

CLEARY SQUARE

*Squares + Streets Idea
Reception Packet*

SQUARES
+
STREETS

PLAZAS
+
CALLES



Planning Department

CITY of BOSTON

**SHARE A SHORT STORY OR VISION FOR
CLEARY SQUARE!**
please keep your story to 2-3 minutes long

10

3 What changes to housing, small business, public space, or arts and culture in Cleary Square would bring you there more often?
54574 LUCAS, a writer to the Merino Arts Center. signs on Fairmount Ave to the center. Interior directing traffic to the location. Interior A large sign at its 1st floor entrance renovations to artists and which is shared by the Dept. of the Neighbor hood Development. the has opened its doors to artists and local national and international both local music, poetry and varied venue

**SHARE A SHORT STORY OR
CLEARY SQUARE!**
please keep your story to 2-3 minutes long

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INTRODUCTION

This Ideas Reception provides the community with a first look at the draft ideas and recommendations for the Cleary Square Squares + Streets Plan. All draft recommendations were derived from feedback received at various engagement events, and seeks to achieve the programmatic goals of Squares + Streets in the context of Cleary Square. The feedback provided at this stage will help the City Planning Department and our co-City departments refine recommendations presented in this document. The next step (as seen in the timeline below) will be a release of the draft Small Area Plan later this year.

CLEARY SQUARE

Squares + Streets engagement timeline



HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

This document is organized around 6 main topics: *housing, land use and design elements that inform zoning and design guidelines, transportation and public realm, open space and resiliency, small businesses, and arts and culture.*

Each section contains the following information:

1. Top community engagement themes for each topic area
2. A summary of draft recommendations, the completion timeline for each draft recommendation, who is responsible, priority level, and how each recommendation was created from community themes gathered at prior engagement events.

RON'S
GOURMET ICE CREAM
AND
BOWLING ALLEY
BUMPER BOWLING

*National Geographic
Third Best
Ice Cream
in the
World*

1



■ 1/6

SMALL BUSINESS

PROCESS TO RECOMMENDATIONS

Through a series of community forums, workshops, walkshops, and focus groups the Squares + Streets planning team learned about the community's vision for the future of Cleary Square's business corridor.

Cleary Square is home to a vibrant and diverse assortment of small businesses that are hubs for everyday community gatherings, and provide for the everyday needs of local residents. Most if not all of the businesses are locally owned, and owners have developed deep and rich relationships with their patrons.

The planning team in close partnership with the Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion (OEI), identified areas for improvement that could help to uplift the unique contributions of local businesses, help them to become more visible, as well as understand opportunities to expand Cleary's business ecosystem.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THEMES

1

STOREFRONT AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Create a more connected and unified square through storefront facade upgrades and infrastructure modernization, focusing on the area surrounding the intersection of Hyde Park Avenue and River Street. This includes funding for general maintenance and upkeep.

2

DIVERSIFY COMMERCIAL USES AND FURTHER ACTIVATE THE SQUARE

Enable pathways for a greater diversity of businesses including affordable and healthy food retailers, cafes, sit-down restaurants, and daytime casual eateries. Businesses that provide culturally relevant and affordable goods & services to Haitian Creole, LatinX, and other immigrant communities in Cleary Square are encouraged.

3

PROTECTIONS AND SUPPORTS FOR SMALL BIPOC AND IMMIGRANT OWNED BUSINESSES

Provide protections and supports for locally owned first- and second-generation immigrant businesses that are potentially at risk of displacement.

4

ADDRESS BRIDGE CLOSURE

Directing support for small businesses who have been heavily impacted by the River Street bridge closure.

5

PROMOTE EXPANSION TO REGIONAL CUSTOMER BASE

Create opportunities for more attractions that bring in a regional customer base.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS THAT HELPED INFORM THE BUSINESS RECOMMENDATIONS:



1:1 INTERVIEWS

Key Takeaway: Historical context of how the square has changed over time, aesthetic and design disconnect between two halves of River Street



KICK-OFF EVENTS

Key Takeaway: Desire for retail that serves a wider diversity income levels and families, more casual places for community and youth to connect with each other



EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOP ON HOUSING AND SMALL BUSINESS (WITH OEOI)

Key Takeaway: Explored opportunities for mixed-use development, nightlife, and cooperative ownership models



VISIONING WORKSHOPS (IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL) (WITH OEOI)

Key Takeaway: More healthy and affordable food options, opportunity for nightlife, greater diversity of retail, and supports for small BIPOC business owners



SMALL BUSINESS FOCUS GROUP (WITH OEOI)

Key Takeaway: Supports and resources for first generation and BIPOC-owned businesses



YOUTH VISIONING WORKSHOP

Key Takeaway: More casual eateries, places welcome for youth to spend time such as movie theaters or places that offer programs for youth such as martial arts



HAITIAN CREOLE FOCUS GROUP

Key Takeaway: Business and institutions that serve Haitian community, social and cultural spaces, small business supports



SMALL BUSINESS WALKTHROUGHS

Key Takeaway: Impacts of the River Street bridge closure, lack of capacity to participate in the squares + streets community planning process

SYNTHESIS OF COMMUNITY NEEDS AND SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION IDEAS

Storefront and Infrastructure Improvements

Create a more connected and unified square through storefront facade upgrades and infrastructure modernization, focusing on the area surrounding the intersection of Hyde Park Avenue and River Street. This includes funding for general maintenance and upkeep.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Create a forum or organize a business walk to engage business owners and (re)introduce OEOI's RESTORE program, which offers opportunities for storefront improvements.

TIMELINE: Short Term (1-5 Years)

RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion (OEOI)

PRIORITY: High ● ● ● ● ●

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Identify funding streams to be directed through local partner organizations such as Hyde Park Main Streets and Keep Hyde Park Beautiful to support the ongoing beautification and maintenance of the local square to ensure the square is uniform and feels connected.

TIMELINE: Long Term (5-10 years)

RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion (OEOI)

PRIORITY: Medium ● ● ● ○ ○

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Develop citywide tracking mechanism for commercial vacancies. Complement with a program that supports existing or start-up businesses in vacant commercial spaces, addressing a major source of concern for the vitality of the business sector in Cleary Square.

TIMELINE: Short Term (1-5 years)

RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion (OEOI)

PRIORITY: Low ● ○ ○ ○ ○

Diversify Commercial Uses and Further Activate the Square

Enable pathways for a greater diversity of businesses including affordable and healthy food retailers, cafes, sit-down restaurants, and daytime casual eateries. Businesses that provide culturally relevant and affordable goods & services to Haitian Creole, LatinX, and other immigrant communities in Cleary Square are encouraged.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Expand on indoor recreation - especially for youth-entertainment, grocery store, retail, and restaurant uses within the study area through appropriate rezoning and development review that supports the desired community uses.

TIMELINE: Short Term (1-5 Years)

RESPONSIBLE PARTY:
Planning Department

PRIORITY: High ● ● ● ● ●

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Create Welcome to Cleary Square Market Booklet in partnership with Hyde Park Main Streets to be used as a tool for development by real estate agents, brokers, and developers that will help to encourage development of the desired community uses in Cleary Square.

TIMELINE: Long Term (5-10 years)

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion (OEI) & Hyde Park Main Streets

PRIORITY: Medium ● ● ● ○ ○

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Utilize public realm for outdoor dining or informal spaces for community to gather through city partnerships, tactical urbanism, or pre-permits. Opportunities for outdoor dining might include restaurants along Hyde Park avenue such as Ron's Gourmet Ice Cream or Little Haiti, Restaurants along River Street such as Boston Restaurant Bar & Grill, ZAZ, Delicias Colombianas, and businesses along Harvard Avenue such as Fan Fan Bakery and Las Vegas Seafood Restaurant.

