Washington Street at Archdale/Whipple Streets
- Washington Street at Metropolitan Avenue and Wellsmere Street
- Belgrade Avenue at Aldrich Street and Colberg Avenue
- South and Walter Streets
- Cummins Highway at Florence and Sycamore Streets

## **Neighborhood Shopping Subdistricts**

provide convenience goods and services to the larger neighborhood (for example, a hair salon, restaurant or insurance office).

Recommended NS Subdistricts include:

- Washington Street at Beech and Walworth Streets
- Southwestern end of Roslindale Square
- Belgrade Avenue at Walworth Street
- Belgrade Avenue at Iona Street and West Roxbury Parkway
- Hyde Park Avenue at Blakemore Street
- Hyde Park Avenue at Canterbury Street and Cummins Highway

## **Community Commercial Subdistricts**

provide a diversified commercial environment serving larger markets (for example Roslindale Square). CC-2 Subdistricts allow higher densities than CC-1 Subdistricts, however CC-1 subdistricts provide a density bonus for mixed use development.

Recommended CC Subdistricts include:

- Roslindale Square
- American Legion Highway at Mount

Hope and Walk Hill Streets

- Stony Brook Plaza on Washington Street

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## OPEN SPACE

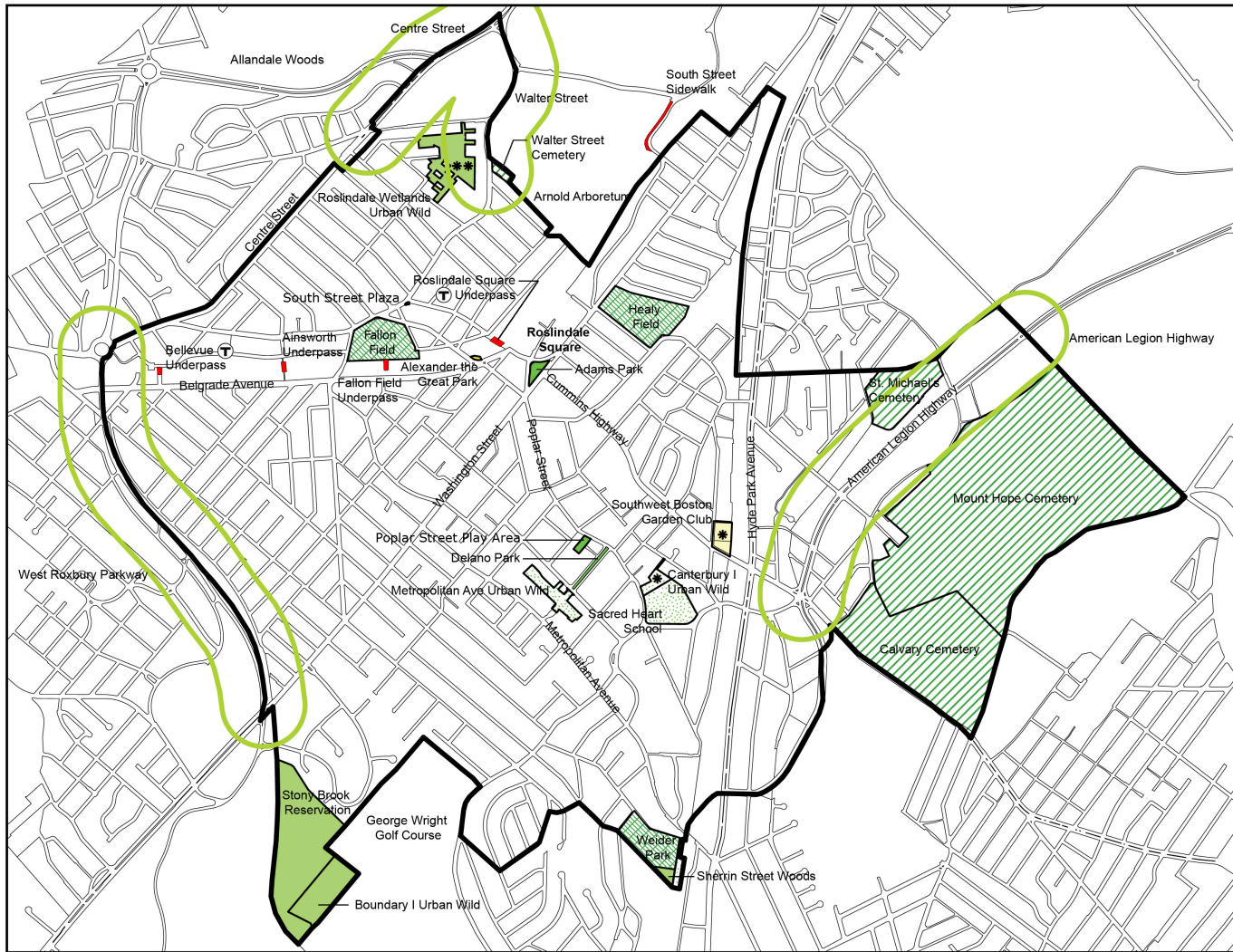
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Open space or green space in a neighborhood includes public parkland, undeveloped land and privately-owned yards and gardens that are visible from surrounding properties and streets. All of this open space provides “breathing room” in a densely developed urban environment, and in some cases helps to mitigate flooding issues related to low lying areas.



*View down Fairview Street to the Arnold Arboretum.*

# ROSLINDALE NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIC • PLAN



## Open Space Recommendations

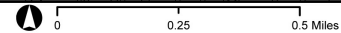
### Open Space Subdistricts

- Cemetery Open Space (OS-CM) Subdistrict
- Parkland Open Space (OS-P) Subdistrict
- Recreation Open Space (OS-RC) Subdistrict
- Urban Plaza Open Space (OS-UP) Subdistrict
- Urban Wild Open Space (OS-UW) Subdistrict
- Greenbelt Protection Overlay District (GPOD)
- Other Recommendations

### Other Subdistricts

- Conservation Protection Subdistrict (CPS)
- Single Family Residential

- \* Zoning could change in the long term, following transfer of the property
- \*\* Publicly-owned parcels zoned OS-UW. Privately owned parcels meeting criteria zoned CPS



As described in the Land Use section, although Roslindale is surrounded by large public green spaces including parks, reservations and cemeteries, there is limited green space within the interior of the neighborhood. In addition, several recent and/or proposed development projects have reduced open space. These developments are primarily infill housing on previously undeveloped parcels, including parts of several privately-owned urban wilds.

Protecting existing open space was one of the key concerns identified by the community. Recommendations fall into the following categories:

- Changes in ownership
- Changes in zoning
- Access improvements
- Wayfinding

### Recommended Changes in Ownership

The **Boundary I Urban Wild**, currently owned by the City of Boston, is a 7.05 acre parcel located at the southern end of the IPOD area. It is surrounded by Stony Brook Reservation and the George Wright Golf

Course. The *Boston 2002-2006 Open Space Plan* recommends that the parcel be acquired by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) for annexation to Stony Brook Reservation. This report supports the acquisition.

The **Southwest Garden Club** operates a community garden on several parcels of land at the northeast corner of the Rowe Street/Cummins Highway intersection on land owned by the MBTA. A deed restriction on the property which allows the garden club to operate will expire in 2008. The well-organized garden club has approximately 35 members and has been in existence since the 1970s.

Boston Natural Areas Network (BNAN) has expressed an interest in trying to protect the garden in perpetuity and considers the garden “at risk” because it is only temporarily protected. BNAN is a non-profit organization that works to preserve, expand and improve urban open space through community organizing, acquisition, ownership, programming, development and management of urban land such as – Urban Wilds, Greenways and Community Gardens.

It is recommended that representatives from the City of Boston Environment Department, BPRD, DND, Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Services, the Boston Redevelopment Authority, the MBTA and BNAN work together to develop a long-term plan for preserving this community garden. These discussions have begun. In the short-term, it is recommended that the land be rezoned from Two Family Residential to Single Family Residential with the designation being changed to Open Space-Community Garden (OS-CG) if a long-term solution of transferring the land to a non-profit entity can be achieved.

The **Canterbury I Urban Wild** is a 1.2 acre parcel currently owned by DND. Due to steep slopes and wetlands on the site, it has limited development potential. This small wetland and forested upland area lies between the playing field of the Sacred Heart School and a residential complex along Hilburn and Seymour Streets. As a functioning wetland, this area provides flood storage, water filtration and wildlife habitat. Birds utilize the site for nesting and feeding purposes. It is recommended that the land be rezoned as a



Conservation Protection Subdistrict. If DND determines that the land is not developable, it could potentially be transferred to the Boston Conservation Commission or other open space or conservation entity, at which time it could be rezoned as Open Space-Urban Wild.

The *Boston 2002-2006 Open Space Plan* recommends improvements to limit access (allowing pedestrians only) for both the Canterbury and the Roslindale Wetlands urban wilds.

**Weider Park**, on the south side of Dale Street in the southeast corner of the IPOD area, is owned by DCR. There is one privately-owned parcel (slightly over one acre) between the park and the MBTA right-of-way to the east. The private parcel extends southward to Sherrin Woods. Although the narrow frontage of the parcel does not meet existing zoning requirements for development, it is recommended that the parcel be rezoned as a Conservation Protection Subdistrict to protect it. It is also recommended that DCR be encouraged to attempt to acquire this parcel to ensure that it is not developed in the future, with possible rezoning as Open Space if acquired by DCR.

The **Roslindale Wetlands Urban Wild** is located between Weld Street, Walter Street and Coniston Road near the northern end of the IPOD area. The backyards of abutters surround this area. However, four streets allow access into the urban wild. This urban wild still serves primarily as a catch basin for stormwater, and is dominated by a forested wetland habitat. The Boston Conservation Commission has been acquiring parcels within the Urban Wild to protect them from future development. This protection has been strongly endorsed by the local Longfellow Area Neighborhood Association. There are, however, several lots still in private ownership. The Conservation Commission should continue to work for acquisition of these parcels. The goal for rezoning this resource is that all Conservation Commission-owned parcels be rezoned as Open Space-Urban Wild, and that privately-owned parcels meeting the appropriate criteria be rezoned as a Conservation Protection Subdistrict.



*The Johnswood Path provides a pedestrian connection from Brown Avenue to Johnswood Road.*

### Recommended Changes in Zoning

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. The proposed subdistricts, and the resources proposed for each subdistrict, are listed below. With the exception of the Conservation Preservation Subdistrict and the Greenbelt Protection Overlay District, these Subdistricts can only be applied to land in public ownership (or land on which the property owner has agreed to the designation) because the subdistricts

prohibit use of the property for anything other than open space.

## Urban Wild Open Space (OS-UW)

**Subdistricts** consist of open land where such features as undeveloped hills, rock outcroppings, quarries, woodlands, meadows, scenic views, inland waters, freshwater wetlands, floodplains, wildlife habitat, or any estuary, creek, river, stream, pond or lake, or any land under these waters predominates.

Proposed subdistricts include:

- Canterbury I (if transferred to Conservation Commission)
- Boundary I Urban Wild
- Stony Brook Reservation (northern section)
- Roslindale Wetlands Urban Wild (publicly-owned portion only)

## Parkland Open Space (OS-P)

**Subdistricts** consist of land appropriate for passive recreational uses including walkways, picnic areas and sitting areas, and may include vacant public land. Proposed subdistricts include:

- Adams Park
- Delano Park
- Poplar Street Play Area - this .44-acre lot on Poplar Street between Augustus Avenue and Delano Park, is owned by BPRD. The *Boston 2002-2006 Open Space Plan* recommended “determining the feasibility of building a play lot at the Poplar Street Play Area *once the community need expresses itself.*” The parcel, which currently has a lawn and several mature trees, provides an attractive passive green space in the



*The Poplar Street Play Area.*

neighborhood. The community sentiment at this time appears to be that maintaining the existing passive nature of the site is preferable to developing a playground. Neighbors appreciate the quiet green space and have concerns about potential parking and noise issues related to playground development. It is therefore recommended that the parcel remain as a lawn area, and be protected through designation as a Parkland Open Space Subdistrict. A play lot could be developed at a later date if desired by the community.

