

**WP1**     
**CASE STUDY**  
**REPORTS** **2012**  
CLUDs PROJECT

**Economic Development Strategies**

**The Role of Public Private Partnership**



## Fort Point District – 100 Acres

### SYNOPSIS

Fort Point district historically is a light-industry related area along the Fort Point Channel in South Boston. It is characterized by a strategic position within the city geography: along the Fort Point Channel, on the Boston waterfront, nearby Downtown, the center of businesses, next to the Logan airport and South Station, and last but not least within the Boston Innovation District, a big Economic Development Area attracting enterprises and economies from all the Massachusetts.

This area has known different kind of development during its history, but the architectural and historical importance of the area remained the same, preserved under the Fort Point Channel Landmark District. Even though the South Boston Manufacturing Center, with trade trucks still active, and the USPS parking lot give it a strong business aspect, the delimitation with 19<sup>th</sup> century yellow and red brick buildings, most of them renewed, is an example of architectural heritage to be preserved. Otherwise, the important number of artist associations within the area have influenced the cultural life and the economic activities of the place, most of them art-related, and the planning processes as well.

The 100 Acres Master Plan within Fort Point South, indeed, is the resulting of a common effort among public authorities, agencies, neighborhood representatives, owners and associations of the area, that contributed to give rise a participatory urban process. The BRA, Boston's Planning and Economic Development Agency, involved community and stakeholders to draw up a plan for growth and development within the 100 Acres, a Planned Development Area, taking into account the preexistent facilities and infrastructures capacity, in order to encourage a lively urban district. Moreover, according to the Boston Zoning code, a PDA must provide for public benefits, and the pre-condition to have it approved is an agreement among proponents at the beginning of the planning process. In this particular case the major Public Benefit is the Public Realm Enhancement in the area, through open spaces and roads enhancement. As result the key component of this Master Plan is a Memorandum of Agreement between the major private land owners, the proponents, and the City on its implementation. The site's ownership, about 90%, is concentrated among several large landowners: the P&G/Gillette Company, the USPS, the largest ones, Archon Group(W2005) and Beacon Capital Partners Inc and Melcher owner. Therefore, all owners agreed reaching a compromise, accepting some condition coming from two important actors within the negotiation process: the Gillette Company agreed under the condition of improving its trucks accessibility in the area and building up the square feet of the company; the USPS agreed to sell the area within 100 acres to the city for the Public Realm Enhancement in order to relocate its facilities into an adjacent one with higher property values; all the others accepted in order to improve their properties values. At the end, the B.R.A. approved the Fort Point District 100 Acres Master Plan in 2006. Moreover, the B.R.A., embedding the public sector within the partnership, is the coordinator of the agreement and the manager of a Sinking Fund, in which private actors are expected to put money into in advance for any project. All infrastructure and public realm improvements will be phased and executed as part of the planned new private development, since the public role is just managerial and regulatory and all the development process of 100 acres area is marked led.



## PART A. THE AREA BEFORE THE INITIATIVE

### A.1. Description

Fort Point district is an historical urban district within South Boston Waterfront neighborhood. The case study area is the south part of the district, historically characterized by manufacturing and trade activities. According to the Zoning Code the area is a Planned Development Area (PDA), that is to say a overlay district characterized by special measures: “A Planned Development Area is the zoning mechanism within the Boston Zoning Code that offers more flexibility and more adequate results for the implementation of this type of “aggregate” approach”.<sup>1</sup>

Particularly, in January 2007 the Boston Zoning Commission approved a Master Plan for the area, Planned Development Area No. 69, which establishes guidelines for planning objectives, allowed uses, dimensional requirements and the phasing of building.<sup>2</sup>

We can say that Fort Point District 100 Acres Master Plan aims at regulating the area giving land use and dimensional guidelines of this great public space between South Boston Waterfront and Downtown of Boston. The B.R.A., Boston’s planning and economic development Public Agency, involved community, proponents, elected officials and stakeholders to draw up a plan for growth and development within the 100 Acres, taking into account the preexistent facilities and infrastructures capacity, in order to encourage a lively mixed-use urban district. The site’s ownership is concentrated among several large landholders that own approximately 93 percent of the entire site: the P&G/Gillette Company, the USPS (United State Postal Service), Archon Group (W2005), and Beacon Capital Partners Inc..

Then, as concern those areas within 91 chapter jurisdiction, about 12 acres within the 100 Acres PDA owned by Gillette Company, there has been a Municipal Harbor Plan Amendment project in order to have a

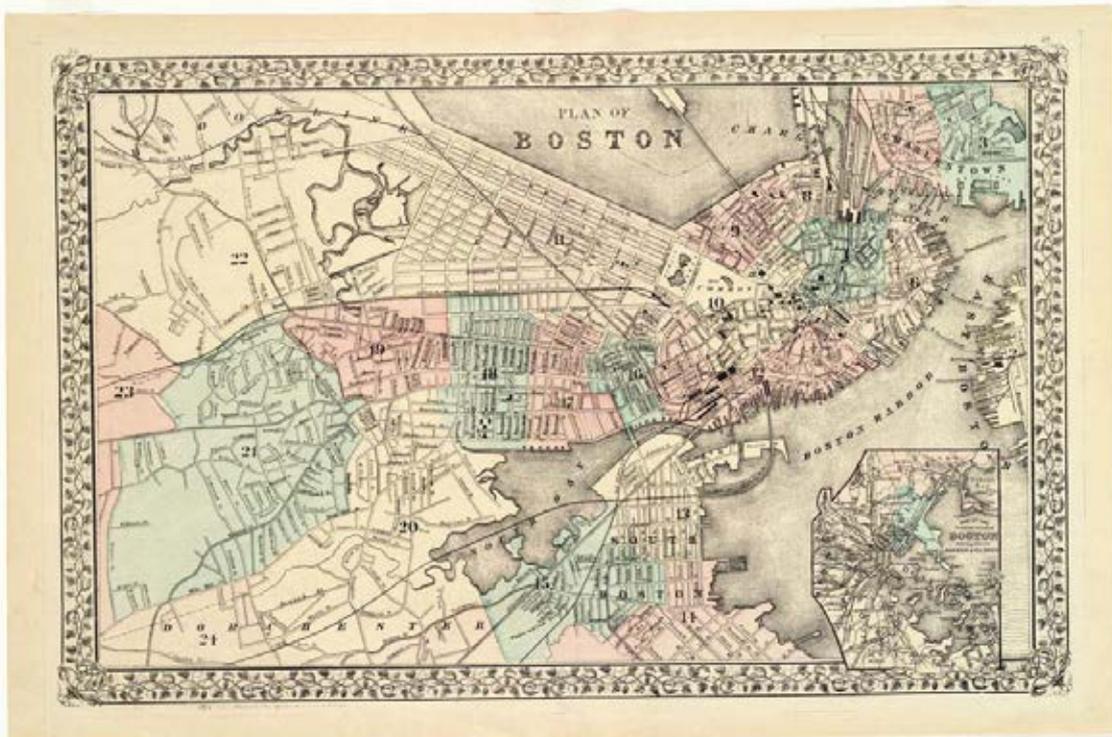
<sup>1</sup> Art. 80 – Boston Zoning Code (A citizen’s guide to art.80, p.12)

<sup>2</sup> Fort Point District 100 Acres Master Plan – Zoning Commission, January 2007

more detailed master planning process to preserve pre-existent industry, transportation measures, public and pedestrians accesses and compatibility with the historic character of the area. The MHP Amendment planning area, inside the 100 Acres, is bounded by A Street and Necco Street to the east, the Archon properties and Necco Court to the north, Fort Point Channel to the west, and the Gillette manufacturing plant to the south.

The entire area of Fort Point is treasured by its citizens thanks to the historic buildings, industries, cultural and commercial activities that lend the district a unique energy. According to this, the 100 Acres master plan provides an overall land use for the district, preserving industrial uses while encouraging an increased mix of uses; preventing conflicts with nearby commercial and residential uses and proposing the development of up 5.9 million square feet of new construction. It is expected that this build-out will get almost 40 years under the coordination of BRA to achieve a balanced mix of uses at every stage. Job creations (12,300 permanent), affordable housing (about 2000 units), opens spaces (11.4 acres) are the other objectives. Summarizing, the overall objective was to create a public realm plan to guide the Fort Point district future development.

Mitchell, S. Augustus 1882- Boston Harbor Map



## A.2. The context at that time

Historically the South Boston neighborhood has been one of the city's center of industrial employment, and around the 1900 it became the center of the wool trade in which all lumber was stored on Boston Wharf Company's warehouses.

The Boston Wharf Company was the first landowner within the 100 Acres, owning buildings containing approximately 1.1 million square feet. These buildings, were built by the Company between the 1880s and the 1920s, are predominantly red or yellow brick designed for either warehouse or manufacturing uses. They are generally of 5 to 6 stories, with generous floor-to-floor heights.

In the last years the company sold most of them to various entities, one purchaser has been the Archon Group. The industry within the area shifted many times from iron, glasswork and rail shipping to machinery, brick, wagons and beer manufacturing, until the G&P/Gillette Safety Razor Company opened its South Boston Plant next to Fort Point Channel. To date, the SBMC- South Boston Manufacturing Center, established in Fort Point in 1905, remains the largest industrial employer in the city.

As concern the urban context of the area, in the last few years there have also been a number of new residential construction projects. The first such project, which included 120 units of housing, was the Fort Point Place condominium on Wormwood Street, completed in 2000 by Beacon Capital Partners. In 2001, Beacon Capital proposed and received permits for the construction of a 1.55 million square foot development called "Channel Center." It includes 426,000 square feet of residential space, 171,000 square feet of live-work spaces, 836,300 square feet of office, research and development uses, 96,700 square feet of other uses (retail, restaurants, cultural, entertainment, fitness) and 20,000 square feet of gallery space. The first phase of this development, completed at the end of 2004, contains 209 units of housing, including 89 artist live-work units in the "Midway Studios."

However the area lacked in urban identity, it was just a place for industries and business and few people lived there for the proximity to Fort Point North, the ancient part of the neighborhood with services, facilities and a good urban environment. Moreover the companies, such as Gillette and USPS, wanted to improve the accessibility within the area reorganizing their trucks, increasing their property values and pursue better standard of production: so that they made a proposal to fix the mobility within the area. This objective matched with the B.R.A. vision for the area: they were asked by the BRA to contribute to the transportation analysis and recommend land uses, street network and open space scenarios for the district. This represented the first step toward the 100 Acres Master Plan.

### A.3. The Challenge

The key component of this Master Plan is the Memorandum of Agreement among the landowners, the companies of the area and the City, through the BRA, for the implementation. All owners agreed on it following some arrangement, but the two most important actors of the negotiation imposed some conditions.

For instance, the Gillette Company agreed under the condition of improving its trucks accessibility in the area and build up the square feet of the company; the USPS agreed to put on the market the area within 100 acres for "Public Realm Enhancement" construction, and relocate its facilities into an adjacent one with higher property values; all the others aimed at improving their properties prices.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, the B.R.A is the coordinator of the partnership and the manager of the "Sinking Fund". All infrastructure and public realm improvements will be phased and executed as part of the planned new private development.<sup>4</sup>

So that we can trace the importance of this kind of project between Downtown and the Harbor area in South Boston as a great effort to turn a historical and peculiar area, once the center of the cultural and economic activities of the city, to the cultural shining and vitality of a time. The core strategy is the direct involvement of people, companies and landowners of Fort Point District: each of them participated in different ways to realize this initiative. People, cultural and artist associations, through their sensitiveness, companies through their know-how and financial capability, landowners through their knowledge of the place and of the needs, authorities through the low constraints, preserving the existent and giving a medium- long term vision of what it could be.

The importance of the case study lies in the planning process that is the core of this kind of public-private partnership: public management of private money to rich community advantages. Taking from the evidence, the risk sharing, precondition for a partnership agreement, here is just among private companies: the public authority guides the development and give the rules to be followed in order to achieve the planning objectives. In Fort Point, the urban regeneration is considered in its broad sense, since it involves the economic aspects, such as job creations and tax revenues (for the public actors), increase of property values and location advantages for companies (the private actors), and also a new urban context vision, with an open spaces system of more than 11 acres, and a better quality of life for people who live and work there (affordable housing, sustainable policies).

<sup>3</sup> Mr. B.K. Boley interview- Chief Architect ADD.Inc.

<sup>4</sup> Memorandum of Agreement - MOA, 2007

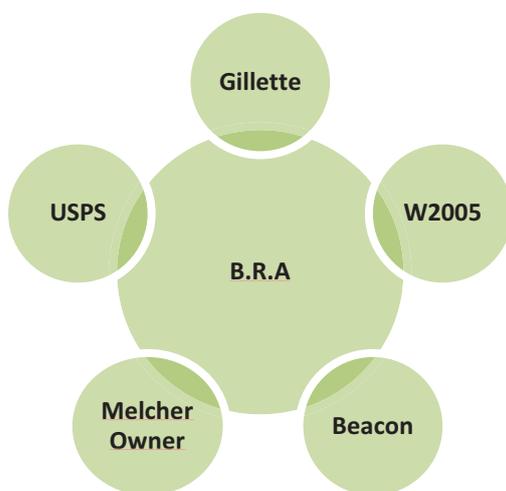
## PART B. PARTNERSHIP AND STRATEGY

### B.1. Construction and composition of the PPP

As stated above, this is a kind of Public-Private Partnership that allows the public sector to deliver services and infrastructure through private funds. The role of “public” is of coordination and management of resources and planning activities among partners involved.

During the process, agencies, organizations and the large property owners in the area presented their plans and future visions for the 100 Acres. The Seaport Alliance for Neighborhood Design, Fort Point Cultural Coalition, Save the Harbor/Save the Bay and the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority and, the four major property owners were asked by the BRA to contribute to the transportation analysis, land uses, street network and open space views for the district.

The development in the 100 Acres area, including the MHP Amendment planning area, incorporates available economic and manageable sustainable technologies in order to reduce pollution, energy costs and impacts on the environment.



The innovative approach is the involvements of private investors and owners to build the Public realm Enhancement, i.e. open space and roads construction and long term maintenance. Moreover, this is a precondition, according to the MOA, for having a PDA. This Master Plan provided the basis for an amendment to the City’s South Boston Municipal Harbor Plan, as well as a Planned Development Area Master Plan, that codifies the development rights and consequent public obligations associated with the privately-owned land.<sup>5</sup>Currently, the major uses of the 100 Acres accordingly with the Boston Innovation District rational, are industrial, manufacturing, warehouse, research and

development and office, surface parking and artist live-work space located in the Archon Group’s buildings, mostly used for office, retail, and artist live-work spaces.

### B.2. Chronology

The initiatives started in 2006 with the B.R.A. approval and the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) among partners to allocate responsibilities and risks.

The site’s ownership is concentrated among several large landholders that own approximately 93 percent of the entire site. These are the P&G/Gillette Company, the USPS, Archon Group (W2005), and Beacon Capital Partners Inc.. A key component of this Master Plan is an agreement among the landowners and the City, through the BRA, on its implementation. All owners agreed on it following some arrangement, but the two most important actors of the negotiation imposed some condition. For instance, the Gillette Company agreed under the condition of improving its trucks accessibility in the area and build up the square feet of the company; the USPS agreed to put on the market the area within 100 acres for “Public Realm Enhancement” construction, and relocate its facilities into an adjacent one with higher property values; all the others aimed at improving their properties values.

The actual state of the master plan implementation is in progress: almost all buildings within the area have been renewed, following energy save of consumptions and materials, few of them have been completed. The most important projects are still waiting for financial resources (according to the interviews about 100 acres master plan) the same for the open spaces system and the road enhancement. Some of the owner of the area, such as Melcher, asked for a PDA in order to start working to Street and the 49-63 of Melcher Street.

<sup>5</sup> The Fort Point District 100 Acres Master Plan, 2006



### B.3. Approaches adopted to address the challenges and strategies

In December of 2000, the Secretary of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs issued a decision on The City of Boston's South Boston Waterfront District Municipal Harbor Plan conditioning the approval of the Fort Point Historic South and Fort Point Industrial Sub-districts upon the drawing of a master plan for the area. The Municipal Harbor Plan

Amendment Area covers both the Fort Point Historic South and the Fort Point Industrial Sub-districts. Today, the Boston Zoning Code (art.80) considers 100 Acres as a PDA, that is to say an overlay district with particular prescriptions in order to ensure the right use of places nearby water, "a special zoning mechanism (a Planned Development Area) to provide zoning that is fully coordinated and consistent with the state regulatory framework provided through Chapter 91"<sup>6</sup>.

In 2006 BRA approved the "Fort Point District 100 Acres Master Plan" which served as planning basis for the PDA master plan adopted by the zoning commission on January 2007: the PDA master plan is intended to support the central goal of the 100 acres master plan, transforming the area into a dense and varied and lively urban district. The PDA Master Plan provides for one or more PDA Development Plans to be submitted with more specific information about various projects.

Since, the Municipal Harbor Plan Amendment Area covers the Fort Point Historic South and the Fort Point Industrial Sub-districts, the 100 Acres have to be consistent to it. Moreover, they are subjected to the constraints of the of Landmark District plan, i.e. the heritage protection plan, for the site that "exemplify a kind of enterprise – land-making and real estate development – that was characteristic of Boston and the region, and important to the economic and physical development..."<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, the yellow and red brick buildings represent a kind of urban loft, important in the economic history, both for the City and the region: once specialized in commodities produced within Fort Point, especially the wool, that for years has been the nation's most important district for wool marketplace, such as Summer Street.<sup>87</sup>

Among these urban tools, Fort point district - 100 Acres Master Plan aims at creating a public realm plan to guide the future development.<sup>8</sup> The B.R.A. involved landowners and companies for the Master Plan drawing up and achieve the main objectives for this area: economic development, job creation, citizens and enterprises involvement and promotion of a new lifestyle. According to this rationale, the 100 Acres area is going to become a place to support the city housing supply, with affordable housing units, to attract a new kind of economy within the Innovation District coherence.

Above all these challenges the most important is the job creation through the local economic enhancement policy: the facts show that new business attraction is strategy and also a precondition to improve jobs in all fields of science, art and research following the original attitudes of this area. The support of the "diversification and expansion of Boston's economy and job opportunities through economic activity, such

<sup>6</sup> South Boston Waterfront District, Municipal Harbor Plan Amendment – Fort Point District South, 2006, p.22

"A Planned Development Area is the zoning mechanism within the Boston Zoning Code that offers more flexibility and more adequate results for the implementation of this type of "aggregate" approach. Its implementation is contemplated as part of planning recommendations envisioned for the district within the 100 Acres Master Plan".

<sup>7</sup> Fort Point Channel Landmark District Study Report, 2008, p.6

<sup>8</sup>The Fort Point District, 100 Acres Master Plan, p.15

as private investment in manufacturing, commercial uses, or research and development; or creating new job opportunities and establishing educational facilities, career counseling, or technical assistance providing instruction or technical assistance in fields related to such jobs”.<sup>8</sup>

#### B.4. Governance and participation procedures

The participation procedures generally are very important for the achievement of the plan objectives. In Boston this is not just a procedure but a concrete part in the planning process. We can argue that, from the evidence of the case study and thanks to the participation to charrette meetings, people is involved since the first beginning of the project. Indeed, the 100 Acres master plan is the product of a common effort among public authorities, companies, neighbourhood representatives, private owners and associations, that contributed to give rise a participatory urban process: they even drawn up their proposals and concurred to influence the final planning choices. Consequently can be said that the land use and the urban frame organizations are strongly influenced by the participatory process.

Indeed, agencies, organizations and the large property owners, organized as a working group, presented their plans and future visions for the 100 acres. Such agencies and organizations included the Seaport Alliance for Neighborhood Design, Fort Point Cultural Coalition, save the Harbor/Save the Bay and the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority. “The Working Group meetings were generally held every other week and were open to the public, and all were encouraged to participate”.<sup>9</sup>

The transportation analysis was the first point to be faced from the Working Group in order to evaluate the proposals of infrastructure improvement proposed by the main four landowners of the area: it finished in 2004 providing the future guidelines for 100 Acres Master Plan development. Parallel to these transportation analyses the design group helped to identify some of the planning issues for the community, such as the size and the location of the open spaces system and their impact on the overall development of the residential area. “These planning and urban design studies were conducted through focused presentations, sub-committee meetings, and charrettes”<sup>9</sup>

#### B.5. Total budget over time

The total initial budget, \$ 2.3 billion, comes from the “Sinking Fund” in which all private partners had to put capitals into by giving a percentage for each square feet of new construction (\$11,93 for each square feet authorized by the PDA Master Plan at full build-out<sup>10</sup>).

The peculiarity is that private money is allocated in advance the start of works and managed by the public authority. Furthermore, each partner after the 2/3 of the phase of construction has to be examined by a the zoning commission for the review that verify the consistency with the project objectives and the planning procedures.

#### B.6. Strategic priorities and programs

The Public realm Enhancement is one of the most important objective to reinforce open spaces system and the construction and maintenance of roads following a new ratio for the urban grid within the 100 Acres. Particularly, 11 acres of new open spaces are expected to improve the quality of life within the area, creating a comfortable place to stay, in the past strongly characterized by the route tracks of the industrial activities. The open space system is also linked to the “Harborwalk that extend along the entire harbour” to reinforce connection with the water transportation, with the interior and open spaces along the Channel and improve the active use of ground floors.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> The Fort Point District 100 Acres Master Plan, p.4

<sup>10</sup> Memorandum of Agreement – MOA, 2007, p.15

<sup>11</sup> South Boston Waterfront District- Municipal Harbor Plan Amendment, Fort Point District South, 2006, p.3

Furthermore, the Public Realm Enhancement in this case is the public benefit requested to have a PDA<sup>12</sup> area approved: that is to say that without a public advantage, you cannot ask to build up square feet within a PDA Master Plan.

Job creation is the other important public priority of the initiative: a urban regeneration action in order to implement the local economic development has to figure out the creation of new job opportunities to improve the liveability of the neighbourhood following a sustainable way, both environmentally and from the economic point of view.

Then the maintenance of SBMC- South Boston Manufacturing Centre, with thousands of employees from all South Boston neighbourhood, and the creation of 24,600 jobs under the period of construction, of which 12,300 will be permanent, are going to give a strong opportunity of development for this area located within the Boston Innovation District, a big Economic Development Area attractor of new enterprises each year.

As concern the expected build out, according to the Master Plan previsions, there will be 5.9 million square feet of gross floor area of new development: 39% Residential – 36% Office – 25% Other Commercial. Furthermore, all ground floors are expected to be commercial, to improve local business activities and facilities, following economic and manageable sustainable technologies in order to reduce pollution, energy costs and impacts on the environment.

Performance standards for environmental impact, indeed, are taken into account for each new project in the area, even for each building a LEED certification must be achieved.<sup>13</sup>

All expenditures come from private investors, landowners and companies within the area, for the build-out and the open spaces and roads realization. As concern the revenues, they come especially from taxation, i.e. residential tax (commercial and housing), personal taxes (jobs), property taxes.



## B7. Marketing promotion

The promotion of the area is led by the marketing activity of the Boston Innovation District brand, implemented by Boston Redevelopment Authority to address the localization of new enterprises within the area and to enhance the relocation of others from the Cambridge area. Boston Innovation District is a big economic initiative of marketing promotion and of business attraction: a EDA, Economic Development Area under the Chapter 121c of the General Law in Massachusetts.

Attraction is pursued through making enterprises aware of the importance of a new localization. The Innovation District indeed aim at involving new business and encouraging the know-how sharing, thus improving competitiveness. So that the main objective is to create a place to work, to attract knowledge from all fields of science, research and production following innovative technologies and approaches, but also a place to stay, to live in a sustainable way.<sup>14</sup>

For this reason, 100 Acres is a support for workers and enterprises looking for affordable housing (300 units) according to the Innovation District approach.<sup>12</sup>

This is the main attraction both for business and workers, either the main retention for artists community that has been living the area for years. Consequently, the housing supply and the open spaces improvement are the main services accessible through 100 Acres Master Plan.

<sup>12</sup> A citizens guide to Art. 80, City of Boston, B.R.A., 2004

“A PDA Development Plan must specify particular public benefits that projects in the PDA must provide. The commitment to provide these benefits is enforced by a cooperation agreement that the applicant must enter into with the BRA”

<sup>13</sup> Mr. B.K. Boley interview- Chief Architect ADD.Inc.

<sup>14</sup> S.Hammar interview, Economic Program Assistant- Boston Innovation District

## PART C. INITIATIVE OUTCOMES: EFFECTS AND IMPACTS

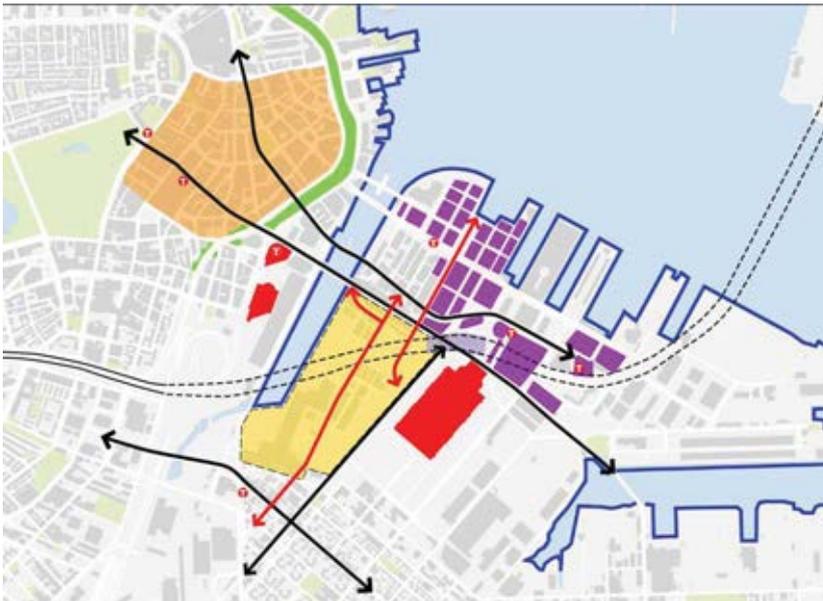
### C.1. The context today

As stated above, Fort Point area is characterized by the typical architecture of industrial and manufacturing activities: all fabrics were industrial warehouses, now high rise buildings maintaining double height for loft and apartment, with yellow or red bricks and big windows. The project takes into account this peculiarity, preserving all existent, searching for a new build-out that maintain the same characteristics as far as possible. Otherwise, from the evidence of the analysis on field, the area lacks of an organized urban frame, and most of it is occupied by the big parking lots, owned by the USPS and the Gillette Company, except for those parts under the Landmark District jurisdiction. The 100 acres Master Plan implementation is expected to provide a new urban grid, and a structured system of open spaces to offer places for socialization and outdoors life.

The USPS owns approximately 23 acres of land within the 100 Acres containing facilities for the main mail distribution center located on Dorchester Avenue, directly across the Fort Point Channel, next to South Station. It accommodates also employee parking, truck and trailer parking and administrative facilities.

The Gillette Company owns 41 Acres. Other large owners include Beacon Capital Partners and Archon Group, successors to Boston Wharf Company's holdings within the 100 Acres, and small owners such as Melcher Properties.

Nowadays, the SBMC- South Boston Manufacturing Center, established in Fort Point in 1905, remains the largest industrial employer in the city and one of the most important economic engine in the Boston area. Moreover, the SBMC pays the city \$3 million in real estate taxes per year, and business machinery taxes to



the Commonwealth of Massachusetts<sup>15</sup>: we can argue that this is an important reason of the Gillette involvement within the 100 Acres planning process.

The area is well-known also for the many artist live-work studios: first artists moved into the underutilized warehouses in the Fort Point District over 30 years ago, attracted for the adaptability of the warehouses buildings. Their work has included jewelry, painting, sculpture, photography, textile, handbag, and ceramic designs. Craft stores and other shops that support artists' work also opened

within the 100 Acres. They formed several community organizations to connect their community with the larger public contributing to major revitalization initiatives for the area, creating a strong art-district character.

### *Geography of the place*

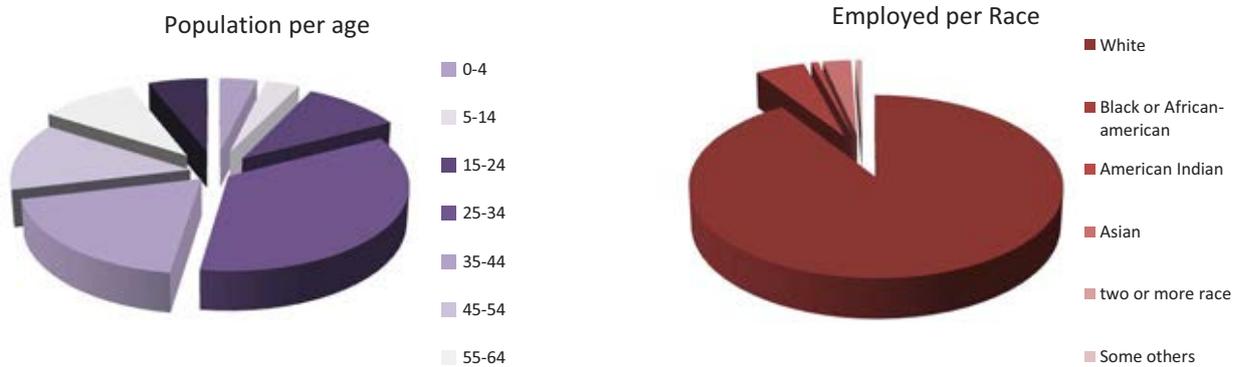
The 100 Acres area is located in the mid section of Fort Point Channel along a half-mile of waterfront boundary. It is defined by the Fort Point Channel and Dorchester avenue to the west, Summer Street to the North, the South Boston Bypass Road/Haul Road to the East, and the West First Street and West Second Street to the south.

The area contains approximately 88.7 acres, of which 35 acres is currently underutilized.<sup>13</sup> The actual vacancy rate is of 14%, after the Master Plan implementation it is expected the 5%.

<sup>15</sup>The Fort Point District 100 Acres Master Plan, p.14

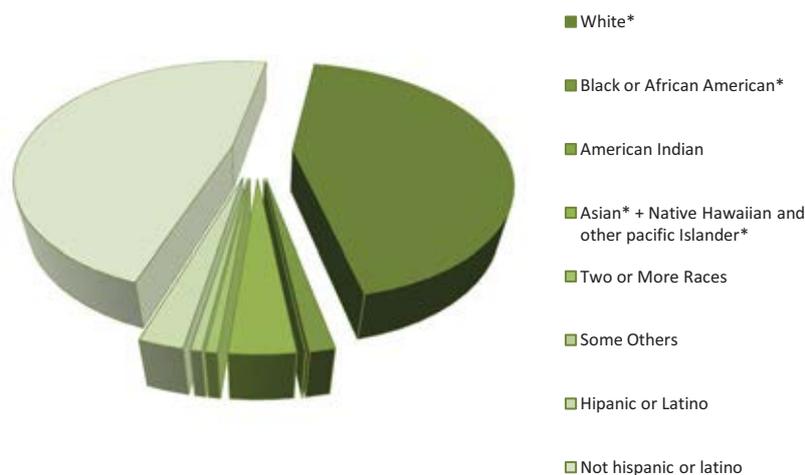
<sup>13</sup>The Fort Point District 100 Acres Master Plan, p.15

Fort Point district has a strategic position within the city, this allows it to be a good place for living and working: South station, within walking distance of the 100 Acres, is a critical transportation hub and includes also southern and western commuter rail service, the Red Line subway, a bus terminal and East Coast Amtrak service. The proximity to this connections represent a privilege in the dialogue with the entire city and for the location of new enterprises. Fort Point, quite similar to the riverfront of an historical European city, is full of connections that the plan stressed through new links from the existing development to the water. Moreover the plan aim to better connect the area to the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, the largest convention facility in the Northeast located along the eastern border of Fort Point district, in order to facilitate visitors to stay and visit these places enjoying of their position next to the Children’s Museum and the ICA museum. Thus the walkability to and from the area makes it attractive for many uses, such as commercial, leisure, activities connected with the Channel, and residential. Actually few of the expected results have been reached, especially due to the financial crises that is affecting the entire world economy.<sup>14</sup>



*Social composition*

The on desk analysis, through the Census statistical data support, shows that the population is composed by almost Whites with a small percentage of Asians. The ageing index shows a young population between 25 and 45 years old. The level of instruction is medium-high, an emblematic data also for the employment that indicates a high-quality stage of specialization in field as research, insurance, management, real estate, education and social services. Moreover, the per capita income give us a picture of a first-rate economic status, with a consequent small percentage of people living under the poverty level (17%).<sup>15</sup>



<sup>14</sup>Mr. B.K. Boley interview- Chief Architect ADD.Inc.

<sup>15</sup>source elaborated from :<http://2010.census.gov/2010census/popmap/ipmtext.php?fl=25>

## C.2. Peculiar characters of the area

Summarizing we can say that the general perception of the area is quite rich and consequently we can argue that there is a high-quality of life standards. Then, from the analysis on field, can be evidenced the quality of restructured buildings, the attention for materials, the high percentage of architectural studios and spaces for lease of a certain value, businesses of home design: everything shows a high level of life within this area. Regarding the expected outcomes of the initiative, we can just figure out what the potential benefits both for community and stakeholders involved could be.

Tax benefits and job creation are the most important “public” goals of this urban development initiative. That is why, taking from the analysis on desk, the B.R.A. is partner of an Agreement among all Owner Parties inside the 100 Acres land.

Considering the private advantages in localize its interests within Fort Point, and in transforming it into a vital neighborhood rich in uses and activities, we can suggest the follows:

- housing (increase of property values);
- a strategic position (south station-Logan airport-financial district);
- retails and commercial activities;
- open spaces system along Fort Point Channel (water-use related).



## PART D. CONCLUSIONS

The Fort Point district case study area gives interesting opportunities to look forward the use of public-private partnership in a different way, perhaps such as intermediary for the implementation of urban planning tools. Particularly from this experience we can take example of the cooperation modes between public actors and private ones: even though the objectives and interests are different, we could say that both parties reached their aim with the final version of the Master Plan.

Then, the participation process strongly contributed to the success of the planning initiatives: people, associations and landowners gave their concrete experience to transform a dead neighborhood into a lively one.

Nevertheless, the most part of the planning initiatives under the 100 Acres Master Plan did not started as predicted. According to the interviews done, the delay in the starting of the works could be explained by the general world financial crisis that is affecting almost all economic fields.

This Planned Development Area that, by definition has to provide for public benefits, in such case giving rise to the Public Realm Enhancement, consisting in new roads with a new urban greed and open spaces, following the Fort Point Channel focuses/views, did not has been implemented.

Nevertheless, the key factor of the urban initiative is the agreement among all partners that let us aware of the complexity of the partnership. Particularly as concern the public role within the initiative, that provides the directions for development in the city of Boston.

If on one hand the sharing of responsibilities and risks among the privates involved can be seen, on the other one the B.R.A. involvement is just as coordinator and supervisor of the right application of zoning rules (in such case of the overlay district under the PDA legislation) and land uses consistency.