TIMELINE: Long Term (5-10 years)

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion (OEI) & the Planning Department

PRIORITY: Low ● ○ ○ ○ ○

Protections and Supports for Small BIPOC and Immigrant Owned Businesses

Provide protections and supports for small locally owned first- and second-generation immigrant businesses who are potentially at risk of displacement.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Direction of information and materials for the Commercial Acquisition Program and SPACE Grant program towards first and second generation business owners in Cleary Square.

TIMELINE: Short Term (1-5 Years)

RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion (OEOI)

PRIORITY: High ● ● ● ● ●

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Provide technical assistance to first and second generation business owners, focusing on business development strategies during the first 3-5 years of opening as well as navigating online platforms such as UberEats.

TIMELINE: Short Term (1-5 Years)

RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion (OEOI)

PRIORITY: High ● ● ● ● ●

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Implement wayfinding that connects the diversity of cultures and ethnic businesses across Cleary Square to bring more recognition and foot traffic into and around the Square.

TIMELINE: Short Term

RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Planning Department

PRIORITY: Medium ● ● ● ○ ○

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Expand marketing outreach for the Legacy Business Program to include more hard copy and translated materials in order to expand the community's participation in the nomination process for this program.

TIMELINE: Short Term (1-5 Years)

RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion (OEOI)

PRIORITY: Medium ● ● ● ○ ○

Address Bridge Closure

Direct support for small businesses who have been heavily impacted by the River Street bridge closure.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Pilot tactical wayfinding solutions such as painting stripes and art installations to direct traffic to impacted businesses located on the bridge.

TIMELINE: Short Term (1-5 Years)

RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion (OEI) & the Planning Department

PRIORITY: High ● ● ● ● ●

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Build on the annual Bridgefest event by further activating the pocket park and/or bridge through improvements to lighting, urban furniture, and art work by way of infrastructure investments or temporary tactical urbanism.

TIMELINE: Short Term (1-5 Years)

RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion (OEI)

PRIORITY: Medium ● ● ● ○ ○

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Implement a temporary “social district” or block party pilot program to increase foot traffic by supporting more places for people to gather.

TIMELINE: Short Term (1-5 Years)

RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion (OEI)

PRIORITY: Low ● ○ ○ ○ ○

Promote Nightlife

Create opportunities for the expansion of nightlife in Cleary Square.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Promotion of nightlife in the square through appropriate zoning and creative solutions such as the directing liquor licenses to interested businesses in the square or Beer or Cocktail gardens.

TIMELINE: Long Term (5-10 years)

RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion (OEI)

PRIORITY: Medium ● ● ● ○ ○

FRIES

WINE

LUNCH





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ARTS + CULTURE

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THEMES

1

PROVIDE DIVERSE AND MULTIGENERATIONAL PROGRAMMING THAT BRINGS ALL RESIDENTS TOGETHER.

2

MAKE THE EXISTING ARTS INSTITUTIONS AND RESOURCES MORE VISIBLE, CONNECTED, AND ACCESSIBLE TO RESIDENTS OF ALL AGES AND SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS.

3

SUPPORT THE VISIBILITY OF EXISTING ARTS INSTITUTIONS AND RESOURCES, LIKE THE MENINO ART CENTER, BY CREATING COHESIVE WAYFINDING FOR ARTS + CULTURE IN CLEARY SQUARE.

4

EXPAND AND INVEST IN THE POCKET PARK, MAKING ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL EVENTS-LIKE BRIDGEFEST- EASIER TO HOST.

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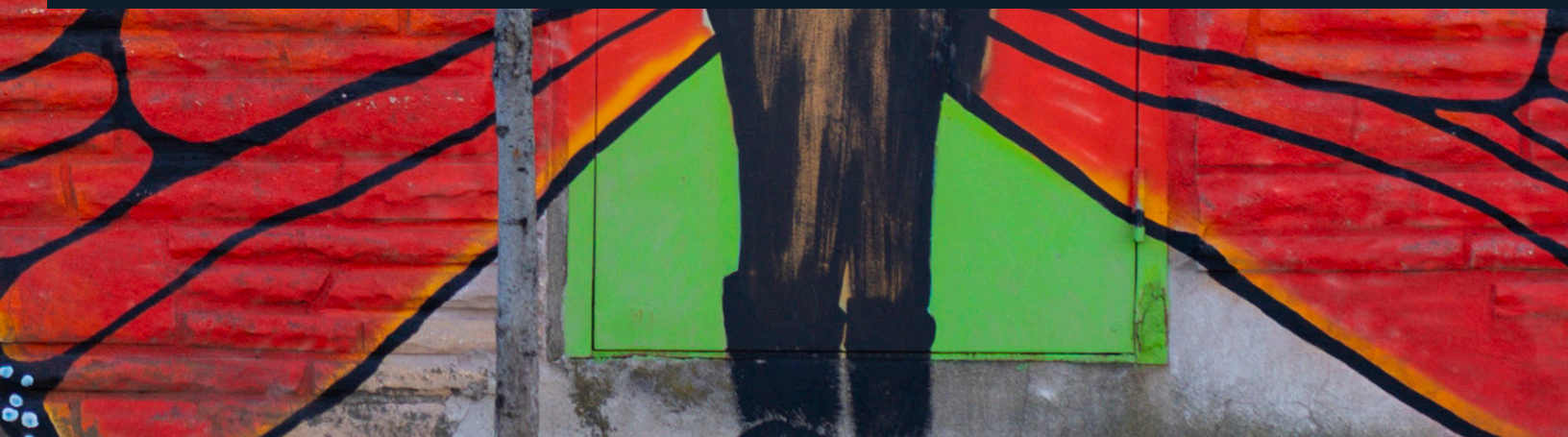
CLEARY SQUARE HAS A LOT OF CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES THAT ARE UNDERUTILIZED. EVERETT SQUARE THEATRE IS FREQUENTLY MENTIONED AS AN EXAMPLE OF A VALUABLE HISTORIC COMMUNITY RESOURCE THAT COULD BE A CANDIDATE FOR REHABILITATION TO REVITALIZE THE MAIN CORRIDOR.



ARTS & CULTURE OPPORTUNITIES IN CLEARY SQUARE

From the Menino Arts Center to Las Colombianas, The Switch, Fan Fan Bakery, and the Riverside Theatre, Cleary Square stands as a vital hub of creativity and cultural expression in Boston. The arts + culture recommendations build on the vibrant artistic and culturally diverse community present in Cleary Square, and seek to celebrate Hyde Park's unique artistic identity.

Our engagement process revealed several individuals and institutions leading grassroots efforts aimed at connecting the arts and culture sector in Cleary Square. Through community engagement workshops, walk shops, and surveys, the idea for an arts + culture corridor emerged, featuring a central corridor of stores, restaurants, makerspaces, and theaters that support the area's vibrant and growing cultural scene. Through programming, design guidance, and open space creation, a cohesive arts + culture corridor could link the dynamic artistic and cultural venues near and along River Street, Central Avenue, and Fairmount Avenue, and strengthen the roots from which Cleary's artistic and cultural identity can continue to branch and flourish, serving and supporting the Square's diverse and multigenerational community.



SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION IDEAS

The Arts & Culture Connector

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Develop a primary arts and culture corridor or designated area, which supports and strengthens the artistic and cultural identity already present in Cleary Square. The primary corridor will run along River Street and Fairmount Avenue, anchored at each end by commuter rail stations. Central Ave also acts as a connection to both the Menino Arts Center and the recently completed Pryde Community Center. Temporary or permanent art installations along these streets can also serve as tools for creating connections between these artists and culture spaces. Additional investment and support for existing arts + culture organizations in Cleary Square could come from private development mitigation funds collected and distributed by the Mayor’s Office of Arts and Culture (MOAC). See Open Space, Land Use and Design Goals, and Small Business draft recommendations to see how this plan will support the arts + culture corridor through other draft recommendations.