## Recreation Open Space (OS-RC)

**Subdistricts** consist of land appropriate for active or passive recreational uses, including walkways, physical education areas, children’s play areas, swimming pools, skating rinks and sporting areas. Proposed subdistricts include:

- Fallon Field
- Healy Playground
- Weider Park

**Urban Plaza Open Space (OS-UP)**

**Subdistricts** are designated for passive recreational uses, are directly accessible to the public from the adjoining street, may be furnished with benches, chairs or other seating facilities, and may contain works of art, plantings and other features. Proposed subdistricts include:

- Alexander the Great Plaza (owned by MBTA)
- South Street Plaza

**Community Garden Open Space (OS-CG) Subdistricts** consist of land

appropriate for the cultivation of herbs, fruits, flowers or vegetables, including the cultivation and tillage of soil and the production, cultivation, growing and harvesting of any agricultural, floricultural or horticultural commodity. Proposed subdistricts include:

- Southwest Boston Garden Club (if transfer of land or other long-term arrangement occurs)

**Cemetery Open Space (OS-CM)**

**Subdistricts** are designated for interment uses. Proposed subdistricts include:

- Mount Hope Cemetery
- St. Michael’s Cemetery
- Calvary Cemetery
- Walter Street Cemetery



*Mount Hope Cemetery provides greenspace along this stretch of Paine Street.*

**Greenbelt Protection Overlay Districts (GPOD)** are established to preserve and

enhance air quality by protecting the supply of vegetation and open space along the City’s Greenbelt Roadways; to enhance and protect the natural scenic resources of the City; to protect the City’s Greenbelt Roadways from

traffic congestion; and to abate serious and present safety concerns. New buildings or building additions larger than 5,000 square feet are subject to the GPOD regulations. Residents have expressed concern that the existing 5,000 square foot threshold is too large to include most of the projects within the Roslindale GPODs, and therefore the GPODs do not adequately protect the greenbelts. The first two roadways below are already included within a GPOD, and no change in designation is recommended. It is recommended that the last two areas also be designated as GPODs.

- West Roxbury Parkway
- American Legion Highway
- Centre Street between VFW Parkway and the Arnold Arboretum – designation of this short stretch of Centre Street would link the VFW Parkway GPOD with the Arborway GPOD (designation will require coordination with the Jamaica Plain and West Roxbury neighborhoods)
- Walter Street from Centre Street to the Walter Street Burying Ground

**Conservation Protection Subdistricts (CPS)** are established to promote the most desirable use of land and siting of development in areas with special natural or scenic features in accordance with a well considered plan. In order to assure that any significant new development within the CPS occurs in a manner that is protective of the special natural and scenic features, requirements for BRA review of site plans for proposed projects in Conservation Protection Subdistricts apply as provided in Article 80 for the Site Plan components of Large Project Review and Small Project Review.

Recommended CPS Subdistricts include:

- **Metropolitan Avenue Urban Wild:** This wooded tract is a fragment of woods that dominated the local hills as recently as 60 years ago. The land is steep with a wide variety of trees and other natural plant life. A portion of the urban wild has recently been developed for residential use. The land is privately-owned.
- **Canterbury I Urban Wild:** This parcel could be rezoned as Open Space-Urban Wild when and if it is transferred to the



*Recent development at the Metropolitan Avenue Urban Wild.*

Boston Conservation Commission or other open space or conservation entity.

- **Sacred Heart School:** The Sacred Heart School, owned by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston, is sited on a 250,000 square foot parcel adjacent to the Canterbury I Urban Wild. The school buildings, parking lot and playing fields occupy approximately 60 percent of the site; the north and western 40 percent of the site is a continuation of the natural features

found at the Canterbury I Urban Wild. Any future redevelopment of the parcel should be sensitively designed to avoid impact to this important natural area.

- **Roslindale Wetlands Urban Wild** (described previously). In the future, if the entire Urban Wild is in public ownership, it should be redesignated as an Urban Wild Open Space Subdistrict.

### **Access Improvements**

As discussed previously, many of the open space resources are on the edges of the neighborhood. The “outlying” nature of these large open spaces, and the small number of open space resources within the interior of the neighborhood, make easy access to these resources particularly important. The following recommendations were developed to improve access to open space resources.

**South Street Sidewalk:** South Street provides an important connection to the Arnold Arboretum from the upper Washington Street area via Archdale Road. Although there is a sidewalk along Archdale Road, it ends where Archdale Road crosses under the MBTA railroad bridge and merges

with South Street. There is a small, steep entry to the Arboretum at that point, but the more formal and accessible entry (Poplar Gate) is further along South Street at the intersection with Bussey Street. Sidewalk improvements along this section of South Street would provide a greatly improved community connection to the Arboretum.

**Pedestrian Underpasses:** The MBTA Needham Heights Commuter Rail Line runs roughly parallel to Washington Street from Forest Hills to the Roslindale Village station. It then turns to the west and runs parallel to Belgrade Avenue. The rail line has only limited street crossings, although a series of pedestrian underpasses provide additional access across the tracks, connecting neighborhoods north and south of the tracks. Underpass locations include:

- The Bellevue Commuter Rail Station near Iona Street.
- The Ainsworth Footway connecting Ainsworth Street on the north to Aldrich Street on the south.
- Penfield Street connecting north to Fallon Field.

- At the Roslindale Village Commuter Rail Station connecting north to the upper MBTA parking lot.



*Pedestrian tunnel at the Bellevue Commuter Rail Station.*

These underpasses tend to be dark, sometimes damp, and uninviting. Improvements including lighting, installation of public art or other decorative wall treatments and grade changes to meet accessibility requirements would increase the visibility and perception of safety in these tunnels, encouraging greater use. It is recommended that funding opportunities for improvements be explored, perhaps as part of

larger infrastructure improvement projects to adjacent roadways or MBTA facilities.

**Bicycle Routes and Bicycle Lane Improvements** are discussed in Chapter VI: Transportation and Parking.

### Wayfinding

Another issue raised with regard to access to open space involves the community's knowledge of the location of these open spaces and how they connect to each other as well as to other parts of the neighborhood. To address this issue, it is recommended that several signage improvements be made.

- Neighborhood maps should be added to MBTA bus shelters, currently designed and maintained by Wall Design, where possible. These maps should include all open spaces and pedestrian connections such as the underpasses described above, as well as bike routes.
- Although the Arnold Arboretum is located within several blocks of Roslindale Square, there are no signs at the Arboretum to indicate this proximity of existing routes between

the Arboretum and the Square. It is recommended that conversations be held with the Arboretum to pursue the installation of such signage.

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## INSTITUTIONAL USE

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There are two large institutional uses located within the IPOD district, both at the northern boundary. It is recommended that the large Hebrew Senior Life parcel be rezoned as an Institutional Subdistrict. The institution has begun preliminary discussions with the BRA regarding potential minor changes to its facility. Any significant changes will require an Institutional Master Plan (IMP).

The Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University has proposed an Institutional Master Plan for the Harvard-owned Weld Hill parcel north of Weld Street and east of Walter Street. That Institutional Master Plan is currently being reviewed through a separate community process. Because the IMP will set permanent zoning for the parcel, planning for that parcel has not been part of this Strategic Plan. In the event that the IMP has not been finalized by the final stages of this rezoning process,

residents have recommended that the parcel be temporarily rezoned as a Conservation Protection Subdistrict.



*View of Hebrew Senior Life from Weld Hill.*



*View of the Weld Hill Parcel from Weld Street.*

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## INDUSTRIAL USE

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Industrial use is very limited in Roslindale, and is confined to a few parcels at the northern end of Washington Street and the southern end of Hyde Park Avenue. In both locations, the existing industrial zone includes a number of parcels in residential use.

It is recommended that existing industrial properties be designated as Local Industrial Subdistricts, but that the districts be reconfigured to include only those parcels currently in industrial use. Industrial development continues to be an important source of jobs and tax revenue, and the City would like to maintain existing industrial uses within the City.

## V: URBAN DESIGN

In discussions with the community, there is strong consensus that residents want to preserve “the character” of the neighborhood. Residents use words such as family-friendly, affordable, lively and diverse to describe Roslindale. A neighborhood’s character results from its physical attributes such as density, building styles, historic resources and parks, as well as from intangibles such as the neighborhood’s long-time residents who know and look out for each other and new residents who bring a fresh perspective and vitality.

The heart of Roslindale is Roslindale Square, an historic crossroads that has long been the commercial center of the community. The buildings represent a variety of historic commercial architectural styles including Classical Revival, Art Deco and Georgian Revival, along with some newer, more modern buildings. The density and compactness of the Square, and the wide variety of available goods and services, together create a village character, and in fact, the Square is also known as Roslindale Village.



*Roslindale Square - the heart of the neighborhood.*

# ROSLINDALE NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIC • PLAN



*Roslindale has many attractive residential streets.*



*266 Poplar Street, the oldest house in Roslindale.*

Although a wide variety of architectural styles can be found throughout the residential neighborhoods, styles tend to be relatively consistent within individual

blocks. The neighborhoods have an appealing character that comes from well-maintained homes and yards, interesting architectural styles, similarly scaled buildings and lot sizes, and consistent setbacks.

The residential neighborhoods have primarily one, two and three-family homes on relatively small lots, creating a very pedestrian-friendly, safe, intimate feel. Street conditions, including the existence and/or condition of sidewalks and street trees, vary widely. Street lights on residential streets include both high level cobra-style fixtures and inverted box pan fixtures. Roslindale also includes a number of private residential streets that are unpaved.

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## TOPOGRAPHY

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As a result of Roslindale's hilly topography, many streets are curved, with shortened views that create a sense of enclosure, adding to the intimate neighborhood feel. In other locations, the hills allow for dramatic

views both to local landmarks and distant vistas. From Washington Street, at the southern end of the IPOD area, one is afforded a perfectly framed view of the downtown Boston skyline.