So that we can argue that there is a particular role of public sector within the partnership which take both long range benefits, such as tax payments, job creation, and immediate ones, such as the transformation of an industrial area into a mix used neighborhood preserving some of the preexistent features, using private money and skills. The privates indeed were asked by the BRA to contribute to the transportation analysis, land uses, street network and open space scenarios for the district.

This is a different way of considering the project process, taking into account the private participation from the beginning. But not only the private actors whit economic interests participated, even citizens, artists and environmental associations took actively part to the Fort Point Working Group meetings, through proposals for the shaping of the final version of the Master Plan.

This is a kind of bottom-up approach in which each person involved, from the neighborhood representative to the public authority member, has a right to be heard with the same weight within the debate for the future growth of a development area. We can assume this is a best practice in which economic interest do not predominate the public one, it rather guides the planning choices following the common consensus rational that allows for the efficacy in planning actions and provides for the success of the economic and spatial development.

It is interesting to stress this public role such as a controller of private actions to achieve community needs without giving incentives or loans: 100 Acres can be considered a urban regeneration/development initiative through a Planned Development Area with specific urban constraints and rules, in which the public authority embedded into the B.R.A. plays a supervisory role in giving trends and boundaries. Moreover a tool such as the "Sinking Fund", established by the agreement, gives parties the possibility to have a "share cost percentage" to build and maintain projects depending on their square feet owned in the area.

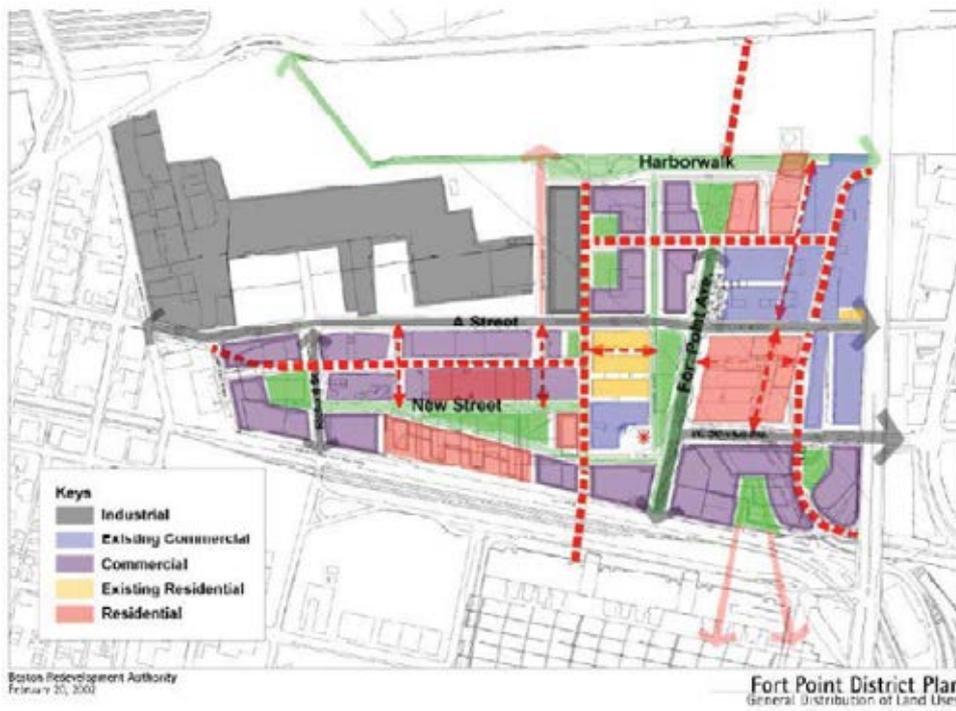
The result is expected to be a place for people, to live and work: this could brings also economic development, attractiveness and improvement of property values. So that both private and public parties reach their aim in a participatory way, giving and taking each others according to the statements of the agreement signed.

Furthermore, the strategic position, the vibrant artist community and the place, right adjacent the Fort Point Channel, give the private stakeholders and owners the input to invest in the area.

The final transformation will be profitable both for them and the public authority, in terms of revenues and social benefits, such as job creation and affordable housing into a good place to live and relocate the place of work. Then, know-how sharing and creation of specialized networks under the guide of the Boston Innovation District, matter of attraction and competitiveness all around Fort Point District, is the great economic engine of the entire area that push for innovation and evolution into high standards of development. Finally it can be argued that this a case study led by a peculiar partnership that, according to Grimsey and Lewis (2007, p.2) "can be defined as arrangements whereby private parties participate in, or provide support for, the provision of infrastructure, and a PPP project results in a contract for a private entity to deliver public infrastructure-based services"<sup>16</sup>.

---

<sup>16</sup> Grimsey D., Lewis M. (2007), *Public Private Partnerships: the worldwide revolution in infrastructure provision and project finance*, Edward Elgar Publishing.





Fort Point District



## PART E. REFERENCES

City of Boston, B.R.A., (2004), A citizens guide to development review under art. 80 of the Boston Zoning Code

City of Boston, Boston Redevelopment Authority, (2006), South Boston Waterfront District- Municipal Harbor Plan Amendment, Fort Point District South

Boston Landmarks Commission, Environment Department, City of Boston, (2008), The Fort Point Channel Landmark District, standards and criteria (design guidelines)

Boston Redevelopment Authority, (2007), Master Plan for Planned Development Area n. 69, South Boston/The 100 Acres,

Boston Redevelopment Authority, Fort Point Channel Working Group, (2006) "The Fort Point District: 100 Acres Master Plan"

Boston Redevelopment Authority, (2004), Fort Point District, Open Space/Public Realm Charrette, Summary Report

Grimsey D., Lewis M. (2007), Public Private Partnerships: the worldwide revolution in infrastructure provision and project finance, Edward Elgar Publishing.

Memorandum of Agreement, (2007)

### On field analysis

Interview to Mr. B.K. Boley,( 3/12/2012- 11:00 p.m.) Chief Architect, Architecture and Design - ADD.Inc-311 Summer Street- Fort Point District - South Boston MA  
b.k.bolely@addinc.com

Interview to Ms. S. Hammar, (3/9/2012- 2:30 p.m.) Economic Program Assistant- Boston Innovation District, Boston Redevelopment Authority- One City Hall Square, Boston (MA)  
Hammar.bra@cityofboston.gov

### Websites accessed

<http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/planning/PlanningInitsIndividual.asp?InitID=33&action=ViewInit>

<http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/Zoning/zoning.asp>

<http://www.malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXIV/Chapter91/Section1>

<http://www.spoke.com/companies/the-gillette-company-3e122f809e597c100000345b>

<http://www.smartplanet.com/blog/cities/inside-bostons-8216innovation-district/1759>

<http://www.usgbc.org/>

<http://www.seaportalliance.org/SAND/Archive/080324archon.html>

<http://11.016.scripts.mit.edu/www/laura/natural-processes/>

<http://maps.bpl.org/id/m8726>

## **CLUDs - Commercial Local Urban Districts**

### **Working Package No 1 - The Role of Public Private Partnership in Urban Regeneration Processes**

**Northeastern University of Boston, MA, USA**

CASE STUDY REPORT



*Plan of South Boston - 1859 Norman B. Leventhal Map Center at the Boston Public Library*

<http://maps.bpl.org/events>

## **Boston Marine Industrial Park**

**\_ABSTRACT (5.000-6.000 types)**

**A\_ THE AREA BEFORE THE INITIATIVE**

**A.1\_ Description**

**A.2\_ The context at that time**

**A.3\_ The Challenge**

**B\_ PARTNERSHIP AND STRATEGY**

**B.1\_ Description of the approach adopted to address the challenges, composition of the partnership**

**B.2\_ Start up of the initiative (year), if it is the case its following modifications, its current state. Budget over time.**

**B.3\_ Governance and participation procedures: the role of decision makers, stakeholders, associations and population at large.**

**C\_ INITIATIVE OUTCOMES: EFFECTS AND IMPACTS**

**C.1. THE CONTEXT TODAY**

**\_Social**

**\_Economical**

**\_Urban**

**D\_ CONCLUSIONS**

**D.1. LESSONS LEARNED**

**Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the initiative (urban social and economical modifications in the area).**

**D.2. RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER INITIATIVES**

**Outline the co-existence/integration/conflict relationship with other tools of urban policy and/or with other development organizations within the area and/or in neighbouring areas.**

**D.3. RELEVANCE OF THE EXPERIENCE**

**Evaluation of the effectiveness of the partnership, even compared if possible to European cases.**

**PART E. REFERENCES**

**Bibliography, websites, index of interviews, glossary.**

**PART F. ICONOGRAPHY OF THE CASE STUDIES (1:5.000-1:15:000)**

**Maps and pictures** (provided with title and a short description).

**Historical maps; Land Use; Zoning; Facilities; Infrastructure; Projects and initiatives; Urban density** (if possible)



**ABSTRACT (5.000-6.000 types)**

The Boston Marine Industrial Park is an industrial port area located near the South Boston Waterfront where are concentrated some economic initiatives of City of Boston to enhance economic growth and job creation.

Activities in the area started in 1977 when the City of Boston bought the area to realize a big industrial park to attract businesses and industries thanks the existence of facilities and infrastructures. The area is a former US Navy base. To manage it was instituted the EDIC, Economic Development Industrial Corporation. According with the Massachusetts General Laws the EDIC is a public instrumentality that within an Economic Development Area (EDA) can take land by eminent domain, issue debentures and revenue bonds, buy and sell property, collect rents, enter into contracts, receive grants, and make and receive loans. An Economic Development Area is a "blighted open area" or a "decadent area" as defined by Mass. General Laws, which is located in the municipality and is zoned for general or restricted manufacturing uses for general or waterfront industrial uses. Main objectives of the city of Boston for this area are economic development, job creation, attract new business, the revitalization of the area.

The area of Boston Marine Industrial Park is located in South Boston within the harbor area. The capacity to attract business is quite high despite the others city areas. After 30 years more than 3000 jobs have been created, more than 300 companies were attracted, more than \$ 300 million were invested, and the activities will go ahead. Location represents one of the more attractive factors: it is really near south station (Boston Down Town) and in front of Logan Airport. It is well infrastructured thanks to the recent initiatives operated by the City of Boston and Federal Government. In the last years were realized a new T line (Silver Line) that serves the area and link it with the airport, and the Turnpike, the road tunnel that directly link the city of Boston to the Logan Airport. The presence of the port and the already existent facilities as dock buildings, the airport and the urban and regional links make this area really attractive for businesses that want to locate their activities in a really convenient place. According with City's objectives the strategy in the Boston Marine Industrial Park is to attract new businesses for jobs creation thanks to the economic and locational advantages that the area and the authorities can offer.

Public (City of Boston) and private (companies, firms etc.) sectors are particularly focused on this area. For the public sector the main goal is to achieve the economic growth and the jobs creation, for the private is that to locate own business in a very competitive area with all the facilities they need. Partnership among them consists in a Lease Agreement between the EDIC and directly with the private or with an other subject that sub-rent later to another subject. There is not a common expiration date for agreements. It can vary from few years to decades. The private tenant can build own buildings in the parcel according with the city's rules and prescriptions included in the Code Zoning and in the BMIP (Boston Marine Industrial Park) Master Plan and all the existing Laws: federal and state.

During the last decade the City of Boston has decided to implement a series of initiatives aimed to the city's economic growth. These initiatives like the Boston Innovation District, Green Tech Boston and Life Science offer a series of services for businesses. Among these, site Selection is a way to suggest what is the best location for each activity. The most suggested site is Boston Marine Industrial Park. The case study presents singular features. The area guests only light industrial and commercial related activities.

The case study seems to be interesting for its singular characteristics. The area is only industry and commercial related.



## MARIE CURIE IRSES 7FP - **CLUDs Project**



From the beginning authorities decided to locate here businesses to create new jobs for Boston. The capacity to attract new businesses is facilitated by the intertwined economic initiatives of the City of Boston. Indeed the Boston Marine Industrial Park is inside the Boston Innovation District where are other initiatives such as GreenTech Boston and Life Science.

However, the waterfront industrial location represents one of the more attractive factors in the Boston area: it is near to the South Station T, downtown and close to Logan International Airport. It is well infrastructured thanks to the recent initiatives operated by the City of Boston and the Federal Government. In the last years a new T line called the Silver Line, has been implemented. The Silver Line is a bus line that serves the area and links it with the airport and the Convention Center.

The presence of the port and the already existent facilities, dock buildings, the airport and the urban and regional links make this area really attractive for businesses that want to locate their activities in a convenient place. According with the City's objectives the strategy in the Boston Marine Industrial Park is to attract new businesses for jobs creation thanks to the economic and location advantages that the area and the authorities can offer.

The initiative is classified as Partnership Agreement<sup>1</sup> between a quasi Public Agency<sup>2</sup>, the EDIC, and Private Actors.

---

<sup>1</sup> CLUDs WP1 Survey Form - Section 1

<sup>2</sup> CLUDs WP1 Survey Form - Section 1

## **PART A\_ THE AREA BEFORE THE INITIATIVE**

### **THE CONTEXT AT THAT TIME**

The South Naval Annex in Boston was officially closed in 1973/1974. At the same time were closed the Naval Shipyards in Charleston and the Chelsea Naval Hospital. This combination brought the loss of almost 6000 jobs in Boston. In the meanwhile the closure of military areas gave space to a 180 acres waterfront area.

The first intention of the City was to reuse areas for the redevelopment of the City.

The two most important public entities in Boston at that time, the Economic and Development Industrial Corporation and the Boston Redevelopment Authority were in charge to draw up a plan for the area.

Agencies commissioned a land use plan in an economic development and reuse perspective.

From various studies commissioned involving several disciplines evidenced the priority to focus on the industrial potentiality of the area.

We can sum up these potentialities in:

- a) the existence of adjacent similar use areas;
- b) the presence of port infrastructure;
- c) the absence of residential units in the nearby;
- d) the proximity to regional national and international infrastructures such as the Logan International Airport (still nowadays)
- e) The presence of existing buildings and facilities that could be converted for the light industrial activities and commercial as well.

However during the first two years after the closure of the Annex the private sector was unable to invest or buy the area for the following reasons:

- a) The high cost of the area associated with the upgrading cost;
- b) The high interest rates for borrowing capitals;

In 1971 was created the Economic Development Industrial Corporation (EDIC) with the main objective to remedy at the unemployment and underemployment conditions of Boston at that time.

It was established by the Chapter 1097 of the Acts of 1971 of the Commonwealth of the Massachusetts.

The EDIC constitution was a natural consequence of the Federal Policies that saw in the industrial development a public purpose for which public funds could be spent.

The initial policy of EDIC was clear:

- 1) Encourage types of development, consistent with the public interest, which maximize employment opportunities for the unemployed and underemployed of the city;
- 2) Utilize those resources within the framework of a balanced program designed to conserve and expand existing commerce and industry as well as create and attract new industrial and commercial activity which will have the greatest impact on the City of Boston<sup>3</sup>.

One of the most important factor is that EDIC didn't have to double private investments but to create the conditions for the facilitation of investments by the private sector.

### **\_Site History**

The Boston Naval Annex was established in the 1800. The presence of a seaport in the North Atlantic and the strategic and repaired position of the Harbour foster the birth of a shipbuilding industry in the area. In Boston was built one of the most ancient military ship, the USS Constitution, anchored still today in the Harbour as a National Monument.

---

<sup>3</sup> EDIC (1976), Economic Development Plan for the Boston Marine Industrial Park

During the World War I the area was used mainly as ship repair location. It was during the World War II that the Annex in South Boston increase exponentially thank to shipbuilding activities. In that period the employment level touched 50.000 units. After the war the South Boston Naval Annex was abandoned. Activities reduced and focused in the Charleston area till the closure of the entire complex.

Fig. 1 The site at that time

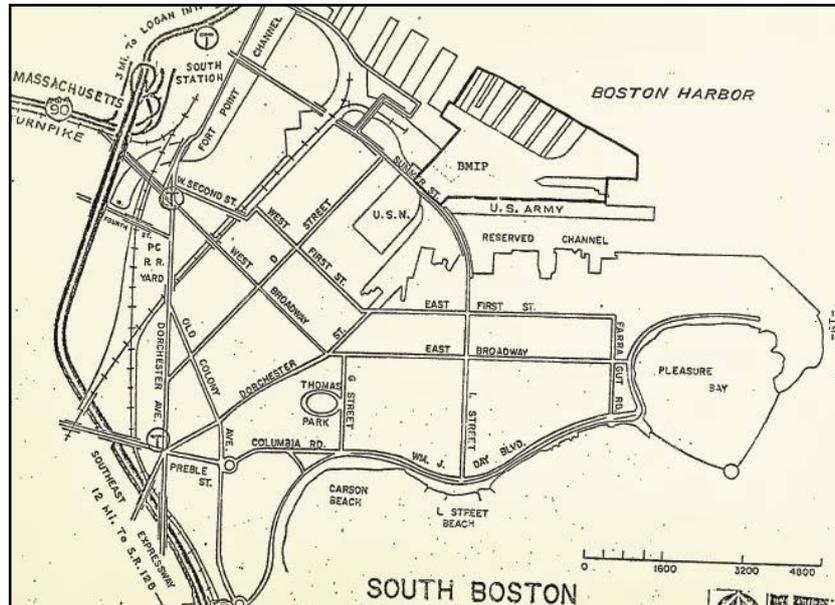


Fig. 2 South Boston at that time, Boston Marine Industrial Park area

Source: EDIC (1976), Economic Development Plan for the Boston Marine Industrial Park

## Key Historical and Regulatory events

- 1890s - 1920s** - Development of Commonwealth flats through legislative authorizations
- 1920s - 1940s** - Sale to US Government for maritime and military purposes, further development of military uses.
- 1974** - Abandonment of military use and base conversion for economic development
- 1976** - Creation of MEPA Unit and provisions for environmental review of development projects
- 1977** - EDIC land acquisition South Boston Naval Annex
- 1978** - Approval of CZM PPlan, designation of South Boston DPA (promotion, economic development)
- 1978** - First set of Ch. 91 regulations, flexibility for dredging, filling, economic development
- 1980** - EDIC/Massport waterways license for maritime industrial use of Massport Marine Terminal
- 1983** - EDIC Land acquisition and Economic DDevelopment Plan for South boston Army Base
- 1983** - Legislative Act extends Ch. 91 to filled tidelands, regulates land use in DPA
- 1988** - Maritime Economy Reserve zoning implemented in Boston
- 1990** - MEPA/BRA establish special procedures for Master Plan
- 1990** - New Ch. 91 regulations finalized, restricts DPA land use significantly
- 1994** - Ch. 91 DPA regulations modified to allow greater flexibility based on statewide problems with implementation
- 1994** - MEPA amends scope for Master Plan based on CA/T activities in the area and revised Ch. 91 regulations
- 1996** - Port of Boston Economic Development Plan released
- 1996** - Draft Master PPlan EIR submitted to MEPA
- 1998** - Master Plan update submitted to MEPA. MEPA amends scope for Master Plan
- 2006** - BMIP Master Plan approved<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> BRA/EDIC (1999), Final Master Plan Marine Industrial Park

## Economical

The economical analysis could start from the 60s when in the country emerged the “third sector” economy that absorbed more than 60,000 jobs within the Boston area, core of New England region. During that period the manufacturing sector lost the 40% of jobs while the service sector gained the 20%.

Since 1950 to 1970 Boston economic situation was not stable: jobs decreased by the 3.5% (18.000 units), population decreased by the 13% (104,247 people).

However in that period EDIC forecast were judged “hazardous”. Population decline, jobs lost, economy downturn were not a good point to start.

The area presents existing facilities than are still used today i.e. Dry docks for commercial and light industrial activities and old buildings (renovated and reused) as offices i.e. EDIC Building. BMIP is well served buy public transportation system and by general infrastructure as the Logan Airport, the Port of Boston, highways and city roads.

## Planning tools (zoning code, master plan, etc.)

US planning tools are totally different from EU ones. The american society is strongly market oriented. The attitude to follows market tendencies also for the planning aspects can generate positive and negative effects. Positives are represented by the dynamic role played by public and private sector. The first seen as just a subject that establish rules, and the second as the first actor for the urban transformation as subject that substantially invest capitals generating a profit.

In the case of Boston Marine Industrial Park the area is interested by several planning tools, included a final Masterplan for the area.

In its 125 years of history BMIP was interested by several actions by the Legislature. All these initiatives had the aim to foster industrial development in the Commonwealth.

Till today industry and manufacturing sectors remain crucial for the City’s economy and job creation. during the last decades legislative and regulatory actions have reinforced this mission.

Boston Marine Industrial Park is located within a DPA (Designated Port Are) as defined by CZM (Coastal Zone Management). Originally the DPA was established to foster financial assistance, economic development incentives, and regulatory relief for projects<sup>5</sup>.

After the Ch. 91 Program (State) redefined the eligible uses for the area linking them to the water -dependent industry.

Specifically:

- a) Water-dependent industrial uses
- b) Use of vacant land and existing buildings for non water-dependent industrial uses
- c) Commercial and industrial uses allowed if supported DPA uses with some limitations.

To whom it concerns the City planning level the area is composed of two districts: the Maritime Economy Reserve (MER) and the Industrial Zone (I-2). Within the MER uses are maritime industrial dependent . In this area is not conceived flexibility and restrictions are higher than Chapter 91 regulations.

Conversely the I-2 area allows also non maritime-industrial dependent activities such as general industrial activities, offices and commercial uses.

BMIP Master Plan of the are is linked with other local planning initiatives. Among these are the Seaport Public Realm Plan, the Port of Boston Economic Development Plan (BRA/EDIC - Massport), Fort Point District Plan, City’s Harborpark Plan, City’s Municipal Harbor Plan.

---

<sup>5</sup> BRA/EDIC (1999), Final Master Plan Marine Industrial Park



There is also a strict linkage between the planning initiative and infrastructures programs.

The main goal of BMIP Masterplan is to attract new businesses in the area retaining the existents and provide attractive job opportunities for Boston residents. In this view the cooperation between BRA and EDIC is crucial for the economic flexibility to facilitate the creation and retention of jobs in the city of Boston.

The Masterplan is linked with other planning initiative such as the Seaport Public Realm Plan, the Harborpark and the Port of Boston Economic Devevelopment Plan.

The primary objective of the Masterplan is to establish a framework for the BRA/EDIC to evaluate development proposals for uses also linked with non maritime-industrial or non water-depedent activities<sup>6</sup>.

Other goals of the plan are:

1. Preserve and enhance the MIP's productivity during construction of major transportation infrastructure and to protect its existing job base and its industrial, manufacturing, and waterfront environment;
2. To provide sites and support for new economic development and job growth and to maintain flexibility to respond to Boston's future economy;
3. To maximize the MIP's locational advantages for export- and import-oriented uses;
4. To chart a streamlined path through the governmental approval process for future MIP projects while ensuring that environmental standards are fully met<sup>7</sup>.

### **Strengths and weaknesses of the area**

The area doesn't seem to present particular weaknesses especially for the investment produced during the last decades for the infrastructure sector. The Boston Marine Industrial Park is near the Logan International Airport directly linked with the Turnpike. The Silver Line (MBTA) was realised recently to better serve the area and link it directly with the South Boston area.

Public economic efforts especially those addressed to realise the Boston Innovation District are attracting businesses and capitals in the emerging sector of hi-tech and clean-tech businesses.

One of the weaknesses of the area (maybe the only one) concerns with environmental impacts of human activities in the area. Many industries are located within BMIP boundaries it implies a high use of trucks for good transportation with consequent air pollution increase.

This could be transformed in a strength if City of Boston policies in green and air pollution sector are able to generate further employment in the area. Recently City of Boston approved a Climate Change Policy that should be make more green the City (this of green economic development is a key aspect of US cities recent policies)

### **A.3. THE CHALLENGE**

Why the case worth discussing, main purposes of the initiative, on-going strategies.

The case study was selected after the analysis of the main City of Boston economic initiatives such as GreenTech Boston, Life Tech, Boston Innovation District as reported by the Northeastern University Unit. All these initiatives support businesses in four crucial aspects: site selection, professional training, businesses finance assistance, businesses networking.

The Boston Marine Industrial Park is the common factor of these initiatives that suggest to businesses to locate their activities, especially commercial and light industrial, within the BMIP area.

It was interesting understand why this area is so important for the City of Boston and why so many businesses choose to locate their activity here.

---

<sup>6</sup> BRA/EDIC (1999), Final Master Plan Marine Industrial Park

<sup>7</sup> BRA/EDIC (1999), Final Master Plan Marine Industrial Park



### MARIE CURIE IRSES 7FP - **CLUDs Project**



Of course the analysis is focused not on the locational aspects but on the partnership issues according with the objectives of the Working Package No 1 of the CLUDs project.

The cases study presents a singular kind of partnership between public and private sector based on a particular kind of agreement, a lease agreement. We will see forward, in the next section, how this partnership works and what are roles and responsibilities of each actor.

## B\_PARTNERSHIP AND STRATEGY

The approach didn't change over time. It remains always anchored with the overall objectives to enhance economic growth and economic development for the City of Boston and its inhabitants. Partnership is between the Public and Private sector, even if this is a particular kind of partnership.

Indeed the Public Sector provides for the participation of several subjects, all involved in a process which have to foster the private businesses in the Boston area in all aspects of their activities.

City of Boston pursue economic growth and economic development through its economic initiatives, EDIC that is a quasi public-instrumentality, is owner of the land and has a partnership with other public subjects operating in the entire Boston Area.

The crucial point of the partnership is the agreement between public and private sector.

In this case we are in presence of Lease Agreement.

EDIC is owner of the land and rent it to privates. Sometimes privates can be identified as the final users sometimes they can be real estate developer that sub rent the land to businesses.

The Lease Agreement provides risks and responsibilities for each partner and the expiration can vary case to case. Within the area, rent at a lower price than the outside the area, businesses can build own buildings according with the laws of City of Boston and Mass General Laws.

Private sector is in charge to maintain all the facilities for businesses and to invest the rent coming from tenants for the maintenance of the area or for its improvement.

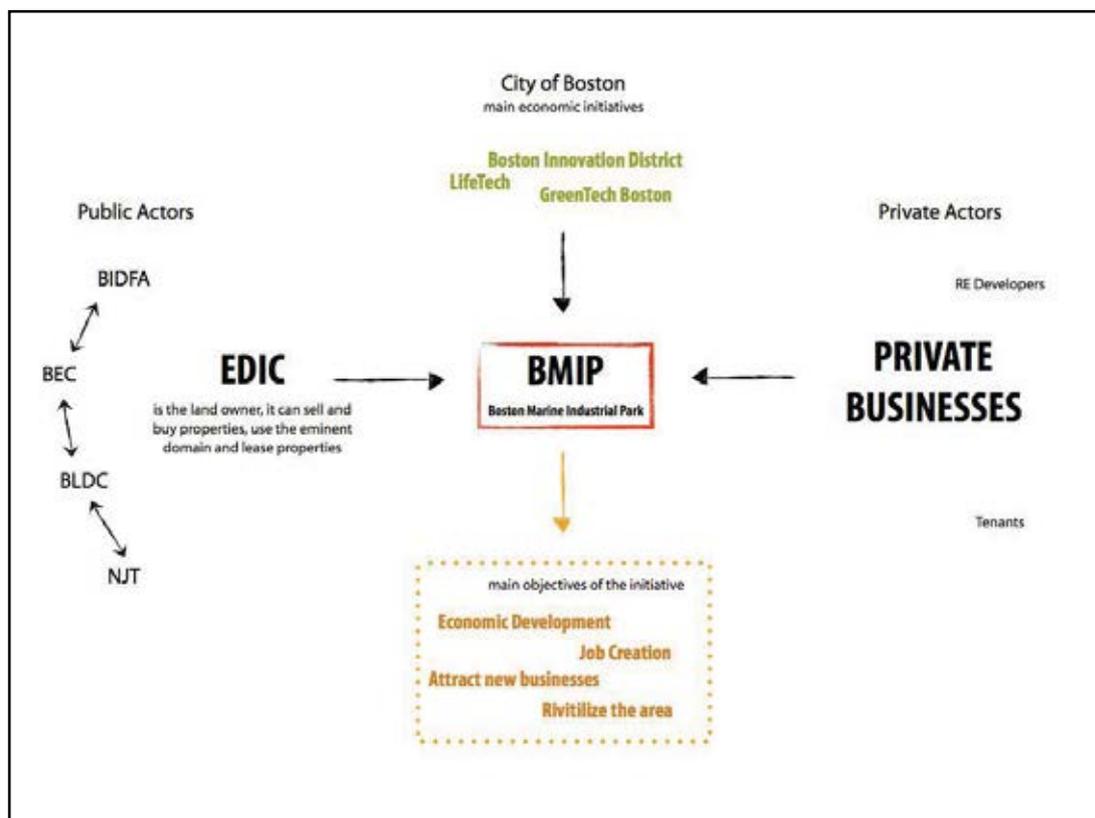


Fig. 3 Partnership Framework - Drawn by the Author

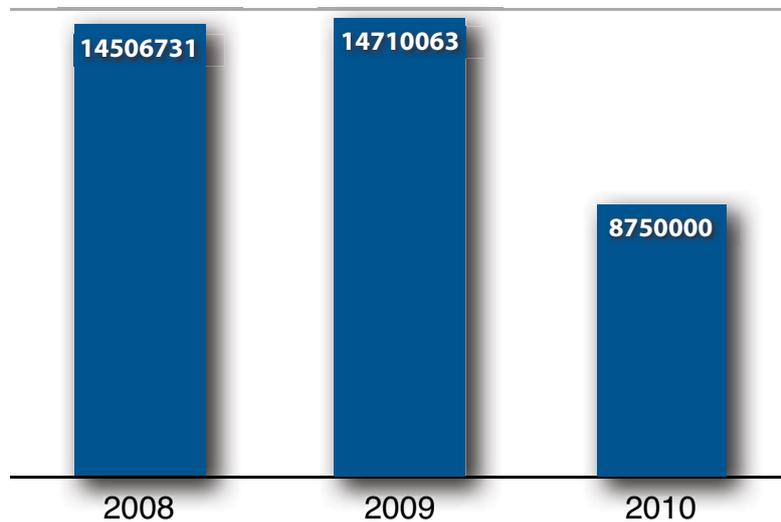
The initiative officially started in 1977 after attempting to foster the private acquisition of the area in the post closure years of the South Boston Naval Annex.

The initiative was not changed over the years in term of objectives. They remain the same: job creation and economic development. During the last decades changes has had as object the composition of the partnership according with the overall economic conditions and abilities to attract capitals and investments.

*Tab1. EDIC - BMIP Rental Income in US Dollars 2008-2010*

2008	2009	2010
\$ 14,506,731	\$ 14,710,063	\$ 8,750,000

*Graph 1. EDIC - BMIP Rental Income in US Dollars 2008-2010*



During the 1990s the EDIC was merged with BRA maintaining its decisional autonomy. The entire structure is characterised in part by a pyramidal organisation that sees at his peak the Mayor of Boston till the BRA Director and Board of Directors. Then it follows a networking organisation characterised by the dialogue among different public bodies involved in all processes. Privates, in this case tenants, are in part associated. Population is not a direct stakeholder in the are, but it is in the near South Boston neighbourhood. As in the entire Boston population may exercise the right to prevent such decision that are not considered suitable for citizenship.

In this case it possible to use the Article 80 within the city Code Zoning. Art. 80 is a participative procedure which serves to analyse each project that may provide direct or indirect impacts for citizens.

## C\_INITIATIVE OUTCOMES: EFFECTS AND IMPACTS

### Economical and Urban prevailing activities

Building Address	Tenant Controlling Entity	Total RSF	General Industrial	Maritime Dependent Industrial	Wholesale Trade/Retail	Offices	Life Science	Vacancy Rate
1. Design Center Place	Merchandise Mart Property	555926	0	0	416000	135869	0	4057
1. Harbor Street	ICCNE LLC	211347	25548	56677	14549	25957	0	88616
1 Seafood Way	Legal Seafood	75000	0	70000	0	5000	0	0
2 FID Kennedy Avenue	Mass Turn Pike Authority	28115	28115	0	0	0	0	0
3 Anchor Way	McDonald Steel	12305	12305	0	0	0	0	0
3 Dolphin Way	American Seafood Exchange	106763	0	0	0	0	0	106763
3 Terminal Street	Boston Harbor Patrol	1500	0	1500	0	0	0	0
5-11 Dry Dock Avenue	North Coast	101124	0	74254	3000	9906	0	13964
7 Channel Street	Stavis Seafood	31313	0	31313	0	0	0	0
7 Tide Street	Leachmore Point LLC	35846	13226	0	0	10313	12307	0
8 Seafood Way	Harbor Seafood center	65712	0	65712	0	0	0	0
12 Channel Street	EDIC - Multi - Tenants	357361	187006	0	1311	7327	10350	151367
12 Dry Dock Avenue	Public Parking Garage	431055	431055	0	0	0	0	0
12-34 FID Kennedy Ave(Nor)	Massport	15000	0	15000	0	0	0	0
18 Dry Dick Ave	Verizon	701	701	0	0	0	0	0
21-25 Dry Dock Avenue	Cargo Ventures	831510	346978	0	66492	29990	27500	360550
20 Dry Dock Avenue	Paul's Lobster	21919	0	21919	0	0	0	0
22 Dry Dock Avenue	EDIC	43626	9688	3350	0	16742	0	13846
25 FID Kennedy Avenue	American Seafood Exchange	159323	0	0	0	0	0	159323
26 Dry Dock Avenue	Boston Ship Repair	555761	0	535761	0	0	0	20000
27 Dry Dock Avenue	Zoom Group	275184	106057	0	7746	9483	145379	6519
30 Dry Dock Avenue	Frank Bean	600	600	0	0	0	0	0
36 Dry Dock Avenue	Coastal Cement	24169	0	24169	0	0	0	0
290 Northern Avenue	AC Cruise	378	0	378	0	0	0	0
296 Northern avenue	BofA Pavillion	48468	0	0	48468	0	0	0
300 Northern Avenue	Commercial Lobster	12767	0	12767	0	0	0	0
306 Northern Avenue	Harpoon/Nagle	117747	59673	58074	0	0	0	0
310-312 Northern Avenue	New Boston Seafood	72560	0	72560	0	0	0	0
327-333 Northern Avenue	ICCNE LLC	142110	0	0	0	0	0	142110
One Au Bon Pain Way	ABP Corp.	43992	29992	0	0	14000	0	0
<b>Totals</b>		<b>4379182</b>	<b>1250944</b>	<b>1043434</b>	<b>557566</b>	<b>264587</b>	<b>195536</b>	<b>1067115</b>
		<b>100%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>24%</b>

**tab. 2 Main activities within Boston Marine Industrial Park**

## D\_ CONCLUSIONS

The Boston Marine Industrial Park represents one of the most successful initiative in the entire New England area from the Public-Private Partnership point of view. Started more than 30 years ago it is still on going. Here Public and Private sectors work jointly with the main objective to ensure economic growth and development for the city of Boston.

Efforts are strongly supported by the City of Boston and its economic initiatives that focus on this particular area.

More than 3000 jobs created, more than 300 companies are located within the BMIP boundaries, numbers that increase if we extend the area to the Boston Innovation District.