TIMELINE: Long Term (5-10 years)

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:
To Be Determined

PRIORITY: High ● ● ● ● ●

Encourage Cultural Programming with Streamlined Permitting Processes

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Designate the pocket park as a pre-permitted entertainment license with a host organization to organize events for diverse and intergenerational audiences in collaboration with diverse cultural groups. If this program expands, consider hosting additional entertainment licenses to other open spaces within Cleary Square.

TIMELINE: Short Term (1-5 years)

RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Mayor’s Office of Arts and Culture

PRIORITY: High ● ● ● ● ●

City-Wide Arts and Culture Initiatives

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Complete inventory of Public Art in Cleary Square as part of a citywide effort to catalog art and identify where gaps in our public art collection exist. Promote the inclusion of Art that reflects the cultural diversity of the Cleary Square community - referencing Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture's guidelines regarding public art on private property.

TIMELINE: Short Term (1-5 years)

RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture

PRIORITY: Medium ● ● ● ○ ○

Support for Historic Cultural Resources

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Work with the Boston Landmarks Commission to evaluate the Everett Square Theater as a candidate for individual designation, as well as contributing to a historic district.

Provide a comprehensive list of funding streams that support the rehabilitation of historic and cultural assets, including the Everett Square Theater. Funding possibilities are greatly restricted based on the type of ownership of the Theater, but different partnerships could open a range of possibilities. Currently the Everett Square Theater site is privately owned and not historically designated, limiting rehabilitation funding possibilities.

TIMELINE: Short Term (1-5 years)

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Boston Landmarks Commission & the Planning Department

PRIORITY: Low ● ○ ○ ○ ○



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THE
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32
Forest Hills
NO STOPPING
STOP FOR
TOW ZONE

Everett Square Theatre
LIVE! PAINT

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TRANSPORTATION



PROCESS TO RECOMMENDATIONS

The transportation and public space recommendations in this plan were developed to respond to three key considerations:

1. The most pressing community priorities shared during the engagement process
2. The most significant safety, access, and reliability issues identified through an analysis of existing data
3. The ability of the City, other public agencies, and private partners to implement solutions within a relatively short time period (10 years)

In any given neighborhood in Boston, there is an endless number of worthwhile investments to improve our transportation systems and public realm. To make sure this plan can be advanced within ten years, recommendations for Cleary Square focus on priorities that can be advanced within 10 years. Over a dozen recommendations are presented below ranging from specific street and intersection changes to broader policy suggestions for the entire study area.

The planning team is continuing to coordinate with the relevant partners to finalize the appropriate responsible parties for this topic area.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THEMES

1

SLOW CARS DOWN AND IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY.

Many people shared a desire for traffic calming to help make Cleary Square feel more comfortable to walk around. Concerns about speeding and cut-through traffic on several streets including Hyde Park Ave, Gordon Ave, Summer St, Austin St, Walnut St, and Central Ave were brought up by many people.

2

EXPAND PUBLIC SPACE FOR BUSINESSES, BUS STOPS, AND STREET GREENERY.

Along the square's main streets including Hyde Park Ave, River St, and Fairmount Ave, many people expressed a strong desire for more public space along the street to support businesses, community uses, better bus stops, and green infrastructure.

3

MAKE IT EASIER TO TAKE THE COMMUTER RAIL.

Many people shared that they are thankful that the commuter rail provides a quick and comfortable transit option for many destinations in Boston. The discrepancy in fares between Fairmount Station and Hyde Park Station was frequently discussed as a barrier to taking the train from Hyde Park Station. Some people said that it can be challenging to reach the stations because of existing infrastructure both on the street and at the stations, especially for those with a physical disability.

4

MAKE THE BUS SAFER, QUICKER, AND MORE RELIABLE.

Many businesses and residents rely on the bus for daily travel. Many daily bus riders shared that buses, including the frequent Route 32, are often delayed in traffic. Some people said that not all bus stops have enough space on the sidewalk and that crossing the street near bus stops can be challenging, especially if there is no crosswalk.

5

CREATE SAFER OPTIONS FOR BIKING AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Many people shared that they feel scared or unsafe biking even short distances because there are few existing bike lanes and paths. Better biking connections to get to several places were frequently brought up including the library, community center, commuter rail stations, Forest Hills station, and Neponset River.

6

RESPOND TO EVOLVING PARKING AND CURBSIDE DEMANDS.

Many people shared concerns about the ability to efficiently manage parking demands of businesses and residents. As the population grows, some people expressed a desire to better understand how demand on existing parking lots and on-street parking would be handled.



SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION IDEAS

Slow cars down and improve visibility on Gordon Avenue and surrounding streets.

Gordon Ave is an important street for families accessing the Henry Grew Elementary School, but has a history of pedestrian crashes. This problem has been exacerbated by the River Street Bridge closure. To address these concerns, draft recommendations include:

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Use traffic calming tools to improve crosswalk visibility and slow vehicle movements on Gordon Ave and surrounding streets.

TIMELINE: Short Term (1-5 years)

PRIORITY: High ● ● ● ● ●

RECOMMENDATION 2:

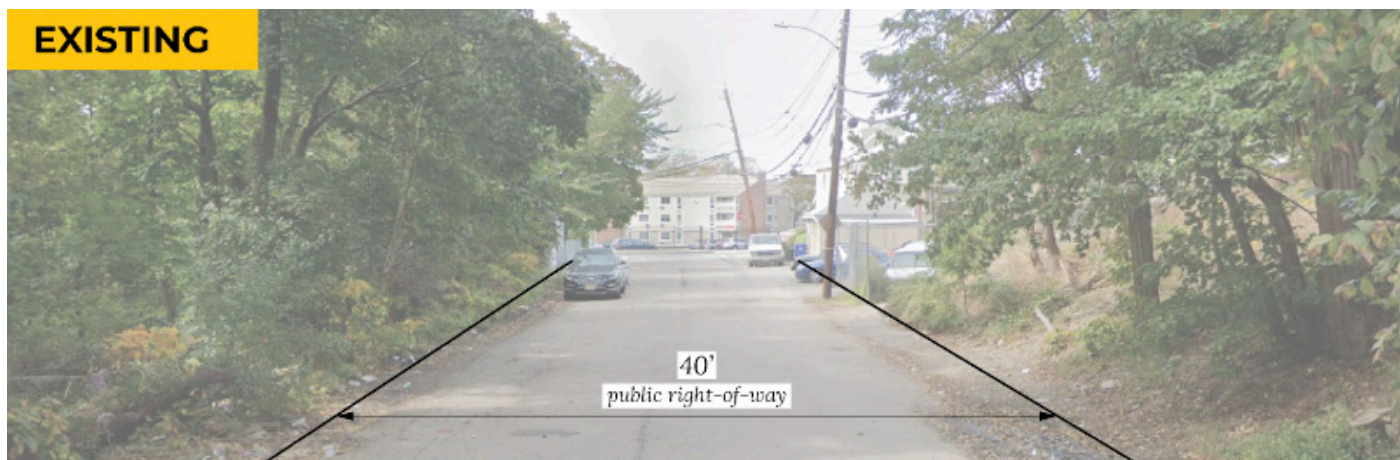
Reconfigure the intersection of Gordon Ave/ River St through the reconstruction of the River St Bridge to shorten crosswalks and slow turning vehicle speeds.