*View of the Downtown Boston skyline from Washington Street*

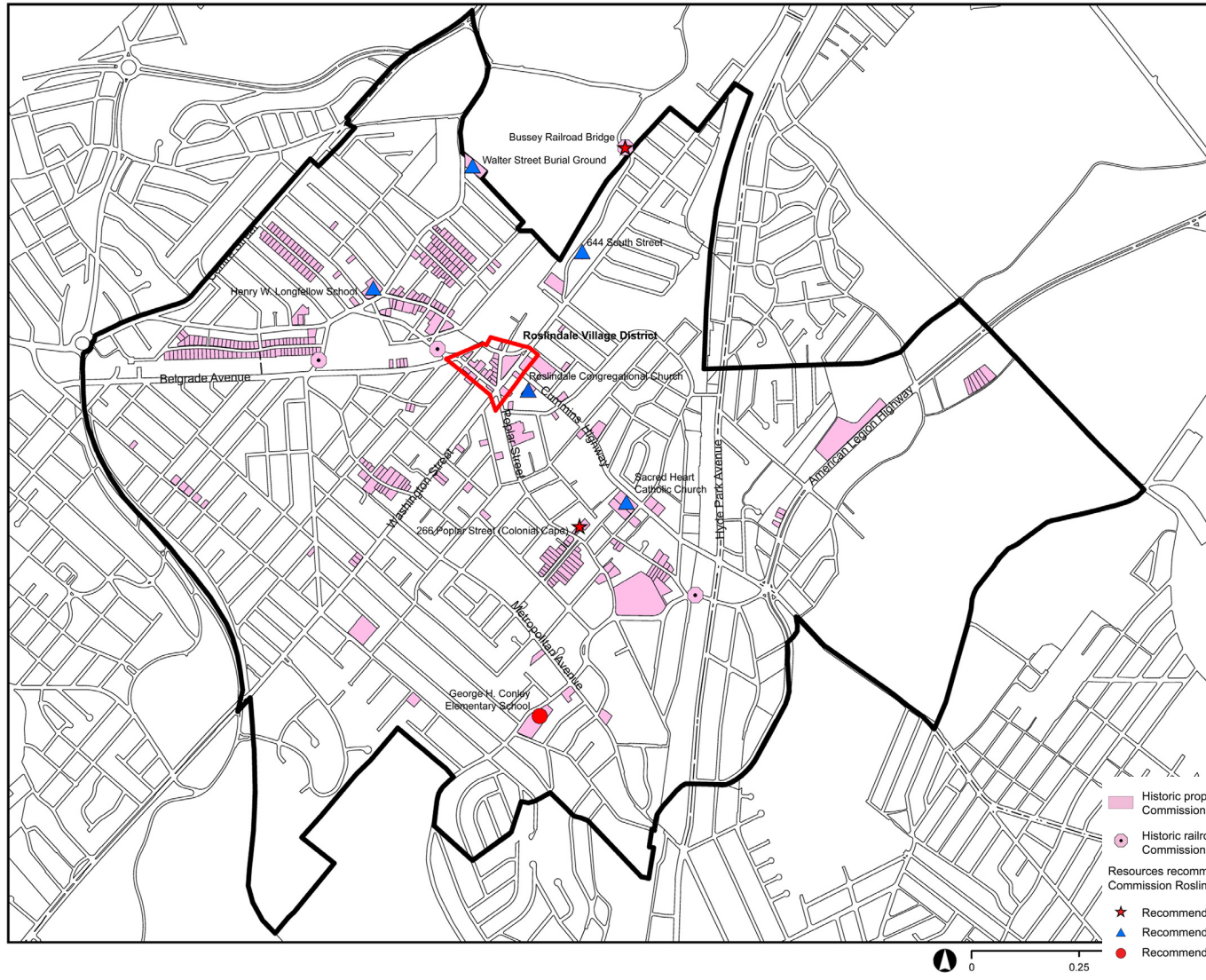
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## HISTORIC RESOURCES

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Roslindale has a wealth of historic buildings. Many of these are individual resources, including churches, public buildings and houses. Two examples are the 1889 Roslindale Baptist Church on Cummins Highway and the 1725 single family colonial period house at 266 Poplar Street – the oldest existing building in





*Historic Resources*

Roslindale. In other cases, there are larger collections of commercial or residential buildings built in a similar style during the same time period.

The Boston Landmarks Commission July 1989 *Roslindale and West Roxbury Project Completion Report* documents an in-depth architectural and historical survey undertaken to make recommendations for properties to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places or designated as Boston Landmarks. These recommendations, and the 174 historic resources listed on the Massachusetts Historic Commission's inventory of historic resources (some of the resources listed include several buildings, so the actual number of buildings is greater than 174), are shown on the facing page.

It is recommended that the 1989 survey be updated, and that the National Register and/or Boston Landmarks designations which are recommended in the report and are supported by the community be pursued.

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## COMMERCIAL AREAS

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The Urban Design recommendations are focused on Roslindale Square and the key commercial roadways. In many cases, they are aimed at creating an identity for the neighborhood, announcing Roslindale to drivers and pedestrians on the major streets.

### Commercial Corridors

Hyde Park Avenue has recently been reconstructed with new decorative lighting fixtures and a brick median. Plans are underway for the reconstruction of



*New lighting and median on Hyde Park Avenue.*



*The neighborhood's collection of distinctive structures could provide a theme for banners.*

American Legion Highway as part of an NStar utility project. This reconstruction from Cummins Highway to Blue Hill Avenue will include a widened median, raised curbing, sidewalk improvements, new lighting and the planting of approximately 500 street trees.

There are no current reconstruction plans for Washington Street, Cummins Highway or Belgrade Avenue. With the exception of the immediate Roslindale Square area,

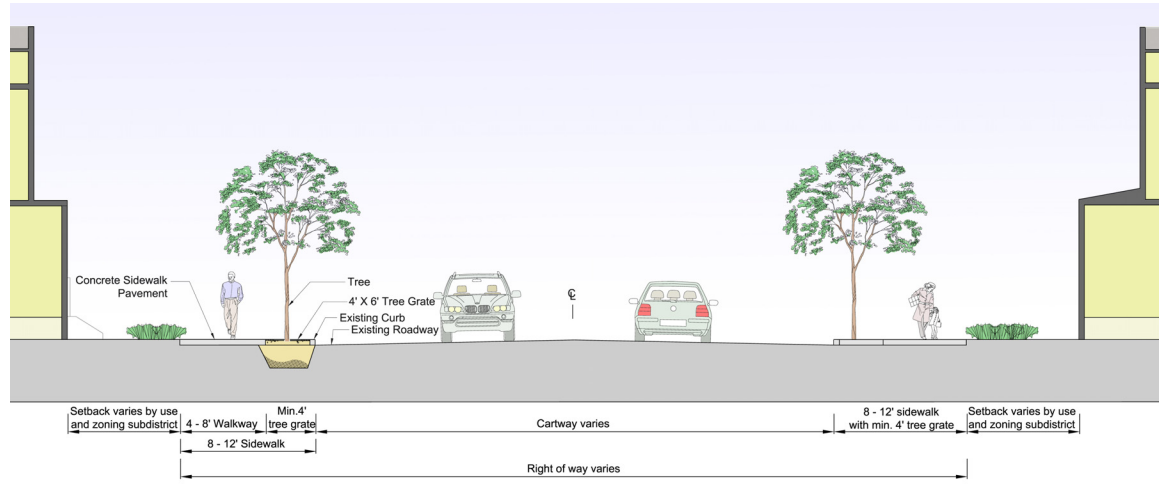
these streets all have older, box-type light fixtures, limited street trees and concrete sidewalks. As a short-term measure, it is recommended that a banner program be initiated for these streets. These banners would provide a visual continuity to the streets, and help to identify the neighborhood. The banners could be hung from existing light poles, limiting the cost of the program.

Longer-term recommendations include replacing the existing street lights with more decorative fixtures. The current City standard is for the pendant-style lights recently installed on Hyde Park Avenue. The pendant fixture allows less than two percent of the useable light above the horizontal of the fixture. This meets the guidelines of the Dark Sky Legislation of Massachusetts which limits the amount of light that is directed toward the sky at night, so as not to affect the visibility of stars.



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*Before and after illustration of new lights and banners on Cummins Highway.*



*Recommended street section to allow street tree planting and generous sidewalk.*

Typical street sections were developed to understand the existing sidewalk widths, location of street trees and building setbacks. A minimum sidewalk width of 7.5 feet is required to provide four feet for pedestrian passage, 3 feet for tree grates and a 6 inch curb. A wider dimension provides a more generous sidewalk, and it is recommended that new sidewalks be a minimum of 8 feet. Because of the narrow existing sidewalks (under 7 feet in many locations), opportunities for new street trees along Washington Street and Cummins

Highway are somewhat limited. Existing sidewalks are wider on Belgrade Avenue (10 to 12 feet) and street trees are more common there. In addition, residential buildings on Belgrade Avenue tend to have larger setbacks and more landscaping than on Washington Street and Cummins Highway. Street trees should be added where possible on all of these streets.

All sidewalk improvements must meet ADA accessibility requirements.

## Roslindale Square

The Roslindale Village Main Streets program has been successful over the years in implementing new storefront signage and



*Old and new signs in the Square.*

façade improvements. These improvements are consistent with the historic character of the Square and with the *Boston Main Streets Commercial District Design Guidelines, 1999*. RVMS should continue to encourage and assist storeowners in following these guidelines. Some older, iconic signs such as the John F. Kennedy Radio & TV Repair sign should be retained and perhaps refurbished. These older signs contribute to the unique character of the district, keeping it from becoming too homogenous.

### *Streetscape and Pedestrian Environment*

Acorn style pedestrian-scaled street lights, brick sidewalk accents and some street trees were added to the Square during the 1980s and 1990s. The RVMS has plans for a new signage and identity program in the Square that will help to identify it, orient visitors and provide wayfinding information. (While the RVMS signage program uses the name “Roslindale Village,” it is recommended that the name “Roslindale Square” be incorporated on other signage and maps throughout the neighborhood.)

A sculpture is also planned for the Belgrade Avenue/Corinth Street intersection to create a gateway to the Square. This signage program will demonstrate renewed interest in the Square, helping to attract new customers and businesses.

Several other short-term recommendations are aimed at “sprucing up” the Square. Hanging flower baskets from the existing lamp poles will provide continuity to the Square, and also help to create a sense of the Square as a place that is well-cared for. As in other locations throughout the city (e.g. Boylston Street, Downtown Crossing, and Audubon Circle), the flower baskets should be installed and maintained through a public-private partnership.

As discussed in Open Space, there are four pedestrian underpasses that connect the areas north and south of the MBTA commuter rail line. One of these underpasses is at the Roslindale Village MBTA station, and links Roslindale Square to the upper MBTA parking lot and the residential development on the north side of the tracks. It also helps to create a pedestrian link between the Arnold Arboretum and



*Photosimulation of hanging flower baskets in the Square.*



*Rehabilitated MBTA underpass in Cambridge, with public art and new lighting.*

# ROSLINDALE NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIC • PLAN



## Urban Design Recommendations

-  Signage location
-  Public art
-  Hanging baskets on street lights
-  New street lights & banners
-  Landscape buffer
-  Pedestrian gateway improvement
-  Existing building
-  Potential new building
-  Parking lot
-  Courtyard/Plaza



*Roslindale Square urban design recommendations (left) and signage program proposed by Roslindale Village Main Streets (above).*



*Bank of America parking lot entrance on Washington Street.*

Roslindale Square. Improvements to this underpass to make it more inviting could include new signage (proposed as part of the RVMS signage program), decorative wall treatments and better lighting.

Bank of America owns a parking lot that runs from Washington Street to Cohasset Street, behind the buildings on Corinth Street. The entrance to the lot on Washington Street is fenced with a metal chain-link fence that is both unattractive and a trap for litter. Limited landscaping behind the fence does little to buffer the view of parked cars. This lot is very visible for both pedestrians and drivers entering the Square northbound on Washington Street. As a short-term strategy, Bank of America should be encouraged to

enhance the existing plantings to create a more successful screen. In the longer term, the chain link fence should be replaced with a more decorative fence, such as one with steel pickets, or removed if it is not needed.

*Taft Hill Terrace Parking Lot*

The Taft Hill Terrace Parking Lot is not always fully utilized (see Chapter VI: Transportation and Parking). The proposed RVMS signage program includes a new sign for the parking lot, as well as several area maps throughout the Square that will identify parking locations. Although the lot is a very short distance from the shops on South Street and the rest of the Square, the existing mid-block pedestrian connection is somewhat dark and uninviting. Installing low planting boxes with flowering plants and vines on the walls would help to create a lighter, more inviting passage. The vines could grow on screens attached to the walls. The screens would cast interesting shadows on the walls in winter when the vines are not growing. These low-cost recommendations could be implemented in the short-term with the assistance of RVMS and the adjacent property owners.