Companies that need to relocate their activities or are looking for a new one are addressed to invest in this area thanks the advantages offered by the BRA/EDIC.

A well supplied area to whom it concerns infrastructures, nearby downtown open to local and regional markets.

A possible threat could be represented by the high number of trucks in the area, that could increase the air pollution especially for the community of South Boston.

However the City of Boston is working on this item thanks to its Climate Change policy.

South Boston community is really important for the initiative. Many residents are employed in the park. Within the "Lease Contract" is asked to companies to hire Bostonian residents, minorities people and people who are under the poverty level status. These measures are significant for the community. They will increase the wellness of the area from an economic and first of all from a social point of view.

There are not significant modification of the urban environment. The area changed over time because it was a Navy Base. Few old buildings remain. New ones were built by privates that within the Lease Contract have to specify the project and respect City Zoning Code and limitations.

### D.2. RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER INITIATIVES

BMIP initiative is well integrated with all the City of Boston initiatives. Economic initiatives such as Boston Innovation district, GreenTech or LifeTech suggest to companies to locate their offices or light industrial activities in the BMIP area.

Other initiatives are ensured by the cooperation among City Agencies that cooperate with the EDIC in a networked way.

### D.3. RELEVANCE OF THE EXPERIENCE

Generally it is difficult to compare US PPP forms with the European ones. In this case the key factor is represented by the high level of flexibility of the entire system: law, economy, planning.

All these aspects are intertwined in common strategic vision.

Partnership in this area is really strong and convenient for both of the actors involved. Public sector pursue its objectives of economic development and job creation through the attraction and retention of businesses that are interested to locate here their activities to obtain advantages. These advantages are not strictly linked with funds but with characteristics that can help businesses to come out from this economic crisis period.



## **E\_REFERENCES**

### **Bibliography**

- EDIC (2010)**, Financial Statements and Auditor's Report  
**BRA (1996)**, Article 80 - Development Review and Approval  
**BRA (2006)**, Neighborhood Business Patterns  
**BRA (2011)**, Demographic and Socio-economic Trends in Boston: What we've learned from the latest Census Data  
**BRA (2011)**, The Boston Economy in 2010  
**BRA/City of Boston (2000)**, South Boston Waterfront District - Municipal Harbor PPlan - Harbor PPlan of the City of Boston  
**BRA/City of Boston (1999)**, Seaport Public Realm Plan  
**BRA/EDIC (1999)**, Final Master Plan Marine Industrial Park  
**EDIC (1976)**, Economic Development Plan for the Boston Marine Industrial Park  
Greentech Boston, Investigating investment in Boston's Innovation District, The American Business Journal Vol 3, No 2, 2011  
**Port of Boston (1996)**, Economic Development Plan

### **Websites**

- Boston Innovation District  
<http://www.innovationdistrict.org/>  
Boston Redevelopment Authority  
<http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority>  
Boston Marine Industrial Park  
<http://www.bostonmarineindustrialpark.com/>  
Boston Marine Park Business Association  
<http://bmpba.org/home.asp>  
GreenTech Boston  
<http://www.greentech.org>  
Norman B. Leventhal Map Center at the Boston Public Library  
<http://maps.bpl.org/events>  
Massachusetts General Laws  
<http://www.malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws>  
MBTA  
<http://www.mbts.com>  
US Census  
<http://www.census.gov/>



## Glossary

<b>CLUDs</b>	Commercial Local Urban Districts
<b>CZM</b>	Costal Zone Management
<b>BEC</b>	Boston Economic Corporation
<b>BIDFA</b>	Boston Industrial Development and Financing Authority
<b>BLC</b>	Boston Local Corporation
<b>BRA</b>	Boston Redevelopment Authority
<b>BMIP</b>	Boston Marine Industrial Park
<b>EDA</b>	Economic Development Area
<b>EDIC</b>	Economic Development Industrial Corporation
<b>DPA</b>	Designated Port Area
<b>NJT</b>	Neighborhood Job Trust
<b>MER</b>	Maritime Economic Reserve
<b>MEPA</b>	Massachusetts Environment Policy Act
<b>MGL</b>	Massachusetts General Laws
<b>PPP</b>	Public-Private Partnership

**Final Report – Assembly Square, Somerville – Luciano Zingali**

Assembly Square, a unique neighborhood district with a land area of 145 acres, is so named after the Ford Motor assembly plant that opened in 1926 and was an important employer in the Boston Metropolitan Area, particularly during World War II. The assembly plant was one of many industrial businesses that thrived in Assembly Square during the 1900's. Boston & Maine Railroad also owned large tracts of land in the district and many of the businesses received shipments by rail. The land was crisscrossed by spur tracks and there were few roadways. The Ford Motor Plant closed in 1958 and by the late 1970's, a number of other industrial businesses had closed as well.

The Assembly Square district is Somerville's largest commercial and industrial district with the greatest potential for redevelopment. Over the past two years, the City undertook an aggressive planning and redevelopment effort designed to convert this former industrial district to a transit oriented mixed-use "urban village." Assembly Square is directly accessible from Interstate 93 and State Route 28. It is approximately 1.25 miles from downtown Boston and a ten-minute walk from the Orange Line MBTA stations at Sullivan Square and Wellington. The Orange Line and two commuter rail lines pass through the district. Assembly Square also contains waterfront parcels located along the banks of the Mystic River. In 2000, the City completed a planning study of the district that recommended a total build out over 20 years of at least 6 million square feet of commercial and residential uses. Various public improvements are planned, including a new Orange Line MBTA station within the district, roadway improvements, renovations and expansion of a waterfront park, and improvements to pedestrian and bicycle access. The planning and redevelopment strategy for Assembly Square is to reduce reliance on retail use by encouraging higher density office, R&D, and residential uses. The primary use in Assembly Square recently has been large-scale retail. The City and community have shown a preference for a mixed-use development including office and residential uses centered on a new transit station.

The aim of the project is to revitalize an area that is of particular importance in the development plan of the city. Its proximity to Boston and Cambridge make Somerville a gravitational center capable of attracting tourism and new investment. This is the goal to achieve with this project, which not only create a new district but also a new use and capable of generating new functions for the city needed for its management and the possibility of developing through specific programs, the infrastructures that will enable the city to become a truly strategic hub in the Boston metropolitan area. The Public Private Partnership between the city and Develop allowed to share a journey to reach this goal within a few years that will change the face of the whole area. The resulting plan envisions a vibrant, mixed-use, urban neighborhood and commercial center providing significant local and regional benefits including 19,000 new jobs, increased tax revenues, market rate and affordable housing, improved access to transportation. Furthermore, the proximity to the shores of the Mystic River, allows ownership by the citizens of new recreational spaces opening the city to its waterfront.

The key industries in Somerville are health services, retail, business services and creative design. Somerville's local economic base is heavily influenced by three factors: its dense residential population, the nature of its commercial and industrial building stock, and its proximity to Boston. The high residential population supports vibrant retail (and eating/drinking) clusters across a number of small and medium size commercial squares. The service industries, health, business and creative design, are heavily integrated both through suppliers and customers with regional hubs in Boston and Cambridge. Somerville's small land area and dispersed development areas are better matched with niche firms and specialized offices than large headquarters, R&D facilities or big manufacturing operations. While not large in terms of people employed, a diverse group of industrial firms maintain the city's history of artisans craftsmanship.

Principles of the Long Term Vision shall include an articulation of best efforts to accelerate the development of office and research and development space in the Assembly Square, in light of the importance of those uses to the tax base and the creation of job opportunities in the City. Best efforts shall include, but are not limited to, creation of an office development strategy and the development of marketing plans aimed at potential research and development and office tenants; outreach to state and industry officials emphasizing the opportunities for development in the Assembly Square.

Assembly Square, once one of the largest employment centers in the region, has experienced significant economic upheavals over the last century. The area has evolved from an undeveloped area known as the “Mystic Flats”, to an industrial center focused on metal industries, automobile assembly and grocery distribution, to the largely vacant and underutilized area with three major regional retail stores that it is today. As the region continues to experience the effects of a strong economy, Assembly Square is ready to reinvent itself for the twenty-first century. A number of development proposals were put forward over the last two decades in the hopes of revitalizing the area, but few came to fruition. In particular, a 1979-1980 urban renewal initiative resulted in few redevelopment successes and some substantive failures.

In 1999, new proposals again emerged for large portions of the area. Prior to proceeding with the initial proposals, however, Mayor Dorothy A. Kelly Gay and the City decided to undertake a comprehensive planning effort for all of Assembly Square, and to establish a clear public policy to direct appropriate development.

This study takes a closer look at the opportunities and constraints of the area, including the historical, urban design, transportation and economic conditions, and creates a comprehensive strategy for a successful future for Assembly Square.

The purpose of this study is to give broad guidance to key public policy decisions and initiatives and to establish a general framework for future development. The framework includes an urban design concept for mixed use, ideas for revised street systems and new open space, recommendations for land use, and requirements for transportation improvements and for implementation.

This initiative will also be the basis for an Urban Renewal Plan amendment to the 1979 Assembly Square Urban Revitalization Plan. Revisions will be recommended that will reinforce conclusions of this study.

This initiative looks at the Assembly Square area in a broad context. Specific plans will emerge from both the private and public sector as development proceeds. These will require specific technical studies, such as traffic, utility, transportation and environmental analyses. Additionally, permitting at either the State or the City level will most likely require site plan review and an environmental impact review process.

These review processes require documentation of a detailed and technical nature about specific site and area issues.

This initiative proposes a balanced approach that addresses a range of reasonable goals and objectives for the City and the community. It is intended to be a pragmatic study regarding economic and physical conditions of the site both today and tomorrow. It is also intended to set new standards and expectations for the future so that an optimistic vision can be achieved.

This program was created by the City with community participation, through dozens of public working meetings and with a special Advisory Committee that met over many months. It would not exist without this participation, and its recommendations will not be realized without the community’s continued involvement and support of its principal conclusions.

Assembly Square, the largest developable area within the City of Somerville, represents an important opportunity for the City.

Situated approximately three miles from downtown Boston, Assembly Square is close to public transit, accessible from the highway system.

In the last years, the City, in conjunction with the private sector, has aggressively pursued the opportunity to revitalize the area. The 1980 Assembly Square Revitalization Plan and the 1994 Assembly Square Revitalization Master Plan were two prongs of this effort.

However, the site faces some obstacles as it seeks to realign itself for this new century.

The lack of a clearly identifiable image, difficult ownership patterns, irregular parcelization, limited roadway access, lack of public transit on site and environmental contaminations are some of the obstacles.

Yet the opportunities presented by Assembly Square are many, and the future of the site is met with high expectations for what it can become.

This approach has developed a vision of Assembly Square that is a mixed-use, twenty-four-hour district with tree-lined streets and community amenities throughout.

It envisions a vital district with retail, office and residential development along an active main street parkway. Additionally, it envisions expanded and improved waterfront parks along the Mystic River.

The vision recommends an initial goal of a 6.6 million square foot development volume in the area, with full consideration to factors such as roadway capacity, traffic impact, real estate market and residents' concerns.

The principles of the vision are:

1. create diverse new uses
2. create jobs, tax revenues and amenities for Somerville
3. create a place at Assembly Square
4. strengthen links to the region
5. become an alternative to the "downtown" or to the "suburb"
6. enhance the environment
7. become a development leader for the region
8. create additional open space
9. improve the water quality of the Mystic River and the character of the waterfront.

The planning area is bounded by the Mystic River to the north and the northeast, the City of Boston and the City of Somerville jurisdiction line to the southeast, Interstate Highway 93 to the southwest, and Fellsway(Rt. 28) to the northwest.

In the 17th century, the southern bank of the Mystic River, a low-lying tidal marsh and wetlands area bordered by uplands further south in the current Ten Hills neighborhood, was avoided by the early settlers because of poorly draining clay soils. The highland site on Ten Hills offered better agricultural land and the first Governor of Massachusetts, John Winthrop, chose it for the site of his farmstead. The location of the Ten Hills site on the Mystic River made it a natural choice for the transport of people and goods, and the first seagoing vessel built in this region was launched from there. Trade and transport led to an expansion of the area's Ten Hills and Middlesex Canal in 1852 Mystic River and East Somerville in 1870 Ford Assembly Plant Assembly Square and McGrath Highway economy and population.



Ten Hills and Middlesex Canal in 1852



Mystic River and East Somerville in 1870



Ford Assembly Plant

The construction of the Middlesex Canal at the end of the 18th century accelerated this process. By the early 1800's, there were 10 shipyards along the Mystic River. The area had

developed into a transportation corridor from Boston to the region. At mid-century, rail surpassed the canal as the most efficient mode of transport and the construction of two railroads across Somerville in 1845 and 1854, along with the opening of a station at Sullivan Square, brought even more development to the area.

But it was not until the construction of the McGrath Highway in 1925 that full industrial development, albeit short-lived, took hold in Somerville.

The Ford Motor Company built a plant here in 1926, and other industries, including First National Stores, a grocery manufacturing, soon followed. Within the next 30 years, Assembly Square remained one of the largest employment centers in the region. However, in 1958, as a result of the failure of the Ford Edsel and the change of Ford's manufacturing strategies, the Assembly Plant was closed. It hurt the area both economically and physically, taking away hundreds of jobs and leaving a vast complex of empty manufacturing buildings. First National moved into the Assembly Plant buildings shortly after Ford left. By the late 1950's and early 1960's, industries were already making the choice to move to suburban locations along newly constructed highways, where land costs were lower. The construction of I-93 segregated the uses on both sides of the highway and significantly reduced its access and visibility from the surrounding areas. In 1976, First National closed its operations, marking the end of Assembly Square as a major industrial employment center.

In 1979 the City prepared an Urban Renewal Plan (the "Assembly Square Revitalization Plan") in an effort to assist in redevelopment of the former Ford plant and the Assembly Square area. The Plan was approved by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Community and Development (currently the Department of Housing and Community Development) and adopted in 1980. Under the direction of the Plan, the area's focus began to shift to retail: the old Ford Plant was converted into the Assembly Square Mall, the old First National Executive Office building was converted into office space, and a new cinema was constructed adjacent to it. Two new roadways, Assembly Square Drive and New Road, were constructed to improve access to these areas.

A linear park was constructed as part of Metropolitan District Commission sewer pipe construction along Mystic River.

In 1994, the Office of Housing and Community Development prepared the Assembly Square Revitalization Master Plan to formulate an approach to revitalizing Assembly Square. Capital improvements, zoning changes, and a land acquisition strategy were suggested in the Master Plan for the area.

In 1996, Shopco furniture, the last owner of the Assembly Square mall, defaulted on its mortgage, and Aetna Insurance took control of the property. By 1999, only one major tenant, K-Mart, remained in the mall.

Over the last decade, economic development dollars have been focused once again on urban areas. In the Boston region, there have been several examples of successful urban reinvestments. The tremendous advances in information technology of recent years have opened up great economic opportunities for places like Assembly Square. Several initiatives were proposed to improve the investment environment and to restore the area's economic prosperity as follows:

1. Assembly Square Plaza (1990): an office, retail and hotel mixed-use development proposal;
2. Traffic Improvements on Mystic Avenue and Route 28 at the I-93 Interchange (1993): potential traffic improvement alternatives for the interchange;
3. Stadium Convention Center Complex (1993): a stadium with multiuse convention space, hotel, retail development proposal;
4. Costco Wholesale (1994): a retail development proposal;
5. Stop & Shop Development (1995): a grocery retail development proposal;
6. Tage Inn (1998): a 156-room hotel;
7. Riverside Square (1999): a box retail power center development proposal;
8. IKEA Home Furniture Store (1999): a furniture retail store development proposal;

9. Assembly Square Mall Redevelopment (2000): an office, retail, hotel and large foot print retail development proposal.

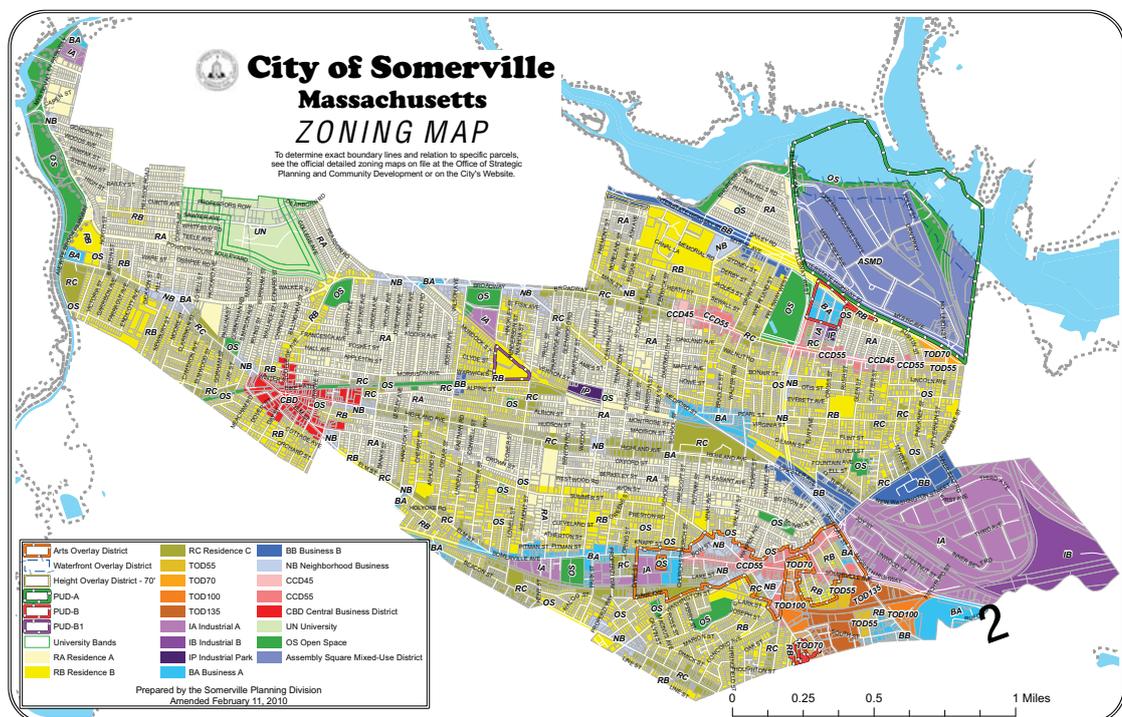
Only a few of these initiatives were realized.

New models of redevelopment have broadened the horizon of possibilities for Assembly Square.

Non-traditional and traditional mixes of uses, such as information technology, research and development, office, retail, housing and culture, can work together to build a strong foundation of a thriving new economy. Recent efforts at revitalization in Somerville show that the City and its residents recognize the value of their community: its history, natural amenities and most importantly, its waterfront.

With continued investment and a focus on quality of life, Assembly Square can become a desirable location that offers amenity, convenience and choice.

Recently, the development community has recognized the potential of the Assembly Square area. Several proposals for retail development appeared, in large part because of the strategic location of Assembly Square and the availability of developable land.



The community raised important concerns that the initial proposals would not fulfill the greatest potential for Somerville.

The Assembly Square area is well situated. It is close to downtown Boston and one of the most important highway corridors in the region, Interstate Highway 93. The area is highly visible from the highway, has the potential to be easily accessible, and has beautiful waterfront views. Its development potential would appear to be high.

An interesting question was brought up during the planning process: "How can Assembly Square be situated along the highest travel volume highway in the region, yet remain largely unnoticed by the travelers who have passed by the area every day for decades?"

One obstacle was the negative image and the vagueness of Assembly Square's identity.

There was no singular specific image associated with the site, and most of the places that register in people's memory are stores: Home Depot, Loews Cinema, and other retail users. While the site is valuable and located three miles outside the financial district of downtown Boston, adjacent to the high-tech center of the region.

The waterfront park and Draw Seven Park are two important public elements in the area. They contain spectacular views of the water and offer recreational opportunities for Somerville

residents. However, because both parks are poorly maintained and have few amenities, they get minimal use.

Improving the quality of the environment is not just a function of creating more open space, it is also a function of improving the quality and the usage of the existing open space. Lack of pedestrian and bicycle connections from the surrounding residential neighborhoods to the parks is another key reason that the parks get so little use.

The Assembly Square planning area is located close to both local and regional transportation networks, including the Interstate Highway 93 and the Sullivan Square MBTA station. However, despite the proximity of these transportation facilities, the area does not enjoy easy roadway or transit accessibility. Assembly Square had been physically and visually isolated from surrounding residential neighborhoods by significant physical barriers that have made pedestrian and bicycle access very difficult.

Public Transit Service MBTA Orange Line and Commuter Rail (Haverhill, Ipswich / Newburyport and Gloucester line) tracks run in a north-south direction on the eastern edge of the Assembly Square site. Some Commuter Rail tracks then branch off in a northeasterly direction, along the southern edge of the Draw Seven Park, to connect up with the North Shore line. In addition, Sullivan Square station is served by eleven MBTA bus routes, including three routes (#90, #92 & #95) that stop close to or within Assembly Square. However, at the closest MBTA Orange Line station, Sullivan Square, there is no Commuter Rail stop, and the Orange Line provides the only rapid transit service to the Assembly Square area. The Sullivan Square station itself is approximately 0.2 miles from the southern tip of the planning area and 1 mile from the northern tip of the planning area. This walking distance is exacerbated by the absence of direct pedestrian routes, and also by the significantly degraded physical condition of the pedestrian facilities. Hence, the planning area is not well supported by rapid transit service in terms of pedestrian connections and an inappropriate walking distance to the farthest point of the planning area until this moment.

The planning area is separated from the neighboring area by the regional highways Orange Line stations and their interval distances that surround Assembly Square. Access to Assembly Square and the Mystic River waterfront is also extremely limited for pedestrians and bicycles. The at-grade area underneath the elevated highways provides extremely poor pedestrian environment in terms of physical condition, aesthetics, lighting and security.

This is what the community thinks of itself in Somerville: "People who know Somerville today won't be surprised to learn that our independent and entrepreneurial identity has roots that run deep. From day one, we've been a gateway for immigrants, a haven for creative thinkers, and a place that families of all means can establish their homes. Somerville's people turn the notion of the anonymous urban environment on its head, building and expanding connections between neighbors, business owners and civic leaders that are the envy of communities everywhere".

In this way born the Somervision Comprehensive Plan!

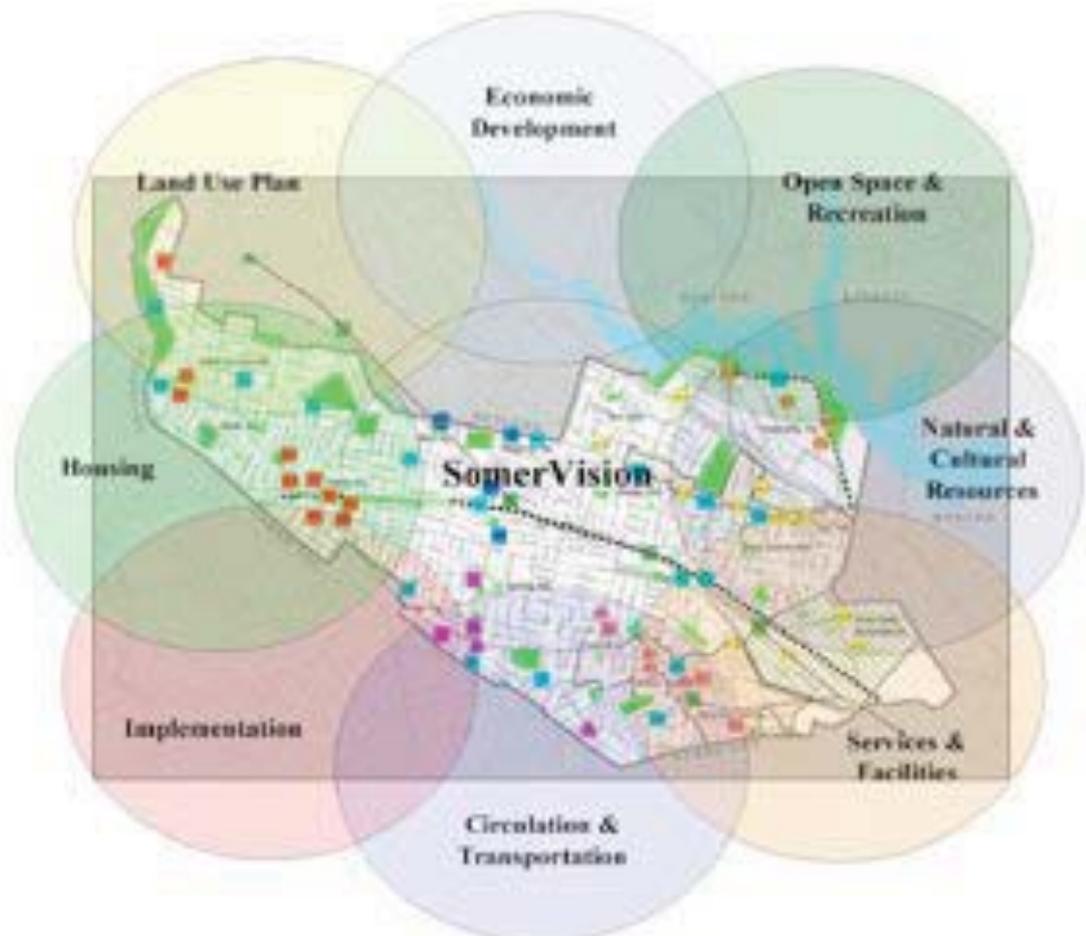
The SomerVision Comprehensive Plan continues the revolutionary tradition of public participation in civic affairs; Somerville has never prepared a long-range, participatory plan for the future.

The citizens know that their city is always changing, and that they can harness the energy of this change for the good of their people: better public schools, more choices in housing and transportation, more local jobs and services. The Comprehensive Plan was produced by the Somerville community, for the Somerville community to use as a blueprint for a more sustainable, more equitable, and more exciting future. Comprehensive planning is challenging for a city government.

Governments frequently work in the present, responding to existing demands for city services and regulations (often with severely limited resources). Since critical functions are handled by

specialized departments, attempts to think long-term are often limited to one specific subject: education; sewer service; public safety; business recruitment.

Comprehensive planning is all about balance. It helps residents and public officials to think about transportation, housing, public services, open space and economic development simultaneously, while assuring that public policy is sensitive to all needs and opportunities, both today and tomorrow.



Somerville's character reflects the unique identity of each of its great neighborhoods. The Comprehensive Plan will support the City and its partners in efforts to reinforce Somerville's excellent quality of life through vital, healthy, inclusive, and distinctive urban neighborhoods that are the best possible places to live, work, do business, learn, serve, and play.

In every phase of its history, Somerville has been a gateway for immigrants. According to US Census data, foreign-born residents represent nearly 30% of the total population. The most recent generation of immigrants is primarily composed of people arriving from Brazil, El Salvador, Haiti and China. Each of Somerville's immigrant groups adds economic and social value to the community.

Somerville is fortunate to have a great network of business organizations. The Somerville Chamber of Commerce, East Somerville Main Streets, Union Square Main Streets and Somerville Local First play a key role in supporting entrepreneurs through advocacy, marketing, and technical assistance. In the future, Business Improvement Districts are likely to be another organizational model through which business owners can work together to revitalize Somerville's commercial neighborhoods.

Economic development is about people: local businesses, local jobs, and tax revenues that fund public services for Somerville residents. Somerville has few jobs relative to the number of workers living in the city. Implementing this Comprehensive Plan will encourage growing

Somerville businesses to stay here, and will attract the next generation of entrepreneurs to create jobs in its community.

Three are the keywords of the new vision of Somerville: Conserve, Enhance, Transform; as well as:

1. *Promote* municipal financial self-determination and reduce fiscal dependence on state aid and residential taxes and fees.
2. *Make* Somerville a regional employment center with a mix of diverse and high-quality jobs.
3. Support a business-friendly environment to attract and retain a diverse mix of businesses that can start here, grow here and stay here.
4. *Invest* in the talents, skills and education of people to support growth and provide opportunities to residents of all social and economic levels.
5. *Link* our corridors, squares and growth districts to support future development and economic activity.
6. *Transform* key opportunity areas, such as Assembly Square, Inner Belt, Brickbottom, Boynton Yards and the southeastern portion of Union Square into dynamic, mixed-use and transit-oriented districts that serve as economic engines to compliment the neighborhoods of Somerville.
7. *Facilitate* thoughtfully-designed, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development and reuse opportunities in commercial corridors, squares and around transit stations that are sensitive to neighborhood context, and serve existing and future residents and businesses.

In this changing environment we can locate what is considered the key project of the rebirth of Somerville, namely the transformation of Assembly Square in Assembly Row.

Assembly Row is a brand-new neighborhood; designed to complement the legacy of Boston and Cambridge, the Assembly Row neighborhood is a mix of retail, restaurant, entertainment, residences and office designed to appeal to savvy, value conscious and discerning consumers. Boston and surrounding 30-mile radius are home to 4 million consumers and, host to more than 26.2 million tourist annually, who spend over \$7.9 billion. That means millions of people will shop, eat and play at Assembly Row.

In 1980, the City of Somerville declared the Assembly Square District to be blighted, substandard, and decadent and adopted a 20-year urban renewal plan. The cornerstone of the urban renewal plan was the rehabilitation of the former auto assembly plant into a retail mall known as the "Assembly Square Mall". Other development included a new Home Depot (home furniture). In 1999, the internationally known Swedish home furnishings store, IKEA, purchased two former industrial sites on the Mystic River waterfront. IKEA obtained permits for its proposed retail store; however, the permits were challenged in court by community members opposed to a "big box" use on the waterfront, with the result that redevelopment of the site was stalled for a number of years.

The company hoped to open their first New England branch of international chain store in Somerville in summer 2001. MVTF (Mystic View Task Force), citizens association, vigorously disapproved of the plan, claiming that big box retail engendered too much traffic for too little tax revenue, and offered only low-paying, dead end employment opportunities. Mayor Kelly Gay called for a roundtable discussion in October 1999.

During the meeting, the Mayor called for developers to wait for the results of the comprehensive plan – which had been commissioned from the Boston Cecil Group- before resubmitting plans for review. Developers, however, were eager to begin construction, and soon submitted revised plans anyway.

Six months later, the Cecil Group master plan was released. The plan used the Back Bay and Post Office Square in Boston as examples of mixed-used development with open space as the kind of place that could be built on the whole of Assembly Square.



The Cecil Group Masterplan

MVTF proponents continued to argue that any plan included any big-box retail would prevent the practicality of serving the area by mass transit.

In 2000, the Somerville Redevelopment Authority (SRA) gained title to the 9.3 acre of former railroad parcel in Assembly Square and filed a Request for Proposal for the developers. At the same time, the City initiated an extensive public planning process, producing the "2000 Planning Study" which set out a new vision for Assembly Square as a 24-hour, mixed use district with residential, retail, office, cinema, restaurant, hotel, and recreational open space uses. In 2002, the SRA (Somerville Redevelopment Authority) and the City adopted a 20-year extension of the urban renewal plan with the goal of transforming Assembly Square into the lively, mixed-use district described in the 2000 Planning Study. Assembly Square was rezoned to promote the mixed-use concept, and design guidelines and a design review committee were created to provide additional assistance in helping foster the new vision.



In 2005, the Federal Realty Investment (FRIT) purchased the Assembly Square Mall and other properties adjacent to the mall; 220,000-square-foot retail/industrial complex. In 2006, FRIT redeveloped the mall and opened the newly refurbished mall as Assembly Square Marketplace. Later that year, Mayor Curtatone decided to bring together FRIT and IKEA to work together and come up with a reasonable redevelopment plan with a brand new vision. FRIT and IKEA agreed to trade parcels, moving IKEA inland from its initial site and leaving the waterfront open for FRIT to create pedestrian friendly, mixed-use development. This new plan was welcomed by those who had previously opposed the IKEA development. The land swap was executed in October 2009 solidifying the vision of the district. The other part of the redevelopment plan includes an addition of a station to the Orange Line (train line). The new station will give the Orange Line a grand total of 20 stops, along side this, the station will serve as an attraction to residents/consumers, making living/shopping in the newly redeveloped area commute friendly. The MBTA board just recently approved this agreement with developer Federal Realty Investment Trust which enables construction of the new station at Somerville's Assembly Square.

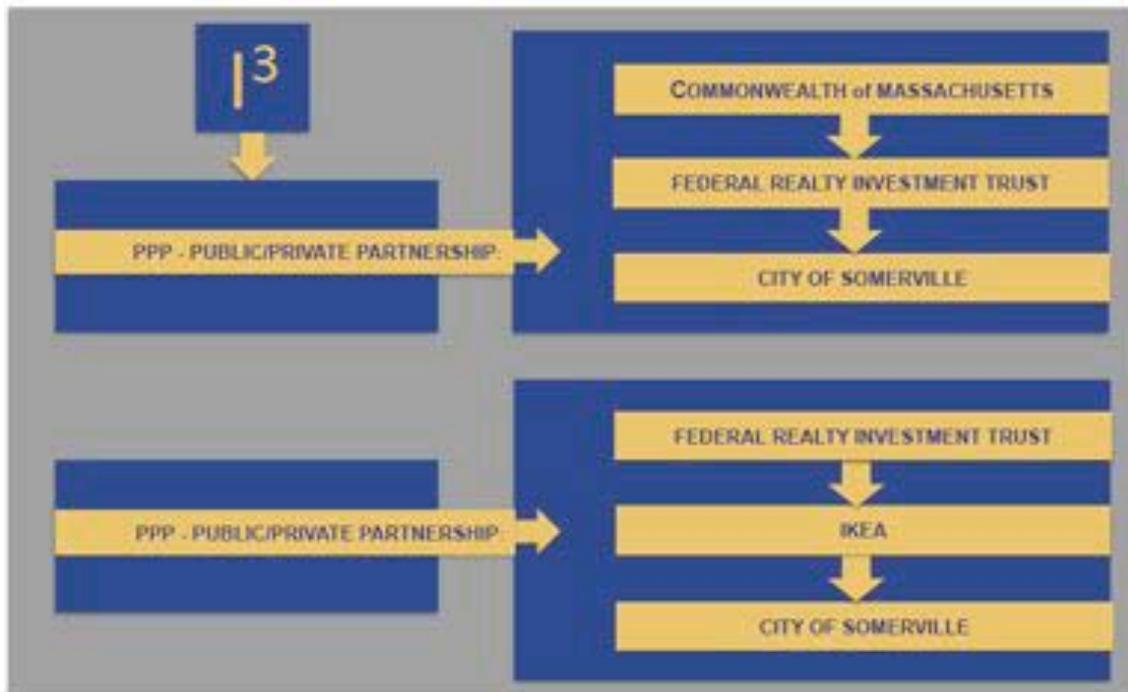


Federal Realty investment Trust is an equity real estate investment trust specializing in the ownership, management, development and redevelopment of high quality retail assets. Federal Realty's portfolio, (excluding joint venture properties) contains approximately 18.6 million square feet located primarily in strategically selected metropolitan markets in the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic and California. In addition, the Trust has an ownership interest in approximately 1.0 million square feet of retail space through a joint venture in which the trust has a 30% interest. Their operating portfolio, excluding joint venture properties, was 93.4% leased to national, regional and local retailers as of June 30, 2011, with no single tenant accounting for more than approximately 2.6% of annualized base rent. Federal Realty has paid quarterly dividends to its shareholders continuously since its founding in 1962, and has increased its dividend rate for 44 consecutive years, the longest record in the REIT (Real Estate Investment Trust) industry. Federal Realty is an S&P MidCap 400 company and its shares are traded on the NYSE under the symbol FRT.