TIMELINE: Long Term (5-10 years)

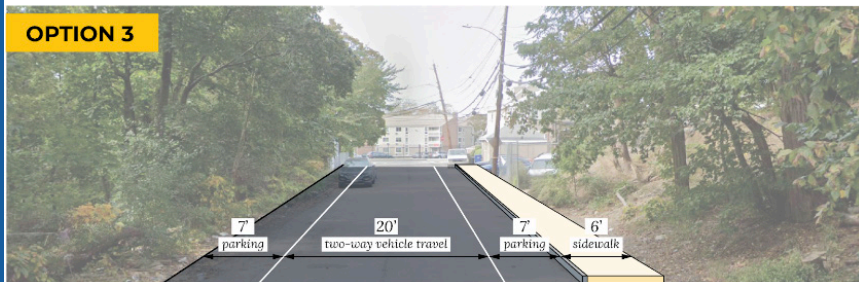
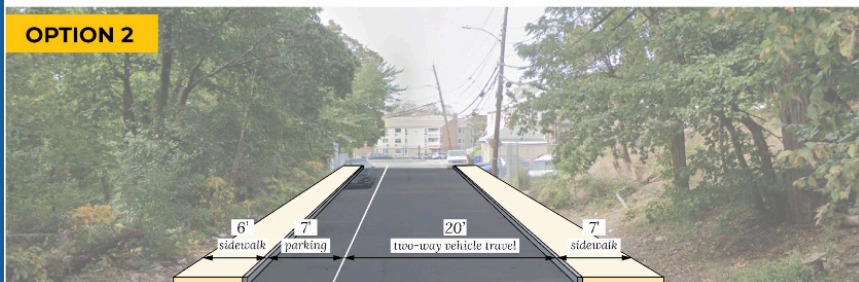
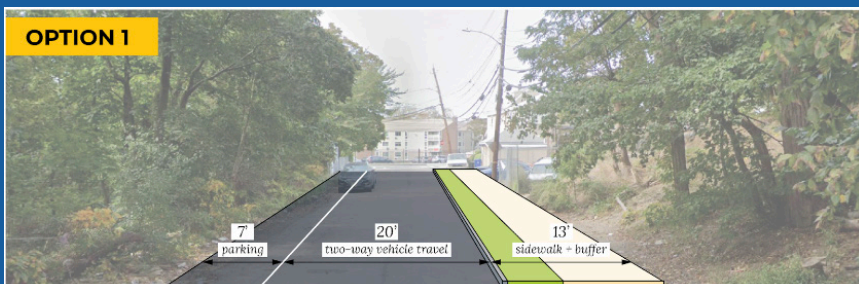
PRIORITY: High ● ● ● ● ●

Reconstruct Walnut Street to provide an accessible sidewalk, traffic calming, and formalized on-street parking from Dana Ave to Fairmount Station.

Walnut Street is a major connection to Fairmount Station but has no sidewalks, no bike connections, and unclear parking regulations. With 30 minute service now operating on the Fairmount Line daily, better access options to Fairmount Station are needed to give people access to this major transit amenity.



RECOMMENDATIONS:



TIMELINE: Short Term (1-2 years)

PRIORITY: High ● ● ● ● ●

Evaluate intersections with a history of crashes for new safety measures.

Between 2021 and 2023, there were 118 traffic crashes requiring an emergency response in the planning area. Several intersections within the square were frequently raised by community members as feeling unsafe and contributed to this history of crashes. Specific draft recommendations include:

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Implement design features to improve crosswalk visibility and slow vehicles approaching the crosswalk at Hyde Park Ave/Winthrop St.

TIMELINE: Short Term (3-5 years)

PRIORITY: High ● ● ● ● ●

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Evaluate pavement marking, signage, curbside uses, and signal strategies to clarify intersection operations and improve crosswalk visibility on Fairmount Avenue between Pierce St and Davison St.

TIMELINE: Short Term (1-2 years)

PRIORITY: Medium ● ● ● ○ ○

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Coordinate with the Department of Conservation & Recreation to identify short term strategies to simplify the intersection and reduce conflict points at the intersection of Truman Parkway and Fairmount Ave/Beacon St.

TIMELINE: Long Term (5-10 years)

PRIORITY: High ● ● ● ● ●

Reconfigure space at major bus hubs to meet safety, transit, and public space needs.

There are two major bus hubs in Cleary Square. On Hyde Park Ave between Oak St and Dana Ave, there are two busy bus stops (one inbound, one outbound) that serve Routes 32, 33, and 50. At the intersection of Fairmount Ave and River St, Routes 24 and 33 pass through and let people on and off the bus. In both locations, the existing bus stops lack adequate space to provide high-quality passenger amenities. By reconfiguring space around these bus hubs, the streets can better serve the needs of bus passengers and operators while also addressing pedestrian safety and creating space for additional streetscape features like trees and green infrastructure. Specific draft recommendations include:

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Reroute bus routes to eliminate the need for Routes 50 and short-turns of Route 32 to make a U-turn on Hyde Park Ave, including modest reconfiguration of the MBTA Hyde Park Commuter Rail Parking Lot. Use additional space no longer needed for bus U-turns on Hyde Park Ave to explore expanded public realm opportunities for additional bus stop amenities, wider sidewalks, separated bike lanes, and green infrastructure.

TIMELINE: Short Term (3-5 years)

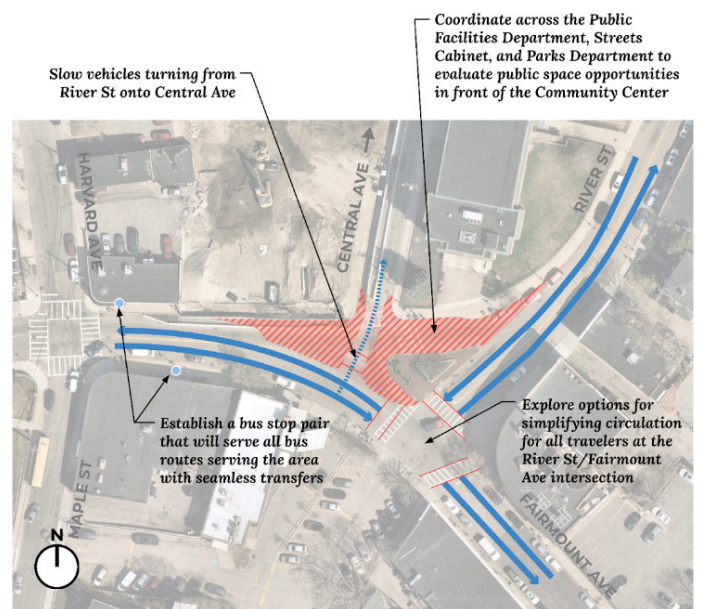
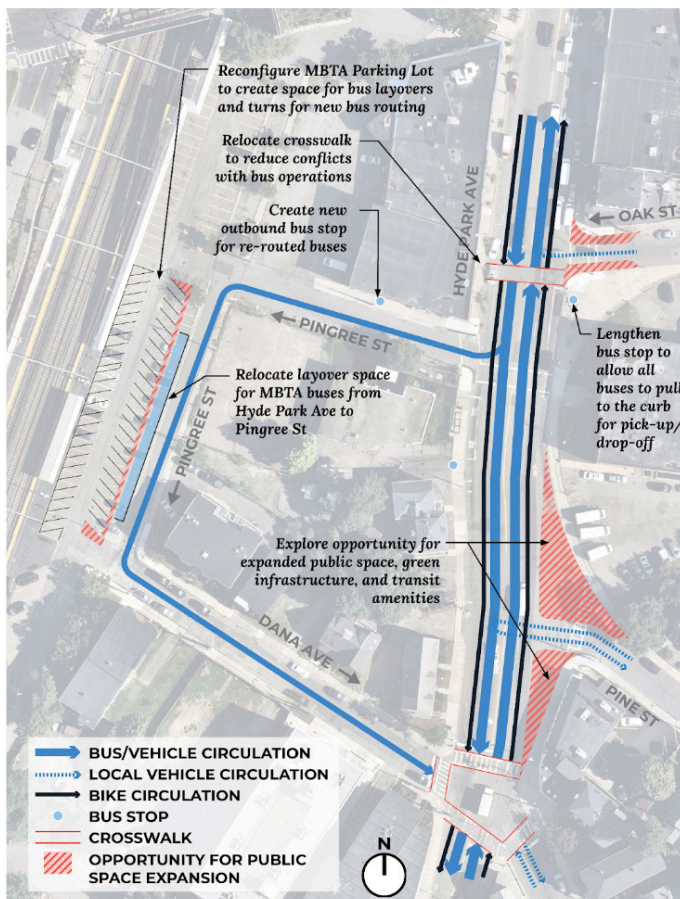
PRIORITY: High ●●●●●

RECOMMENDATION 2:

In coordination with the Boston Public Facilities Department, explore reconfiguration options for the intersection of River St and Fairmount Ave to establish high-quality bus stops serving all routes planned under the MBTA's Bus Network Redesign, simplify the intersection for all travelers, and create additional public space for community uses, businesses, and green infrastructure.