*Before and after images of improved pedestrian connection to the Taft Hill Terrace Parking Lot.*

Longer term, it is also recommended that the existing acorn-style light fixture be replaced with a series of wall mounted pendant-style

# ROSLINDALE NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIC • PLAN

fixtures matching the fixtures in the parking lot. These fixtures would add a more interesting rhythm of light to the walkway, making it more inviting.

Planting additional trees in the parking lot would improve the appearance of the lot, but must be balanced with the desire to restripe the lot to increase parking capacity.

## *Key Development Parcels*

As described in Land Use and Zoning, the vacant Ashmont Store, gas station and MBTA substation on Washington Street create a series of “missing teeth” in this commercial district. Potential development concepts for these parcels include buildings that continue the existing street wall and create street level activity. The concept illustrated for the gas station block includes an outdoor café across from Adams Park, connecting the Roslindale Branch Library with potential uses at the MBTA substation and the Roslindale Community Center.

The Ashmont Parcel concept illustrated on the plan of the Square on page 50 includes a mixed-use building with ground floor retail space and residential uses above.



*Before and after conceptual illustration of a new building on Washington Street between the MBTA substation and the Roslindale Branch Library. The new three story building has ground floor commercial space with outdoor tables facing Adams Park.*



The Ashmont and gas station parcel concepts all incorporate these key components which are recommended for all future development in the Square:

- Buildings sited to maintain the existing street wall.
- Active ground floor uses.
- Three-story buildings.
- Parking behind the buildings to keep the street frontage lively.

### Design Guidelines

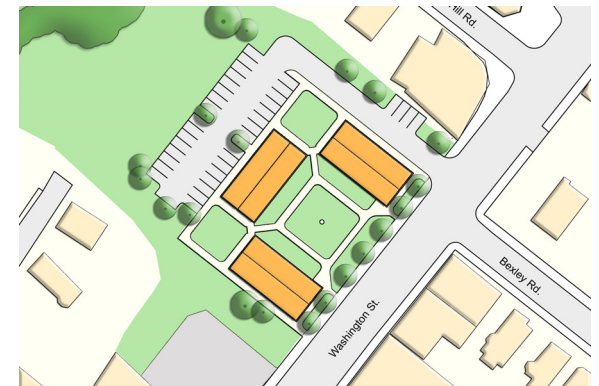
Design guidelines help developers to understand the building characteristics that are desired in the neighborhood and provide the framework for design review by the BRA. Design guidelines for commercial buildings include:

- Using open spaces, building entrances, store fronts, shop windows, shop entrances, terraces, gardens, arcades, and similar elements to enhance pedestrian activity and encourage an active street life.

- Open and welcoming storefronts and display windows.
- Use of façade treatments, building materials, and design details in keeping with the area’s finest commercial architecture.
- Minimizing front setbacks to maintain street wall continuity.
- Use of setbacks on upper floors, corner treatments, and other design details to minimize the sense of bulk of structures.
- Minimizing the visibility of roof structures normally built above the roof and not designed to be used for human occupancy.
- Creating a zone for signs on the building façade, clearly defined by a change in façade color and/or materials or by an articulation of the façade.
- Minimizing the number and size of driveways.
- Landscaping and screening to make

business subdistricts more attractive, and to provide screening between business, industrial, and residential uses.

- Taking into consideration any special characteristics of the site and its location to enhance and reinforce any historic qualities of existing structures.
- Locating parking, storage, and disposal areas behind buildings, adequately screened from public view by suitable fencing and vegetation.



*Alternative conceptual design for the Ashmont parcel, illustrating three story buildings around a landscaped forecourt.*

# ROSLINDALE NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIC • PLAN

- Limiting security grates to those that provide pedestrians with a view through the display window. Security grates should be integrated into the design of the storefront and should be mounted inside the building.
- Where appropriate and possible, siting buildings to preserve views from public streets and open space to both distant vistas and local landmarks.

The Boston Landmarks Commission July 1989 *Roslindale and West Roxbury Project Completion Report* recommended the Roslindale Village District (i.e., Roslindale Square) for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. It is recommended that Roslindale Square be designated as a Neighborhood Design Overlay District (NDOD) to protect the historic character, existing scale and quality of the pedestrian environment. Proposed projects within a NDOD are subject to BRA design review and potentially review by the Boston Landmarks Commission.



*A variety of residential styles are represented throughout the community.*

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## RESIDENTIAL AREAS

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As described earlier, Roslindale contains numerous clusters of similarly styled and scaled homes. Historic residential architectural styles include:

- Queen Anne and Colonial Revival houses in the Mount Hope and Metropolitan Hill-Beech Street Areas.
- Colonial Revival style triple deckers on Lower Washington Street.
- Stick Style homes around the Sacred Heart Church on Metropolitan Avenue.
- Dutch Colonial, Picturesque Tudor and other 1920s and 1930s residential styles between West Roxbury Parkway and Beech Street.
- Colonial Revival, Queen Anne and Craftsmen Style houses in the Centre Street-South Street area.

There are also many blocks with residential buildings built in consistent, but more modern architectural styles.



*Roslindale has a variety of historic residential styles.*

There is strong agreement that zoning regulations should preserve open space on residential parcels through increased side setback requirements, minimum requirements for usable open space and/or regulation of maximum allowable lot coverage.

A number of residential streets do not have sidewalks. As streets are improved, sidewalks should be added where feasible to improve the pedestrian environment and encourage more pedestrian activity. A seven and a half foot sidewalk would allow for street trees, although eight feet is preferable. On those

streets where the sidewalk is too narrow to accommodate street trees, Boston Parks and Recreation Department will plant trees on private property if desired by the property owner. The property owner is required to maintain the tree after the first two years. It is recommended that property owners on individual blocks without adequate sidewalks for street trees organize to have trees planted on private property.

Existing trees should be preserved, and it is recommended that the City enforce regulations requiring a permit for tree removal as part of any demolition or construction project.

#### **Design Guidelines**

Design guidelines for residential districts are aimed at reinforcing the existing cohesiveness of the residential neighborhoods. Proposed guidelines include:

- Designing new or rehabilitated residential buildings to reflect and complement the patterns of height, siting, and architectural character of the surrounding residential

structures. The removal or alteration of any historic architectural feature should be held to a minimum.

- Repairing rather than replacing deteriorated architectural features in the rehabilitation of residential or commercial buildings. In the event that replacement is necessary, the new material should be compatible with the existing in composition, design, texture, and appearance. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based, where appropriate, on accurate duplication of original features of the building to be rehabilitated or those of other buildings of the same style and period.
- Allowing contemporary design for residential structures, if such design is compatible with the size, material, scale and character of the surrounding neighborhood environment.
- In new residential construction, reflecting the traditional location and

relationship of buildings on their sites, including setback from streets, spacing among buildings, and orientation of openings to the street and neighboring structures. In addition, the location of the buildings should respect significant landscape features on the site.

- Respecting the scale of existing residential construction in order to maintain the subdistrict's special qualities.
- Siting garages to minimize their visual impact. Ideally, they would be located to the rear of the parcel or be side-loading. Front facing garages are strongly discouraged on all parcels except where necessary due to steep slopes. At a minimum, garage entrances should be set back from the front façade.
- Siting driveways on the side of the lot, with no parking allowed in either the front or back yard.

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## DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS

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The community would like to see the following items incorporated into the new permanent zoning for Roslindale:

1. Continue some type of abutter/ community notification of ZBA cases and As-of Right projects requiring BRA design review coordinated between ISD and ONS and the District City Councilor's office (currently Councilor Consalvo).
2. Continue some degree of BRA design review on As-of-Right projects beyond a threshold (to be determined).

## VI: TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING

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### INTRODUCTION

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This Strategic Plan did not include a detailed traffic study. The analyses identified problem areas and recommendations for some improvements. They also provide background information to support future more detailed studies. Because traffic issues are greatest in Roslindale Square, traffic analysis tasks were focused there, with recommendations for further study in other areas. Other transportation issues such as bus service, bicycling/pedestrian facilities, and parking ratios for zoning, were addressed as area-wide.

In the Transportation Appendix (available under separate cover), each topic is addressed under four headings: Issues, Background Facts, Analysis, and Recommendations.

This summary highlights issues and recommendations for action, including both short and mid-term improvements, and issues that require longer lead times for analysis, funding and implementation.



*Aerial view of Roslindale Square (2005).*

## ROSLINDALE SQUARE ROADWAYS AND TRAFFIC

### Issues

Roslindale Square, specifically its roadways and intersections, are generally considered to be congested during weekday morning and evening peak hours. Traffic counts and related analysis performed in November and December 2006 confirm that locations on Belgrade, South, Corinth and Washington streets function poorly.

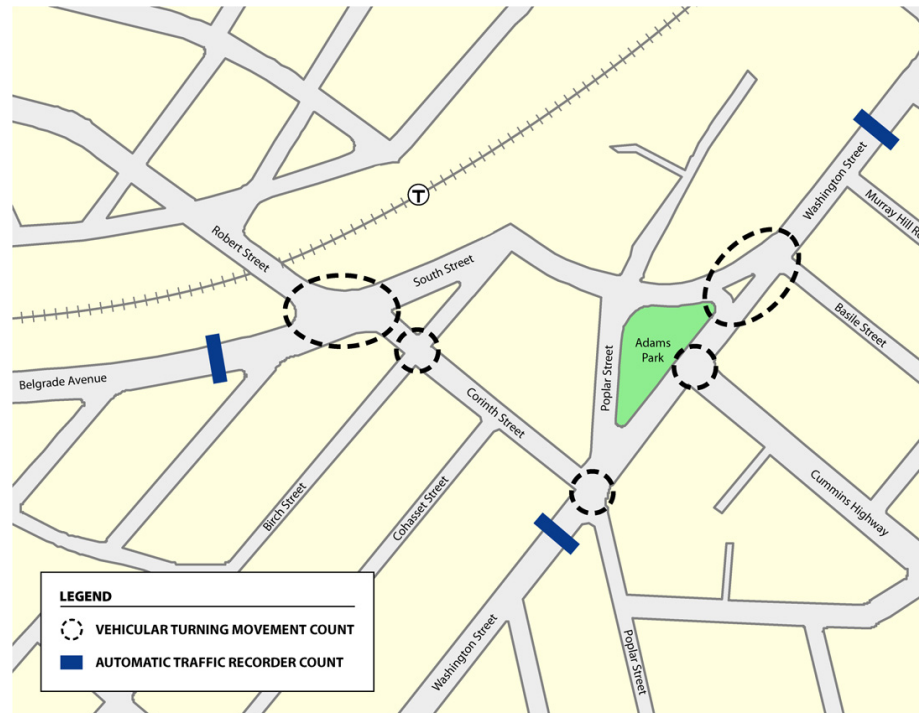
Constrictions in traffic and pedestrian flow have been attributed to a variety of causes including poor geometry; the directional split of Washington Street; bus stop location; signal timing; the locations of the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) and US Post Office; and high volumes of through traffic (regional traffic passing through the area, rather than stopping at local destinations).

Analysis showed that the intersection of Corinth/Poplar/Washington Streets is likely to be the first to consistently reach Level of Service F. The intersection is already

operating at close to its full capacity. Level of Service is a term used to describe the quality of the traffic flow on an intersection or roadway facility at a particular point in time and ranges from A to F, with A representing the best operating condition and F representing the worst condition.

### Recommendations and Rationales

The major long-term questions are related to maintaining pedestrian and traffic flows in the Square as traffic increases because of growth in both local activity and through traffic. The Boston Transportation Department is working with the Boston



Location of turning movement and automatic traffic recorder counts (Nov./Dec. 2006).

School Department to review and potentially change school bus routes which increase morning traffic congestion in and around the Square.