The project is expected to result in an estimated \$1.36 billion construction investment in the City to include new public and private infrastructure, publically accessible open space, public facilities and public benefits. The project is forecasted to generate \$24 million in annual municipal tax revenue and \$16.7 million in annual state tax revenue. It's expected to generate an estimated 9,700 permanent jobs, 10,300 construction jobs, while retaining 590 existing permanent jobs.

The other part of redevelopment that by this time had not received much funding was the new station on the Orange Line. The MBTA project is expected to cost an estimate of \$53.7 million. The developer is expected to put in \$15 million. State Representative Michael Capuano, Democrat of Somerville, had previously already secured authorization for \$25 million in federal funds for the train stop, however the Congress itself has only provided \$1 million and does not seem to be in any rush to provide the remaining fund needed to start the project. On the other hand, to keep the project from stalling any further, the state Department of Transportation and the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization have put a hold on federal highway funds. The Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, after seeing the potential for thousands of construction and long term jobs, have also decided to put in infrastructure

money. So, the design of the MBTA Orange Line Station in Assembly Square is at 100% engineering design and is expected to be ready for bid by spring 2011, but is still under construction. Currently, \$50 million is required to build the station including two head houses. The Developer, in partnership with the City of Somerville, proposes designation of the site as an Economic Development District pursuant to the I-Cubed Program in order to secure \$50 million in state financing toward an estimated \$111.5 million in required Public Infrastructure Improvements excluding costs associated with the Infrastructure Investment Incentive Economic Development Proposal – Assembly on the Mystic Final Proposal dated October 27, 2009 design and construction of the new MBTA Orange Line station. I-Cubed financing is proposed in two Bond Phases. Debt Service will be supported by New State Tax Revenues generated by Project Components that will be constructed in phases in coordination with infrastructure work. In the Preliminary Certificate of the Commissioner, the Department of Revenue has certified revenue projections demonstrating New State Tax Revenues adequate to provide greater than 1.5x Debt Service Coverage in compliance with the I-Cubed Statute as well as 801 CMR 51.00 and the Department of Revenue TIR 09-10, superseding TIR 08-18. In addition to ongoing revenue benefits to the Commonwealth and to the City of Somerville, the Project will also result in over 9,700 direct new permanent jobs and over 10,300 direct new construction jobs.



The Developer proposes to redevelop 66.5 acres of land in the Assembly Square area of Somerville, Massachusetts with a new mixed-use urban development providing a new MBTA Orange Line station and consisting of approximately 2,100 residential units, 1.78 million sq. ft. of office and 835,000 sq. ft. of retail space (including restaurants and cinema), and a hotel. When completed, the Project will include over 9,000 total parking spaces, most of which will be located in above- or below-grade parking structures. Construction is planned in multiple phases. In addition to the Developer's \$15 million investment matched by \$25 million in federal funding for the MBTA Orange Line station, the Project will include an anticipated \$44.5 million in private investment plus the following targeted public investments: \$15 million from the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Federal Stimulus); a \$2 million Growth District Initiative grant; and \$50 million in I-Cubed funding that has received preliminary approval, for a total of \$111.5 million.



I-Cubed is a financing arrangement whereby the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the municipality and the private developer share the cost and risk associated with the construction of public infrastructure needed to support a certified economic development project.

The intent of I-Cubed financing program is that the new state tax revenues generated from the project cover the costs of the public infrastructure improvements needed to support the project. To that end, only new state tax revenue or revenue that would be lost to the state if the project were not developed will be included in the evaluation. The following tax revenue will not be included: state tax revenue that replaces lost revenues from businesses that were replaced by the new economic development project; existing state tax revenues that relocate from another part of the state into the economic development district unless it can be shown that the business would have relocated out of state but for the new project; or state tax revenues from new or expanded businesses within the economic development district that replace other similar businesses within the state.

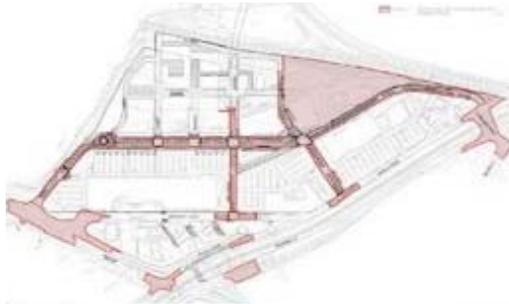
This Proposal anticipates total principal debt of \$50M in two Bond Phases, the First Bond Issuance in the amount of \$20 million and the Second Bond Issuance in the amount of \$30 million. The Preliminary Certificate of the Massachusetts Development Finance Agency dated July 20, 2009 indicates that the Bonds will have a 30-year term with 5% interest, including an initial interest-only period of 20 months (First Bond) and up to 60 months (Second Bond).

The First Bond Phase of Public Infrastructure Improvements to accompany the Economic Development Project includes construction, reconstruction and relocation of portions of Assembly Square Drive to create a newly aligned and continuous connection from Route 28 (Fellsway) at the northern limits of the Project to Mystic Avenue to the south. This phase of the Project will also include the construction of the IKEA retail store and IKEA Way and improvements to Foley Street, New Road, Route 28 (Fellsway), Lombardi Street, Mystic Avenue and Middlesex Avenue. These infrastructure improvements include both roadway and underground utility construction and upgrades that will support both the IKEA phase of the Project as well as subsequent phases of the development. Below are brief descriptions of the infrastructure improvements for the First Bond Phase.

The Second Bond Phase of Public Infrastructure Improvements that will accompany the Economic Development Project includes the majority of the mixed-use portion of the development generally located to the east of Assembly Square Drive and North of the newly constructed IKEA Way as well as some limited off-site Public Infrastructure Improvements. The

mixed-use portion of the Project will consist of the internal circulation roadways that are arranged in a block grid with east-west and north-south orientation and utility infrastructure that will support the proposed Future phase of the development. Below are brief descriptions of the Public Infrastructure Improvements, listed by street, for the Second Bond Phase.

This idea support the revitalization of city and town centers and neighborhoods by promoting development that is compact, conserves land, protects historic resources, and integrates uses. Encourage remediation and reuse of existing sites, structures, and infrastructure rather than new construction in undeveloped areas. Create pedestrian friendly districts and neighborhoods that mix commercial, civic, cultural, educational, and recreational activities with open spaces and homes.



First Bond Phase



Second Bond Phase

The Project encourages reuse and rehabilitation of existing infrastructure, such as public transit, roadway and utility infrastructure, rather than the construction of new infrastructure in undeveloped areas. The Project is a redevelopment of a brownfields site. This Project has been planned such that the District is expected to meet the certification requirements for LEED-ND (Neighborhood Development), including mixed use, redevelopment of a brownfield site, the addition of a new rapid-transit station (MBTA Orange Line), and abundant pedestrian and bicycle connections.

The Project promotes equitable sharing of the benefits and burdens of development. New job opportunities and a new MBTA Orange Line station provide significant regional benefits to residents and visitors. Housing will be offered in affordable and market rate units.

This project falls under the categories of TOD *Transit Oriented Development*.

The *TOD*, is a mixed-use community that encourages people to live near transit services and to decrease their dependence on driving (Still 2002, Bernick and Cervero 1997), or “The practice of developing or intensifying residential land use near rail stations, moderate and high-density housing, along with complementary public uses, jobs, retail and services, are concentrated in mixed-use developments at strategic points along the regional transit systems”(Cathorpe 1993, Boarnet and Crane 1998A, Salvensen 1996).

An equitable approach to transit-oriented development seeks to share broadly the benefits of this major public investment in transit access, ensuring that both existing and future residents can benefit through expanded affordable and accessible housing options, opportunities for local business development, affordable access to regional employment opportunities, and enhancing anchors for community life.

There are a set of equitable development strategies, many of which are already being deployed in Somerville that can be focused around the opportunity for equitable transit-oriented development.

The adjacent neighborhoods that would benefit from the Project and its associated Public Infrastructure Improvements are Environmental Justice communities and home to significant low income and minority populations. Providing resources to these communities is one of the objectives defined in the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs Policy on Environmental Justice.

The Project will protect and enhance the Mystic River Reservation and provide connections to adjacent open space; also includes the creation of pocket parks and landscaped plazas, thus

increasing the quantity and quality of urban open space in Somerville. The Project promotes development that respects and enhances Somerville's riverfront. The Project will improve the water quality in the Mystic River and result in remediation of a brownfield.

Foster the development of housing, particularly multifamily and smaller single-family homes, in a way that is compatible with a community's character and vision and with providing new housing choices for people of all means.

The Project includes construction of over 2,100 units of new housing to meet the needs of people of a wide range of abilities, income levels and household types, also, will provide a mix of rental and condominium housing options including affordable housing units pursuant to the City's Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance.

The multi-modal nature of the Project provides vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle and transit improvements, and thereby increases access to transportation options.

Maintain and expand transportation options that maximize mobility, reduce congestion, conserve fuel and improve air quality. Prioritize rail, bus, boat, rapid and surface transit, shared-vehicle and shared-ride services, bicycling, and walking. Invest strategically in existing and new passenger and freight transportation infrastructure that supports sound economic development consistent with smart growth objectives.

Attract businesses and jobs to locations near housing, infrastructure, and transportation options. Promote economic development in industry clusters. Expand access to education, training, and entrepreneurial opportunities. Support the growth of local businesses, including sustainable natural resource-based businesses, such as agriculture, forestry, clean energy technology, and fisheries.

Other objective is maximize energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities; support energy conservation strategies, local clean power generation, distributed generation technologies, and innovative industries.

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and consumption of fossil fuels.

The Developer agreed to investigate and employ, to the extent commercially reasonable, energy co-generation technologies within the Amended and Restated Assembly Square Development Covenant (the "Covenant"), executed with the City of Somerville on December 14, 2006.

The IKEA store is being developed to meet the criteria for the LEED-NC (New Construction) certification. IKEA has a commitment to environmentally responsible business practices and extends this commitment to its retail developments. IKEA received a Feasibility Study grant from Massachusetts Technology Collaborative to determine ways to maximize photovoltaic use as well as the feasibility of green power purchasing from its utility.

The location and form of proposed development is fully consistent with "smart growth" and sustainable development principles advocated at every level of government, and exemplify the Developer's commitment to achieving a development outcome in Somerville that will achieve broadly supported public policy objectives.

The Project is expected to result in substantial long-term benefits to the City of Somerville and to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and will serve as a model of large-scale transit-oriented urban redevelopment.





Assembly Square Model

## Conclusion

The project is part of a wider regeneration of the city of Somerville. Assembly Square is the center of change, which enabled the design right joining the network in the city. The future of the site not only represents an exceptional event, given the duration of ten years of discussions on the implementation, but also the turning point of an area that seemed to have lost all hope of rebirth. Watch Assembly Square in a broad time frame, allowing not only to understand the true value of identity, but also the attractiveness of a catchment area which will transit the area itself. Its proximity to Boston and Cambridge, Somerville will make the new business area, and with the financial heart of Boston will represent the true face of change. The story, the story for decades, the struggles, the opposition seem to be the result of a passion for a marginal place but at the same time crucial to the rebirth of the city and the reappropriation of citizens.

Visual barriers, attempts to reconnect to the land seem finally won a battle, the goal towards the desire for redemption of an abandoned place and that both represented in the social history of the place.

The desire to redeem a place with many vicissitudes, leads the consciousness of citizens to debate the major themes of regeneration and reuse the most appropriate to the welfare and community services, meetings, public debates, were not only the simple participation citizens in public affairs, but much more coming to dictate the parameters on which to forward the requests of the community.

Somerville has done and continues to make public transport and regeneration of the flag took place, and not operating on marginal areas, but strategically placed in the wide zoning which is the subject of studies and proposals.

Assembly Square and Union Square two major projects on which hinges the real turning point for the transport in cities and on which you play the real game of economic development, trade and employment in the community, embracing two subway lines represent the real

engine of growth and development closer increasingly in Boston and creating that system efficient and comprehensive infrastructure that will ensure the vitality of the new districts. The aim is to develop a network design that emphasizes the desire and timely economic and social redemption, and the employment needs of the community strengthens the image of the market places, and carry through projects of urban design that creates a unified, compatible scale pedestrian shopping areas defining aesthetically pleasing as well as strengthening the role of public places and facilities. Maintain an efficient and comprehensive infrastructure both public and private sectors also developing a comprehensive plan for parking management. We are dealing with a dynamic community that has struggled over the years against the economic recession, whose rebirth is emphasized by the clear message sent out: that make Somerville a great place to live, work, play and live well with the family. A solid community founded on a common identity, independent and participatory. Attached to their city and making it a unique place that has no equal in other American cities. Without the will to live passionately their city, they are making a place where we can carry out its activities by interacting with the big city, becoming a major center of attraction day and night! This is Somerville!!



The site under construction



Plant Project

References

Ackerman, Jerry. *Mall at Assembly Square Hits Auction Block*, Boston Globe 11/26/1996 pg D3.

Cecil Group, *The Assembly Square Planning Study*, October 2000.

Consensus Building Institute, *The Conflict Assessment; On the future on Assembly Square*, 8/25/2003

Fishman Sarah, *Somerville is focus of debate; 140 acre is ripe for development*, Boston Globe 8/22/1999

Flint Anthony, *Somerville test case for growth city in spotlight after Ikea deal*, Boston Globe, 10/29/2001

Grillo Thomas, *Somerville Mayor's Race; seeking solutions for Assembly Square*, Boston Globe 10/4/2003

*Economic Development Executive Summary, City of Somerville*, Office of Housing & Community Development, City of Somerville, June 2004

*Trends in Somerville: Transportation & Infrastructure Report*, Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development, City of Somerville, september 2009

*Implementing Transit. Oriented Development Strategies and Tools*, City of Somerville Citywide Planning Steering Committee, february 2010

*Somerville Equitable Transit Oriented Development Strategy*, Reconnecting America Center for Transit Oriented Development, may 2008

S. Annear, *Assembling Assembly Square "Stop"*, Metro article, 11/15/11

S.A. Heikin, B.Nessen, *Locked or liberated: East Somerville, a Transit Oriented Development Opportunity*, April 2010, Paper

*Locally driven public financing alternative to fund public works, infrastructure and development projects, Commonwealth of Massachusetts District Improvement Financing program, october 2010*

*Assembly Square. Design guidelines for the Public Realm, Office of Housing and Community development, City of Somerville, march 2002*

*Assembly on the Mystic in the city of Somerville, Commonwealth of Massachusetts Infrastructure Investment Incentive Program, october 2009 (Submitted to the Massachusetts Executive Office for Administration & Finance by federal Realty Investment Trust and the City of Somerville)*

*Assembly Square Revitalization Plan, 2002 Major Plan Change, Somerville Redevelopment Authority and Office of Housing and Community Development, september 2002*

B. Cullingworth, *Planning in the USA, policies, issues and processes*, Routledge, London 1997

## Websites

<http://www.somervillema.gov/>  
<http://www.federalrealty.com/>  
<http://mysticview.org/>  
<http://www.boston.com>  
<http://bostonglobe.com/>  
<http://www.somervillestep.org/>  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fwanBnz\\_i2w](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fwanBnz_i2w)  
<http://www.somervillecdc.org/>  
<http://www.somervillema.gov/departments/dpw>  
<http://www.malegislature.gov/>  
<http://www.aerodyne.com/application/particle-measurement>  
<http://somervilleresistat.blogspot.it/>  
<http://www.apa-ma.org/572>  
<http://www.healthcommunities.com/>

Thanks to:

Don Briggs, President Federal Realty Investment Trust, Boston  
Brad Rawson, City of Somerville  
Wig Zamore, Spokesman Mystic View Task Force and member of STEP  
Ellin Reisner, Member of Mystic View Task Force  
Steve Cecil, President of The Cecil Group

## Index of interviews

## Glossary

FRIT- Federal Realty Investment Trust  
STEP – Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership

# DOWNTOWN BOSTON BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

## SYNOPSIS

*The Downtown Boston Business Improvement District is the first BID established in Boston and one of the few in Massachusetts after the approval of the Massachusetts General Law - Chapter 400 (1994). It has been established in 2011 after 15 challenging years and after many failed attempts and it represents the strength of a solid finally achieved partnership: 528 property and business owners as well as different local authorities are committed to improve Boston Downtown area by providing supplemental services; in other words, it supports long-term enhanced maintenance while encouraging a general economic revitalization of the district, where the mix of commercial, hospitality, non-profit institutional and residential properties demanded a higher level of services than the City of Boston provided. At the same time, it aims at creating an eclectic mix of uses including small, leisure-oriented retail, restaurants, diverse residential and tourism-related activities and businesses.*

*Actually, at the end of 1990s Downtown Boston showed a high demand of drastic measures in order to halt an increasing decline and to prevent further drawbacks: although the neighbourhood was an important economic and financial district and a primary retail district, between the end of 1990s and 2010 some unexpected and underestimated factors – the proliferation of new retail forms, global economic dynamics, significant real estate development initiatives in the area, etc. – determined a deep change in the context and in its socioeconomic structure. Even though the local authorities tried to intervene in the area by promoting significant interventions, development projects and restorations, Downtown Boston demanded a renewed commitment, which finally led to the Downtown Boston BID.*

*Due to its long-term establishing process and to its short experience, the Downtown Boston BID experience is somewhat difficult to interpret, but it is worth discussing because of different reasons.*

*BID's boundaries include a 34-block area where premier financial businesses and government buildings are located, as well as public and private sector offices, general merchandise stores and small retail activities, famous and best-preserved Boston's historical landmarks, well-known hotels, theatres and nightlife venues. Thanks to such a varied programme of activities and structures, Downtown Boston has always attracted a diverse range of workers, shoppers, residents, visitors and tourists. The initiative has showed a positive connection with the area: it is strongly community-based and deeply related to the local authenticity, namely the initiative is supported by the district's bustling streets, the variety of active and unique places, people who live, work, play and cross the area every day.*

Moreover, the Downtown Boston BID is an interesting example of public-private partnership supporting urban and economic revitalization while promoting an innovative approach to the delivery of services: a wide range of stakeholders has been involved, therefore the BID is likely to meet a varied set of demands. At the same time, to build the partnership has required a strong public leadership; therefore, even if the Downtown Boston BID is publicly authorized and privately managed, it has been unusually promoted and supported in the start-up process and in its early stages by the City of Boston (precisely Boston's Mayor Thomas Menino) and the Boston Redevelopment Authority. In other words, this BID exists in deep relation with local authorities and public actors, being part of the collective action determining urban policies.

Finally, even though the initiative has been credited with transforming Downtown Boston into a cleaner, safer and more attractive place, improving pedestrian experience and enhancing local resources, it might be questioned if it is able to achieve the economic and urban revitalization while more demanding issues are affecting the area, such as controversial development initiatives and long-stalled real-estate projects.

## **DOWNTOWN BOSTON BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**

The *Downtown Boston Business Improvement District* is the first BID established in Boston and one of the few in Massachusetts. As a matter of fact, despite the wide spread of BIDs throughout the United States, Massachusetts permitted the establishment of BIDs just in 1994, by passing *Massachusetts General Law - Chapter 400*<sup>1</sup>.

The *Downtown Boston BID* belongs to non-profit development initiatives: it is a 501(c)6 non-profit corporation – Section 501(c) of the United States Internal Revenue Code (26 U.S.C. § 501(c)) – exempt from some federal income taxes. It has been created in 2011 by 528 property and business owners committed to improve Boston Downtown area and to promote it as a vibrant and thriving destination by providing supplementary services.

The *Downtown Boston BID* serves a 34-block area of almost 40 ha and 4148 residents<sup>2</sup>. The district includes the *Downtown Crossing* (the retail centre of the district), the *Ladder District* (known for its popular restaurants and nightlife), the *Theater District* (with three historical landmarks – the Paramount, the Modern Theatre, the Boston Opera House) and part of the *Financial District* (Figure 1). This downtown area – a major hub of Boston public transportation network – is both a local and an international crossroad; it offers a wide range of amenities, historical architecture, office spaces, retail options, cultural, dining and entertainment choices. It is known for its walkability, as well as its proximity to government institutions and major convention centres; the area faces the Olmsted-designed parklands (Boston Common and Public Gardens) and the Rose Kennedy Greenway and it is

<sup>1</sup> Four other cities in Massachusetts have established BIDs: Springfield and Hyannis (1998), Westfield (2007), Northampton (2009).

<sup>2</sup> Source: [hubmaps.cityofboston.gov/MyNeighborhood](http://hubmaps.cityofboston.gov/MyNeighborhood) [Access: 28.01.2012]

in direct connection with the Boston Waterfront and the new Seaport Innovation District (Downtown Boston BID, 2011a; 2011b).

#### **BEFORE THE INITIATIVE** (figure 2, 3, 4, 5)

Although Downtown Boston was originally a residential area (BRA, 2005), it quickly became an important economic and financial district and, in the mid-1990s, Boston's primary retail district: in the 34-block area some of the premier financial businesses in the world (Bank of America, Fidelity Investments, State Street Bank, Federal Reserve Bank, etc.) and many government buildings (the Massachusetts State House, the Boston City Hall, the State Transportation building, etc.) are located, as well as public and private sector office space, commercial structures and retail properties – not only general merchandise stores (Macy's, Marshalls, TJ Maxx, and H&M), but also a wide variety of small retail activities (shoe and clothing stores, jewellery stores, etc.) and eating and drinking establishments. At the same time, some of the most famous and best-preserved Boston's historical landmarks rise in the area (not only the Freedom Trail, but also the Old State House, the Old South Church, the Park Street Church, the Old Corner Bookstore, etc.), as well as well-known hotels (the Parker House, the Hyatt Regency Boston, the Ritz-Carlton, etc.), theatres and nightlife venues, important social services agencies, nearly 100 restaurants, including some of Boston's oldest (Locke-Ober's, the Last Hurrah, and Marliave's).

Moreover, the area is extremely well served by Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) with a variety of subway lines, bus routes, nearby commuter and regional train connections.

Thanks to such a varied programme of activities and structures, Downtown Boston has always attracted a diverse range of workers, shoppers, residents, visitors and tourists: it daily hosts over 227.000 workers (BRA, 2005), 14.000 students, 230.000 pedestrians and 100.000 T passengers (Downtown Boston BID, 2011a; 2011b).

Nevertheless, between the end of 1990s and 2010 some unexpected and underestimated factors – the proliferation of new retail forms, global economic dynamics, significant real estate development initiatives in the area, etc. – determined a deep change in the context and in its socioeconomic structure.

In 2000 the total population of the area<sup>3</sup> was 7.255 inhabitants and it became 10.774 inhabitants in 2010 as a result of a significant increase (33%, while the population increase was 19% in the corresponding planning district, Boston Central, and 5% in Boston) (Figure 6a). This important change in the population is justified by a large increase of young people (15-34 years-old) (Figure 6b): in the late 1990s the *Emerson College* relocated to Downtown Boston determining a tremendously positive impact; a large student population moved into the area as residents and customers and this private College renovated former office buildings into dormitories and classrooms. Following this successful experience, the *Suffolk University* relocated some of its schools to the downtown area and the overall student population noticeably increased (BRA, 2005). Such a circumstance also justifies the significant increase in the educational attainment of downtown population occurred from 2000 to 2010.

<sup>3</sup> All the mentioned data refer to the Boston tracts 303/701 (for 2000) and 303/701.01 (for 2010) of US Census (<http://factfinder2.census.gov>).

As far as the ethnic composition is concerned, it has not changed over the last ten years: the largest ethnic groups in Downtown Boston are White (73%) and Asian (18%), even if from 2000 to 2010 the smallest ethnic groups slightly increased. Indeed, the general decline which affected Downtown Boston at the end of 1990s determined a deep change not in resident population, but in the ethnic composition of visitors and customers: Hispanic and Latino population is now a prevailing group crowding the district during the day (Interviews 1 and 2).

With respect to the economic conditions in Downtown Boston, a significant improvement took place from 2000 to 2010: while individuals below poverty levels slightly decreased (Figure 7a), per capita income increase largely (42%) doubling Boston's average (Figure 7b). This important change is closely connected to a large decrease of unemployed population but particularly to a new economic structure of sectors of employment: while the most employed sectors (finance, insurance, real estate, etc; professional, scientific, management, etc.; educational, health and social services) have not changed over the last ten years, some sectors have largely increased (wholesale trade; arts, entertainment and recreation; public administration), outlining a new survey of the economic situation of the district (Figure 8).

Even though the mentioned socioeconomic dynamics have determined interesting changes in Downtown Boston over the last ten years, the four districts in the neighbourhood (*Downtown Crossing*, *Ladder District*, *Theatre District* and *Financial District*) have not shared the same lot.

#### ***The Theater District***

Boston's Theatre District was established in the first half of the twentieth century, when the area became home to many of the city's theatres, vaudeville houses and concert halls (BRA, 2005). Due to some socioeconomic changes and depending on an ambiguous zoning assignment, this district quickly became a "Combat Zone" (Interview 2), a sleazy and notorious enclave of "adult entertainment" venues. When the Public Authority understood the tremendous impact the "Combat Zone" was determining on the surrounding areas, a strong operations plan was worked out: the *Boston Redevelopment Authority* started up a drastic requalification on Washington and Avery Street (Figure 9), it pulled down the buildings on the corner and, thanks to a strong public-private partnerships, it promoted the construction of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel and of The Residences at the Ritz-Carlton Towers. This intervention (1998-2002) brought a luxury hotel, new residential units and a new health club to the area (BRA, 2005), but above all it outlined a course of actions for preserving and enhancing the district: the Boston Opera House was restored in 2004 (\$54 million); the *Emerson College* acquired and renovated the Cutler Majestic Theatre and in 2010 it restored the Paramount Theatre (as part of a larger Paramount Center redevelopment, for \$95 million); the Modern Theatre was restored by *Suffolk University* (2010), the historic Ames building, a vacant shell since 1995, was converted into a boutique hotel (2010), new entertainment structures were opened (i.e., the Loews Theatre Cineplex).

#### ***The Downtown Crossing***

Over the last ten years the Downtown Crossing, a strategic area and a primary retail district in Downtown Boston, have been affected by a widespread decline and by a progressive decrease of

retail activities. Such a decline is strongly connected to a debatable real estate development. (Interviews 1 and 2; Schwartz, 2011).

In 2005 the *Federated Department Stores*, a private business, acquired the Filene's commercial chain and announced that the *Filene's Department Store* and *Filene's Basement*, a discount-shopping institution in the center of the Downtown Crossing, were going out of business. The *Federated Department* also announced that Filene's would be merged into Macy's, the department store right across the street which it already owned: the common opinion was that the *Federated Department* was interested in moving Macy's commercial activity to the flagship historical building hosting Filene's (Interview 2). Disappointing public opinion's expectations, Filene's locations were closed down and, shortly after, they were put up for sale (Figure 10). Filene's shut-down determined a deep impact on the area, increasing the number of empty storefronts and crumbling sidewalks in one of the most strategic area in the center of Boston.

In 2006 *Vornado Realty Trust* – a real estate investment trust – and *Gale International* – a local developer – bought the block of buildings for \$100 million<sup>4</sup>, planning to raze them and rebuild; at the end of the year they announced their plans for *One Franklin*, a \$700 million, 39-story tower to replace Filene's; the new building's height, use and architecture were shortly determined (Schwartz, 2011).

Following an unusual accelerated approval process (Schwartz, 2011), in 2007 the *Boston Redevelopment Authority* board unanimously approved the *One Franklin* plan. The initiative seemed to combine the developers' interests and the Mayor's intention to revitalize the Downtown area: «*that may explain why the BRA let Vornado slide on certain zoning laws and skirt some requirements in order to get the project moving quickly*» (Schwartz, 2011). In 2008 the demolition was started; in the same year, due to the global economic crisis and to the impossibility to obtain bank loans, works were halted, leaving behind a huge hole and a partially torn-down building – the exterior of the oldest portion of Filene's still stands, protected by a historic-preservation designation (Figure 11).

For more than three years, the *One Franklin* initiative was a stalled real-estate development: *Vornado Realty Trust* was not really interested in making efforts for re-starting the works and for completing the project and, despite the public harsh-tone persuading campaign the Mayor conducted, there were no obligations on the owners: actually, *Vornado* and its partners paid cash for the site and have no debt obligations on it (Schwartz, 2011). Moreover, part of the public opinion believes *Vornado Realty Trust* devised a clear strategy to increase its profit: the longer the huge hole was empty and vacant, the more public authorities would want the project to be completed, the more help they would give to the developers involved (Schwartz, 2011). Evidently, this awkward situation produced a strong impact on the Downtown Crossing: when Filene's closed, the area started losing its vibrancy and many small businesses and retail activities closed; but things got worse when the beloved department store came down, since the big hole produced a widespread and devastating influence on local activities.

Because of so many conflicting interests, in 2010 the *Boston Redevelopment Authority* revoked *Vornado's* building permits. At the same time, Mayor Menino demanded that the Company transferred the property to someone interested in completing the initiative; therefore in October 2010 *Vornado* put

---

<sup>4</sup> *Gale International* didn't invest money itself in the initiative, but it recruited real estate firms (*J. P. Morgan* and *Mack-Cali*) to get in (35 and 15 percent stakes respectively); while renouncing to have any ownership, *Gale International* would earn a bonus if the *One Franklin* made a certain amount of money (Schwartz, 2011).

the Filene's site up for sale. At the beginning of 2012 *Millennium Partners*, a local developer, agreed to take part in the long-delayed *One Franklin* initiative with a new project for a mixed-use tower<sup>5</sup>: with the Mayor's and *Vornado's* consensus, *Millennium Partners* is going to acquire a controlling role buying the stakes of former minor partners – a fund managed by *J.P. Morgan Chase & Co.*, *Mack-Cali Realty Corporation* and *Boston Global Investors*, previously *Gale International* – while investing new money in the project (Brown, 2012).

#### ***The Ladder District and the Financial District***

The Ladder District has been deeply affected by the controversial real estate development in the Downtown Crossing; as in the adjacent areas, when Filene's Department Store closed and it was pulled down, small businesses and retail activities – most of them long-established activities – closed, leaving empty storefronts and crumbling sidewalks. Nevertheless, in the last few years and depending on the interventions promoted by the *Boston Redevelopment Authority*, new popular restaurants and nightlife venues have been established; at the same time, the area is experiencing a significant increase in the number of residential units (including affordable housing and student dormitories).

On the other side, even though not directly compromised by the widespread decline of the area, the Financial District has been deeply involved in the changes affecting the neighbourhood; therefore, all the financial businesses have showed great interested in improving the experience of people working or visiting the district.

#### **DOWNTOWN BOSTON BID: THE INITIATIVE**

The *Downtown Boston BID* was proposed in order to offer supplemental services to support long-term enhanced maintenance while encouraging a general economic revitalization of the district (Downtown Boston BID, 2011a; 2011b), where the mix of commercial, hospitality, non-profit institutional and residential properties demanded a higher level of services than the City of Boston provided (an overall description of BIDs strategies and goals is discussed in section 4.3). In other words, the initiative aims at achieving Downtown's full potential – namely to boost an area which was starting to sag by improving its attractiveness and offering services and initiative.

Since hospitality and cleaning are the first actions required to improve the perception of the district and to make it more attractive, liveable and enjoyable, the *Downtown Boston BID* promotes a wide maintenance of the physical space (through landscaping, consistent design, new street furniture) and the creation of a clean, welcoming, safe and vibrant environment (beautification programmes). On the other side, it serves as a resource to relocate businesses and retail activities, to enhance property values, to attract further investment in the area and to support the cooperation between business owners and municipal agencies and resources (such as *Neighborhood Restaurant Initiative*, *ReStore Boston*, *Boston Buying Power*, *Boston Invests in Growth*, *Partners with Non-Profits*, *Boston Industrial*

---

<sup>5</sup> When the first partnership bought the Filene's site, it imagined that the return would come from lucrative office-space rentals and condo sales; the current real estate trends support the idea it would be more profitable to build apartments (Schwartz, 2011).

*Development Financing Authority, and Boston Local Development Corporation*) (Downtown Boston BID, 2011a; 2011b).

It is important to notice that to deal with such a challenge the *Downtown Boston BID* may take advantage from unique and unquestioned strengths of the district but, at the same time, it is required to face important weaknesses.

On one hand, the neighbourhood vitality, which depends on its variety of facilities providing an intense influx of students, visitors and workers, and the high number of local stakeholders interested in the revitalization of the area represent a solid ground encouraging the initiative. Moreover, the deep involvement of local authorities patronizing the BID positively supports the partnership and the interventions proposed. On the other hand, the decline affecting Downtown Boston has causes and implications a BID hardly manages; moreover, some of the most important stakeholders and owners in the district refused to join the initiative, therefore they represent a significant drawback for BID's spending power and operational capacity.

The *Downtown Boston BID* has been established after 15 challenging years and after many failed attempts and it represents the strength of a solid finally achieved partnership.

Following successful experiences throughout the United States<sup>6</sup>, in 1969 a first voluntary membership organization of businesses and retailers – the *Downtown Crossing Association* – was established in order to achieve the full potential of the area. When in the 1980s this association naturally declined, the BID was a wide-implemented policy; nevertheless, it was not possible for public and private actors in Downtown Boston to start the BID's petition process since Massachusetts was late in passing the BID State Law.

When the Statue was finally adopted (1998), the first *Downtown Boston BID* was proposed; even though it was strongly championed by Boston's Mayor Thomas Menino (Interview 2; Barrett, 2011), this first attempt was quickly unsuccessful because it was run not in compliance with the State statute. Moreover, the weak consent between the Mayor and the local *Downtown Crossing Association* negatively affected the proposed partnership and it indirectly determined the *Downtown Crossing Association* dissolution (Interview 2).

Enthusiastic about the intervention the *Boston Redevelopment Authority* was carrying out in the Theatre District and confident about the possibility to change the Massachusetts State Law, in 2000-2002 Thomas Menino supported a second attempt to establish the *Downtown Boston BID*<sup>7</sup>. Again the inconsistency with the State statute worked as a real impediment. Moreover, due to a wrong promotion campaign and to inaccurate news about the initiative, the BID was strongly opposed by Public Works and Police Unions.

Due to the previous failure and to the strong oppositions, in October 2004 Boston's Mayor Thomas Menino dropped the BID initiative and he launched the *Downtown Crossing Economic Improvement Initiative (DCEII)* – spearheaded by the *Boston Redevelopment Authority* – confirming his commitment to the enhancement of Downtown Boston. The initiative was based on a solid partnership between the

---

6 Even though the first BID was created in Toronto in 1969, downtown revitalizing associations and voluntary membership organizations of business leaders were established in United States starting from 1930s and 1940s.