TIMELINE: Long Term (5-10 years)

PRIORITY: Medium ●●●○○



Create a safer, quicker, and more reliable bus experience on Hyde Park Ave

Hyde Park Ave carries thousands of bus riders every day, but the bus is delayed by traffic. Many bus stops lack crosswalks or amenities.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

The City of Boston is currently developing a plan through the Southwest Boston Transit Action Plan led by the Boston Streets Cabinet that will develop and evaluate design measures to improve bus service on Hyde Park Ave. As part of that process, the City will evaluate opportunities to install additional crosswalks on Hyde Park Ave to ensure all bus stops are served by a crosswalk.

TIMELINE: Medium Term (3-7 years)

PRIORITY: High ● ● ● ● ●

Reduce physical and financial barriers to the commuter rail

Uneven fares and station access infrastructure create barriers to everyday use of commuter rail stations. Specific draft recommendations include:

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Work with the MBTA to advance design for high-level platforms at both the Hyde Park and Fairmount Commuter Rail stations to improve accessibility.

TIMELINE: Long Term (7-10 years)

PRIORITY: Medium ● ● ● ○ ○

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Continue to advocate for lower fares (Zone 1A) for the Hyde Park station to reduce financial barriers to the Commuter Rail.

TIMELINE: Long Term (5-10 years)

PRIORITY: Medium ● ● ● ○ ○

Expand access to biking through additional traffic-calmed streets, bike lanes, and paths

With few existing bike connections, people in Cleary Square lack safe and comfortable options for biking to local destinations or the Neponset River. In addition, there is no Bluebikes station at Fairmount Station. By linking together a neighborhood-scale network of traffic-calmed streets that are comfortable to bike on, bike lanes on more major streets, and off-street paths, more people will have access to biking as an option for short trips around the neighborhood. Specific draft recommendations include:

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Create a network of bike routes that provide connections to key neighborhood destinations including commuter rail stations, City services in Logan Square, and the Neponset River Greenway.

TIMELINE: 1-10 years (would happen over time on a street-by-street basis)

PRIORITY: Medium ● ● ● ○ ○

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Work with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation to extend the Neponset River Greenway from its existing terminus east of Fairmount Avenue through the Planning Area, ultimately connecting to the Blue Hills.

TIMELINE: Long Term (5-10 years)

PRIORITY: High ● ● ● ● ●

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Provide a Bluebikes station at Fairmount Station.

TIMELINE: Short Term (1-2 years)

PRIORITY: High ● ● ● ● ●



Expand access to shared parking and transportation resources to efficiently manage parking demand.

Today, there are few shared transportation resources available in Cleary Square, such as carshare. In addition, the vast majority of on-street parking in the area is unregulated, meaning anyone can park there for any amount of time. As a result, residents, developers, and businesses have few options for efficiently managing the costs and space needs of vehicle parking. Specific draft recommendations include:

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Encourage new development projects to provide carshare to give residents as-needed access to cars while minimizing financial and space costs.

TIMELINE: Short Term (1 year)

PRIORITY: High ● ● ● ● ●

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Study how people use street parking and public parking lots to make sure parking rules fairly and efficiently meet the needs for curb space.

TIMELINE: Short Term (3-5 years)

PRIORITY: High ● ● ● ● ●





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■ 4/6

OPEN SPACE AND RESILIENCY

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: COMMUNITY THEMES

1

ENHANCE EXISTING OPEN SPACES WITHIN THE SQUARE

Improvements to and expansion of the ‘Pocket Park’, a Boston Transportation Department-owned plaza, is a high priority. This park serves as an important anchor to the community and center of the arts + cultural programming in the Square today.

2

CREATE CONNECTIONS TO THE NEPONSET RIVER

Create open space connections that enable recreation along the river, provide access to the river for kayaks and canoes, and connect to the Neponset River Greenway for walking and cycling.

3

EXPAND AND ACTIVATE THE PUBLIC REALM

Key intersections and existing parklets within the Square could more meaningfully activate the Square through the addition of planting, seating, public art, outdoor dining, and cultural events. Community identified opportunities for improvements and programming included the small parklet in between buildings on River Street, the intersection in front of the Municipal Building, and the intersection in front of the Hyde Park Seventh-day Adventist Church.

4

INTEGRATE RESILIENCY

Expansion of the urban forest through street tree planting, particularly along Hyde Park Avenue.

Implementation of green infrastructure to manage stormwater adjacent to the Neponset River.



IDENTIFYING OPEN SPACE OPPORTUNITIES IN CLEARY SQUARE

Cleary Square today has urban wilds, small plazas, and playgrounds, but residents must travel outside of the Square to enjoy larger public parks and connection to the Neponset River.

Public realm improvements have the potential to

- create connections
- serve as outdoor events space for arts and cultural programming
- make the neighborhood more resilient to extreme heat and stormwater flooding.

The open space draft recommendations identifies three major expansions to the open space system at important gateways into the neighborhood: improvements to the Pocket Park near the Hyde Park train station, a new plaza at the center of the Square as an entry from River Street, and a new open space at the river near the Fairmount train station.



SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION IDEAS

Enhance the Pocket Park

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Transfer ownership of the Pocket Park from Boston Transportation Department to Boston Parks and Recreation Department in order to facilitate improvements to and expansion of the Pocket Park, an important anchor to the community and center of the arts + cultural programming in the Square today.

TIMELINE: Short Term (1-2 years)

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Planning Department, Parks and Recreation Department & Boston Transportation Department

PRIORITY: High ● ● ● ● ●

Support the creation of a public park along the Riverfront

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Transfer ownership of the former Lewis Chemical site from the Mayor's Office of Housing to a public agency or nonprofit in order to facilitate the creation of a public park and connection to the Neponset River. Long term, this site could be connected to the Neponset River Greenway.

TIMELINE: Mid Term (3-5 years):

Complete design study of the expanded park

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Planning Department & Mayor's Office of Housing

PRIORITY: Medium ● ● ● ○ ○

Expand the Public Realm

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Creation of a new plaza at River Street and Fairmount Avenue through intersection improvements directly in front of the Municipal Building. This plaza has the opportunity to create an anchor for the arts corridor and connect to the existing recreational facilities along the Municipal Building. There are opportunities to coordinate this work with other upgrades to the Municipal Building led by the Public Facilities Department.

TIMELINE: Long Term (8-10 years)

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Planning Department, Boston Transportation Department, Public Facilities Department

PRIORITY: Low ● ○ ○ ○ ○

Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure opportunities should be integrated within all public realm improvements. Within this plan, those projects include the Pocket Park, public realm expansion along Hyde Park Avenue and at the intersection of River Street and Fairmount Avenue, and the site along the Neponset River. With the proximity to the Neponset River, slowing the movement of water and improving water quality are of particular importance in Cleary Square.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Office of Green Infrastructure can lead small scale green infrastructure on community identified sites along the Neponset River, building off existing work and community connections within the neighborhood.

TIMELINE: Short Term

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Office of Green Infrastructure

PRIORITY: Medium ● ● ● ○ ○

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Integration of green infrastructure within the Pocket Park, public realm expansion along Hyde Park Avenue and at the intersection of River Street and Fairmount Avenue, and the site along the Neponset River

TIMELINE: Long Term

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Office of Green Infrastructure

PRIORITY: Medium ● ● ● ○ ○

Street Tree Planting

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Street tree planting should be prioritized along Hyde Park Avenue and the streets identified as the Arts Corridor (River St, Fairmount Ave, and Central Ave).