A detailed study of Roslindale Square should be conducted. The study should include:

- A detailed study of the Washington/ Corinth/Poplar Streets intersection, including signal timing changes and crosswalks, to maximize the safe movement of pedestrian and vehicular traffic through Roslindale Square. When the RMV re-opens after renovations to the Community Center are completed, it may be necessary to study the Washington Street/ Cummins Highway intersection.
- Investigate through traffic patterns and recommend improvements to alleviate queues within the Square area.

It is also recommended that a study of the entire length of Washington Street from Forest Hills to West Roxbury Parkway be conducted. The study should include

synchronization of lights, left turn lanes in strategic locations and pedestrian crosswalks. The use of signal pre-emption devices on buses to allow them to more easily pass through signalized intersections should be explored; this would require study and coordination with the MBTA.

Studies for approximately 25 other intersections and roadways identified by the Advisory Group and the community should be prioritized (see Transportation Appendix under separate cover for a list of the intersections and roadways). The scale of analysis for long-term improvements, especially the two-way operation of Washington Street between South Street and Corinth Street, will require a more comprehensive, regional-scale analysis than for the other roadways.

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## PEDESTRIANS

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### Issues

Major concerns were expressed about two crossings:

- South Street at Adams Park during peak traffic hours
- The intersection of Corinth/Poplar Street and Washington Street where several bus stops and the library entrance are located

In general, residents were concerned with the location and safety of pedestrian crossings on heavily trafficked streets, such as between Adams Park and shopping areas.

### Recommendations and Rationale

Pedestrian crossings should be studied as part of the detailed Roslindale Square traffic study mentioned previously.

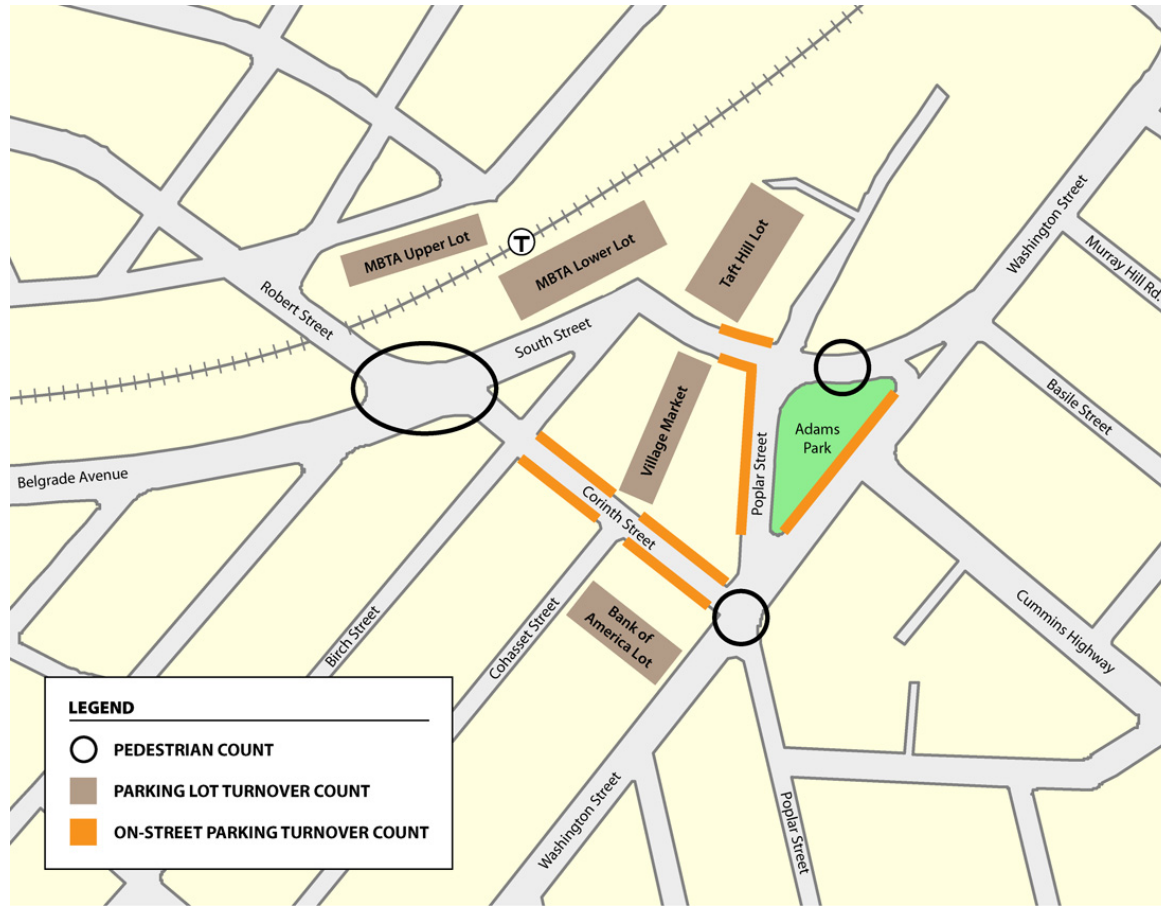
In addition, it is recommended that BTM study the possible benefits of relocating the mid-block crosswalk across South Street at Adams Park to the corner of the park by Taft Hill Terrace with a new pedestrian signal, in conjunction with the recommended detailed study of the Washington/Corinth/Poplar Streets intersections.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION: BUSES  
AND TRAINS

Issues

Ten MBTA bus lines serve the Roslindale IPOD area. Several bus routes use the same stops, although this typically involves three to four bus lines at one stop. One location on South Street serves seven lines with two stalls. Residents expressed concern about the number of double-parked buses blocking circulation. This concern led to interest in realigning bus routes and relocating bus stops. Concern was also expressed about the infrequency of bus service on American Legion Highway.

Overall, commuter rail concerns were limited. Some residents were interested in adding a commuter rail station at the intersection of Hyde Park Avenue and Cummins Highway, and in extending MBTA Orange Line service. The 2003 Program for Mass Transportation published by the Central Transportation Planning Staff establishes the priority of MBTA projects. The Program currently lists the Orange



*Pedestrian count locations (November 2006).*



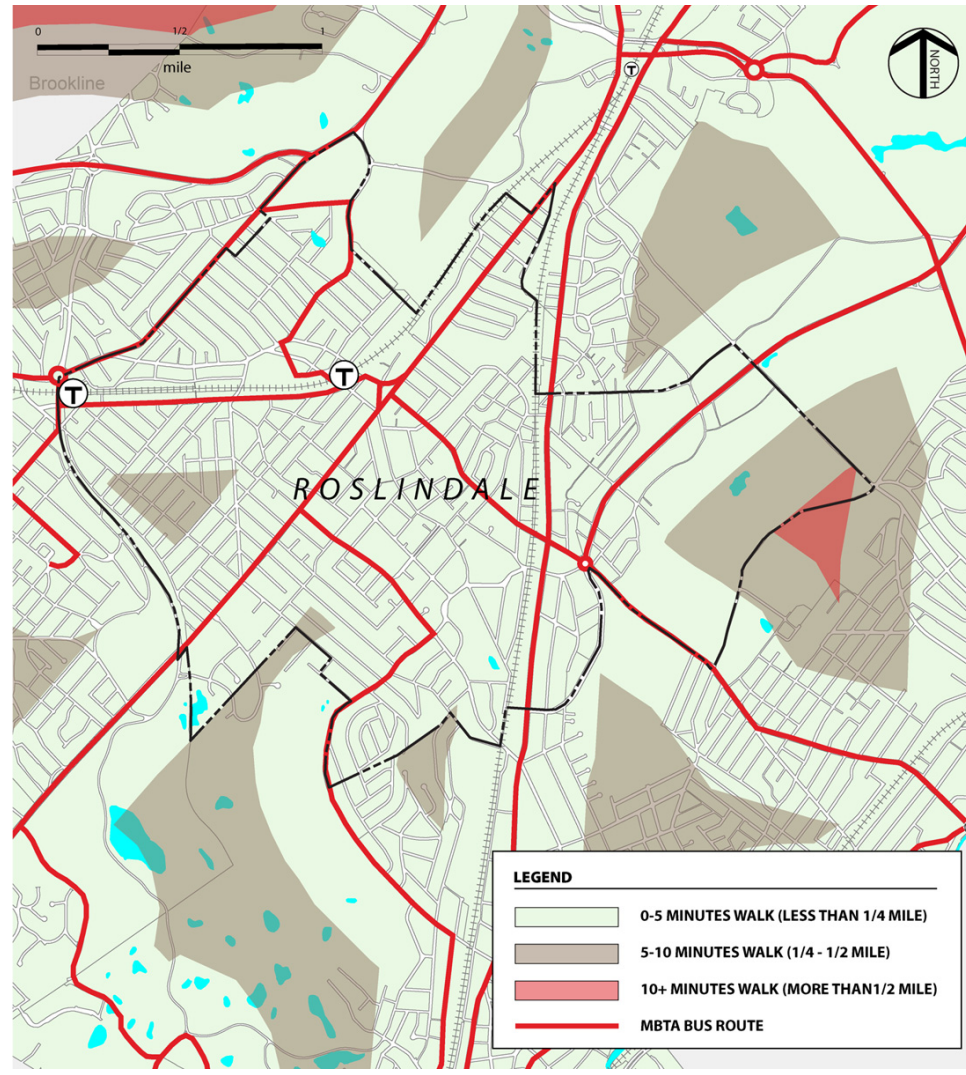
Line South expansion to Route 128 as a “low priority.” It lists the Orange Line extension to Needham as an even lower priority.

### Recommendations and Rationales

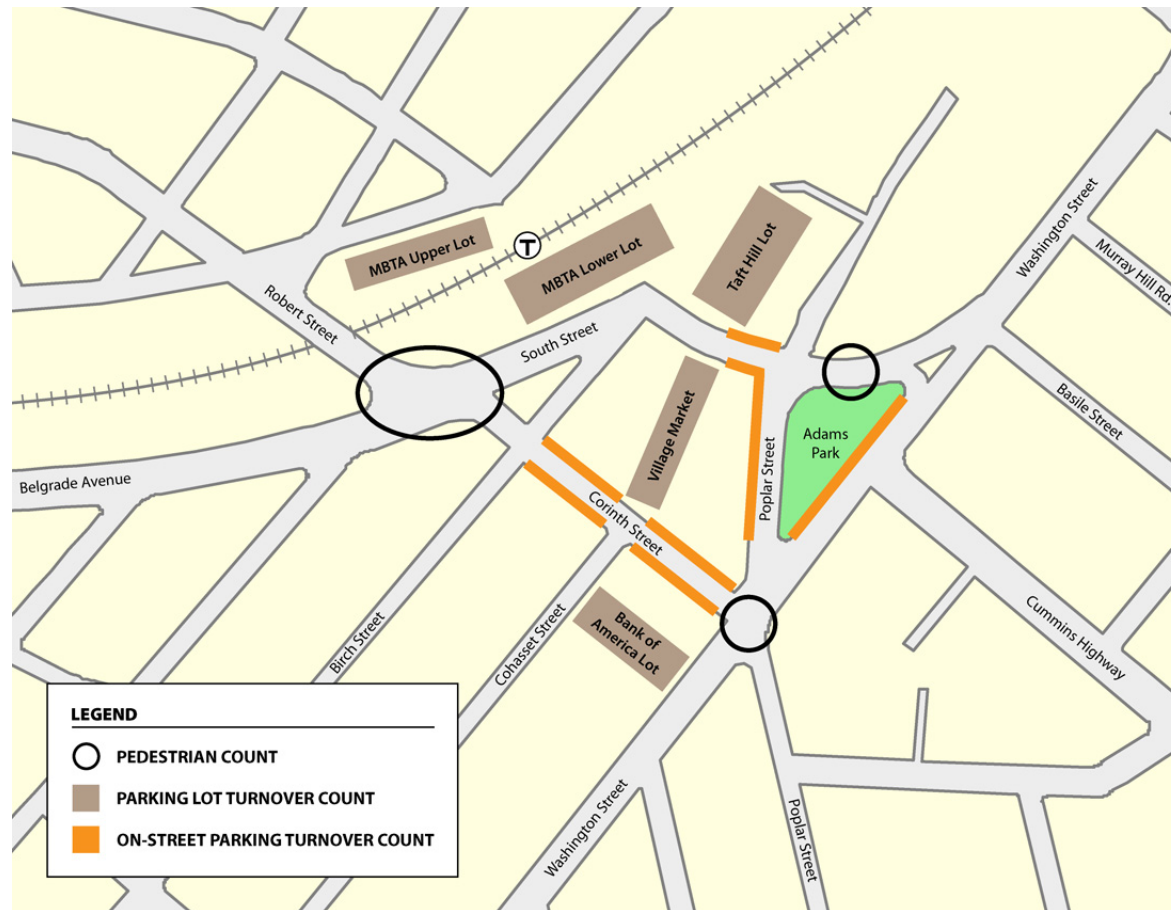
**Buses:** Concerns about double parked buses eased somewhat after completion of work on the Washington Street sidewalk of the Community Center.