7 All the information about this second attempt comes from the Interview 2.

*Boston Redevelopment Authority*, local stakeholders – including the *Downtown Crossing Association*, a new organization of businesses, retailers and owners inheriting the 1969 association<sup>8</sup> – property owners and retailers. The *Downtown Crossing Economic Improvement Initiative* intended to improve the area and to strengthen its economic vitality by assisting the City in cleaning sidewalks and streets and improving open spaces and street furniture (new sidewalks and lighting, addition of flower baskets, benches, new awnings and umbrellas for the pushcarts, banners, etc.).

When in 2008 the Filene's building was pulled down and the Downtown Crossing area started to sag, the increasing decline awakened the local private actors' interest: the BID seemed to be the right policy to foster the revitalization of the neighbourhood. During 2010, the public and private actors involved in the BID process carried out an intense persuasion campaign in order to involve local stakeholders, owners and businesses: «Likewise, there probably would be no BID if Mayor Menino hadn't spoken directly with at least one key office-tower owner; if State Street Corporation had not stepped up to the plate after Equity Office Properties did not; if supportive property owners, and agents and brokers such as CB Richard Ellis and Lincoln Property Company had not sold the merits of BIDs to their clients and peers; or if the Boston Herald and the Boston Globe hadn't written supportively about the BID in its editorial pages» (Barrett, 2011).

Finally, in October 2010 the BID petition was presented to the City Council and in April 2011 the *Downtown Boston BID* became completely effective. It is important to notice that in the third attempt to start up the BID, the process followed in presenting the petition differed from the approaches taken in the previous experiences: while in 1998 and 2002 the BID process was based on a home-rule petition somewhat inconsistent with the State Statute, in 2010 the authorization to create the BID has been tightly based on *Massachusetts General Law - Chapter 400* (Boston Municipal Research Bureau, 2010): this means that property owners are able to "opt-out", not taking part in the initiative and not paying the assessment fee. In other words, rather than a compulsory BID that may have generated \$22 million in improvements during its first five years, a \$16 million operation was started up (Barrett, 2011).

### ***Governance and partnership***

The *Downtown Boston BID* is an interesting example of public-private partnership supporting urban and economic revitalization while promoting an innovative approach to the delivery of elementary yet consequential public services. Generally, the term BID is used in the literature to identify both the initiative operating in a designated geographic area and the organization managing it (Morçöl and Wolf, 2010), but such a distinction is really important to understand this initiative. While the *Downtown Boston BID* management entity is a non-profit organization of private property owners in the district, the initiative is a solid partnership between local authorities and quasi-governmental entities, private owners and local stakeholders.

As any other BID, the *Downtown Boston BID* is publicly authorized and privately managed (for more detail, see the overall description of BIDs in section 4.3), but it has been unusually promoted and supported in the start-up process and in its early stages: the City of Boston (precisely Boston's Mayor Thomas Menino) and the *Boston Redevelopment Authority* played a leading and strategic role during the start-up,

---

<sup>8</sup> During this process, this association became the *Downtown Crossing Partnership*, due to a shift in its leadership and a dramatic restructuring of the organization's direction and focus.

strongly championing the initiative as far as the creation of the partnership is concerned and about the promotion of the BID's strategy (Interviews 1 and 2). In other words, this BID exists in deep relation with local authorities and public actors, being part of the collective action determining urban policies.

The decision-making board, the *Board of Directors* (32 members), expresses the public-private composition of the initiative since it is made up of a mixture of partnership staff and representatives from the private and public sectors (Figure 12). Another important expression of the partnership supporting the *Downtown Boston BID* is the *Neighborhood Advisory Board* (38 members), an official board included in the governing structure as a consulting committee but without decision or voting power (Figure 13). Evidently, the vast majority of members in the boards are private actors representing companies or individual who have physical assets in the district (as explained in section 4.3, such a composition depends on the BID main features and on the management entity, in this case a non-profit organization), but the influence of public agents is unanimously recognized (Interviews 1 and 2).

As far as the private sector involvement is concerned, when in 2010 the BID petition was presented to the City Council, it was signed by at least 60% of the property owners in the district, representing almost 51% of the assessed valuation of all taxable properties (Boston Municipal Research Bureau, 2010). On the other side, in *Downtown Boston BID* residential membership and involvement is partly restricted: residential properties and parcels are not subject to the mandatory assessment but they can choose to be members of the initiative; moreover, they are represented in the *Neighborhood Advisory Board*, so they are permitted to attend the decision making board without voting or formally joining the planning or decision-making processes. With respect to tax-exempt institutions, colleges and universities, hospitals, cultural and non-profit organizations, they can contribute to improvements in the district by joining the initiative with a voluntary support agreement.

Finally, a wide range of local development associations is informally part of the public-private partnership and cooperate in pursuing the BID's strategic priorities (Figure 14).

#### ***Strategic priorities, programmes and budget***

As defined in the first BID Improvement Plan, the *Downtown Boston BID* provides a varied range of supplemental services in order to enhance the district. It is involved with *maintenance and security* – the BID addresses cleaning issues, like cleaning, graffiti and gum removal, spring cleanups, etc., and it provides supplementary security guards, *consumer marketing* (festivals and events, advertising campaign, etc.) and *local economic development* – it supports property owners, managers and brokers in recruiting new businesses and tenants and encourages businesses interested in locating downtown by raising the district's profile at key retail conventions – and it is deeply committed to provide *social services* in the district; thanks to the *Hospitality Ambassadors Program*, the BID provides information and guidance as a welcoming presence into the district.

The annual budget of the initiative is \$2.9 million, while the expected revenue is \$16 million. 42% of the budget (more than \$1 million) has been allocated for cleaning and graffiti removal, 20% for the *Hospitality Ambassadors Program*, 10% for marketing, communication and special events, 8% for capital improvements and 20% for administration and other purposes.

In 2010 the total asset of the *Downtown Boston BID* non-profit organization was \$80.501<sup>9</sup>. Such an amount derived from the mandatory assessment on member property owners and it was based on the parcel's assessed value and use, with a distinction made for properties valued at \$70 million or less and those valued at over \$70 million.

Despite the *Downtown Boston BID* is quite a newly established initiative, it has had a productive opening year and it has produced good outcomes in the district: the BID has hired 31 highly visible employees who serve as street-level *ambassadors* for the downtown area and it has been deeply committed to the beautification and cleaning programme. It has organized art displays, jazz performances, car shows, and restaurant crawls and it is supporting ongoing efforts to increase and improve lighting throughout the downtown area. Finally, thanks to \$21 million invested in the district, over 500 jobs have been created and 40 new businesses have opened (of them, 28 restaurants).

## CONCLUSIONS

The *Downtown Boston BID* experience is somewhat difficult to interpret; its establishment represents the conclusion of a long-term process, therefore many local stakeholders consider the BID start-up as an important result in itself (Interview 1 and 2). Moreover, even though the initiative has been credited with transforming Downtown Boston into a cleaner, safer and more attractive place, improving pedestrian experience and enhancing local resources, it has been questioned if it might achieve the economic and urban revitalization while more demanding issues are affecting the area: precisely, «*scraping gum off the ground isn't a useful thing to do when you've got a much bigger eyesore*» (Sondergard, 2011), that is the big hole in Downtown Crossing, the twisted metal, the wood scraps, the empty bottles nearby (Schwartz, 2011). The BID's members themselves are aware that nothing major is going to happen until the *One Franklin* project will be completed (Interview 1).

One of the most favourable aspects of this initiative is the positive connection with the area: the *Downtown Boston BID* is strongly community-based and deeply related to the local authenticity, namely the initiative is supported by the district's bustling streets, the variety of active and unique places, people who live, work, play and cross the area every day (BRA, 2011).

Undoubtedly, the *Downtown Boston BID* is a successful although long-pursued public-private partnership and it represents an important turning point for the area.

A wide range of stakeholders has been involved, therefore the BID is likely to meet a varied set of demands. At the same time, to build the partnership has required a strong public leadership – Boston's Mayor and the *Boston Redevelopment Authority* have been decisive at all stages – which has encouraged the dialogue between the actors involved: public meetings, official discussions with local stakeholders, face-to-face persuading campaign have been necessary to solve short and long term problems and to decrease tension. Moreover, informational forums were held with Police and

---

<sup>9</sup> Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service – Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt From Income, 2010 [Available at: [http://dynamodata.fdncenter.org/990\\_pdf\\_archive/273/273596446/273596446\\_201012\\_990O.pdf](http://dynamodata.fdncenter.org/990_pdf_archive/273/273596446/273596446_201012_990O.pdf) - 12.02.2012]

Public Works union officials to address their concerns regarding how the BID might change their role and public officials from cities with BIDs were invited to speak about their experiences (BRA, 2011).

However, such an involvement of the public authorities might compromise the BID's self-government. Actually, this initiative is continuing the positive development trend started by the *Downtown Crossing Economic Improvement Initiative* while focusing on supplemental services, but it is hard to distinguish these initiatives and the good outcomes they have produced, in other words it might be difficult to determine the role of local property owners and residents in the BID initiative.

## REFERENCES

- Barrett F. (2011), "Improving downtown Boston through BID", on-line article in *Boston Society of Architects*, 28 January.  
[Available at: <http://www.architects.org/news/improving-downtown-boston-through-bid> - 30.01.2012]
- Boston Municipal Research Bureau (2010), *Testimony before the Boston City Council's Committee on Economic Development and Planning*.  
[Available at: <http://www.bmrb.org/content/upload/BID8210.pdf> - 14.02.2012]
- Boston Redevelopment Authority (2005), *Downtown Crossing: vital heart of Downtown Boston*, Insight – Research Department, 05 (2).  
[Available at: <http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/pdf/ResearchPublications/Downtown%20Crossing-Vital%20Heart%20of%20Downtown%20Boston.pdf> – 23.02.2012]
- Boston Redevelopment Authority (2008), *A Crossroads for a Crossing: An Executive Summary of the Identity & Branding Strategy for Boston's Downtown Crossing*.
- Boston Redevelopment Authority (2011), *Boston Downtown Crossing Economic Improvement Initiative: A Crossroads for a Crossing – 2011 IDA Downtown Achievement Awards Submission*.  
[Available at: <https://www.ida-downtown.org/eweb/docs/2011%20Awards/Boston%20Redevelopment%20Authority,%20Boston's%20Downtown%20Crossing.pdf> – 24.02.2012]
- Brown E. (2012), "New Tower Would Fill Boston's Scar", on-line article in *The Wall Street Journal*, 13 February.  
[Available at: [http://online.wsj.com/article\\_email/SB10001424052970204062704577219493738121630-1MyQjAxMTAyMDEwMzExNDMyWj.html?mod=wsj\\_share\\_email](http://online.wsj.com/article_email/SB10001424052970204062704577219493738121630-1MyQjAxMTAyMDEwMzExNDMyWj.html?mod=wsj_share_email) - 13.02.2012]
- Downtown Boston BID (2011a), *About the Downtown Boston BID*.  
[Available at: <http://origin.library.constantcontact.com/download/get/file/1011270028105-2659/About+the+Downtown+Boston+BID.pdf> - 29.01.2012]
- Downtown Boston BID (2011b), *Introducing BID services*.  
[Available at: [http://origin.library.constantcontact.com/download/get/file/1011270028105-2227/BID+Services+Brochure\\_June2011.pdf](http://origin.library.constantcontact.com/download/get/file/1011270028105-2227/BID+Services+Brochure_June2011.pdf) - 29.01.2012]
- Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts, *A guide for establishing BIDs*.  
[Available at: <http://www.mass.gov/hed/docs/dhcd/cd/mdi/bidmanual.pdf> - 13.02.2012]
- Morçöl G. and Wolf J. F. (2010), "Understanding Business Improvement Districts: A New Governance Framework", in *Public Administration Review*, pp.906-913.
- Schwartz J. (2011), "Steve Roth: The Pit Boss Behind the Filene's Crater", on-line article in *Boston Magazine*, September.  
[Available at: [http://www.bostonmagazine.com/articles/steve\\_roth\\_the\\_pit\\_boss\\_behind\\_the\\_filenes\\_crater/](http://www.bostonmagazine.com/articles/steve_roth_the_pit_boss_behind_the_filenes_crater/) - 08.02.2012]
- Sondergard M. (2011), "Have you noticed a change in downtown Boston? Business Improvement District is having an impact", on-line article in *CommonWealth – Politics, ideas and civic life in Massachusetts*, 22 August.  
[Available at: <http://www.commonwealthmagazine.org/News-and-Features/Online-exclusives/2011/Summer/014-Have-you-noticed-a-change-in-downtown-Boston.aspx> - 30.01.2012]

[www.bostonbid.org](http://www.bostonbid.org)

[www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org](http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org)

[www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/planning/PlanningInitsIndividual.asp?action=ViewInits&InitsID=110](http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/planning/PlanningInitsIndividual.asp?action=ViewInits&InitsID=110)

[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

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

[www.cityofboston.gov/assessing/search/](http://www.cityofboston.gov/assessing/search/)

**Index of interviews**

Interview 1: John A. Nucci - VP for Government & Community Affairs - Suffolk University  
*February 23rd 2012*

Interview 2: Andrew Grace - Senior Planner/Urban Designer - Boston Redevelopment Authority  
*February 27th 2012*

ICONOGRAPHY OF THE *DOWNTOWN BOSTON BID*

Figure 1 – The *Downtown Boston Business Improvement District*: boundaries and districts

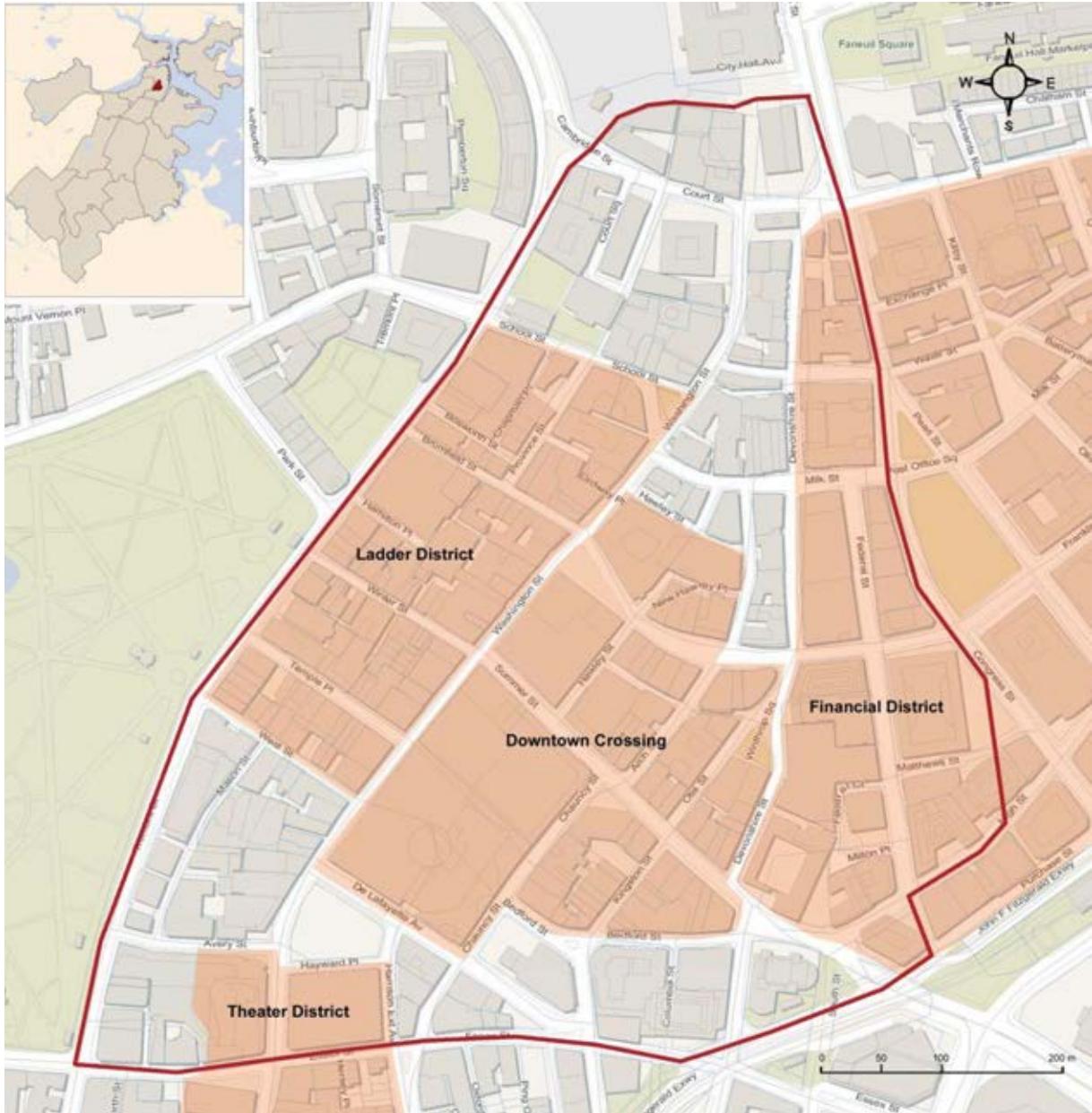


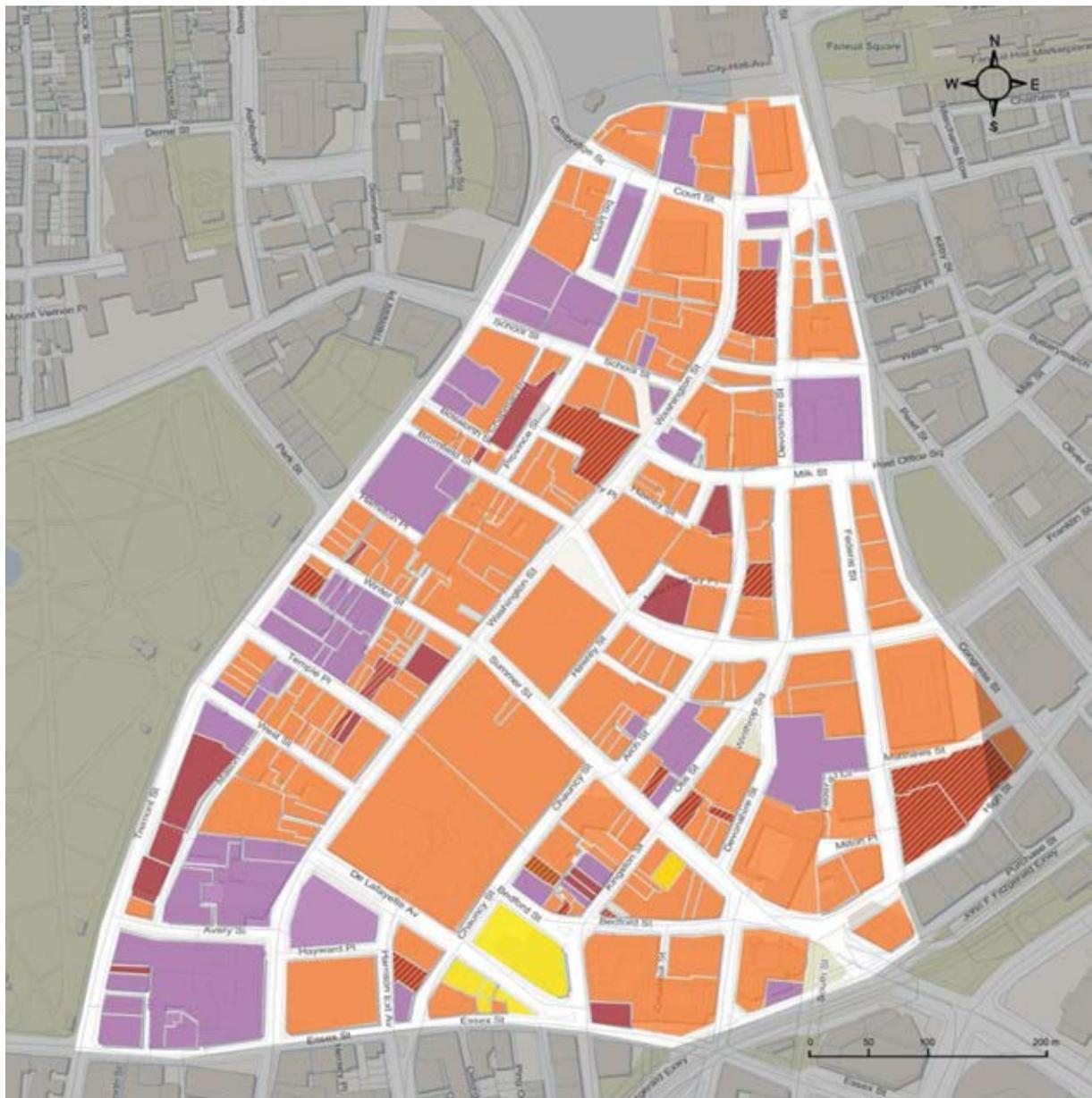
Figure 2 – Zoning in Downtown Boston

<http://www.mass.gov/mgis/zn.htm#bylaws>



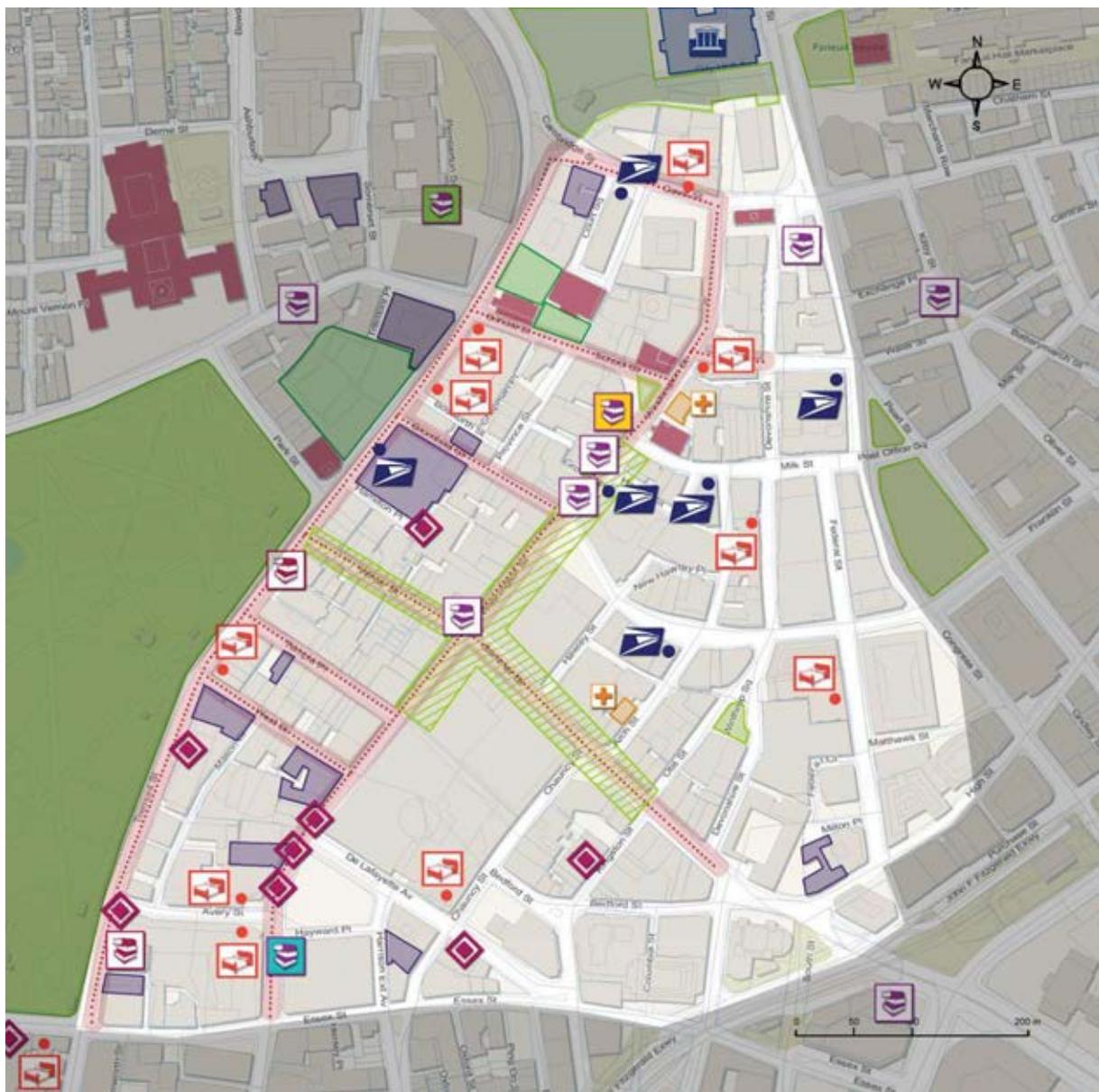
- CP - Conservation/Passive Recreation
- GB - General Business
- MU - Mixed Use

Figure 3 – Land use in Downtown Boston



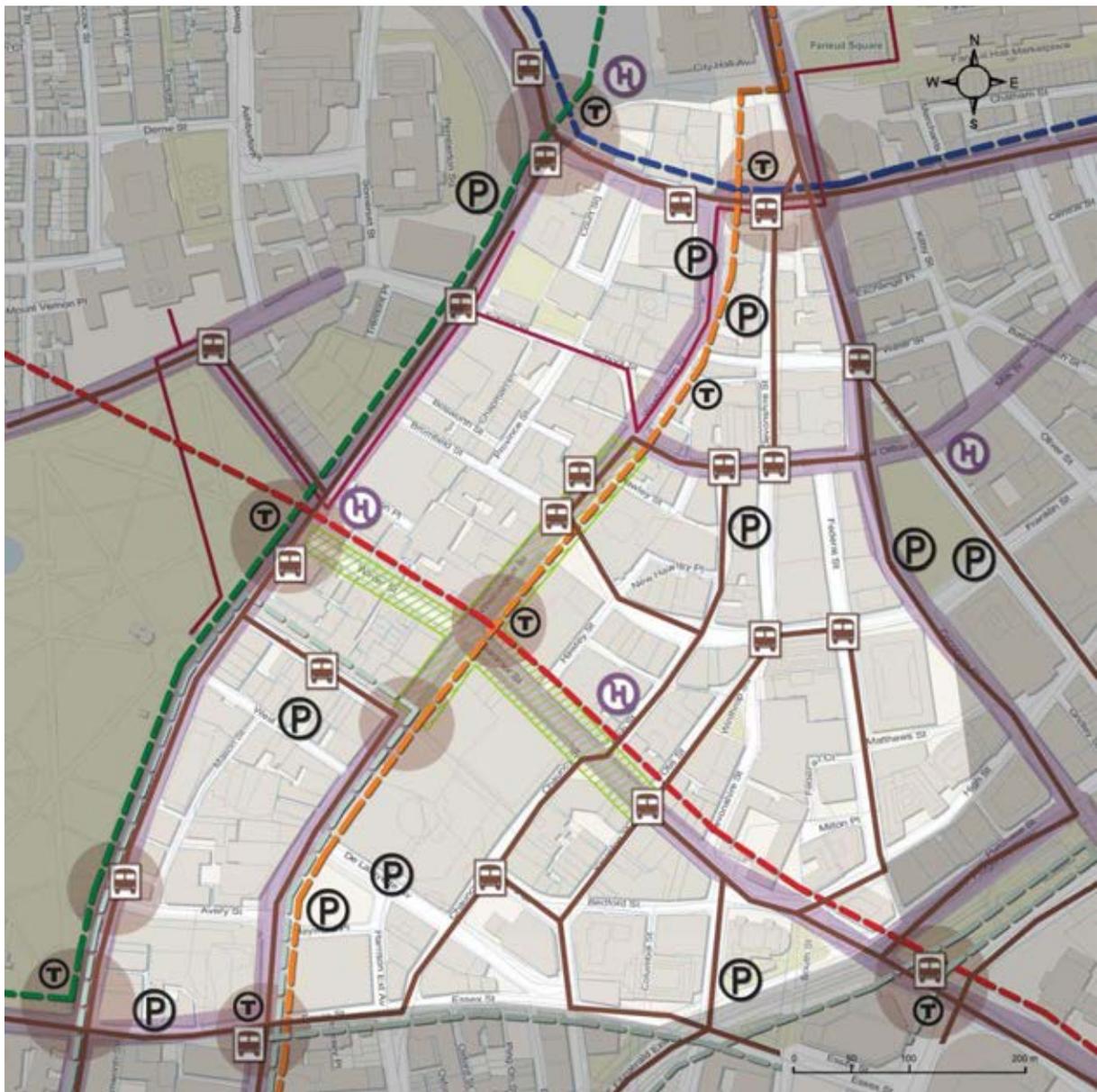
- Industrial
- Commercial
- High Density Residential
- Mixed use - Residential/Commercial
- Urban Public/Institutional

Figure 4 – Public services and facilities in Downtown Boston



- |                                |                                 |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Heritage - Building            | Theatre and cinema              |
| Heritage - Public area         | Academic library                |
| Historical garden or graveyard | Special library                 |
| Parc or public garden          | Special library - Institutional |
| Square                         | Special library - Law           |
| Pedestrian area                | Special library - Medical       |
| Health centers                 | Private university              |
| Hotel                          | Civic building or hall          |
| Commercial area                | Post office                     |

Figure 5 – Infrastructures and transportation in Downtown Boston



- MBTA - silver line
- MBTA - blue line (subway)
- MBTA - green line (subway)
- MBTA - orange line (subway)
- MBTA - red line (subway)
- MBTA - subway station
- MBTA - bus route
- MBTA - bus stop
- MBTA - node
- Parking
- Freedom trail
- Bicycle route
- Bike sharing stop
- Pedestrian area

Figure 6a – The population increase in Downtown Boston<sup>10</sup> from 2000 to 2010 – Total population

Figure 6b – The population increase in Downtown Boston<sup>11</sup> from 2000 to 2010 – Age ranges

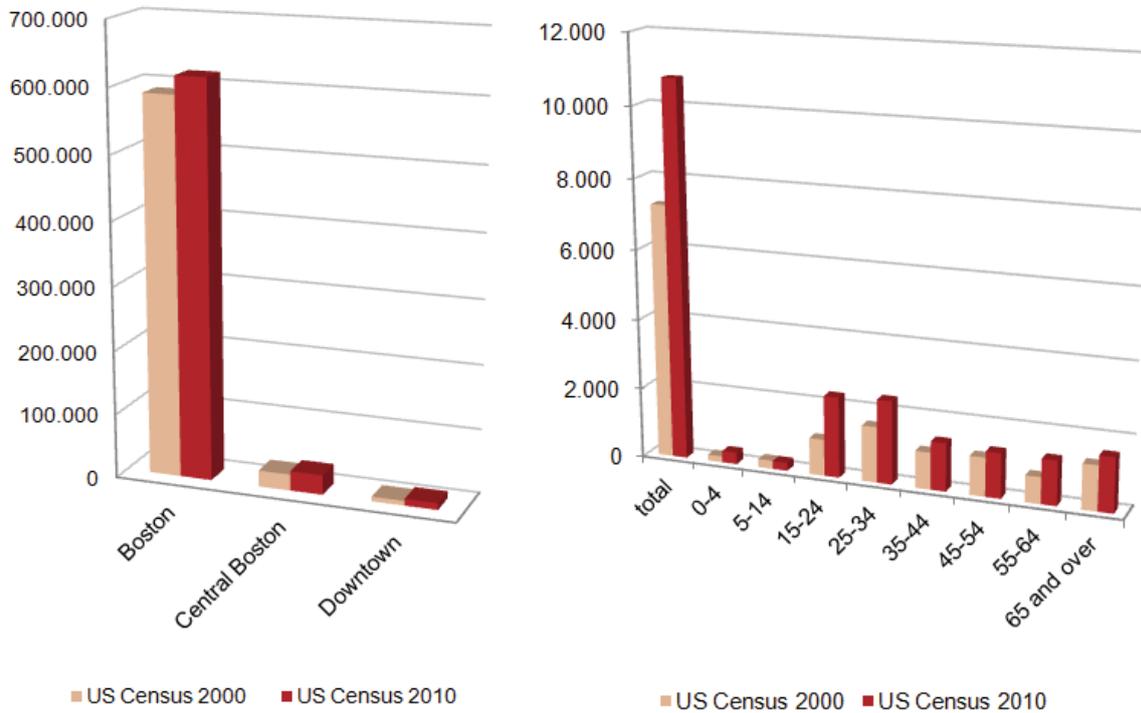
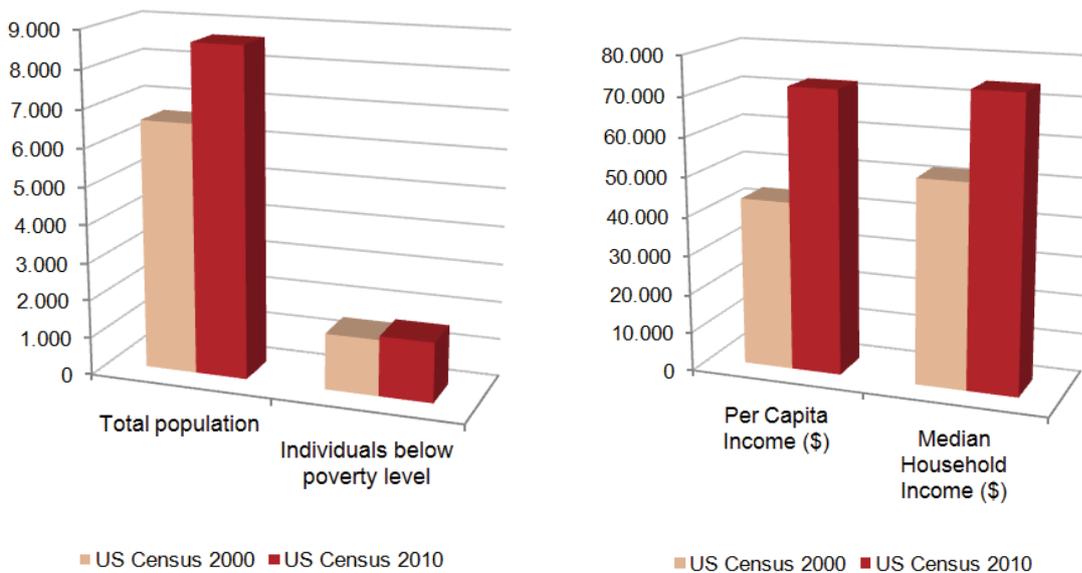


Figure 7a – Socioeconomic data in Downtown Boston<sup>12</sup> from 2000 to 2010 – People below poverty level

Figure 7b – Socioeconomic data in Downtown Boston<sup>13</sup> from 2000 to 2010 – Income



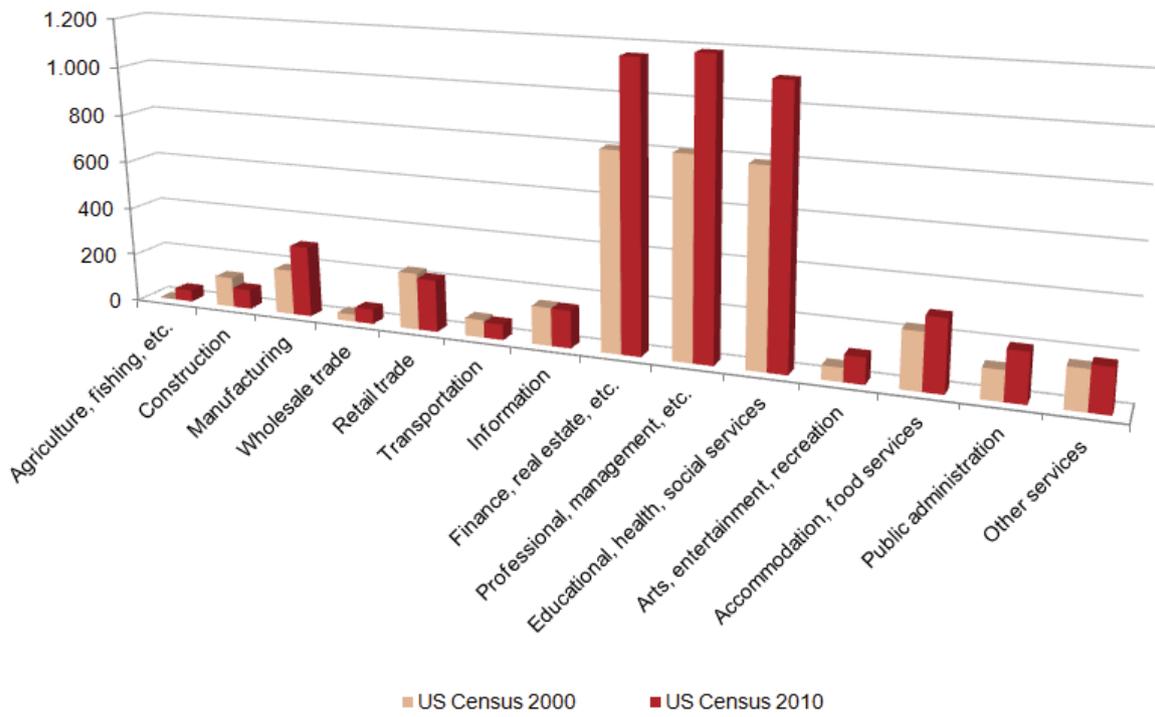
10 Data refer to the Boston tracts 303/701 (for 2000) and 303/701.01 (for 2010) of US Census (<http://factfinder2.census.gov>).