TIMELINE: Subject to development timeline

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Parks and Recreation Department (Urban Forestry Division)

PRIORITY: Medium ● ● ● ○ ○

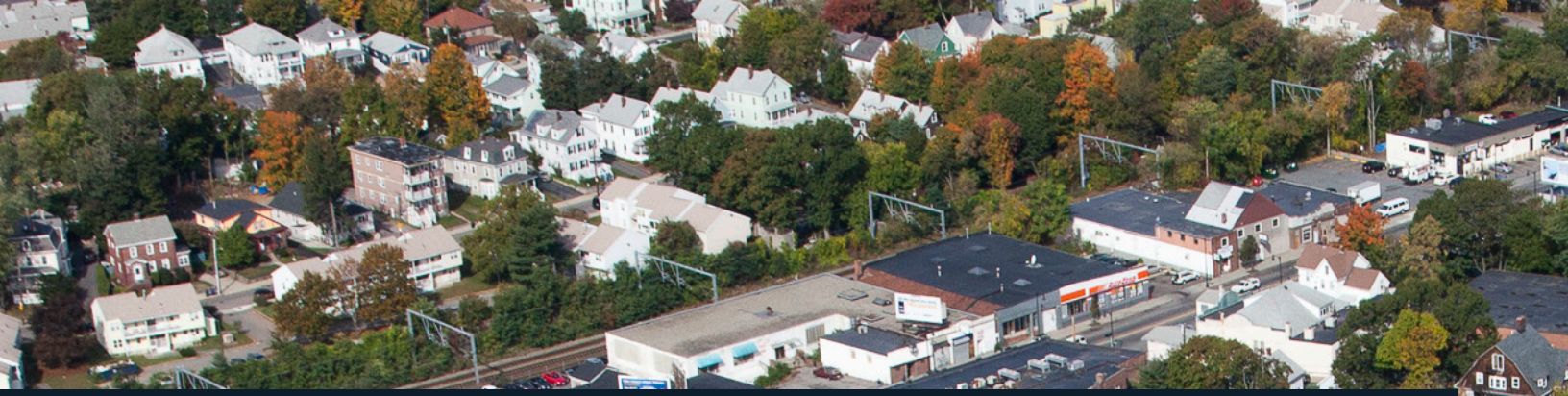


5



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HOUSING



PROCESS TO RECOMMENDATIONS

The following list of engagement events have influenced the draft recommendations listed and summarized below:

- 1:1 Interviews
- Kick-off Event
- Educational Workshop on Housing and Small Business
- Visioning Workshops (In-person and Virtual)
- Haitian Creole Focus Group
- Walkthroughs

In various engagements, the community feedback included concerns regarding displacement risks due to rising costs, housing affordability & stability, and opportunities to leverage public land in Cleary to address those needs. The draft recommendations summary below includes existing city-wide initiatives, public land identified for a disposition process, and ongoing displacement risks management efforts by City staff.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THEMES

1

DEEP AFFORDABILITY LEVELS FOR NEW INCOME-RESTRICTED HOUSING

There is consistent concern with regard to the depth of affordability of new housing produced through Squares + Streets. Many community members indicated their preference for more deeply affordable housing distinct from Inclusionary Zoning (IZ), which requires 17% of residential square footage to be income-restricted at an average of 60% Area Median Income with an additional 3% set aside for voucher holders.

2

SUPPORT FOR MEASURES THAT ENSURE HOUSING STABILITY

There is concern that new development will not be truly affordable to the household income ranges that currently reside in Cleary, and there is a desire to mitigate rising housing prices as a result of new development and investments in Cleary Square.

3

DESIRE TO LEVERAGE PUBLIC LAND FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

There is significant support for leveraging existing public land for new housing and achieving deeper affordability levels than typically comes through private development. Within the study area of this Square, there are several opportunities for maximizing public land for potential affordable housing solutions.

4

IMPROVING SOCIOECONOMIC INTEGRATION THROUGH HOUSING

Diversity and integration across income and race is an important community value to improve through producing more supply of housing at a range of unit sizes and affordability levels in new developments. There is support for both smaller units (up to 1-bedroom), which comprise much of the newly developed units today, as well as larger units for households with children, which are less likely to be provided in new developments without incentives.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION IDEAS

Begin Disposition of Pingree Street lot for Affordable Housing in Cleary Square

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Launch a community engagement process to guide the disposition of the vacant lot on Pingree Street, with a strong focus on affordable housing for Cleary Square. Prioritize developments that address local needs, such as family-sized affordable units (2- and 3-bedroom apartments) and mixed-income housing.

TIMELINE: Short Term: 1-2 years

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:
Planning Department

PRIORITY: High ● ● ● ● ●

Begin Disposition of Walnut Street lot for Community-Desired Use

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Conduct a community engagement process to determine the best use for the vacant lots on Walnut Street

TIMELINE: Short Term: 1-2 years

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:
Mayor's Office of Housing

PRIORITY: High ● ● ● ● ●

Identify Opportunities for AOP Acquisition with Non-Profit Affordable Housing Developers

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Collaborate with non-profit affordable housing developers to acquire existing properties through the Affordable Opportunity Program (AOP). Focus on properties in strategic locations, particularly near transit corridors, to preserve affordability.

TIMELINE: Long Term: 5-10 years

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:
Mayor's Office of Housing

PRIORITY: High ● ● ● ● ●

Create Acquisition Guidelines for Public Acquisitions in Cleary Square

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Develop clear acquisition guidelines to facilitate the purchase of key properties in Cleary Square.

TIMELINE: Short Term (1-5 years)

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Planning Department/ Planning Department Real Estate Division

PRIORITY: High ● ● ● ● ●

Prioritize Family-Sized Units in IZ Unit Creation

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Recommend through Affirmative Furthering Fair Housing(AFFH) that a larger proportion of affordable units in new developments be larger, specifically 2- and 3-bedroom units. This will help address the growing demand for housing that accommodates families with children, particularly in areas like Cleary Square.

TIMELINE: Short Term (1-5 years)

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Mayor's Office of Housing

PRIORITY: Medium ● ● ● ○ ○

Anti-Displacement

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Support tenants in Hyde Park by providing tenant protection measures and other assistance programs, including requiring landlords to provide earlier and more comprehensive notifications regarding evictions or displacement due to redevelopment.

TIMELINE: Short Term (1-5 years)

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Planning Advisory Council (PAC)

PRIORITY: High ● ● ● ● ●

WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR CLEARLY SQUARE?

PLACE A POST-IT ON THIS BOARD IN RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS BELOW!

Housing: What barriers exist that prevent you from accessing affordable, diverse types of housing?

More affordable housing options

Zoning around ADUs and other multi-generational housing options

Housing options for Seniors

Keep housing affordable for all income levels

Small Business/Arts and Culture: What kinds of cultural uses would bring more foot traffic and vitality to Clearly Square?

Cafes/bakeries + bubble tea

Cafe
Child care center

More bars/lounges + restaurants
A good mural

More art + culture
Community space

Transportation and Public Realm: How could we make the square more comfortable, or safer for you to get around?

Improve bike lanes
More seating
More greenery

Bike lanes on bike park area and river

Have businesses clean up in front of their store fronts

M.G. + A better use of Truanga Highway Parkway (Preston)

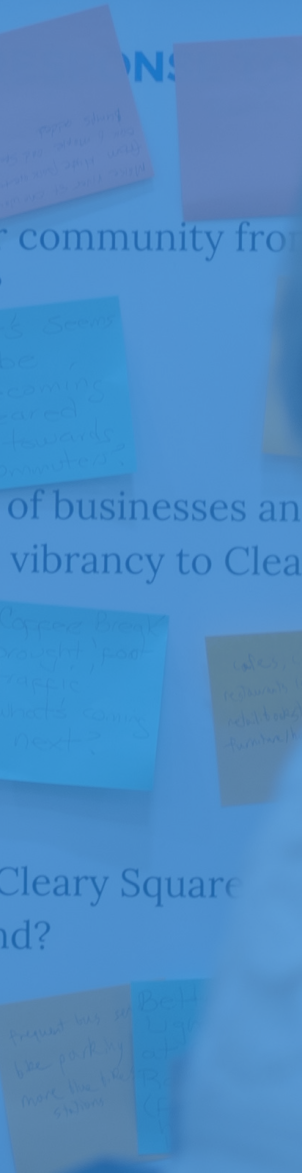
Design: What are some of the most notable physical features of the square (buildings, materials, lighting, outdoor furniture, etc.) that are most important to the square 'feeling' like Clearly Square?