The graphical analysis shows that better coverage would be difficult to achieve; all of the IPOD area is within a 10 minute walking distance of a bus line. However, changing bus stop locations and increasing frequency of service may enhance bus ridership. Adjusting bus stop locations and frequency of service requires working with both the MBTA operations group and BTD.

It is recommended that the MBTA be requested to evaluate the necessity of the bus stop at the corner of Corinth Street and Washington Street, which currently requires buses to stop in the right lane on Corinth Street and then swing across the intersection to turn left onto Washington Street. Eliminating this stop would require the bus to stop earlier on Corinth Street or



*Existing bus routes and coverage in the IPOD.*



*Parking lots & locations surveyed November 8, 2006.*

go on to the next stop on Washington Street, just past Cummins Highway. Any changes in bus stop locations would be studied by the MBTA to determine if the stop is being used and if there is an alternate location which can conveniently serve those users.

**Trains:** The addition of a commuter rail station at Hyde Park Avenue was investigated by the MBTA and dropped from further consideration because of low potential ridership estimates. Should residential densities increase in this area, discussions with the MBTA should be reopened.

## PUBLIC PARKING

Curbside Post Office/RMV parking does not turn over frequently enough for many users. Free off-street parking is also adequate but at some distance from shopping. Rail commuters are perceived to fill the Taft Hill Terrace Parking Lot to near capacity during working hours while the Lower MBTA lot is rarely more than half-full. The fare for parking at the MBTA lot is \$2.00.



*Upper and lower parking lots at the Roslindale Village Commuter Rail Station.*

### Recommendations and Rationale

Residents expressed concern about the convenience, availability, and use of public parking in Roslindale Square. Many residents feel that convenient on-street parking is not adequate for shoppers, resulting in shoppers parking on residential streets, circling the square, or deciding to shop in other locations.

However, there is a sense in Roslindale Square that some on-street spaces are used primarily by owners and employees of adjacent businesses.

The following items can be studied and/or built within short time frames and at relatively low cost:

- **Crosswalks:** Encourage the City to re-stripe pedestrian connections to/from the Taft Hill Terrace Parking Lot and major intersections.
- **Parking Management:** Convene business owners, Roslindale Village Main Streets and Roslindale Board of Trade to develop a Roslindale Square parking management plan. The plan could include some type of monthly pass program for the Taft Hill Terrace Parking Lot, which would allow parking for longer than the existing two-hour limit.
- **Lower MBTA Lot:** Explore shared-use proposals that would allow merchants and employees to use the lot, thus freeing up on-street and municipal lot spaces.
- **US Post Office/RMV:** Change the 2-hour limit for up to five curbside spaces at the entrance to the Post Office to 15 minutes. The impact on users of the re-opened RMV office will have to be balanced with the needs of Post Office patrons. Implement a 2-hour limit at

the two spaces on the opposite side of Cummins Highway.

- **Taft Hill Terrace Parking Lot:** Explore the installation of two-hour parking meters in order to minimize their use by commuters.
- **South Street:** Change the 2-hour limit on South Street between Taft Court and Poplar Street to a combination of one commercial loading space and 15 or 30-minute parking spaces.

The following improvement requires study as well as a source of funding for design and construction.

- **Taft Hill Terrace Parking Lot:** Restripe the lot for more spaces. This involves design studies as well as decisions about whether to use Taft Hill Court for access and whether to replace existing landscaping with parking spaces. Depending on the scheme, some light fixtures may have to be replaced. As discussed in Chapter IV. Land Use, it is recommended that the neighborhood pursue structured parking as one of several potential long-term parking solutions.

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## BICYCLING

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### Issues

Roslindale residents want to provide more varied and safer routes for bicycle commuting and recreation. These goals affect both on-street and off-street bicycle routes.

**Off-Street Bike Facilities:** As part of the overriding concern for safety, Roslindale residents want to provide off-street bicycle paths that connect to Boston's wider network of bicycle paths. These connections include the Perkins Street Bikeway, Jamaica Way, Southwest Corridor, and Stony Brook Reservation Fire Road. New connections require passage or easements on public and, potentially, on institutional property.

**On-Street Bike Lanes:** Wherever it is possible and safe, residents want more shared facilities on new and/or existing roadways. Bicycle advocates have an ongoing debate about the safety of shared bike lanes on heavily trafficked, relatively high-speed arterials such as Washington Street or Hyde Park Avenue. The proposed extensions of the

bicycle network include exclusive as well as shared bike facilities and signage.

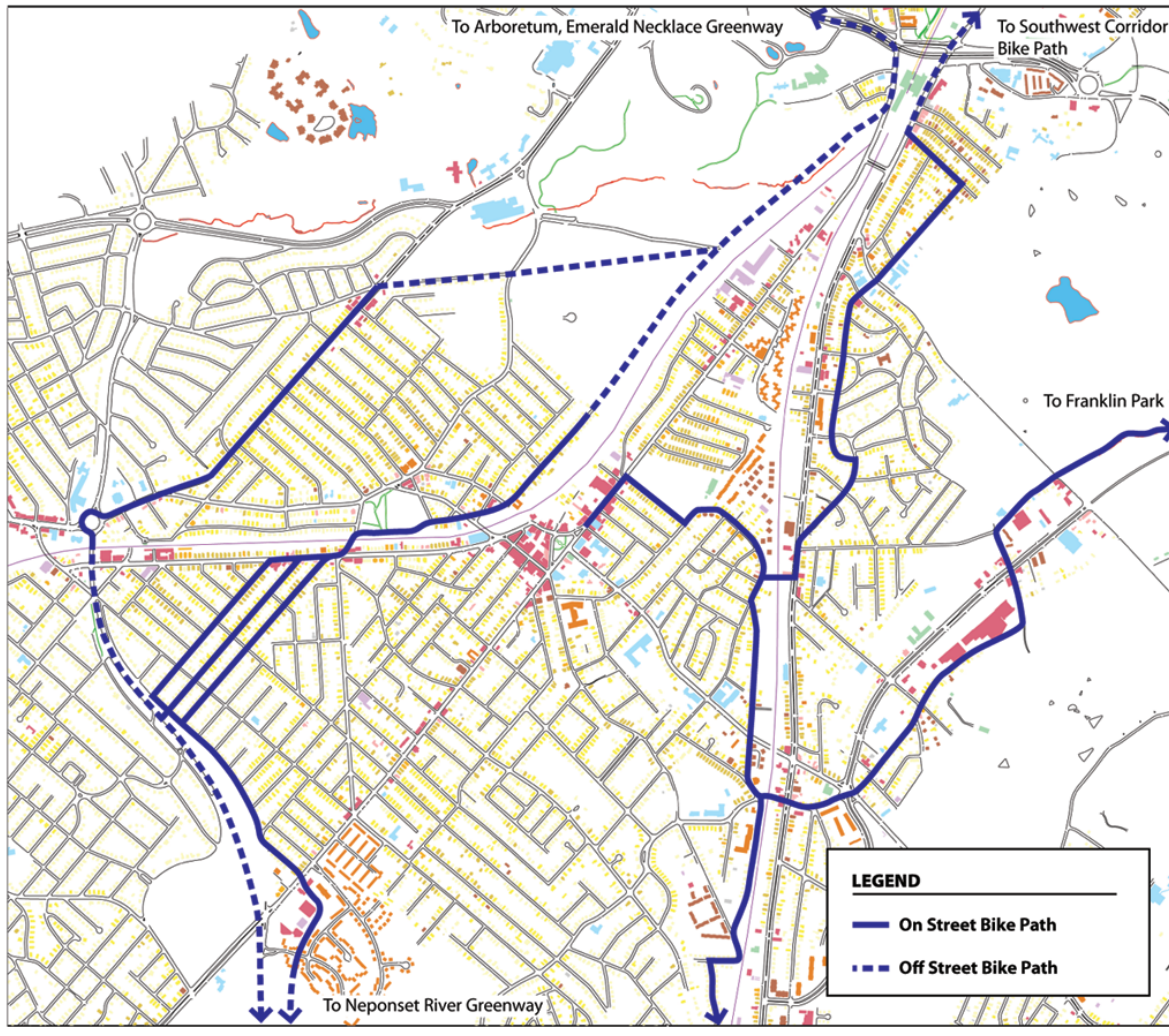
### Recommendations and Rationales

As outlined in the Boston Bicycle Plan (2001), building up Boston's bicycle facilities is an incremental, long-term project. Whenever the opportunity presents itself, new bicycle routes and connections to the City's existing resources should be studied and pursued. This would suggest that bicyclists work with BTD to support the creation of the paths described above whenever construction or permitting for new projects is proposed.

A number of straightforward measures such as putting up bicycle route signs and requiring bicycle racks at stations and for new construction would help improve bicycle convenience and safety.

It is recommended that requirements for bicycle parking be incorporated into the vehicular parking requirements for Roslindale. Recommended requirements from the Boston Bicycle Plan include:

- **Residential Uses:** Any residential project with at least nine (9) dwelling



*Proposed new bike path connections in Roslindale.*

units in a single building shall include a secure bicycle parking area that accommodates at least one (1) bicycle per three (3) dwelling units in the building. The secure bicycle area may be located inside the building or in a parking garage. A bicycle rack shall be installed near each public entrance serving nine (9) or more residential units.

- Non-Residential Uses: Any non-residential project over 10,000 square feet shall include a bicycle rack near each public entrance. If the rack is not visible from the sidewalk, a sign directing bicyclists to the parking location shall be posted.
- If a parking garage or parking lot open to the public is part of the project, bicycle racks shall be provided in the following quantity: If the project includes retail or entertainment uses, there shall be sufficient space to accommodate one (1) bicycle per ten (10) public automobile spaces or one (1) bicycle per 10,000 square feet of retail

# ROSLINDALE NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIC • PLAN

or entertainment floor space, whichever number is greater.

Roslindale Square has a number of small retail establishments and narrow sidewalks, limiting the desirability of placing bicycle racks at the entrances to all non-residential establishments. It is therefore recommended that the City install bicycle racks in several central locations around the Square.

Locations that appear to have sufficient sidewalk space include the corner of South and Poplar Streets and the corner of Belgrade Avenue and Birch Street. The MBTA should also install a bicycle rack in their parking lot. A bicycle rack could be installed at the Taft Hill Terrace Parking Lot, although this is a less convenient location.