11 Data refer to the Boston tracts 303/701 (for 2000) and 303/701.01 (for 2010) of US Census (<http://factfinder2.census.gov>).

12 Data refer to the Boston tracts 303/701 (for 2000) and 303/701.01 (for 2010) of US Census (<http://factfinder2.census.gov>).

13 Data refer to the Boston tracts 303/701 (for 2000) and 303/701.01 (for 2010) of US Census (<http://factfinder2.census.gov>).

Figure 8 – Labour market in Downtown Boston<sup>14</sup> from 2000 to 2010 – Employees per sector



14 Data refer to the Boston tracts 303/701 (for 2000) and 303/701.01 (for 2010) of US Census (<http://factfinder2.census.gov>).

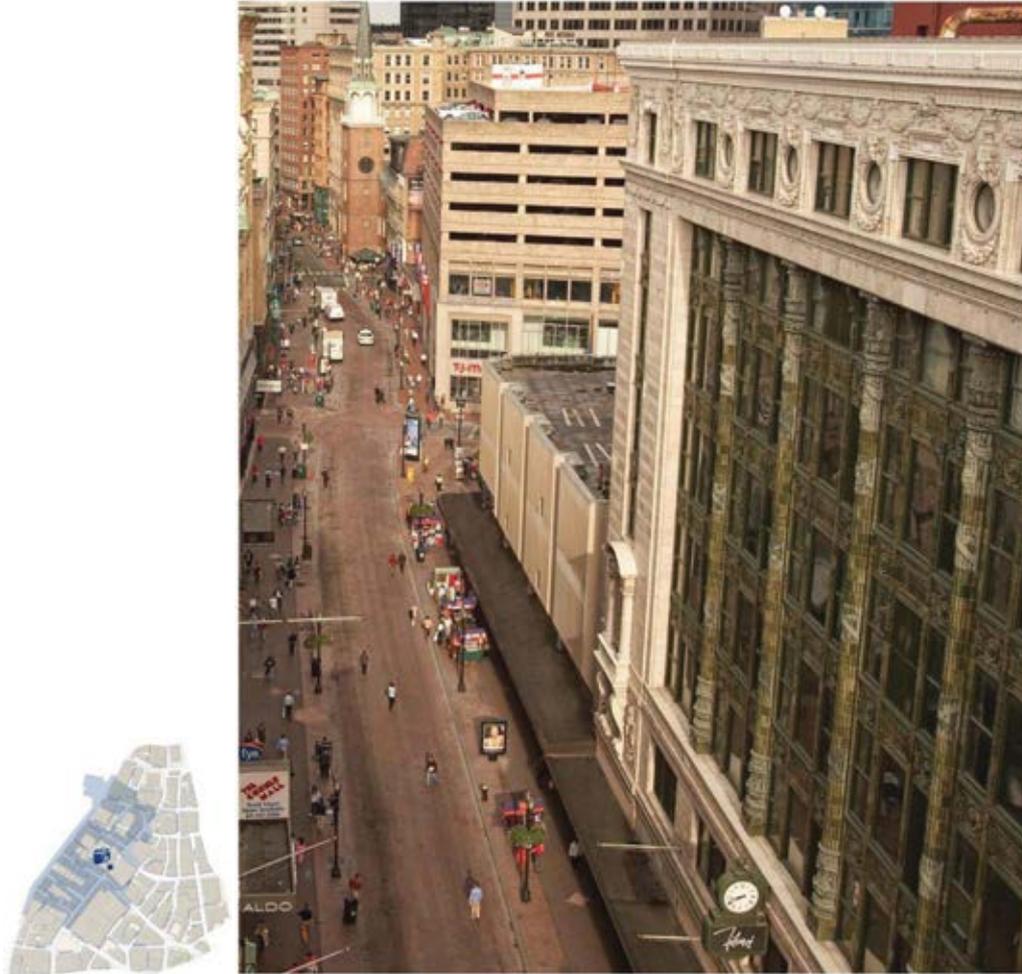
Figure 9 – Theatre District: the corner between Washington and Avery Street where the *Boston Redevelopment Authority* promoted a drastic requalification.

[08.02.2012]



**Figure 10 – Filene’s Department Store before its demolition**

[from Boston Redevelopment Authority (2008), *A Crossroads for a Crossing: An Executive Summary of the Identity & Branding Strategy for Boston’s Downtown Crossing*]



**Figure 11 – One Franklin Site – the big hole produced by Filene’s Department Store demolition**

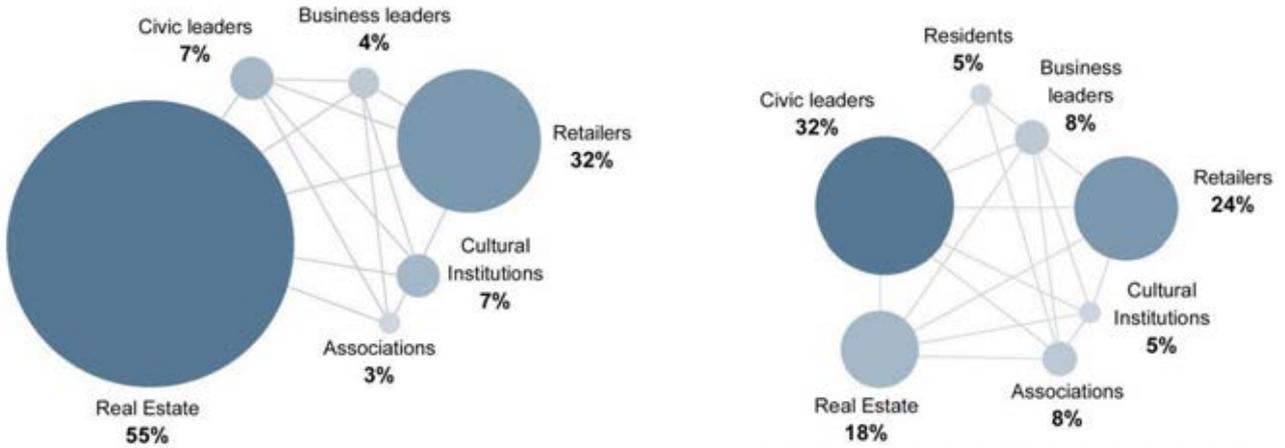
[from Brown E. (2012), “New Tower Would Fill Boston's Scar”, on-line article in *The Wall Street Journal*, 13 February. Available at: [http://online.wsj.com/article\\_email/SB10001424052970204062704577219493738121630-1MyQjAxMTAyMDEwMzExNDMyWj.html?mod=wsj\\_share\\_email](http://online.wsj.com/article_email/SB10001424052970204062704577219493738121630-1MyQjAxMTAyMDEwMzExNDMyWj.html?mod=wsj_share_email) - 13.02.2012]



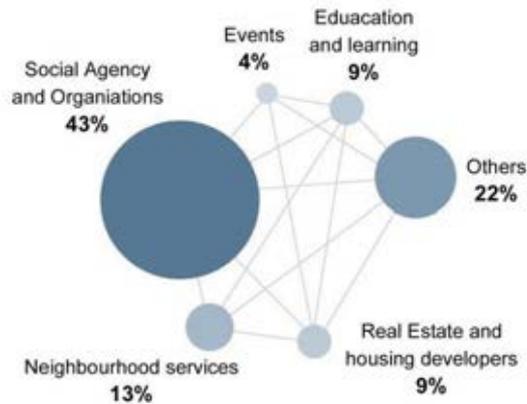
**Figure 12 – Downtown Boston BID official partnership composition – Board of directors**

**Figure 13 – Downtown Boston BID official partnership composition – Neighbourhood Advisory Board**

While in the Board of Directors real estate agents have a prevailing role, in the Neighbourhood Advisory Board institutions and public authorities are highly represented (“civic leader” in the tables).



**Figure 14 – Downtown Boston BID informal partnership composition – Local development organizations**



## **Anna Ferraiuolo – Reggio Calabria Unit: St Mark's Area Main Street - SMAMS**

### **Abstract**

St. Mark's Area Main Street is a local business district on Dorchester Avenue from Melville Avenue at the north to Mercier Avenue at the south, in the Dorchester neighborhood of Boston, Massachusetts. The district is approximately 5 miles south of Boston's downtown. SMAMS is in the vicinity of other Dorchester Main Streets districts: Fields Corner (north of SMAMS), Codman Square (west of SMAMS), Four Corners (north-west of SMAMS) and Bowdoin/ Geneva (north-west of SMAMS). The St. Mark's Area Main Street district begins just south of Fields Corner at Melville Avenue, and encompasses a long stretch of Dorchester Avenue to Mercier Avenue and Beale Street, south of the MBTA's Ashmont Station. It is connected to Codman Square to the west by Talbot Avenue. The Shawmut MBTA Station is just outside the district, serving residents in the district's northern portion.

Peabody Square, the district's commercial nexus, is located at the southern end of the district and is adjacent to Ashmont Station on the MBTA's Red Line. The station is a significant multimodal commuter station, connecting the trolley from Mattapan, several bus lines and the subway. More than 28,000 people transit the station daily.

The St. Mark's Area Main Street District, which is almost a mile long, includes more than 120 businesses in almost 400,000 square feet of commercial and industrial space, and serves more than 30,000 residents, workers and commuters.

SMAMS is a non-profit, 501(c) (3) corporation that brings together local businesses, residents, neighborhood organizations and corporate sponsors to revitalize the St. Marks Area business district and strengthen the entire community. The commercial district includes more than 100 businesses in almost 400,000 square feet of commercial and institutional space, and serves more than 30,000 residents, workers and commuters.

SMAMS is powered by dedicated volunteer residents and merchants. It works to revitalize business district on Dorchester Avenue, from Ashmont Station to just south of Fields Corner. By working with the City of Boston and the National Main Street Center, it's participating in a citywide and nationwide revitalization of local business districts. The purpose of SMAMS is to promote and enable the economic revitalization of the St. Mark's commercial district.

SMAMS strives to improve the economy and the aesthetics of the St. Mark's community through building rehabilitation, community reinvestment and education.

The act of revitalizing the St. Mark's commercial district imparts economic and social benefits to the St. Mark's community as well as to the residents of Boston and surrounding areas.

In 2000, neighbors of the MBTA's Ashmont Station, in Dorchester's Peabody Square, began working with the T on plans for the station's renovations.

In November 2003, when the design was nearing completion, local residents looked at the station in its larger context and asked the question: What can we do to improve Peabody Square as a whole? The "Friends of Peabody Square" met with SMAMS in December, 2003 and January, 2004 to discuss what they liked and didn't like about the Square, and what they hoped to see in a revitalized Square. Concerns included the need to make the Square safer for pedestrians and drivers, the poorly designed and timed traffic signals, the existing mix of businesses and whether it meets residents' needs, and the need to preserve historic buildings. Realizing that a project of this scope would benefit from professional assistance, SMAMS hired an architecture and urban planning firm, Gail Sullivan Associates, to help the community develop recommendations for the entire SMAMS district, including Peabody Square.

Gail Sullivan Associates led two community charrettes in March and May 2004. The first focused on the whole district, from Melville Avenue to Mercier Avenue south of Ashmont Station, and included discussion of storefronts, business mix, and public improvements. The second focused on redesigning Peabody Square. In April, Gail Sullivan Associates facilitated a workshop for local merchants to solicit their concerns and ideas and to discuss possible storefront improvements.

The community charrettes were open to everyone interested in improving the district. Local residents including youth, business owners, representatives of neighborhood organizations, political and government officials

participated. More than 50 people attended the first charrette and more than 35 attended the second. Eleven representatives from local businesses attended the merchant workshops.

The SMAMS district is undergoing a once-in-a-lifetime transformation. With a completely rebuilt MBTA Red Line Station, a major commercial/residential Transit-Oriented Development project, re-routing the streets leading into Peabody Square, and new businesses discovering the neighborhood, the district is becoming a destination for residents, shoppers and merchants. SMAMS played a major role in all these projects, and we continue to drive our neighborhood's renaissance with storefront renovations, business recruitment, and developing a "green street" program to decrease pollution from stormwater runoff.



Main Streets Districts in Boston

## PART A. THE AREA BEFORE THE INITIATIVE

### THE DISTRICT

The St. Mark's Area Main Street district begins just south of Fields Corner at Melville Avenue, and encompasses a long stretch of Dorchester Avenue to Mercier Avenue and Beale Street, south of the MBTA's Ashmont Station. It is connected to Codman Square to the west by Talbot Avenue. The Shawmut MBTA Station is just outside the district, serving residents in the district's northern portion.

#### Major Issues in the District - Shape, Form and Connections:

- The district is very linear - Dorchester Avenue serves as a strong spine, stopping or interrupting almost all cross-directional (east - west) movement. Many streets terminate at Dorchester Avenue.

Where streets cross the avenue, they usually change name and, in many instances, jog, making east-west movement in the area more difficult, and more reliant on Dorchester Avenue. This enhances the importance of the avenue, but also increases its vehicular traffic.

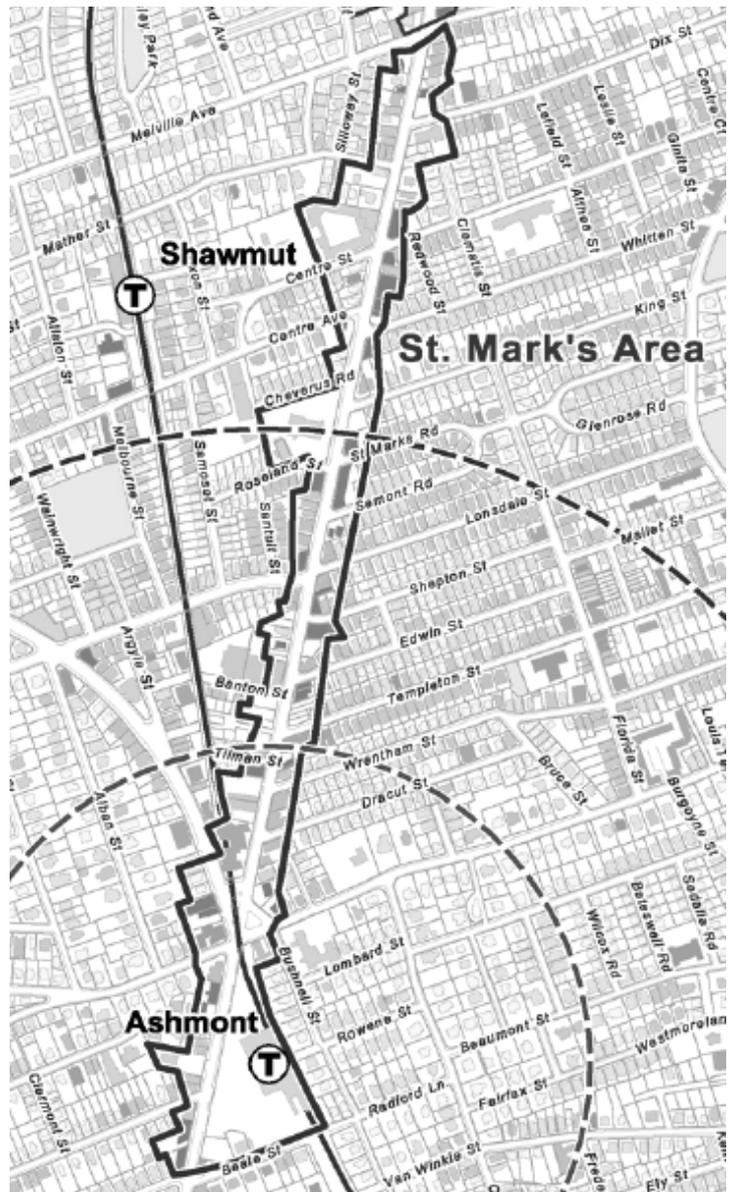
- Dorchester Avenue is a relatively narrow street for its level of activity, and therefore it is limited in its ability to increase pedestrian space. Existing sidewalks are too narrow to allow tree planting and still comfortably accommodate pedestrians. Any tree planting or street furnishings other than street lights will require extension of the sidewalks at corners or possibly placement on private property.

- Talbot Avenue appears far wider than necessary for the level of vehicular traffic and the mostly residential character of the street. The roadway could be significantly reduced to allow for increased pedestrian activity, street planting and perhaps a bike path.

- Very little of Dorchester Avenue's commercial activity extends onto the cross streets within the district. However, the buildings often turn the corner providing a good transition from commercial to residential.

- Side streets from Dorchester Avenue afford good views, with a strong street wall of repeating roof lines, bay windows and other architectural elements. Several street open to a view of a park or open space beyond. The residential streets offer very strong, street walls, largely consisting of two and three family homes and small front yards. Rooflines, front walls, and architectural details are consistent, repetitive and strengthen the character.

- The district retains some architecturally strong buildings, particularly in Peabody Square. All Saints' Church and the Peabody Apartments are on the National Register of Historic Places. The fire station, though small, has a very strong architectural character. Other buildings along Dorchester Avenue have good structures, though years of neglect or insensitive renovations have left them in need of appropriate renovation and revitalization.



## PEABODY SQUARE - NO "THERE" THERE

- Where once Peabody Square was truly a square, today it has no "there" there. It is a pass-through location, moving cars in five directions. It has no presence as a place. Much of the area is roadway, and much of that is undefined and confusing.

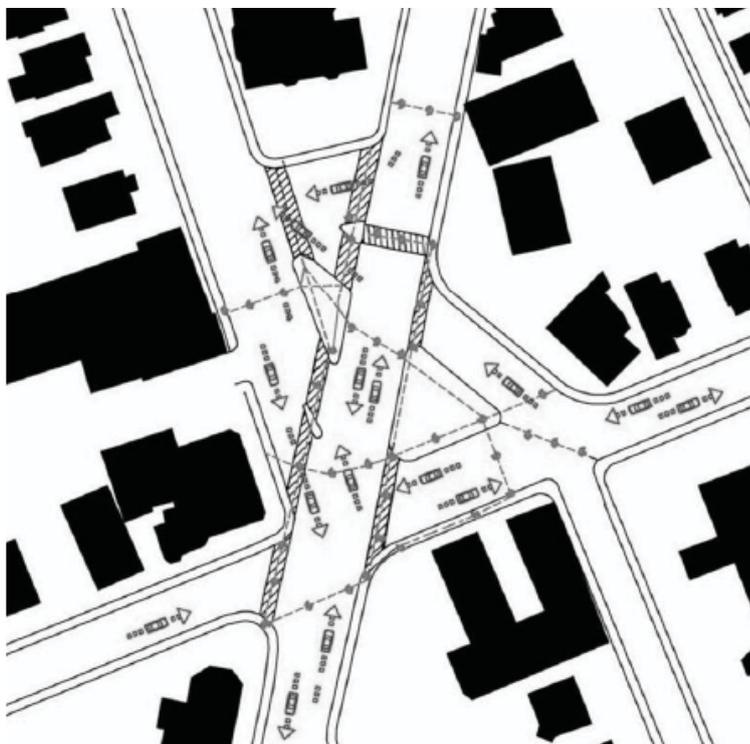
The area lacks sufficient street wall to form an urban "square." Diagram at left shows how buildings, streets and open space can work together to form a place.

- Peabody Square today is a confusing maze of roadways and endless asphalt. Vehicles entering the square from any of five directions face oversized street signals that lack any clarity of direction.

Pedestrians find no assistance in crossing the streets, which are overly wide, undefined and lacking adequate crosswalks.

- Buildings set at irregular angles to the street fracture the street wall and leave leftover and poorly utilized front yards. Adequate landscape, site walls, and architectural elements can ameliorate this, but parking exacerbates the problem.

- Parking lots facing the public sidewalk, without a landscaped edge between the sidewalk and the parking also rupture the street wall.



Vehicle and Pedestrian Flow Through Peabody Square

← [Car Icon] [Car Icon] [Car Icon] VEHICLE TRAVEL PATTERN  
- - - [Pedestrian Icon] [Pedestrian Icon] [Pedestrian Icon] PEDESTRIAN TRAVEL PATTERN

## MISSING LANDSCAPE & STREET ARCHITECTURE

- The district severely lacks landscaping. There are few, if any, trees along Dorchester Avenue. There are no parks that face the avenue. There is very little privately owned, well-landscaped property facing the avenue. Without street trees, there is insufficient shade in the summer for encouraging pedestrian activity.

- The district has no public amenities, such as benches, planters, pleasant street lamps, etc.

## INADEQUATE MIX OF USES TO CREATE AN URBAN VLLAGE

- St Mark's Area Main Street and Peabody Square lack a critical mass of publicly accessible commercial activity along Dorchester Avenue.

Retail commercial activity would feed all other commercial uses, bringing in customers, encouraging people to walk and explore the district.

- Most of the larger businesses along Dorchester Avenue are industrial, either auto or construction-related. Such uses, with closed street facades, few windows and no display, do not encourage pedestrian activity, and do not attract customers to the other businesses in the district.

- Many other businesses are service oriented, and also draw limited pedestrian activity. Businesses could work to increase visual interest along the avenue with window displays, good signage, murals, and landscaping.

- Areas of Dorchester Avenue shift from commercial to residential quickly. In a district with strong retail activity, such shifts would be barely noticeable. However, because so little of Dorchester Avenue is devoted to retail or other pedestrian-oriented uses, these shifts diminish the liveliness of the street wall.

## DEVELOPING A STRATEGY FOR IMPROVEMENT

There is no public land available in the St. Mark's Area Main Street district for development, except that designated for Trinity Financial's project at Ashmont Station. Therefore, it is extremely unlikely that public improvements alone can transform the district.

To develop a strategy for improving the district as elaborated in the goals, it is necessary to focus on design changes at both:

- The public territory, which includes streets, sidewalks, street furnishings, parks, etc.
- The private territory, existing buildings and open space along the avenue.

The time frame for action in the public and private spheres is likely to be different, which must be taken into account for a successful strategy. Further, a successful strategy will need to look at largescale moves such as the reconfiguration of roadways in Peabody Square to make them urban streets, the redesign of the Ashmont Station open space, and the new Trinity Financial development adjacent to the station. Smaller incremental moves such as street plantings, building facade improvements, etc., will also play a part in the area's improvement.

## GOALS FOR REDEVELOPMENT OF THE ST. MARK'S AREA MAIN STREET DISTRICT

Goals of the Community design and Planning Process for St Mark's Area Main Street

At the inception of the planning process, the urban planning team and SMAMS developed a series of five key goals for the district's redevelopment, including work in both public and private sectors. The intention is that at least one project should be accomplished within six months of the City of Boston's adoption of these goals:

- 1: Make Peabody Square and the entire SMAMS district safer for pedestrians, drivers and cyclists.
- 2: Make the public territory of Peabody Square and Dorchester Avenue more welcoming as a destination.
- 3: Maximize potential community benefits from the MBTA's renovation of Ashmont Station and the proposed Trinity Financial development at Ashmont.
- 4: Improve the "public face" of businesses in the SMAMS district, and increase the mix and variety of businesses, in order to increase foot traffic and draw more customers.
- 5: Celebrate the area's history and promote its present culture and resources.

The ideas generated through the community planning process for how to achieve each goal follow.

Goals 1: Make Peabody Square and the entire SMAMS district safer for pedestrians, drivers, and cyclists.

### Implement Pedestrian-oriented Design

- Implement traffic calming measures, e.g. neck down/curb extensions, traffic humps and raised crosswalks.
- Add sidewalk extensions, e.g. curb extensions and neck downs, where shown on the site plans. The sidewalk extensions are located in areas where pedestrians cross the street.
- Add textures of paving to distinguish pedestrian versus vehicular surfaces.
- Provide metered parking on Dorchester Avenue. Parking can wrap around some side streets to give access to shops, but limit commuter parking. Use night rime permit parking to ensure residents' parking while allowing daytime use by customers of businesses.
- Incorporate universal design principles to ensure that all area residents can enjoy the public spaces.
- Evaluate a secondary use of MBTA's Red Line tunnel cap. There is an interest in using the "cap" between Shawmut and Ashmont Station as a bike path. Further study should be done regarding the feasibility of this proposal.

### Build Connections with pedestrian and bike paths

- Connect the district to surrounding neighborhoods, particularly ones east and west of the district, by pedestrian and bike paths, e.g. a path from Codman Square to Shawmut subway station and a path connecting neighborhood parks. This would also help integrate the subway station with the neighborhood. All bike paths shown on the site plans should be further studied for their actual routes.

Goal 2: Make the public territory of Peabody Square and Dorchester Avenue more welcoming as a destination.

### Focus on pedestrian orientation - a walkable, livable cityscape

- Create a transit oriented, multi-modal pedestrian-friendly community. Pedestrians are the life of the city.
- Set new buildings lots at or close to sidewalks. The closer the buildings are to the sidewalk edge, the more active and engaging the area can be.
- Do not locate parking lots in front of buildings, or at the back of sidewalk.
- Build buildings between two and seven stories high. They should be low enough so one can see to tops of buildings, but tall enough to make a real edge for the street.
- Prevent streets and sidewalks from always being in a permanent shadow.
- Provide street furniture. This will encourage people to walk because it gives them a place to rest.

### Use Lighting

- Draw people to the area at night as well as during the day with good and interesting lighting.
- Use lighting to add to ambience.
- Create a kind of magic that differs markedly from daytime experience with the use of color and accent lighting.

### Use Landscaping to Make the District More Livable

- Use landscaping to contribute greenery and hardscape to the district.
- Provide gathering places and play spaces.
- Add greenery. It provides a place to get some solitude or to gather with friends.
- Use landscapes as art and to beautify very tight spaces.
- Explore "borrowed" private land as a location for additional landscape with public amenities.

The district does not have much public space landscaping, so private land will have to be the locations of the majority of the new landscape.

- Use neck downs on the east side of Dorchester Avenue on the southwest corner of the street.

Include street trees and plants on the neck downs. Use neck downs with street trees and plantings on Talbot Avenue at the end of each block.

- Provide street furniture at all bus stops on Dorchester Avenue and Talbot Avenue.

### Build Connections with Public Amenities

- Develop "loops," circuits that return to Dorchester Avenue to reinforce the centrality of the district by paying attention to street direction, to activities on loop, and to street furnishings. Potential loops identified are the Talbot-Dorchester-Welles Avenues and Ashmont Station to the Dorchester YMCA.
- Use common street furniture, textures, and materials throughout the district to build connections and provide continuity.
- Build up the visual continuity within district, e.g. SMAMS street signs.
- Build up the cross connections with streets that cross Dorchester Avenue: Ashmont Street, Welles Avenue Lonsdale Street, Melville Avenue-Parkman Street.
- Build up connections along major streets between villages e.g. Ashmont, Talbot and Welles Avenue to Codman Square and Carruth and Minot Streets to Adams Village.
- Connect to public resources, e.g. to the YMCA, to Hemenway Playground, Adams/King Street Playground, and Wainwright Park, and to Ashmont and Shawmut stations.
- Create connections for pedestrian access from residential neighborhoods.
- Design storefronts to wrap the corner.
- Provide bike access and bus facilities.

### Identify a Gateway

- Install a large sign announcing the beginning of the Saint Mark's Area Main Street District, or the end of it, depending on one's direction of travel.

Goal 3: Maximize potential community benefits from the MBTA's renovation of Ashmont Station and the proposed Trinity Financial development at Ashmont.

### Redevelopment of Peabody Square

Participants in the second charrette agreed upon a series of criteria that must be met in any redesign of Peabody Square.

#### New roadway design must:

- Improve vehicle circulation (i.e. minimize confusion and potential for accidents)
- Provide safe access for pedestrians to and within the Square, including direct, easy street crossings
- Increase space for pedestrians
- Provide public space for community gatherings and social interaction
- Provide opportunities for businesses to expand from shops onto sidewalks
- Minimize amount of street pavement

#### New Peabody Square design must:

- Bring renewed vitality to Peabody Square
- Restore neighborhood focus onto the Square
- Increase opportunities for strengthening the street wall
- Provide opportunities for evening activities
- Provide development opportunities for multi-story buildings
- Facilitate storefront improvements
- Provide opportunities for signage and designs that reflect the area's history and personality
- Contribute to transit-oriented-development
- Increase housing near the station
- Increase employment opportunities near the station
- Increase public gathering places near the station
- Express the "Green Streets" philosophy

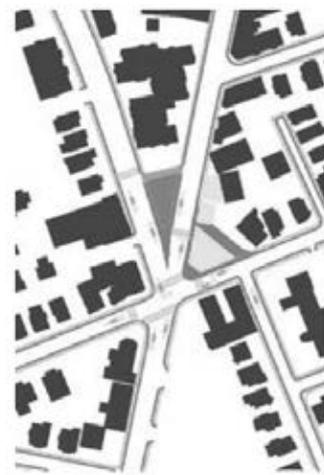
### Preliminary Design Options

Four reconfiguration options were presented at the charrette focused on Peabody Square. The groups considered the merits of each for pedestrian, vehicles, and business.



#### **An Island**

Reconfigure Dorchester Avenue around a new parcel of land in the center of Peabody Square to be used as a park.



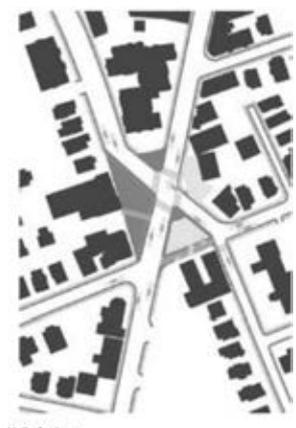
#### **The Star**

Remove Bushnell Street Extension. This creates new space beside Englewood Apartments.



#### **Double Intersection**

Configure Talbot Avenue so that it ends perpendicular to Dorchester Avenue. Remove the Bushnell Street Extension. This creates new space beside Englewood Apartments, in front of Talbot Avenue businesses, (e.g. Ashmont Grille), and at the Bushnell Street Extension.



#### **X Solution**

Break Ashmont Street by removing the roadway in front of the Peabody Apartments. Configure Talbot Avenue so it ends at Dorchester Avenue across from Bushnell Street Extension. This creates new space beside Englewood Apartments, in front of Talbot Avenue businesses (e.g. Ashmont Grille), and in front of The Peabody Apartments.

As describe above, the charrette's three working teams were presented with four design ideas for simplifying the baffling street layout in and around the Square. From these four ideas, the participants developed two alternative design approaches. Each approach would reduce the size of roadways and create new land, which could be used for open space or development, to be determined in the future.

The first design scheme places the newly created space on the east side of Dorchester Avenue, requiring the path of Dorchester Avenue to move around it. In so doing, it forces the very strong, linear element of Dorchester Avenue to move around the space, increasing the importance of the space created.

The second scheme places new land on the west side of Dorchester Avenue, requiring Talbot Avenue to turn to meet Dorchester Avenue. This provides new space in front of the Ashmont Grille and adjacent properties, but maintains the strong linear form of Dorchester Avenue.



Some noteworthy design ideas that appear in both schemes:

- Create one large open space. This meets the residents' need for a large gathering location.
- Build up the commercial buildings that surround Peabody Square to accommodate new businesses.
- Enlarge the sidewalk on Talbot Avenue to reduce the roadway's width and to provide sidewalk location for café tables, an area for merchants to show off their merchandise and other sidewalk amenities.
- Allocate space for the return of the historic Englewood Diner.
- Add a unique street paving to Peabody Square to designate the area as a pedestrian zone.
- Relocate parking lots to the rear of buildings.

Groups also noted that any new open space must be owned or maintained by a defined entity in order to ensure that it is properly maintained and continues to be a resource contributing to the community.

Participants agreed that regardless of which alternative is selected, it should include the following pedestrian friendly strategies:

- Curb extensions and neck downs
- Raised intersections/ speed tables
- Raised sidewalks
- Alternative paving surfaces
- Tight corner curb radii
- Crossing islands
- Signage to alert drivers of crosswalks' locations
- Countdown walk lights.

Goal 4: Improve the "public face" of businesses in the SMAMS district, and increase the mix and variety of businesses, in order to increase foot traffic and draw more customers.

#### Increase the mix and variety of businesses

Add these types of new businesses to the district:

- Food Service: cafes, multi-cultural restaurants, coffee shops and breakfast places
- Retail: home goods store, bookstores and other small leisure shops
- Entertainment: a movie theatre
- Vendor carts outside Ashmont station.

#### Expand commercial space available

- Locate areas for development of additional commercial space in the district. There are limited options for new buildings due to the fact that there is little vacant land and only a few vacant buildings. Two opportunities for new business are Trinity Financial's development at Ashmont Station and the new building at Dorchester Avenue and Banton Street.
- Increase the available commercial area by building up, especially at buildings that are one story along the avenue and where houses behind are 2 and 3 stories. Some uses now at ground floor do not need to be there; they could shift to 2nd or 3rd floor.
- Build out horizontally. Add to the front or side of buildings to get a continuous street wall. A lively street wall is critical to a pedestrian friendly main street, forming a strong edge to the public terrain of street and sidewalk.
- Relocate industrial uses to the backstage when possible. If some industrial uses on Dorchester Avenue do not need all their space, they could shift toward the rear of the building/property, thus allowing more pedestrian-oriented activity at the sidewalk face. Where buildings are not deep enough for this, businesses in those buildings could relocate over time to sites that are not right on Dorchester Avenue.
- Add new uses into existing buildings, e.g. a coffee shop in the front of a building housing an existing car shop. Many small shops make for lots of commercial activity and interesting streetscape.
- Use spaces between buildings for outdoor cafes, vendor carts, etc.
- Avoid parking lots and gas stations facing Dorchester Avenue. They break the continuity of the street wall by creating voids. The voids should be filled with trees, plantings, and street furnishings to continue the edge between public and private.
- Form a strong edge between the public terrain of sidewalks and private commercial space.
- Encourage businesses to share parking lots.