6

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LAND USE AND DESIGN



The information we gather during this Ideas Reception and follow-up period will help shape the Land Use and Design Framework that will be part of the final Cleary Square plan document.

The Land Use and Design Framework documents recommendations for future land use and building design. It will also serve as a basis for drafting a Zoning Map Amendment that, if adopted, would update zoning in Cleary Square to implement the plan.

The plan will also include Design Guidelines to ensure that the activities and building types recommended by the Land Use and Design Framework fit in Cleary Square's unique context. These will provide guidance for the look and feel of new development in the Square. These guidelines could include suggesting what types of open space should be used to meet zoning requirements (such as balconies or yards), or how the facade design of new buildings should relate to what exists today.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THEMES

1

IMPROVE CONNECTIONS

Cleary Square today has many important community assets, including the Pocket Park, the BCYF, the Menino Art Center, the YMCA, Hyde Park Public Library, and Ron's Gourmet Ice Cream. These assets are dispersed throughout the Square. The Square also has MBTA commuter stations on either side of the main street and Neponset River running along the southern boundary. Multiple ideas have emerged related to improving the connections between these existing assets:

- Stitch together community anchors through the implementation of an arts and cultural corridor.
- Create welcoming entries into the Square's Community + Commercial Core from the two MBTA stations.
- Improve access to the Neponset River and create more continuous open space amenities.

2

ENCOURAGE COMMERCIAL USES

Continue the character of small storefronts and second-story office spaces in the existing commercial area. Allow opportunities for new businesses and desired commercial uses, such as family sit-down restaurants, coffee shops, and a diversity of retail that serve different income levels.

3

AFFIRM EXISTING BUILDING CHARACTER

Retain existing historic buildings through additions and adaptive reuse. There is also a strong desire for new development to fit with existing architecture, although some residents have also expressed interest in seeing more modern and diverse architectural styles in new development.

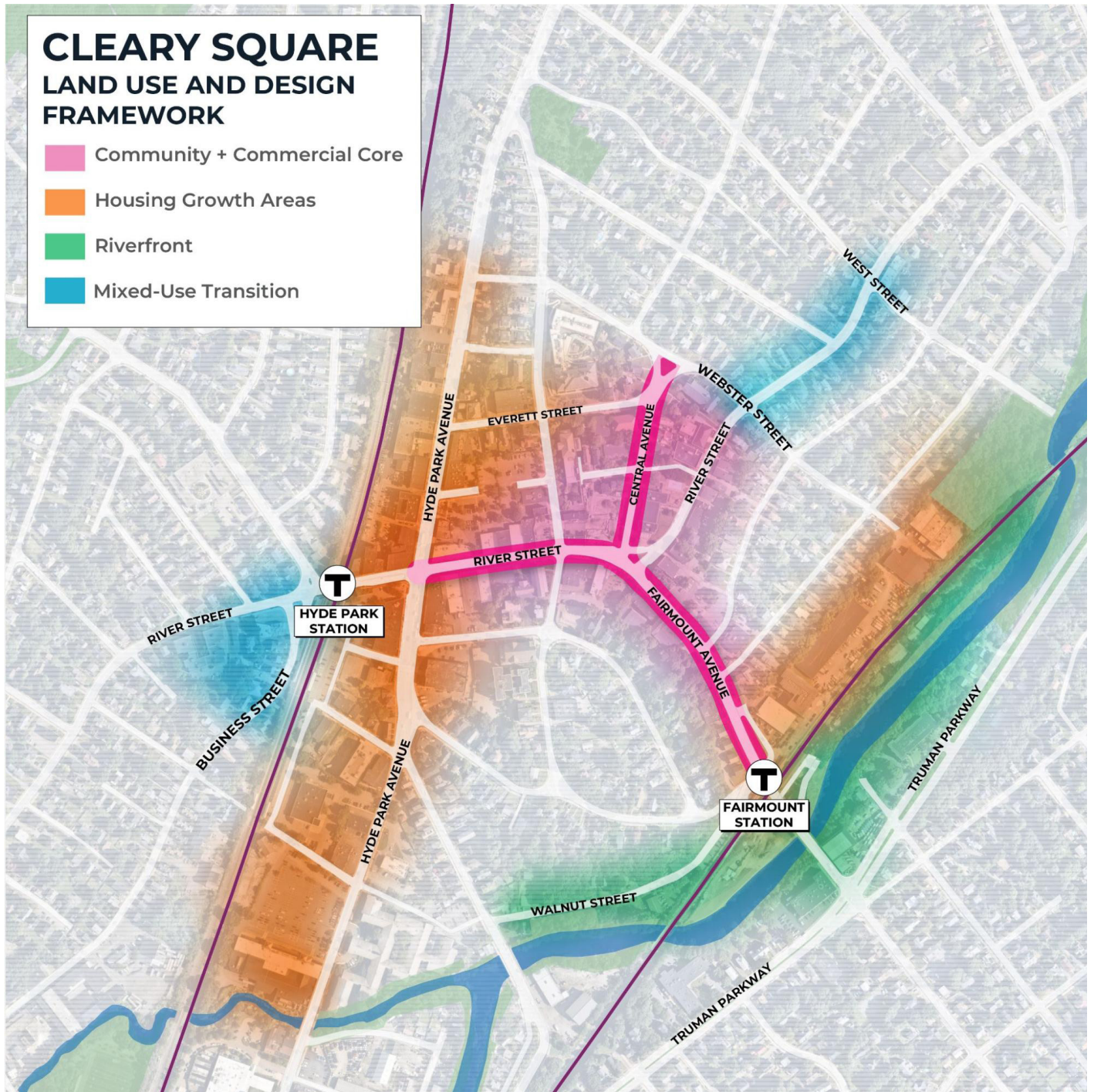
4

INCREASE HOUSING

Increase the number of housing units available in the area, especially affordable and family-sized units. Community members have identified the areas near MBTA stations as priorities for housing growth, as well as Hyde Park Ave as appropriate for larger buildings due to its larger street width.

THE PROCESS + SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION IDEAS

LAND USE AND DESIGN FRAMEWORK



Community + Commercial Core

The Community + Commercial Core contains many important existing community assets (such as the BCYF, the YMCA, and the library) and historic structures.