The extension of safe, convenient bicycle paths is a long-term undertaking because of funding constraints. The routes proposed for Roslindale, shown in the figure to the left, should be incorporated into future transportation improvements, as state and federal funding permit. On-street sections include portions of:

- Centre Street
- Conway Street
- Washington Street
- Firth Street
- Florence Street
- Rowe Street
- Canterbury Street
- Aldrich Street
- Newburg Street
- West Roxbury Parkway
- Belgrade Avenue
- Colberg Avenue.

## VII. SUSTAINABILITY

The terms “sustainability” and “smart growth” encompass many topics, including the density, scale and location of development; building and landscaping design and materials; design of sidewalks and other infrastructure; and the availability of multiple transportation options. Many sustainable and smart growth ideas are aimed at recreating the kind of walkable, compact, mixed-use communities that were developed before the prevalence of the automobile and sprawl development.

Roslindale is, in many ways, just the kind of community that those sustainable and smart growth principles describe. And, as outlined in the goals and objectives for this report, it is exactly those characteristics that community residents want to maintain or enhance.

A number of organizations, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Local Government Commission, have developed principles or guidelines for sustainability and smart growth. While not every set of guidelines or principles is all

inclusive, there are a number of ideas that are consistently included. Key concepts, and a description of how they have been incorporated into this plan, are summarized below.

1. **Mixed use:** Commercial clusters are scattered throughout this predominately residential neighborhood. All of the recommended commercial zones allow mixed commercial and residential use, and in Roslindale Square, at the American Legion Highway shopping center and Army Reserve Center, and at Stonybrook Plaza, density bonuses are provided for mixed-use projects.
2. **Concentrated development around transit:** The plan recommends relatively higher densities and lower parking ratios in Roslindale Square around the Roslindale Village commuter rail station; this location is also served by numerous Washington Street bus lines.
3. **Diversity of housing types, sizes, income levels:** Residential zoning districts are designed to accommodate a variety of building types and sizes, with 1, 2, 3 and multi-family districts. The plan encourages development of housing affordable to “middle-income” residents (defined as those households earning 80% to 120% of the Boston Metropolitan Area Median Income). Recommended residential zoning regulations should allow developers to create new housing units at prices affordable to this middle-income bracket. New residential development also will be required to comply with the Mayor’s Executive Order of 2000 (and as it is modified through new policies) that requires

the creation of affordable housing units for new residential housing projects of ten units or more. These affordable units are targeted to middle-income residents.

4. ***A focus on the center, creating a sense of place:*** Roslindale Square encompasses both commercial and community services, with Adams Park in the middle and Healy Field and the Arnold Arboretum nearby. Zoning and urban design recommendations are developed to encourage mixed-use, and enhance the existing “sense of place” through signage, streetscape improvements and design guidelines.
5. ***A variety of open space types:*** Open space zoning recommendations are developed to protect the existing open spaces, which vary from large, natural environments on the periphery of the neighborhood to ballfields, playgrounds and plazas within the heart of the community.

6. ***Neighborhood activity over many hours of the day and night:*** It is recommended that commercial uses in the Square are encouraged to stay open later to help enliven the Square in the evenings. The introduction of new residential development in and around the Square will also help to generate evening activity.
7. ***A variety of transportation choices with fully connected pedestrian and bicycle routes:*** The plan includes recommendations for sidewalk and streetscape improvements to encourage pedestrian activity and improved bicycle routes and installation of bicycle racks. Existing commuter rail and bus stops provide transit connections within a five-minute walk of every portion of the neighborhood.
8. ***Preservation of natural terrain and vegetation:*** Roslindale is well-served by an existing system of large open spaces. Recommended open

space and conservation protection subdistricts, as well as an expansion of the Greenbelt Protection Overlay District, are designed to protect natural resources. Expansion of the GPOD will require coordination with the Jamaica Plain and West Roxbury neighborhoods. The recommended design guidelines include provisions for siting buildings to respect significant landscape features on the site, such as rock outcroppings, drainage areas and mature trees. It is also recommended that the City explore ways to encourage the preservation of existing landscaping on parcels, including trees, prior to redevelopment.

9. ***Maintenance of natural drainage:*** The recommended zoning includes provisions for maximum allowable site coverage and minimum required usable open space per unit on residential lots. The recommended design guidelines also include provisions for using pervious materials on driveways.



10. **Predictable, fair, cost-effective development decisions:** The intent of the recommended zoning and design guidelines is to clarify the land uses, character, density and scale of development desired by the community so that potential developers know what is expected of them.

11. **Citizen and stakeholder participation:** Through the Advisory Group, project website, and a series of public meetings, residents and other stakeholders actively participated in the development of this plan. The plan recommends a standardized notification process so that residents and stakeholders can continue to participate in the decision making process as new developments are proposed. Residents are interested in instituting a more comprehensive notification process to reach a broader population. It also is recommended that the community request that the local papers run a

weekly calendar of upcoming cases going before the Zoning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals.

#### Public Health

A sustainable neighborhood is also one which promotes the health of its residents. There are many opportunities to use the built environment in order to create a healthier environment for community residents. This healthier environment includes a community with more trees, cleaner air, better protected natural resources, and encouragement/support of more physical activity. A healthier environment can reduce the incidence of obesity and diabetes, as well as respiratory illnesses such as asthma. Recommendations contained in this report which support a healthier environment include:

- Improvements to the pedestrian and bicycling environment including designated bike routes and bicycle racks, new sidewalks where none exist, preservation and planting of additional street trees, repainting of crosswalks, and consolidation of

auto-oriented uses that would improve pedestrian safety and accessibility.

- Continued investment in the Square to offer a range of goods and services which inspire residents to come to the Square by bike or on foot, rather than getting in the car to go to adjacent towns.
- Zoning changes to protect public and privately-owned open space and important natural features, and to limit the amount of impermeable surface on a lot.
- Transportation measures to reduce automobile congestion, including both signalization changes and increases in transit service.

#### Green Buildings

The City of Boston’s Zoning Commission recently adopted Article 37, Green Buildings as part of the Zoning Code. The purposes of this article are “to ensure that major building projects are planned, designed, constructed and managed to minimize

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adverse environmental impacts; to conserve natural resources; to promote sustainable development; and to enhance the quality of life in Boston.” Because Article 37 is applicable only to projects over 50,000 square feet in size, it will apply to very few, if any, projects in Roslindale. Projects meeting this threshold will be required to comply with Article 37, as the requirements are modified through new policies.

This Plan also encourages the incorporation of “green building” concepts into all projects in Roslindale to the extent feasible, with developers aspiring to meet the Department of Neighborhood Development Residential Design Standards which promote cost effective, energy efficient, environmentally responsible design. Several examples of green building concepts in the DND residential design standards include the use of low or no VOC paint for building exteriors and interiors, limited use of linoleum flooring, the use of carpets with recycled and recyclable content fiber, and lighting that meets the Energy Star requirements.

The City’s Green Building Task Force (Task Force) has been working with all of the City departments and agencies to continually revise and update building guidelines and public health policies with green building standards, eventually including buildings smaller than 50,000 square feet. The Task Force is striving to establish green building guidelines that would be appropriate for one to four-unit residential buildings.

## VIII. IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the recommendations from this Strategic Plan will be an ongoing process that could extend over the next 15 to 20 years. The BRA will coordinate implementing this plan.

An initial and key implementation component will be the adoption of new, permanent zoning for the neighborhood. After the new zoning is in place, the positive effects of that zoning will occur as property owners and developers undertake new development projects.

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 Roslindale Neighborhood Strategic Plan will help to provide justification for placing Roslindale projects on the priority list for programs with these various agencies.

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

Throughout the planning process, community members have expressed serious concerns regarding illegal development and parking, enforcement of existing zoning and the City's building code, and other developments that have negatively impacted the neighborhood. Enforcement should be improved through better coordination and communication between City departments and agencies,

property owners, community groups and individual community members.

The City has engaged Hansen Information Technologies to assist in the creation of a city-wide permitting system. The goal of the system is to connect the different permitting agencies such as the Inspectional Services Department and the Boston Redevelopment Authority, and provide an on-line user-friendly process that will improve the delivery of services and information to Boston residents and businesses.

Resident involvement is critical to the implementation of the recommendations of this plan, whether it be through attending public meetings on specific projects, submitting comments during a project's development review process, attending Zoning Board of Appeal hearings, or contacting the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services or the City Councilor's office regarding questions or concerns. (See Appendix A for contact information.)

<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>DEPARTMENTS/ ORGANIZATIONS PARTIES INVOLVED</b>	<b>TIME-FRAME</b>
<b>ZONING &amp; DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS</b>		
Revise & Adopt Zoning Regulations, including Design Guidelines & Requirements, and Neighborhood Design Overlay District	BRA, Boston Zoning Commission	Short-term
Coordinate Notification Process for Zoning Board of Appeal cases and other projects requiring BRA design review	Inspectional Services Department (ISD), Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services (ONS), BRA, Neighborhood Groups	Short-term
<b>ROSLINDALE SQUARE</b>		
Implement new wayfinding and identity signage program in the Square	Roslindale Village Main Streets (RVMS)	Short-term
Implement hanging flower basket installation and maintenance program in Roslindale Square	BRA (public/private partnership)	Short/Mid-term
Implement design improvements to pedestrian entrance to Taft Hill Terrace Parking Lot	Property owners, RVMS, BRA	Short-term
Improve Bank of America's fencing and landscaping along Washington Street	Bank of America, RVMS, BRA	Short-term
Encourage evening hours for commercial uses in the Square	RVMS	Short-term
Develop/Issue Request for Proposals for former MBTA substation	BRA	Short-term

RECOMMENDATION	DEPARTMENTS/ ORGANIZATIONS PARTIES INVOLVED	TIME-FRAME
<b>OPEN SPACE</b>		
Resolution to maintain the Southwest Community Gardens	MBTA, Boston Natural Area Network, Boston Parks & Recreation Department (BPRD), Southwest Community Gardens Club, BRA	Short-term
Transfer ownership of Boundary II Urban Wild to Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR)	City of Boston, Dept. of Conservation & Recreation (DCR)	Mid-term
Install sidewalk on South Street from MBTA overpass to Bussey Street	Boston Public Works Department (PWD)	Mid-term
Acquire remaining privately-held parcels or conservation easements on privately-held parcels in Roslindale Wetlands	Boston Conservation Commission, BPRD	Mid-term
Encourage acquisition of privately-owned parcel between Weider Park & MBTA ROW for annexation to Stony Brook Reservation	DCR, property owner	Short-term
Improve pedestrian tunnels under MBTA Commuter Rail tracks	MBTA	Mid-term
Install sidewalks on residential streets as roads are rebuilt, where feasible	PWD	Ongoing
<b>HOUSING</b>		
Redevelop Washington-Beech Housing Development	Boston Housing Authority (BHA)	Mid-term
Encourage developers to develop middle-income housing	BRA	Ongoing
Encourage developers to develop units with three or more bedrooms for families	BRA	Ongoing

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RECOMMENDATION	DEPARTMENTS/ ORGANIZATIONS PARTIES INVOLVED	TIME-FRAME
Implement strategic code enforcement of problem properties	ISD	Ongoing
Encourage participation in home ownership & home improvement programs	DND	Ongoing
<b>URBAN DESIGN AND STREETScape</b>		
Replace street lights on Cummins Highway between American Legion Highway & Washington Street, on Belgrade Avenue between South Street & West Roxbury Parkway and on Washington Street between Franklin Place and West Roxbury Parkway	PWD	Long-term
Install banners on Belgrade Avenue, Cummins Highway & Washington Street	Local business organization, Basic City Services	Mid-term
Improve landscaping and signage at the Shopping Center on American Legion Highway	Property owners, BRA	Short-term
Update inventory of historic resources and pursue National Register and/or Boston Landmarks designations	Boston Landmarks Commission, Massachusetts Historic Commission	Mid-term
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>		
Work with MBTA on shared use of Lower Lot in the Square	MBTA, Boston Transportation Department (BTD)	Short-term
Convene stakeholders to develop Roslindale Square parking management plan	RVMS, Roslindale Board of Trade, BTD	Short-term
Re-sign parking by Post Office and on South Street by Taft Court	BTD	Short-term
Restripe Taft Hill Parking Lot	BTD	Mid-term