#### Create Commercial "Nodes"

- Establish local, intensive areas of commercial development to increase pedestrian activity in Peabody Square and at the intersections of Dorchester Avenue and Welles Avenue and at the intersection of Talbot Avenue.
- Locate the nodes at intersections already busy with vehicle and/or pedestrian travel. Future developments should assist in making the node a destination.
- Develop the area in a node with higher density or with larger structures.

#### Develop a Zone

- Designate the area created by connecting the nodes as a zone.
- Develop multi-story properties within the zone, particularly on Dorchester Avenue, with commercial space on the first floor and above.
- Prioritize improvements in the district to be done first within the zone.
- Encourage new commercial developments, particularly within the zone, to consider the list of businesses and services that residents would like to add to the district.

#### Implement Pedestrian-oriented Design

- Redesign major streets to include pedestrian-oriented design concepts, such as: sidewalks wide enough for two or more people to walk together; street trees; and a bike-only travel lane. Sketches, shown in the left column, show both the existing roadway conditions and the streetscapes as redesigned.
- Dorchester Avenue's redesign: A wider sidewalk provides space for street trees. Where there are no trees, a lane is provided for parking. The roadway is narrowed, but two cars can still pass each other with an additional lane for parking. The narrowed roadway provides additional room for the sidewalk.
- Talbot Avenue's redesign: A wider sidewalk provides space for street trees. Where there are no trees, a lane is provided for parking. The roadway is narrowed, but two cars can still pass each other with an additional lane for parking. The narrowed roadway allows room for a bike lane on each side of the road.

#### Renovate building facade.

- Provide good architectural detail at sidewalk level and above.
- Design facades to have continuity e.g. heights and location of sign bands.
- Provide variety in types of signage, façade materials and colors.

#### Enhance storefront architecture

- Create storefronts that display the image and character of the building and business. Storefronts are the place of engagement between private and public territory.
- Design storefronts to be welcoming and open with large window areas and low sills. This allows people to look in and see the activity inside.
- Celebrate the interaction of people's comings and goings.
- Use sidewalks for attractive retail displays.

#### Improve/enhance signage

- Design signage to present important information about the business. Good signage also adds visual interest and a continuous sign band helps create a strong street wall.
- Design lighting and signage to work together to create evening interest and mystique.
- Design signage as art forms.

#### Develop creative window displays

- Use window design and displays to contribute to the liveliness of sidewalks.
- Design the display so that it reflects the personality and purpose of the business.
- Draw people through creativity, change, and surprise.
- Encourage interaction of looking in/out
- Create interesting window display even if the business cannot have passersby look into the store. Provide a solid wall behind the display.
- Utilize resources like Dot Art, local artists, craftspeople and organizations for changing displays.

#### Use art and landscape to enhance public/private interaction

- Add murals to enliven dead walls, or integrate murals into building façades.
- Use art as a backdrop. It can help make a place out of a driveway.
- Consider even the smallest area for improvement with art and landscape.
- Contact local art groups like Dot Art for permanent and temporary art installations.

Goal 5: Celebrate the area's history and promote its present culture and resources.

#### Historic markers and references

- Reflect Dorchester's strong and lengthy history.
- Use informational signage and directories to present culture and history.
- Provide historic plaques for All Saints Church and Peabody Apartments, both listed on National Register of Historic Places.

### Peabody Square Clock

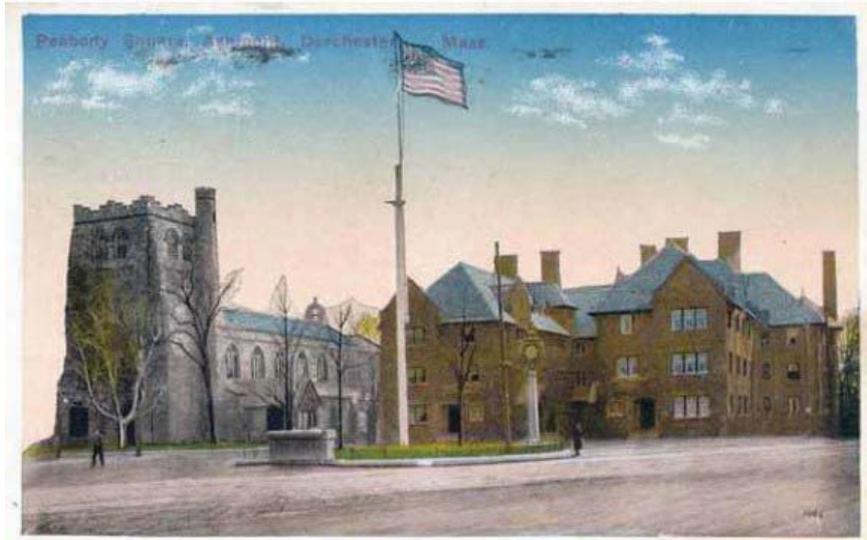
- Emphasize restored clock as focal point of Peabody Square redesign. Consider moving it to a more prominent location such as the Ashmont Station site.

Commonalities among charrette team proposals:

The following items represent a clear consensus among all charrette participants:

- Create "nodes" (focus areas) throughout the district. New commercial development, possibly of higher-than-current density, would be concentrated in these nodes.

- Link the nodes on Dorchester, Talbot and Welles Avenues through development of a Peabody Square Loop, reinforcing the triangle formed by these streets, and bringing people back into Peabody Square and the district.



- Signify a "gateway" to district at least at the south end of the district along Dorchester Avenue, and some transition to indicate the relationship of Fields Corner to St. Mark's Area at the north end.
- Create new bike routes to connect to the Neponset bike trail, to connect Codman Square to the St. Mark's Area and to link the neighborhood parks.
- Establish walking tours of historic houses, buildings and sites.
- Develop community space for children, youth and families near the district.
- Extend the commercial district off Dorchester Avenue at nodes.
- Develop a parking strategy to include more on-street parking for residents.
- Employ a sustainable design approach, making St. Mark's Area Main Street a "Green Street" Main Street.
- The key elements to the district's improvement are in the redesign of sidewalks, crosswalks, intersections for pedestrian focus, improvement of the commercial buildings and mix of uses, and intensification through construction and/or landscape improvements to create a greater sense of place.

## **PART B. PARTNERSHIP AND STRATEGY**

### St. Mark's Area Main Street District in a Pivotal Moment

Residents and business owners in the St. Mark's Area Main Street district have devoted countless hours working together to develop a vision that will restore this once-vital urban neighborhood physically, visually and functionally. Located along one of Boston's major boulevards, the district has experienced little of the urban redevelopment common in many of Boston's neighborhoods. The residential neighborhoods surrounding St. Mark's Area Main Street are diverse, multi-ethnic, and comprise a broad mix of incomes. It is a highly organized and active community, willing to volunteer time and effort to improve the neighborhood.

The district was in a pivotal moment:

- It was on the verge of significant redevelopment with the renovation of Ashmont Station and the new Trinity Financial development on land leased from the MBTA at Dorchester Avenue. These two changes have been the potential to begin the transformation of the southern edge of the district.
- There was a disconnection between the resources of some area residents and the commercial uses available. The result was an outflow of money from the neighborhood to communities outside the city, which also shifts tax revenue outside the city.
- It had the potential to be a model of transit-oriented development.

To take advantage of the moment, residents were looking to create a three-way partnership among the City of Boston, area residents, and local business owners. There was great opportunity, and need, for all parties to contribute to the transformation of the district and of Peabody Square.

St. Mark's Mea residents wanted a master plan to be developed by the City, residents and business owners, based on the vision and goals articulated in the community planning process. It should address the following development issues:

- The mix of commercial uses;
- Improvements to commercial property through design guidelines;
- The addition of pedestrian-focused amenities such as tree planting, street furniture, and traffic calming measures;
- Reconfiguration and restructuring of key streets in the district;
- Pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular safety;
- Creation of a Green Street/Main Street;
- Transit-oriented development guidelines.

Newcomers and long-term residents shared a need for a better mix of retail businesses and commercial services in order to meet their needs within the local area. Such a plan will support the local economy, and will encourage residents' use of local businesses. It will also decrease the need for car trips, thereby conserving fuel and reducing air pollution.

The character of Dorchester Avenue in the SMAMS district was mostly limited to industrial uses. There was little precedent for a varied mix of pedestrian-friendly businesses.

Merchants participating in the workshop noted the need for additional city services. They proposed the following:

- Combine two-hour daytime parking with night-time resident permit parking to ensure that parking is used to support local businesses and area residents, rather than all-day commuters from outside the city;
- Better enforcement by Police Department of traffic and parking regulations, as well as cracking down on illegal use of commercial dumpsters and illicit activity behind commercial buildings at night.
- More police presence in the district, especially when youth are returning from school, and at night; merchants felt that the community policing model was no longer visible in the neighborhood;
- More consistent trash pickup and street and sidewalk cleaning by city;
- SMAMS and neighborhood groups to work with merchants to improve delivery of city services to the area, and to get to know youths using Ashmont Station;
- Increased night-time business use to improve safety.

The master plan, public improvements, and private development needed to include a plan for creating a pedestrian-oriented urban village in the district. Public amenities such as landscaping, public art, street furniture, street and storefront lighting to encourage night time use, should all be key elements of the plan. Consideration should also be given to activities and elements that encourage walking and cycling, as well as to encouraging public events that draw neighbors together.

Peabody Square's roadways and traffic signals didn't work - they serve neither pedestrians nor bicycles trying to traverse the square, nor the cars and trucks trying to pass through it. This was the unanimous opinion of charrette participants, who called for the Boston Transportation Department to conduct a multi-modal traffic study of the district, including the triangle formed by Welles Avenue, Talbot Avenue, and Dorchester Avenue, and with a particular focus on Peabody Square. This study was conducted in coordination with the planned Trinity Financial development at Ashmont Station.

One of the most exciting proposals to come out of the community planning process was that of making Main Street a "green street," looking at sustainable design principles.

## PEABODY SQUARE GREEN STREET PILOT

Mayor Thomas M. Menino on September 16, 2004 announced that the city will set aside \$150,000 for a design study for the Peabody Square and St. Mark's Area Main Streets district of Dorchester. The ongoing renovations to Ashmont Station have encouraged area residents and merchants to express interest in additional neighborhood improvements and revitalization. The staff and volunteers of St. Mark's Area Main Streets have worked with area

residents and merchants to develop proposals for neighborhood improvement projects. Additionally, the MBTA has announced that it will award \$25,000 to the project.

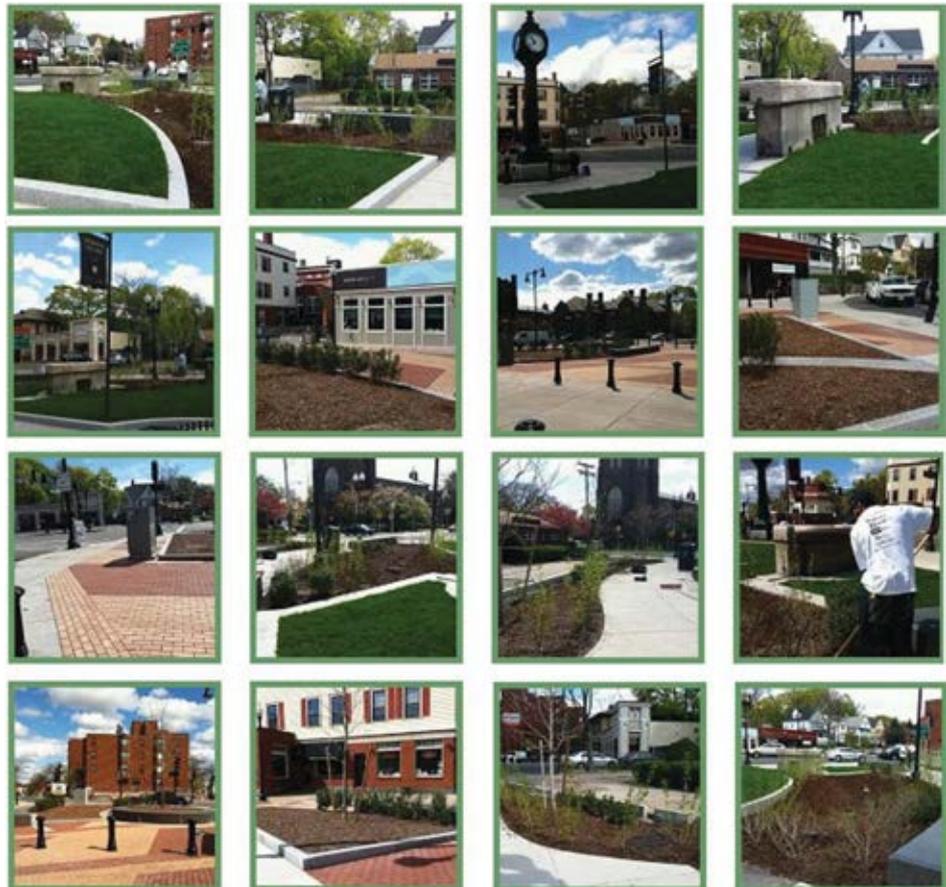
"Today I'm proud to announce that the City has awarded 150 thousand dollars for a design study to look for improvements to the traffic patterns here in Peabody Square," said Mayor Menino. "This award is given in response to the impressive level of commitment demonstrated by the community, particularly St. Mark's Area Main Streets. St. Mark's worked with residents, merchants, the police and fire departments, and elected officials to come up with proposals for improving the square and the entire Main Streets district<sup>1</sup>".

This study re-routed several streets, overhauled the traffic-light system, and added much-needed green space. Thanks to a partnership among SMAMS, the City's Environment Department and the Charles River Watershed Association the project includes a pilot "Green Street" storm water management system.

The City of Boston was interested in determining whether Green Streets are feasible in Boston, particularly given our cold climate, and understanding more about their costs and benefits. Since there are currently no Green Streets in Massachusetts, the City of Boston Environment Department (BED) and Charles River Watershed Association (CRWA) began working together to identify an appropriate pilot project in 2006. A proposal was submitted to MassDEP in December of 2006 seeking funds to support the pilot project. In the spring of 2007, BED and CRWA selected Peabody Square as a potential site for a pilot project, and upon receipt of the 604(b) grant from MassDEP, began work to assess the feasibility of including Green Street designs into an existing plan to redevelop the streetscape.

In July, 2007, the City of Boston was awarded a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) to undertake an innovative pilot project to assess the potential stormwater management and recharge benefits of a so-called Green Street. Green Streets are streets designed to incorporate innovative stormwater management techniques, including Low Impact Development (LID) stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs), into the street right-of-way to collect and treat stormwater runoff that is generated from sidewalks, roadways and other impervious surfaces.

In addition to document research, CRWA conducted site visits to study the existing physical conditions at Peabody Square and analyzed how the 25% design studies will change the existing landscape characterization of the study area. Given the dearth of green spaces and street trees in the area, a need for replacing paved areas with vegetative and soil based best management practices was immediately identified. The project showcases numerous innovative Low Impact Development features including a pedestrian plaza with porous pavers, a rain garden, and a stormwater planter. Peabody Square is a pilot green street project demonstrating the Boston



<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cityofboston.gov/news/Default.aspx?id=2270>

Complete Streets approach recently adopted by the City. CRWA worked with the Boston Transportation Department and the Department of Public Works and its consultant Nitsch Engineering Inc. and Carol R. Johnson and Associates to advance the Green Street design for Peabody Square. One of the most significant impacts of this partnership and CRWA's outreach efforts on this project has been the incorporation of green street strategies into "Boston's Complete Streets Design Guidelines" effort.

## ASHMONT TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

### New Housing, Commercial Space to Help Transform Dorchester's Peabody Square

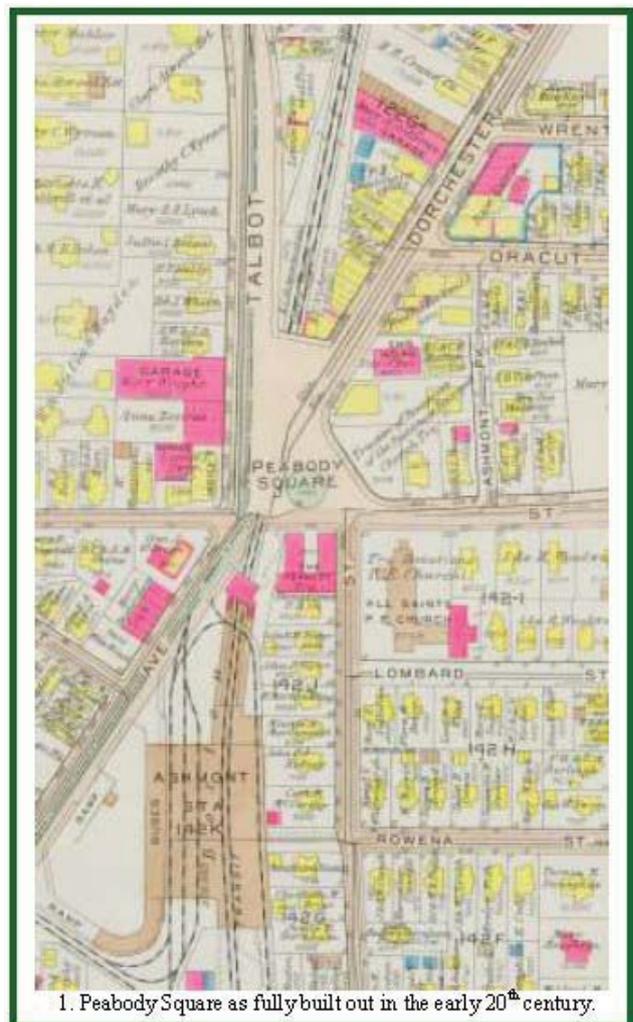
On March 28, 2007 Mayor Thomas M. Menino signed the steel beam for the topping off of the Ashmont Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), to be called The Carruth, at Peabody Square adjacent to the MBTA's Ashmont Red Line Station. The project involved the new construction of 116 units of mixed-income housing and approximately 10,000 square feet of neighborhood retail on a site directly adjacent to the T station, which was undergoing complete reconstruction. Trinity Financial was developer.

"This development sets the standard for all transit-oriented development – new housing and commercial space right next to a major T station," said Mayor Menino. "And when you look at what else is going on in this area – the total renovation of the Ashmont T Station and the redesign of Peabody Square – you will see in the future a transformed Peabody Square"<sup>2</sup>.

The TOD parcel is approximately 37,000 square feet. The parcel had been used for MBTA buses and temporary parking. The development is the subject to an 85-year ground lease between Trinity Financial and the MBTA. The proposed building is planned as a six-story structure with one floor of neighborhood retail and five stories of housing. This building contains 116 units of housing, consisting of 74 affordable rental units on the first four floors and 42 market rate condominiums on the upper two floors. All of the rental units are available to households earning no more than 60% of the area median income, which is \$40,380 for two-person household in Boston. In addition, eight of those unit are rented to households earning no more than 30% of the area median income, which is \$20,200. As a condition of the ground lease with the MBTA, all the rental units will remain affordable for the lease's 85-year term.

This building includes approximately 10,000 square feet of neighborhood retail and also includes one level of below-grade parking with 80 spaces.

The building's name, The Carruth, reaches back to Dorchester's history. In the 1850s, Nathan Carruth, a forward thinking apothecary merchant, recognized the potential value of Dorchester's land and was instrumental in creating the Old Colony Railroad line that ran from Boston to Quincy and stopped at the Ashmont location. The convenience of the new Ashmont train stop allowed Bostonians to live in Dorchester and commute by train. All of this changed the town forever and led to the annexation of Dorchester by Boston in 1870.



<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cityofboston.gov/news/Default.aspx?id=3476>

Funding for The Carruth was provided by Department of Neighborhood Development (\$1,750,000 HOME), Neighborhood Housing Trust (\$750,000), MassHousing (\$3,250,000 PDF), state tax credits (\$9,460,000), federal tax credits (\$15,624,211), Department of Housing and Community Development (\$1,000,000 HOME funds, \$2,000,000 TOD funds and \$750,000 CATNHP funds), MassHousing (\$3,250,000 PDF funds), and MassHousing/Mass Tec PV Panels (\$580,000).

On November 25, 2008 Mayor Thomas M. Menino, together with Department of Neighborhood Development Director Evelyn Friedman, celebrated the completion of the Carruth Building by opening five new businesses in the building: Flat Black Coffee, Wainwright Bank, At Home Real-Estate, Tavolo, and the St. Mark's Area Main Street Office (SMAMS).

St. Mark's Area Main Street, after eight years in St. Mark's Rectory, is now housed in the Carruth Building.

St. Mark's Area Main Street was also instrumental in bringing Wainwright Bank and Flat Black Coffee together to share an innovative new space in the front of the Carruth Building. Wainwright Bank is a leader in socially responsible banking and has 12 branches in the Boston area. Flat Black Coffee is a socially conscious organic coffee shop with three locations in the City of Boston. At Home Real Estate, an established Dorchester business and the sales agent for the condos in the Carruth Building, also opened a new office in the building. Joining in the celebration and grand opening was Tavolo, a modern but casual Italian neighborhood restaurant owned by Chris Douglass, the owner of the Ashmont Grill and Icarus. Tavolo, open seven days a week, offers a full bar and extensive menu.

Additionally, the Office of Business Development's Neighborhood Restaurant Initiative provided Tavolo with \$110,000 in CDBG loans. The Office of Business Development developed the Neighborhood Restaurant Initiative as a way to facilitate the development of a number of full service restaurants in the City's neighborhood commercial districts.



#### PART D. CONCLUSIONS

This report, and the work that preceded it, exemplify the best in community planning. The City government funded the process. A professional planner facilitated the process. And local residents and merchants were the process, investing many hours to develop goals that are ambitious yet practical.

These goals present both the vision and the foundation for a safe, attractive and vibrant Peabody Square and SMAMS district. Public infrastructure investment will inspire private investment in buildings and businesses, which will translate into new jobs and tax revenues.

Many of the people who drove this project also led the campaign to renovate Ashmont Station, and many are active SMAMS volunteers. With station construction due to begin soon, and with several SMAMS storefront renovations in progress, the neighborhood energy level is at its highest point in years.

## PART E. REFERENCES

### Bibliography

*Dorchester*, Mitchell Sammarco A., , Arcadia Publishing (SC), February 2005 ISBN: 0738536962

*DORCHESTER REPORTER*, Boston Neighborhood News, Inc., November 20, 2003

*Connecting Dot Ave: A new vision for St. Mark's Area Main Street*, Gail Sullivan Associates, Inc., Dorchester, 2004

### Websites

<http://www.smams.org>

<http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/Home.aspx>

<http://www.masshousing.com>

<http://www.trynityfinancial.com>

<http://www.dotnews.com>

<http://www.cityofboston.gov>

<http://www.crwa.org>

### Glossary

BED Boston Environment Department

BMPs Best Management Practices

CATNHP Commercial Area Transit Node Housing Program

CDBG Community Development Block Grant

CRWA Charles River Watershed Association

LID Low Impact Development

MassDEP Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

MBTA Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

PDF Priority Development Fund

SMAMS St. Mark's Area Main Street

TOD Transit-Oriented Development

YMCA Young Men's Christian Association

REPORT CASE STUDY  
Carla MAIONE

## **“CONCORD COMMONS COMMUTER RAIL”, the role of PPP in a case study TOD.**



<b>Abstract</b>	2
<b>PART A</b>	
Concord Commons; before the initiative	3
Concord Commons and its contest	4
Strengths and Weaknesses'	5
Demographic analysis	7
<b>PART B</b>	
Partnership and strategy	8
Construction and Composition of the PPP	8
The Planning Initiatives and program	10
<b>PART C</b>	
The context today	13
social economics AND urban characters	14
<b>PART D</b>	
Conclusion	15
<b>PART E</b>	
References	16
<b>PART F</b>	
The visual analysis	17

## Abstract

Concord Commons Commuter Rail, is a model of Transit Oriented Development,” a mixed-use community, that encourages people to live near transit services and to decrease dependence on their driving” (Still 2002, Bernick and Cervero 1997, p. 5).

TOD, Transit Oriented Development, is a program of the “Smart Growth”, dominant paradigm of sustainable urban planning, launched by the state of the Massachusetts, with the purpose of providing financial assistance for parking facilities, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and housing (Chapter 291 of the Acts of 2004). This initiative assigns award funding up to \$10 million, at the areas within a quarter-mile of a commuter rail station, subway station, ferry terminal, or bus station, for housing developments, the program is intended to provide gap financing in a way that reduces the need for multiple funding sources while encouraging maximization of private financing. Funding award caps are \$1 million for projects up to 25 units and up to \$2 million for projects greater than 25 units.

The key to success of the TOD are Public Private Partnership, “designed to decrease the costs of operating or constructing public transportation systems, stations or improvements through creative public-private financing arrangements” (The National Council for Urban Economic Development 1989), and again “Any formal agreement or arrangement between a public transit agency and a private individual or organization that involves either private-sector payments to the public entity or private-sector sharing of capital costs in mutual recognition of the enhanced real estate development potential or market potential created by the siding of a public transit facility” (Cervero et al. 1991).

Concord Commons Commuter Rail, is for the principles of “Smart growth” launched by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1993, a important example of case study for Transit Oriented Development that has been most successful, thanks also to a strong process of participation public and private.

Concord Commons developed within Business District, is located in Concord, historic suburban a few miles of Boston, was established in 1635 as a farming community, living of wealth and income, the community wanted to preserve its historical and colonial, maintaining a “niche market”, and preventing the intrusion of big industrial chains, but in 1987 the need of renewal, the town have prepared a “Long Range Plan” intended to direct development in Concord.

In 1994, a private Developer have launched a purpose, integrate housing and small retail in proximity to the stations, with the goal of to preserve a colonial character similar to the existing buildings, with the challenge to create job and improving the quality of life.

The strategy is Local property owners and developers have always worked with local government, and, today, the resulting Concord Common development comprises three mixed use buildings with retail space, office space, a 180 seat restaurant, and 20 rental apartments. With the final agreement

between the Town and Developer, required that he provide four affordable units at another location in the Town, allowing all the units at the station to be rented at market rates, with the purpose to encourage the small retail and hinder the Global Market, and to keep rents of the local stable in the time.

This particular focus, have provide a mix of necessities and unique services and products that is valued by neighborhood residents. Businesses in the core area include a mix of small retailers, eating places, luxury restaurant, and personal and professional services. Over the last several years there appears to be growing clusters of related products such as the natural foods and food-product businesses and home decoration and improvement businesses.

Concord Commons is recognized as an important node for future higher density commercial, provided direct access to downtown Boston and have improving the quality of life of the entire local community, is recognized as a major tourist destination.

## **PART A**

### **Concord Commons; Before the initiative**

In 1994, with thoughtful planning and attention to the market, the Town of Concord and a private developer have successfully transformed the Concord Center commuter rail station into a center of retail, office, restaurant and residential activity. Through early intervention and persistent negotiations with the developer, the Town has achieved a model TOD at its historic train station.

Concord Commons Commuter Rail, is for the principles of “Smart growth” launched by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1993, a important example of case study for Transit Oriented Development <sup>1</sup>that has been most successful, thanks also to a strong process of participation public and private.

Before the advent of the automobile, the train stations played a central role in shaping development patterns in Concord. Businesses and residents were built in close proximity to the stations, which provided direct access to downtown Boston. After automobiles became widespread, development in Concord became more dispersed, and locations around the stations became less desirable.

In the XX century the main goal for the Town and community was centralize the station and your area, reconstruct the area of the station, making it a focal node of the city as it had been in the past.

The strategy in Concord Commons commuter Rail was that Local property owners and developers have always worked with local government-often local business owners served on town boards and committees that envisioned the future.

---

<sup>1</sup> Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is compact, walkable development centered on transit stations and designed to improve the quality of life while reducing the dependence on the automobile.

**Concord Commons and urban contest**

Concord, is a town in Middlesex County, is an outer Boston suburb with a rural feel. From about 1830 to 1880 it was effectively the literary center of America, where Emerson, L. M. Alcott, Hawthorne and Thoreau lived and wrote. Was established in 1635 as a farming community, is located at the intersection of the Sudbury, Assabet and Concord rivers in rolling terrain of glacial deposits.

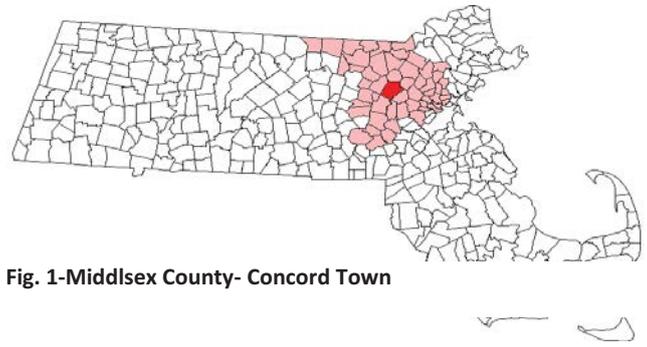


Fig. 1-Middlesex County- Concord Town

It is considerate the oldest inland town in New England, its proximity to Boston and abundance of water resources has stimulated diverse development in the land over time. Rivers, railroads and a road system, this “corridors”, have linked Concord to the 18 towns surrounding it, as well as to Boston and other locations and have stimulated agricultural, residential and recreational development over time. Its open space and recreational needs remain high, as its economy tends to remain vibrant and residential development continues to spread.

A Boston-to-Fitchburg railroad arrives in 1844, connecting Concord Center and West Concord to the wider world. Commuting and shipping products to Boston are faster; manufacturing expands. In 1850, 70% of the taxpayers are landless. A north-south Framingham-to-Lowell railroad and two other railroads create a rail junction. Coal becomes available, and efficient Rumford fireplaces and Franklin stoves decrease the amount of tree removal for fuel.

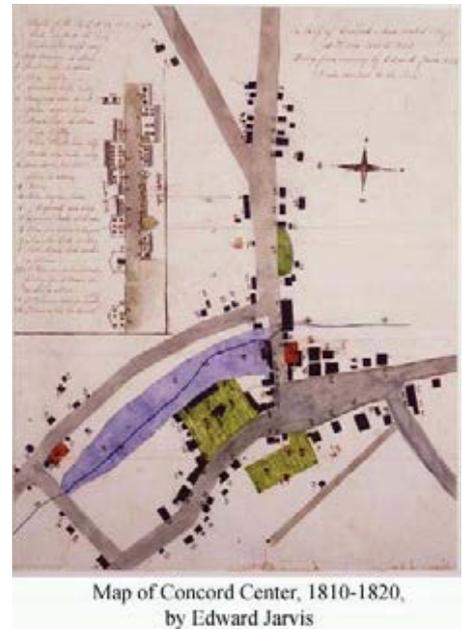


fig.2-Town Concord 1810

During the first four decades of the 20th C. suburbanization and city-commuting accelerate. Sewer and electric systems are built. Electric streetcars briefly zip through town along Bedford St., Main St., and Commonwealth Ave. Railroad lines decline. Wagons, horses, and walkers decrease, while automobiles and paved roads spread. Oil becomes plentiful, and auto repair shops emerge. Route 2 slices Concord in half.



fig.3 Aerial view Concord, 1938

Housing developments appear along the river and along the street, Homes fill land between Thoreau St. and the railroad. During the Early Modern Period (1915-1941) the Colonial Revival style of architecture predominates, and many of the development homes are American Four-Squares, Dutch Colonials, and Cape Cod Cottages. To the

outside world, Concord symbolizes devotion to liberty, intellectual freedom, and stubborn integrity of rural life. In 1945, post war, the town and the community want to mitigate the damage of a aggressive planning, think zoning, natural-resource protection, and historic-resource preservation as keystones to Concord's future.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses'**

Concord Commons is a combination of physical factor, environmental, cultural, economic, and social qualities to make a town a livable, vibrant community. From the charm and beauty of the village centers, to the thriving cultural and artistic offerings, to the quality of the schools, to the physical beauty of the landscape and waterways, to the pockets of friendly neighborhoods and active citizen involvement in local government, Concord has a lot to offer its residents.

In 1984, the major objective of the municipality of Concord was to take steps to enhance the quality of life for those who live, visit, or work in Concord. Offering a variety of housing types in a wide range of prices in a community is important to maintaining a demographically diverse population.

The coming of the railroad spawned coal, wood, and grain dealerships and other businesses that depended on freight shipments in nearly every town the railroad passed through, with sidings and loading platforms built adjacent to the buildings so the freight could be unloaded directly from the trains to the buildings. While all of the buildings constructed westerly of the tracks have been lost, there remain four commercial buildings on Thoreau Street (east of the tracks) that date back to the late 1800, and early 1900, the Depot and its baggage office (now Bedford Farms ice cream shop), the Concord Provisions building at the corner of Middle Street and Thoreau Street and its companion building the Dry Cleaning business (Priest Cleaners) at the corner of Belknap Street and Thoreau Street.

One of the critical aspects of this area is the lack of publicly owned land and the lack of welcoming places to sit and take in the sights, was a need for shade, of comfortable benches, need for more greenery.

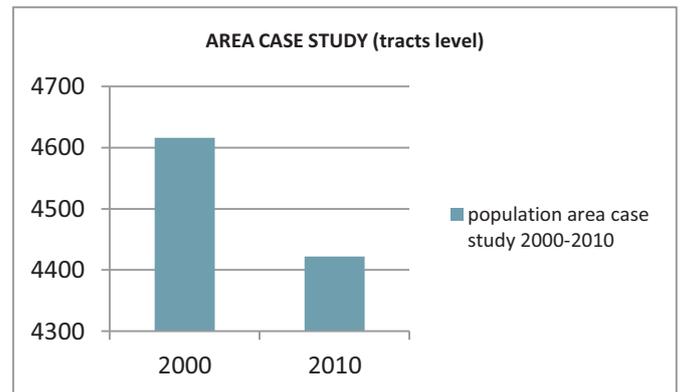
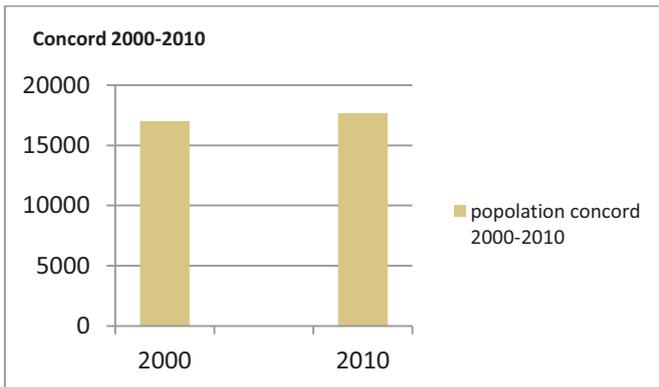
Were devoid pedestrian access in this area, sidewalks, from Thoreau Street down Sudbury Road toward Grant Street there aren't lights, was important adding street trees and nicely designed street furnishings (benches, trash receptacles, information kiosks, etc.) and the big opportunity is the link between the city and private property owners, who in this case study have always worked together, and improve the open spaces on their land. Another critical aspect was the need for well-coordinated parking agreements and regulations among residents, business owners and employees. Was urgency for cooperative efforts within currently available parking in the district, and is fundamental to explore the best choices that will respond to the area, future parking needs.