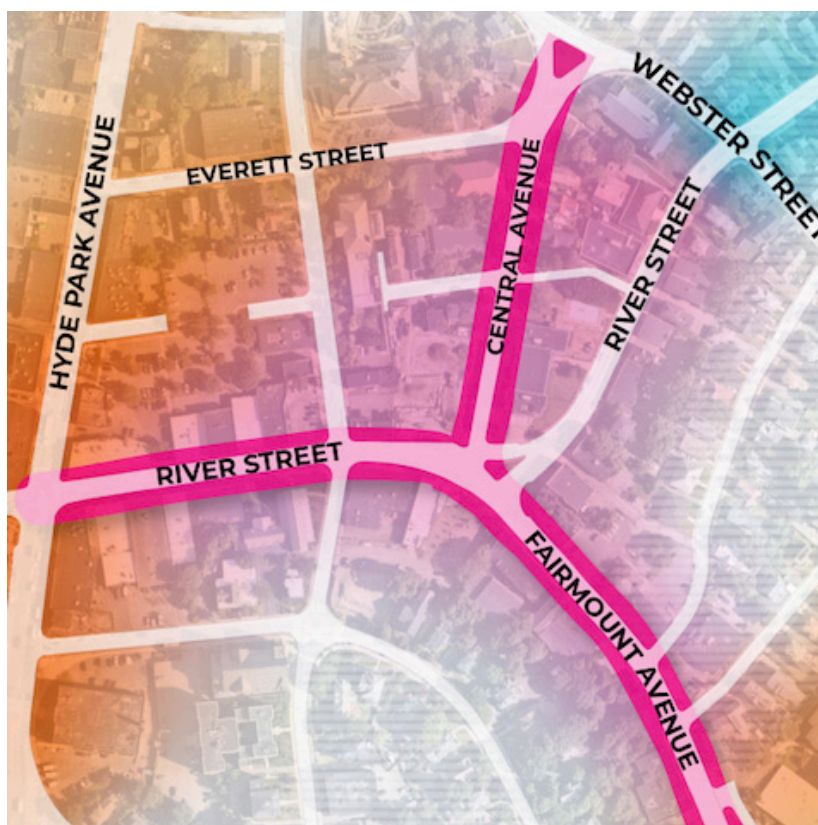
The priorities for this area include affirming the existing character and supporting uses that create more activity and improved connections between the existing community assets. The idea of an arts and cultural corridor (shown in dark pink) has emerged through community engagement as a way to connect the existing arts and cultural communities in Cleary Square (see Arts + Culture).

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Support existing commercial character through land use regulations that allow a variety of commercial uses, including second-story offices, clinics, and arts and entertainment destinations.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Discourage ground-floor dwelling units fronting the main commercial corridors of River St and Fairmount Ave.



RECOMMENDATION 3:

Encourage preservation of existing historic structures by allowing additions and buildings with similar yard and buildout patterns. Allow development on vacant or underutilized lots.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Support the continued success of existing art uses and community destinations clustered in this area and encourage the establishment of new art uses to strengthen the arts corridor.

Housing Growth Areas

These areas of Cleary Square have the most significant opportunity for larger mixed-use buildings (up to 7 stories) that can increase the housing supply and create more opportunities for active uses and public realm improvements.

Near Fairmount Station, a collection of large lots is currently used for vehicular and other light industrial/storage purposes. If redeveloped, this area could add significant new housing to Cleary Square and create a more active entrance from Fairmount Station. Hyde Park Ave is also appropriate for larger mixed-use buildings due to the wide street width, grade change, and existing bus route. New development near Hyde Park Station can create a more active entrance into the Square.



RECOMMENDATION 1:

Near Fairmount Station, allow a new center for mixed-use development with a focus on housing.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

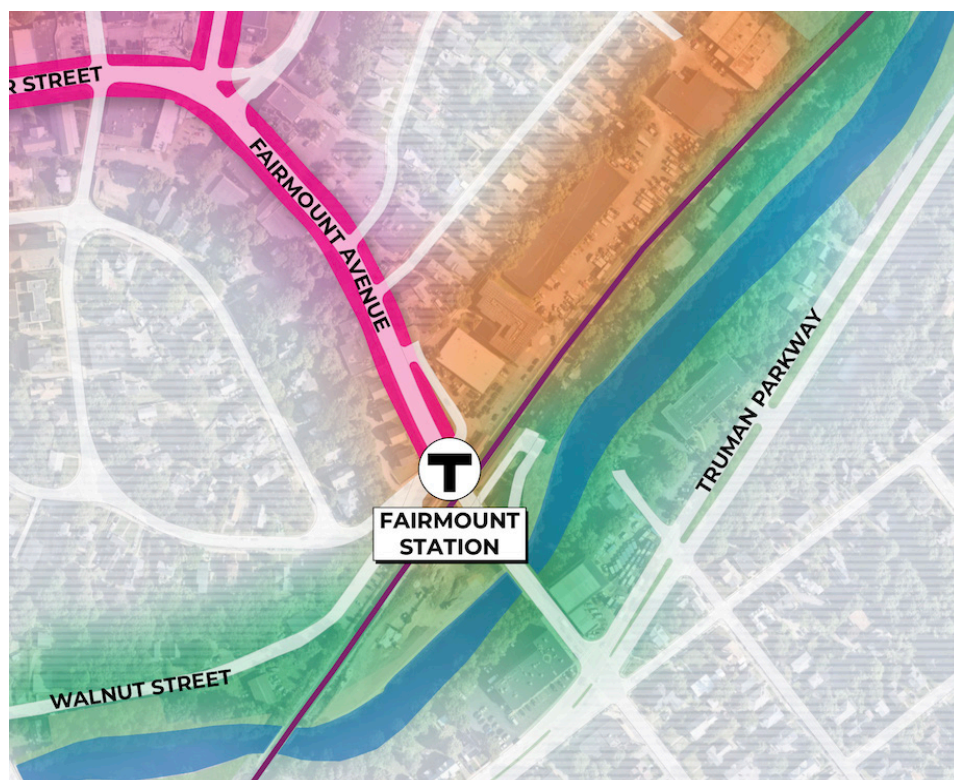
Near Hyde Park Station, enable redevelopment with active uses and public realm improvements to create a more active gateway into the Square.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

On North and South Hyde Park Ave, encourage development on vacant or underutilized lots.

Riverfront

Although the Neponset River runs through the Cleary Square study area, residents must travel outside the Square to access the river. Additionally (as noted in Open Space and Resiliency), slowing the movement of stormwater and improving water quality is particularly important in Cleary Square. Therefore, open space should be prioritized in this area and all new development near the Neponset should be designed to improve permeability, open space amenities, and public connections to the Neponset wherever possible.



RECOMMENDATION 1:

On lots between MBTA tracks and the Neponset, improve flood resilience and public access to the Neponset River by creating a new public park on the city-owned lot south of Fairmount Station (see Open Space and Resiliency). On the privately owned lot north of Fairmount Station, work to establish publicly-accessible open space and potentially acquire land for additional public park space.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

On Walnut St, allow new medium-scale, 4- to 5-story residential development.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Near Truman Parkway, allow larger-scale, mixed-use development to create an active gateway to the Square while remaining sensitive to location near the Neponset.

Mixed-Use Transition

The section of River St near Webster St (by the YMCA) serves as another entrance to the Community + Commercial Core for pedestrians, drivers, and bus riders. At the corner of River St and West St, there is an existing commercial area, which is separated from the Community + Commercial Core by two primarily residential blocks of River St. Allowing more opportunities for commercial activity in this area could connect the existing commercial areas and create a more active gateway into the Square.

The area west of Hyde Park Station is primarily residential with some churches and the Henry Grew School on Gordon Ave. Recently, a mixed-use development was also approved at the corner of River St and Business St. The proximity to Hyde Park Station and the rest of the Square could make this area ideal for more opportunities for mixed-use development and other small-scale commercial activity.



RECOMMENDATION 1:

We need more feedback from the community before we can draft place-based, specific recommendations for these areas. Please see the attached survey.

DRAFT DESIGN GOALS

The community has identified the following as essential design goals to help shape the plan's Design Guidelines:

Improve Public Realm

GOAL 1:

Provide room for street trees and improved sidewalks in space created by setback requirements.

GOAL 2:

Enhance pedestrian and bike connections to the Neponset River and nearby Urban Wilds.

Affirm Built Form

GOAL 1:

Affirm the existing pedestrian form of the Square's storefronts, especially the tight rhythm of entrances, windows, and architectural details.

GOAL 2:

Celebrate the Square's existing architectural and community assets through adaptive reuse and renovation.

GOAL 3:

Guide new development to respond to the existing architecture and design elements most important to Cleary residents.

Support Arts and Cultural Corridor

GOAL 1:

Expand public-facing space for artists along the arts and cultural corridor, including workshops, performance spaces, galleries, makerspaces, and more.

GOAL 2:

Develop a cohesive identity for artists and art spaces throughout the Square, such as through signage and common branding.

SQUARES + STREETS



Planning Department

CITY of BOSTON