RECOMMENDATION	DEPARTMENTS/ ORGANIZATIONS PARTIES INVOLVED	TIME-FRAME
Study potential parking deck on Taft Hill Terrace Parking Lot	BTD, PWD	Long-term
Conduct detailed traffic study of Roslindale Square and implement recommendations	BTD	Mid/Long-term
Conduct detailed traffic study of Washington Street and implement recommendations	BTD	Mid/Long-term
Study/implement signal change at Corinth/Poplar/Washington	BTD	Mid-term
Prioritize/study/implement neighborhood-wide intersection/roads identified for further study	BTD	Mid/Long-term
Explore relocating Roslindale Square bus stops (Washington Street) and adjusting frequency of buses on Washington Street & American Legion Highway	MBTA, BTD	Short-term
Review bicycle routes and install bicycle route signs	BTD	Mid-term
Install bicycle racks in Roslindale Square at the corner of South and Poplar Streets, the corner of Belgrade Avenue and Birch Street and the Taft Hill Terrace Parking Lot	BTD	Short-term
Install bicycle racks at MBTA parking lots	MBTA	Short-term
Require bicycle racks for new development projects	BTD	Short-term
Review school bus routes in and around the Square	Boston Public School Department, BTD	Short-term

# ROSLINDALE NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIC • PLAN

Neighborhood groups have become more organized across Roslindale. Throughout this Strategic Planning Process, there have been discussions regarding coordination between groups for information sharing, including the potential for the creation of an umbrella neighborhood organization to work on neighborhood-wide issues.

As described previously, the implementation of this plan will occur incrementally over a number of years. However, many positive changes can happen more quickly. 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.



## APPENDIX A: CONTACT & PROGRAM INFORMATION

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### CONTACT NUMBERS

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For 24-hour assistance, contact the **Mayor's 24-hour Constituent Services** number: 617-635-4500. A log of requests and complaint calls is kept. Calls are referred to the appropriate departments.

For more information on this Plan, recommendations in this Plan, and zoning, contact the **Boston Redevelopment Authority** at 617.722.4300.

The **Inspectional Services Department**: can be reached at 617-635-5300 from 8am-4pm Monday-Friday, 8am-7pm on Thursdays. Calls outside of these hours should be directed to the Mayor's 24-hour number: 617.635.4500.

**City Councilor - District 5**, Robert Consalvo can be reached at 617.635.4210.

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### HOME OWNERSHIP AND HOME IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS

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The City of Boston's Department of Neighborhood Development (DND) offers City residents a variety of programs that provide technical and financial assistance in helping homeowners buy, build, maintain and repair their homes. The programs listed below have enjoyed the greatest participation among Roslindale residents and are the most relevant to these homeowners' needs.

#### **Boston Home Certificate Initiative**

BHCI offers closing cost and down payment grants to assist homebuyers in purchasing their first homes in Boston. With this funding, eligible buyers may be able to receive between \$1,000 and up to 3% of their purchase price towards down payment and/or closing costs. To qualify for BHCI

funds, a first-time homebuyer must complete the free, 10-hour "Homebuying 101" course offered by the City, meet income eligibility requirements (combined household income below 120% of the area median income), and work with a participating lender. An impressive number of Roslindale residents have participated in and benefited from BHCI. In the past 5 years (2001-2006), 52 Roslindale homebuyers received BHCI funding, with a total of \$152,782 allocated.

For more information and to register for upcoming Homebuying 101 and Homebuying 102: Purchasing a Condominium courses, please call 617-635-HOME (4663) or visit [www.bostonhomecenter.com](http://www.bostonhomecenter.com).

#### **Boston HomeWorks**

Through the Boston Homeworks program, homeowners can receive financial and

technical assistance in completing exterior and interior home repair projects. Several grant programs are available, and eligibility is dependent upon the types of repairs and a household's gross annual income.

- **HomeWorks Grant** – These are conditional grants for one-third of the total cost of certain interior or exterior home improvements, up to \$5,000. A homeowner must be an owner-occupant of a one to four-family house or condominium unit, and income cannot exceed \$63,000 for one-person households or \$90,850 for households of two or more. The homeowner is responsible for obtaining matching funds, and the grant must be repaid if the owner decides to sell the home.
- **Boston's Historic HomeWorks Grant** – This version of the HomeWorks Grant applies to homes that are at least 50 years old. It assists homeowners in making exterior improvements that maintain the original architectural integrity of homes and enhance the historical character of neighborhoods.

- **PaintWorks Plus** – This version of the HomeWorks Grant applies to exterior painting and repairs that improve the look of a house from a public way. The program offers cash rebates of up to \$1,000, 1% APR loans of up to \$8,000 from Citizens Bank to match the owners' investment, free workshops, and discounts on supplies.
- **HomeWorks Emergency Loan Program** – This version of the HomeWorks program provides conditional emergency loans for health and safety repairs, such as no heat or hot water, broken stairs, or leaking pipes and roofs. Loans between \$1,000 and \$7,000 are offered to homeowners; the maximum income per household is lower than for the other programs.

For more information, including a schedule of workshops and directory of resources, contact the Home Works Program at 617-635-0600 or visit

[www.cityofboston.gov/dnd/hos/A\\_Boston\\_HomeWorks.asp](http://www.cityofboston.gov/dnd/hos/A_Boston_HomeWorks.asp).

### Senior Home Rehabilitation Program

Through the Senior Home Initiative, DND contracts with neighborhood-based non-profit agencies to provide minor home repairs to eligible senior homeowners. The Senior Home Rehabilitation Program provides technical assistance and 0% interest deferred loans to assist with more extensive repairs and, in extreme conditions, seniors can apply for additional emergency grants. These programs are available to owner-occupants over age 62 whose income does not exceed 80% of the area median family income and who require basic health and safety improvements to their homes.

For more information, contact the Senior Home Rehab Program at 617-635-0338 or visit [www.cityofboston.gov/dnd/hos/A\\_Senior\\_Home\\_Rehab.asp](http://www.cityofboston.gov/dnd/hos/A_Senior_Home_Rehab.asp).

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## SMALL BUSINESS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

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### Programs administered by the Boston Redevelopment Authority

#### *Boston Loan Development Corporation (BLDC)*

The BLDC is a private, 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation administered by the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA). It provides loans of up to \$150,000 for small businesses in, or relocating to, Boston. The BLDC provides loans that are not provided by banks or second loans, ranging from \$25,000 to \$200,000 with an average loan of \$85,000. A \$2,500 credit is administered for each employee residing in the City of Boston. For more information, call 617-722-4300.

#### *Back Streets Program*

Sponsored by the BRA, the Back Streets Program supports the growth of Boston's businesses through the preservation of industrial space. The Back Streets staff of neighborhood business managers will assist businesses in accessing information, technical assistance, and funding.

For more information, call 617-722-4300.  
[www.cityofboston.gov/bra/backstreets/backstreets.asp](http://www.cityofboston.gov/bra/backstreets/backstreets.asp).

### Programs administered by the Boston Department of Neighborhood Development

#### *Department of Neighborhood Development (DND), Office of Business Development*

The Office provides entrepreneurs and existing businesses access to financial and technical resources.

#### *Boston Business Assistance Center*

The Business Assistance Team and its Small Business Technical Assistance Program focus on the following services: administration, development, marketing, and business recruitment services.  
[www.cityofboston.gov/dnd/OBD/G\\_Boston\\_Business\\_Assistance\\_Center.asp](http://www.cityofboston.gov/dnd/OBD/G_Boston_Business_Assistance_Center.asp)

#### *Boston Main Streets*

Boston Main Streets works in collaboration with a range of community groups and with the Office of Business Development Business Assistance Team to bring technical assistance resources to small business

owners throughout the city. The program offers the following services: design assistance, financial management, inventory management, business planning, customer service training, investment tax credit advice, marketing assistance, web page development, window display assistance, and façade and sign improvement assistance.

[www.cityofboston.gov/mainstreets](http://www.cityofboston.gov/mainstreets)  
Roslindale Village Main Streets, Inc. can be reached at 617-327-4066 or  
[www.roslindale.net](http://www.roslindale.net).

#### *ReStore Boston*

ReStore Boston helps neighborhood business and property owners with matching grants and design assistance of up to \$7,500 for the exterior design and renovation of commercial façades.  
[www.cityofboston.gov/dnd/OBD/G\\_Restore\\_Boston.asp](http://www.cityofboston.gov/dnd/OBD/G_Restore_Boston.asp)

### Additional City-Sponsored Programs

#### *Boston Industrial Development Financing Authority (BIDFA)*

BIDFA promotes economic growth and increased employment in Boston by issuing

bonds that finance the capital needs of the city's businesses and institutions. For more information, call 617-722-4300.

*Small & Local Business Enterprise Office*

Formerly known as Minority and Women Business Enterprise, this office promotes economic opportunities in the public and private sectors for small, Boston-based, minority, and women-owned businesses through outreach, certification, and advocacy. The office certifies businesses to bid on City contracts and also offers seminars and a yearly trade fair to assist businesses with accessing information about contract opportunities.

[www.cityofboston.gov/minorityandwomen/](http://www.cityofboston.gov/minorityandwomen/)

**State of Massachusetts Departments and Agencies**

*Massachusetts Office of Business Development (MOBD)*

The MOBD helps small businesses identify technical assistance providers on the state level. [www.state.ma.us/mobd](http://www.state.ma.us/mobd)

*State Office of Minority and Women Business Assistance (SOMWBA)*

This office promotes the development of business enterprises and non-profit organizations owned or operated by minorities and women.

[www.somwba.state.ma.us](http://www.somwba.state.ma.us)

*Massachusetts Small Business Development Center*

The Metro Boston Regional Office provides free one-to-one management and technical assistance counseling and low-cost training programs to small prospective and existing businesses in the Greater Boston region.

[www.bc.edu/SBDC](http://www.bc.edu/SBDC)

*UMass Boston Small Business Development & Minority Business Center*

The UMass-Boston SBDC & Minority Business Center provides free management counseling and low cost business training to prospective and existing small businesses.

[www.sbdc.umb.edu](http://www.sbdc.umb.edu)

**Other Organizations**

*Community Enterprise Project*

Based in the Hale and Dorr Legal Services Center of the Harvard Law School, this

Jamaica Plain-based organization provides lawyers and students to counsel and represent small businesses and entrepreneurs in business formation, business acquisition, contract negotiation and preparation, commercial leasing, and other legal needs. [www.haledorr.com](http://www.haledorr.com)

*Roslindale Board of Trade*

The Roslindale Board of Trade is the community's prime business network. The Board of Trade's purpose is to better the community through commerce. The RBT offers benefits directly to its own members and to the community. Membership benefits include monthly meetings with an array of educational, community, and social events; a business directory, monthly newsletters, website, discounted health insurance, reciprocal memberships to other business organizations, discounted advertising and timely information about important activities and trends that affect business operations in Roslindale, such as parking, new developments, and special local events. For more information, call 617-469-9411.

[www.roslindaleboardoftrade.com](http://www.roslindaleboardoftrade.com)