### **Context urban social and economics**

Concord is composed of a very rich community, perhaps for the beauty and natural resources, good schools, rich history and traditions, and proximity to highways and public transportation. These much-treasured resources increasingly planned for and protected, help define and preserve the Town's character.

The main goal for the community and the Town, was to preserving economic and social diversity, along with a diversity of the housing stock, while remaining mindful of the Town’s rural and historic traditions, including preservation of open space.

From the analysis of tables and from the data collected with use of [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), can be seen that the population of Concord has remained stable over the past decade 2000-2010 at approximately 17,000, but between 2000-2010 Concord Commons Commuter rail the population has decline about of the 2%.

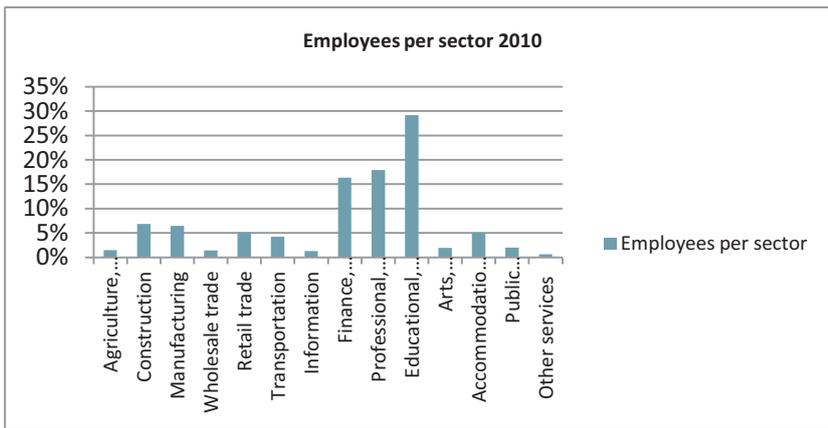


The causes of the decline are the prices of land very high, perhaps for the lack of availability of building land, High land prices contribute to ever-increasing housing costs, which make the Town unaffordable to both those who currently reside in the community and those who would like to move into the community.

Based on the information gathered appears that the diversity within the Concord community is increasing slightly, with a 2% decline in those reporting their race as “white.” While the number of residents reporting their race as “black” declined, there were increases in the numbers of residents who reported their race as “Asian; some other race; or two or more races”.

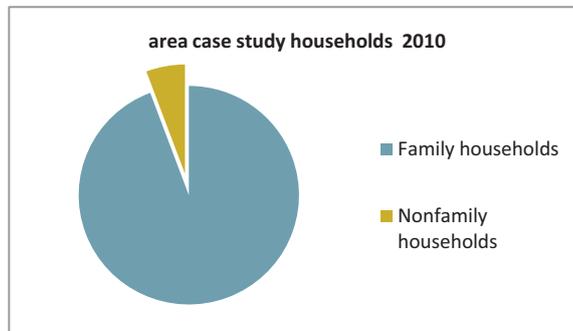
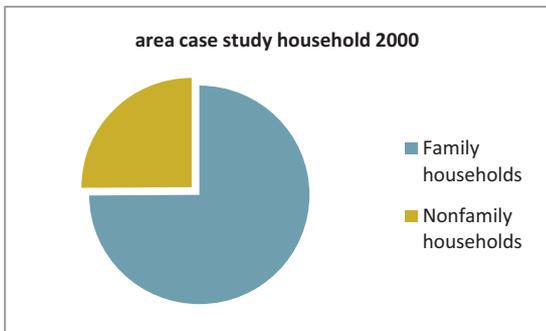
In recent years, there have been some significant shifts in the composition of the Concord Commons population from 2000-2010, with the adult population increasing the 20 to 54 year age bracket by 48%, and in declining the 75 and over bracket by 38%. The Town has a smaller average household size and has experienced an increase in the percentage of elderly residents.

Steve Cecil of “CECIL GROUP” supports during interview, that American Economy Became had an explosion of wealth and income, in last 30-40 years, and in Concord as many suburban in Massachusetts, the wealth is divided in a different category the doctors, lawyers, business executives, that have reorganized the tax structure for to preserve the wealth, in Concord the Employers per sector is high for the finance and real estate, Educational, health and social service.



In the last decade, data shows that Incomes have risen 12% to Almost a median of \$ 109.384 for adult of 54-55 years.

Although the total population did not grow, the number of households has increased. In the Tables can be seen that 22% of the town’s households were renters, by 2000 the ratio fell to 18%. This change is also reflected in an outflow of available renter housing units. It is important to evidence that, the largest net increase occurred among single-person households. The Town has a smaller average household size and has experienced an increase in the percentage of elderly residents. In summary, while the overall population stayed the same, the number of households has increased, with more owner-occupied units and fewer people per household. Through zoning amendments made at Town Meeting, Concord commons has become a town zoned almost exclusively for single-family residences.



Concord’s rental vacancy rate declined from 4% in 1990 to 3.2% in 2000. The homeownership vacancy rate declined from 1.9% to 0.6% in the same period.

Generally, housing vacancy rates of 5% for rental units and 2% for ownership stock are thought to be sufficient for accommodating reasonable housing choice. Throughout the region, the ownership and rental vacancy rates remain below the desired averages. Factors that would account for this trend include high employment growth and increased housing demand and a lag in housing production as well as the increased housing costs that result from a tight housing market.

## PART B

### Partnership and strategy Construction and Composition of the PPP

The key to success of the TOD are Public Private Partnership, “designed to decrease the costs of operating or constructing public transportation systems, stations or improvements through creative public-private financing arrangements” (The National Council for Urban Economic Development 1989), and again “Any formal agreement or arrangement between a public transit agency and a private individual or organization that involves either private-sector payments to the public entity or private-sector sharing of capital costs in mutual recognition of the enhanced real estate development potential or market potential created by the siting of a public transit facility” (Cervero et al. 1991).

In 1987 the Town prepared a “Long Range Plan”, this is a “five-year level plan” of the Facilities Planning Committee, as a general guideline, and recommend that this be updated to respond to changes in tax laws, funding sources, and economic climate, as appropriate, intended to direct development in Concord. The long range plan identified the Concord Center station as an important node for future higher density commercial and residential development. The Town particularly recognized the potential to redevelop the lumber yard site with uses that might benefit from a location in close proximity to the commuter rail station. So, he began the work of restructuring,

From an interview with a important private developer of the town, filed in the public library of Concord, responsible of the "Period Realty Trust"<sup>2</sup>, a leading private real estate developer, the report shows that public / private partnerships Concord Commons Commuter Rail was born around 1980, when the Concord Housing Authority<sup>3</sup>, no profit organization, asked the private developer to work for the construction of housing for elderly and disabled people.

From 30 July 1993, in a regular meeting, in building inspector of the 133, Keyes Road, Town of Concord, with the presence the planning board, Guy Di Giovanni, Marcia Rasmussen, and some members of the community concluded these informal agreements for phases of the future project of Concord Commons Commuter Rail.

So from a interview in 2001, we note that the business for private developer, was integrated housing and retail, and for the community was important the growth of the small retail, or small business, and the strategy was to keeps rents of the local stable in the time, purchased the Depot Concord, that

---

<sup>2</sup> Real Estate, annual revenue estimate \$500,000

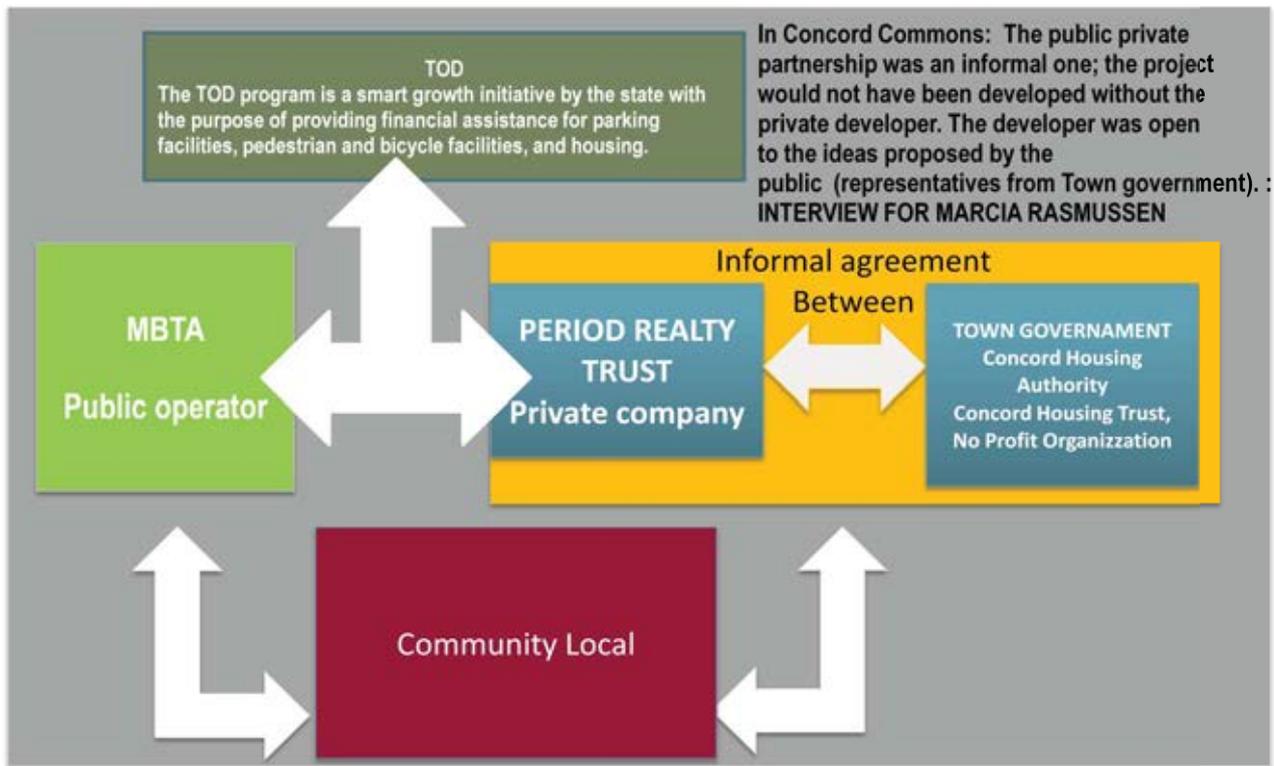
<sup>3</sup> The role of the Concord Housing Authority, no profit organization, is to provide housing for families of low and moderate income and individuals who are elderly, disabled or handicapped. The Concord Housing Authority owns and manages one hundred and forty three units in the Town of Concord and administers eighty-five Housing Choice Vouchers, providing subsidy for individuals and families to rent in the private market.

needed maintenance, he says, “ The conversion of a railroad depot to retail space intrigued me. There was decent parking and there was a restaurant and of course the Concord Depot store itself. I was pleased that it turned out the way it has. It’s an important focal point for the people that live the train”, with the goal of to preserve a colonial character similar to the existing buildings, with the challenge to create job and improving the quality of life.

In 1994, he was proposed to purchase a lumberyard near the station area, with problems of restructuring, the intent of the private developer was able to integrate business and housing to improve the quality of whole community. The Building, has been well restored, is characterized by a typically colonial style that has been deliberately preserved, the old station building represents a stunning example of historic train stations of the mid-1800s. The area located around a portion of land owned by the MBTA<sup>4</sup>, so after a process of negotiation, for the creation of 146 parking lots by public and private, and also to build a pedestrian access with greenery and street furniture. The Planning Board negotiated a reduction in the impervious lot area from 2.15 acres to 1.93 acres, and the inclusion of a landscaped garden area for residents. The developer also agreed to provide a landscaped pathway from Sudbury Road to the platform, creating a pleasant pedestrian access way. Finally, because the Concord Common development directly abuts an established residential neighborhood, the developer designed the building facing the residential street at a scale that blended well with the existing housing, and provided a vegetative screen between the parking lot and the neighborhood. With a final agreement between developer and the Concord Housing Authority, have been designed 20 rental apartments for elderly and disabled. This private developer, therefore, have developed One of the units in this development was designated as affordable and the family negotiated with the Concord Housing Authority to provide two units in another location. They have also completed a comprehensive permit in concord commons to develop, 80 units of rental housing, of which 20 units are designated for households earning less than 80% of the Boston median income (or 16 units for households earning less than 50%). This collaboration is still active, in fact, working together with other units in the area of West Concord.

---

<sup>4</sup> The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, often referred to as the MBTA or simply The T, is the public operator of most bus, subway, commuter rail and ferry systems in the greater Boston, Massachusetts, area.

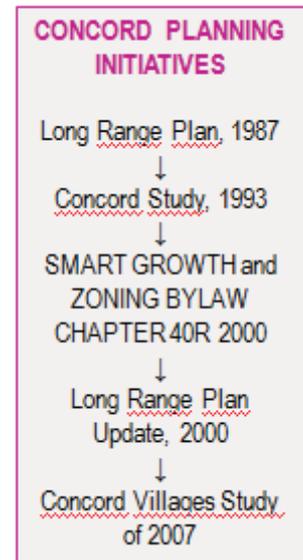


picture.4 sketch of PPP in CONCORD COMMONS COMMUTER RAIL

### The Planning Initiatives and program

The redevelopment of a lumberyard in the Depot Area into a shopping area with residential units above many of the stores. This is an exceptional "mixed-use" development because it is within walking distance of the train station, a supermarket, a drug store, a hardware store, and several restaurants and other businesses in downtown Concord, and is a good example of a "Smart Growth" development.

With the analysis of the "implementation plan, 2010" of the Master plan WEST CONCORD addresses in the city are those found within the principles of "Smart Growth".



Smart Growth Zoning Overlay Districts (M.G.L. Chapter 40R) is a initiative launched of the "Governator Patrik's" of the Massachusetts, for development and planning techniques and strategies that protect natural resources, save energy, enhance quality of life, create housing choices, and improve municipal finances by taking into consideration location, design, and long-term costs of growth. Massachusetts state law enables towns to implement special Smart Growth Zoning Districts, commonly called "Chapter 40R" zones. This mechanism effectively promotes "as of right" development with certain densities and mixed uses geared to transit-oriented town and village center scales. The specific rules, standards, and procedures for the Smart Growth Zoning

Overlay Program are established in 760 CMR 59.00. Briefly, the town holds a public hearing on the creation of a Smart Growth Overlay district; the town submits an application with supporting materials to the State DHCD; if approved, the town adopts the Ch. 40R district at a Town Meeting, just as it would any other zoning; following adoption, the town submits proof to DHCD (caveat: any repeal of the Smart Growth Overlay district requires review and approval by DHCD); within ten days of approval by DHCD, the Commonwealth makes a zoning incentive payment to the town. Any municipality may propose a “smart growth zoning district” as an overlay to its existing zoning in “eligible locations” which include the following:

- Areas near transit stations
- Areas of concentrated development (i.e., town/city centers, existing commercial/rural village districts)
- Areas “that by virtue of their infrastructure, transportation access, existing underutilized facilities, and/or location make highly suitable locations for residential or mixed-use...districts”

Chapter 40R zoning encourages a significant proportion of housing and affordable units within the housing mix and require “by right” a minimum density of housing units per acre:

- Single-family use: 8 units/acre (1 unit/5,445 s.f.)
- Two- and three-family use: 12 units/acre (1 unit/3,630 s.f.)
- Multi-family use: 20 units/acre (1 unit/2,178 s.f.)
- Developments of 12 units or more must provide at least 20% of units as affordable units
- Overlay district zoning must prove at least 20% of all units developed in the district as a whole will be Affordable
- At least 25% of units in developments exclusively serving the elderly, disabled, or those needing assisted living must be affordable.

Under the umbrella of “Smart Growth”, Concord Commons Commuter Rail, refers at the TOD program, is initiative by the state with the purpose of providing financial assistance for parking facilities, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and housing (Chapter 291 of the Acts of 2004). Draft guidelines were established in January 2005 by the Office of Commonwealth Development in cooperation with the Executive Office of Transportation and DHCD. Areas within a quarter-mile of a commuter rail station, subway station, ferry terminal, or bus station are eligible for both loans and grants. Depending on specific thresholds, the TOD program will award funding up to \$10 million each year under the following guidelines:

- Housing Projects – For housing developments, the program is intended to provide gap financing in a way that reduces the need for multiple funding sources while encouraging maximization of private financing. Funding award caps are \$1 million for projects up to 25 units and up to \$2 million for project greater than 25 units.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities – OCD advises that proponents submit applications for eligible projects not to exceed \$500,000.

Parking Facilities – Not to exceed \$2 million.

In order to be competitive, applicants must describe how they will meet the TOD performance criteria regarding location efficiency, value recapture, and livability.

Through creative Zoning Bylaw amendments, another important planning initiative in Concord, that utilize Smart Growth principles, additional housing options should be developed in Concord with the goal for to retain existing residents who wish to downsize from their current home, and to attract new residents and returning residents who wish to locate here.

Concord want to take a proactive approach to developing affordable housing throughout the community that is in keeping with the character of the town and meets the state goal of 10% affordable housing under Chapter 40B of the principles of the smart growth. This will help assure that the town retains control over the density, distribution, and design of affordable housing developments.

Especially high band width data connections funding desirable projects with state, federal and other funding programs where available to offset the costs. Such projects include support for the arts, the acquisition and maintenance of conservation land and waterways; the acquisition and development of adequate recreation fields and facilities; and developing additional affordable housing opportunities. Maintaining and possibly expanding the town's modest commercial tax base is important for the town's fiscal health. Every effort should be made to support zoning changes that allow for improvements to the town's economic base. We recommend that the town's current policy of a uniform tax rate be preserved, and that consideration be given to allocating up to 5% of the room occupancy tax into a fund for promoting Concord's business community and accommodating visitors .

With the planning initiative of the TOD that assigns award funding up to \$10 million, at the areas within a quarter-mile of a commuter rail station, subway station, ferry terminal, or bus station, for housing developments, the program is intended to provide gap financing in a way that reduces the need for multiple funding sources while encouraging maximization of private financing. Funding award caps are \$1 million for projects up to 25 units and up to \$2 million for projects greater than 25 units. From the interview with Marcia Rasmussen, director of the Department of Planning of The City of Concord, I got that for the Concord Commons Commuter Rail has a private developer Expenditure of \$ 1,425,000 for a living area of 1.53 square meters in 1994, \$ 804,200 for renovation of buildings and access and private parking pedestrian \$ 211000, and the present value today is approximately \$ 5,360,600.

Another important point, are Marketing and communications have become increasingly important to villages and towns as they compete for jobs, a sustainable tax base, and a vibrant civic life.

Business recruitment has become very competitive and advertising has grown rapidly making it more difficult for prospective business owners to differentiate between the market opportunities and services offered by a municipality.

The strategy for the valorization of the local produce, is A farmers' market should feature local and regional produce and related agricultural goods. Concord Commons is an excellent venue especially if the hours coincided with commuter train schedules so local residents could buy goods on return trips from work. Farmers' markets can be held for four to six months of the year and coupled with other activities, such as live music.

The strategy of marketing for the community was to preserve its historical and colonial, maintaining a "niche market", and preventing the intrusion of big industrial chains.

## PART C

### The context today

Today, Concord Commons Commuter Rail is just one element of a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood, is located about 1/3 mile from the historic business center of Concord, which, is recognized as a major tourist destination. The station serves commuters heading to jobs in Boston as well as tourists headed to historic sites in Concord. It extends to approximately 2.71 acre, located directly across the train tracks from the original station building. Area includes also Concord Crossing, a complex of mixed retail, office and residential uses Concord Depot.



Businesses in the core area include comprises three mixed use buildings with a mix of retail and office, in Thoreau and Sudbury Road within an easy walk to the station, Other sites surrounding the station were converted to a range of uses including a gas station, a supermarket, and a Friendly's Ice Cream, luxury restaurant with 180 seat, two corner lots at the intersection of Sudbury Road and

Thoreau Street have undergone several transformations and now are home to a Dunkin' Donuts and a Starbucks.

The zoning required 146 parking spaces for the mix of uses proposed. However, the developer negotiated a reduction of 20 spaces by demonstrating that shared parking could be successful in meeting demand. The project included 15 spaces dedicated to commuter parking. Town of Concord is responsible for parking lot maintenance, for the problem regarding parking lot snow removal, cleanliness and maintenance issues.



Initially had been planned in the project 20 rental apartments of approximately 65 square meters and a value in 2010, between 1200/1600 \$/sqm, 2 affordable units at the site, although the final agreement required that he provide four affordable units at another location in the Town, allowing all the units at the station to be rented at market rates.

Municipalities adopting a TOD overlay district are encouraged to review these requirements and incorporate some of the bicycle parking design and materials requirements into their bylaws to ensure that quality bicycle parking is provided.

Was, so, important for the city and for the community, the inclusion of a landscaped garden area for residents between Sudbury Road to the platform, creating a pleasant pedestrian access way. Finally, because the Concord Common development directly abuts an established residential neighborhood, the developer designed the building facing the residential street at a scale that blended well with the existing housing, and provided a vegetative screen between the parking lot and the neighborhood.

Is evident from the data collected, in the case study there was a large increase in property values, small retail have a value for square meters of \$ 1046, the cause is a better quality of life, in fact many residents of the area live in a condition "home-office", to the increase green, the convenience of parking, and more security.

Over the last several years there appears to be growing clusters of related products such as the natural foods and food-product businesses and home decoration and improvement businesses. This particular focus, have provide a mix of necessities and unique services and products that is valued by neighborhood residents.

Today, Concord Commons is recognized as an important node for future higher density commercial, provided direct access to downtown Boston and have improving the quality of life of the entire local community, is recognized as a major tourist destination.

## **PART D**

### Conclusion

From "Long Range Plane" of the 1987 in a vision of future, they write "much as we might like to see Concord's growth and development "frozen forever", we cannot and should not prevent the building of more housing in the Town. This is not within the Town's power, the Town's finances, or the law. But we can, to a limited degree, control the direction and form which future development takes if we have the will and the willingness to pay the price. We can help assure that Concord continues to be home to a wide mix of people-young and old, rich and poor, professionals, farmers, blue and white collar workers, families, retirees, and singles", with this sentence introduces the basic tools for the development of the city, one of these are forms of Public/Private Partnership.

The strength of this case study, is the strong sense of participation that emerges between the developer and the town, during a interview Marcia Rasmussen says; "The strategy of Concord Commuter Rail was that Local property owners and developers have always worked with local government-often local business owners served on town boards and committees that envisioned the future", for this motive it is between the major success stories of Transit Oriented Development.

Experience in this case study has demonstrates that implementing TOD can result in significant benefits to individuals, communities and entire regions by improving the quality of life for people of all ages and abilities to live, work, shop, learn and play. Conventional development often consumes acres of land, requires extensive investments in infrastructure, and perpetuates dependence on private vehicles. TOD reduces travel time, shortens journeys and provides non motorized trip options, helping to reduce our reliance on the automobile. The case study has illustrated how transit supportive policies, planning and coordinated investment in land use and transportation, and the public private partnership, can create opportunities for TOD.

## **PART E**

### References

S. Mark White. James B. McDaniel, TRB Counsel for Legal Research Projects, (1999), The Zoning And Real estate Implications of Transit Oriented Development , TCRP REPORT 102, Sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration.

Cervero R., Ferrell C., Murphy S. , (2002) Transit-Oriented Development and Joint Development in the United States: A Literature Review, TCRP REPORT 102, Sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration.

Aecom An Affiliate Of Dmjm Harris, (2007) Case Studies of Transportation Public-Private Partnerships around the World Consult, Report.

Cervero R., Ferrell C. , Murphy S. , (2004), Transit-Oriented Development in the United States: Experiences, Challenges, and Prospects, TCRP REPORT 102, Sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration.

### WEBSITE

[http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart\\_growth\\_toolkit/pages/how-to-SG.html](http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart_growth_toolkit/pages/how-to-SG.html)

[http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart\\_growth\\_toolkit/pages/CS-tod-concord.html](http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart_growth_toolkit/pages/CS-tod-concord.html)

[http://www.concordma.gov/Pages/ConcordMA\\_Bylaws/index](http://www.concordma.gov/Pages/ConcordMA_Bylaws/index)

## **glossary**

TOD, transit oriented development

CHA, Concord housing authority

MBTA, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

**PART F**



Enrica Polizzi di Sorrentino  
WASHINGTON GATEWAY MAIN STREET

---

## INTRODUCTION

Washington Gateway is a non-profit organization implementing one of Boston's Main Street projects.



Located in the South End – Lower Roxbury, it covers an area of 0.4 sq./Km alongside Washington Street, between Chinatown and Roxbury.

With less than 23.000 residents living in the surrounding<sup>1</sup>, the area is highly strategical not only for its proximity to the city's downtown but also as a regional hub for transportation.

The MBTA Silver Line runs through this part of the street connecting Dudley Square (Roxbury) to the Boston Logan International Airport.

Awarded by the American Planning Association's 2008 Great Streets in America, Washington Gateway was set up in 1997 as an outgrowth of an intense work of a 40-members Task Force appointed by Mayor Menino with the goal of revitalize the neighborhood from decades of decline. The purpose of Washington Gateway was twofold. First of all, the creation of a neighborhood-shopping district, accessible through public transportation and well integrated in its historical fabric. Secondly, the increase in middle-income housing but, at the same time, the retention of the neighbourhood' social and economic diversity against gentrification phenomena.

The implementation of the Action Plan followed diverse steps, from organizational capacity and partnership building to the economic restructuring, from design to promotion, using the ready-made model of the National Trust's Four Point Approach and the Boston Main Streets Program's funding. A participatory planning approach was adopted and community and stakeholders participation was high and organized in committees to guide the redevelopment of the area, based on local needs and assets.

Between 1997 and 2010 many activities have been put in practice to follow given priorities, especially retail enhancement, historic preservation and the provision of local services directed both to businesses and people. Thanks to the adaptation of the flexible four-point approach to local needs and context, the intense volunteer work and a

---

<sup>1</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, data calculated on census tracts on which the project insists.

strong partnership, guided by the Boston Redevelopment Authority and a pool of developers, many results were achieved.

The following sections provide the historical context, a description of the project and the composition of the partnership. Statistical data are provided in order to evaluate the concrete impact of Washington Gateway and finally some conclusions are drawn to highlight best practices.

## THE AREA BEFORE THE INITIATIVE

Also known as “Boston’s Neck”, Washington Street has historically been the land entrance to the city of Boston, the commercial route connecting peninsular Boston to the mainland [Map 1].

**Map 1: 1806 Boston map by R. Philip showing Washington Street as the main corridor between the mainland and the city.**



Source: Norman B. Leventhal Map Center, Boston Public Library

Alongside its central section, the South End began in 1850 “as a series of real estate ventures of filled marshland [...] as a residential area”. Large row houses were built and shops, theatres and restaurants were opened to attract the burgeoning middle class, including business owners, bankers and industrialists. Washington Street became a wealthy residential district made of stately row houses, but “by the turn of the century, the South End had become the largest lodging house district in the United States” [B.R.A. 1988].

The easier access to the district through horsecar transportation and the shift of the more affluent residents to the new fashionable Back Bay, together with the financial crisis of 1873 undermined the development of the district. The working class began to move into the area because of new industrial developments and diverse ethnic communities settled, crowding into lodging houses and the 41 saloons, 24 liquor stores and 11 poolrooms that were build in the area<sup>2</sup>. To worsen the condition in 1907 an elevated railway was constructed along Washington Street causing noise insomuch as buildings' doorfronts and windows facing the street were closed [image 1-2].

**Image 1. and 2.: Examples of architectural features caused by the Elevated Railway running through Washington Street**



Source: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs

Source: Author's own picture

*Image 1 shows a stretch of Washington Street under the Elevated Railway along which building's doorfronts and window were closed as a consequence of the railway noise. The same architectural feature is visible today looking at the Blackstone Elementary School in Image 2.*

The construction of the Prudential Center in 1964 and the development of Copley Square offer an opportunity to revitalize the neighborhood. An Urban Renewal Project was adopted in 1965 by the B.R.A. and the City of Boston, which caused struggles among the various communities. In the words of Medoff [1994] "official agency plans systematically underestimated the likely displacement and overestimated housing alternatives for those displaced". Nonetheless demonstrations and negotiations put in action by organized communities<sup>3</sup>, the B.R.A. plan went forward and between 1960 and 1980 estimated 25.000 people were relocated from the South End and 19,000 moved in, especially White young professionals.

Gentrification went on leading to a mixed income neighborhood with property values increased to the triple of the city average on one side, and

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>3</sup> The so called "Tent City" remains a symbol of these struggles. Located at the intersection of Columbus Av. and Dartmouth St., this three-acre development was once a parking lot occupied by protesters in 1968 against the urban renewal programs that was displacing south end's residents. This protest led to the formation of the Tent City Corporation, which in 1983 decided to undertake the development of the site which is now home to 269 mixed-income families whose ethnic mix reflects that of the South End. Priority for subsidized units is given, in order, to people displaced by public action, South End residents and people living in substandard housing.

many new units constructed of which only  $\frac{1}{4}$  were federally subsidized. However, neighborhood activism brought to new planning practices giving space to community participation and preservation policies.

In 1987 the old Elevated Railway structure [Image 3] was dismantled and the strategic position of the area called for the opening of new development opportunities. The delay in the installation of the Transit Replacement Service and the street reconstruction had a chilling effect on reinvestment activity and, despite the Urban Renewal Project, acres of land and housing units remained vacant and many of the historic buildings were ruined.

**Image 3.: The Elevated Railway on Washington Street in 1980**



Source: Picture was taken from one of the informational kiosks located along the Silver Line's bus stops on Washington Street.

In 1995 Mayor Menino appointed a 40-member Task Force, which together with residents developed an Action Plan for the street's revitalization with two main purposes. First of all, the creation of a neighborhood shopping district, accessible through public transportation and well integrated in its historical fabric. Secondly, the increase in middle-income housing but, at the same time, the retention of the neighborhood's social and economic diversity against gentrification phenomena.

In 1997 Washington Gateway was officially designated as a Main Street (Washington Gateway Main Street, *Inc.*) and began implementing the Task Force's Action Plan using the ready-made model of the National Trust's Four Point Approach and the Boston Main Streets Program's funding.

To concretely evaluate the impact of the Main Street's intervention, it is worthy to observe some statistical data prior to that time, which capture the population and household information between 1980 and 2000<sup>4</sup> [Tab1]. In 20 years changes in the South End occur both in population and in households.

---

<sup>4</sup> Even if Washington Gateway Main Street was created in 1997, area transformation actually began in 1999 with the Transit Replacement Project by MBTA.

**Tab.1. Differentials in Population and Households among 1980-1990, 1990-2000 and 1980-2000 in the South End Planning District**

		□ 1980-1990	□ 1990-2000	□ 1980-2000
<b>Population</b>	TOTAL	6,5%	-2%	4%
	0-4	16,5%	-22%	-12%
	5-14	-16,3%	-11%	-26%
	15-24	0,6%	-20%	1%
	25-34	14,7%	-6%	7%
	35-44	33,5%	12%	49%
	45-54	15,1%	22%	40%
	55-64	-11,5%	21%	7%
	65 and over	-18,9%	-2%	-14%
<b>Race Origin</b>	White*	20,7%	10%	33%
	Black or African American*	-10,7%	-30%	-37%
	American Indian and Alaska Native*	74,4%	10%	92%
	Asian* + Native Hawaiian and other pacific Islander*	9,6%	-4%	5%
	Some other races	17,2%	-2%	15%
<b>Household occupancy</b>	Total housing units	8,4%	2%	11%
	Occupied Housing Units	10,0%	8%	19%
	Vacant Housing Units	-2,9%	-43%	-45%
	Owner-occupied housing units	63,9%	51%	148%
	Renter-occupied housing units	1,9%	-2%	0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Data on South End Planning District for years 1980, 1990 and 2000

Data show a significant modification in the population structure: whereas in 2000 the statistical group of adults not older than 55 (35-54 years old) arose significantly, Black and Afro-Americans decreased up almost 40% and were replaced mostly by White people. Though in the '80 landlordism absentee and vacant buildings were the most common problem, many housing units were constructed and also vacant houses were finally occupied, mostly by their owners.

Still, the Task Force in 1997 reported: *“Washington Street has suffered from years of public and private disinvestment and is in extreme disrepair. Several historic buildings remain vacant and deteriorated”*. In the words of Randi Lathrop, former manager of Washington Gateway and now B.R.A. project manager, *“the real challenge was to convince property owners and prospective developers to invest in the area. At the same time, the mission was to maintain the historical identity of the neighborhood through a continuous and active involvement of the community”*.

Washington Street had significant development potentials [see Tab. 2] and the Washington Street Task Force adopted a participatory planning approach and together with the Boston Redevelopment Authority and the community began to work on new zoning and design guidelines. Monthly work meetings were held throughout the neighborhood, mostly in community housing cooperatives, in the Holy Cross Cathedral and in the Blackstone Elementary School, as well as in institutional premises. As highlighted by the Executive Director of Washington Gateway Nick Fedor *“it was definitely a bottom-up process, a joint effort in which both the community wanted an action to be taken and the mayor Menino, who is really in touch with the neighborhoods and convinced that the strength of the city is in the individual effort of neighborhoods. So the main goal was to revitalize*

*the neighborhood commercially but taking care of all the other components in the same time. This initial collaborative effort ended up with the decision to implement this vision through the Main Street approach.”*

**Tab. 2: Strengths and Weaknesses of Washington Street**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<b>Public transit and infrastructure investments as a leverage for private investments and catalyst for urban revitalization</b>	Delay in the installation of the Transit Replacement Service
<b>Of 150 businesses in the area, 50 are located on Washington Street</b>	Physical deterioration of the street
<b>375 artist working within the corridor</b>	Lack of parking
<b>Successful revitalization of adjacent areas</b>	Perception of crime
<b>New investments in the area by the Asian community</b>	Social isolation
<b>Interests by commercial developers in developing retail and restaurants</b>	Disparities in terms of income and levels of unemployment
<b>Many publicly owned vacant parcels</b>	
<b>BioSquare Project attracted by the strategic location near the airport</b>	
<b>Several historic buildings and a distinctive architectural character</b>	

## **PARTNERSHIP AND STRATEGY**

The strategy was to implement the four-point approach taken from the National Trust for Historic Preservation model of Main Street, taking in consideration the local context, needs and assets. It was pursued with the involvement of the public sector, the private sector and diverse local communities, in a joint effort to revitalize the whole neighborhood starting from commerce but giving great importance to social and infrastructural issues [Tab.3]. Obviously, even if the mission remained the same during the whole project some changes were made in its implementation, due to the natural following of steps and priorities. But these directions were all part of the project’s vision.

**Tab 3. Strategic priorities set by Washington Gateway Main Street**

<b>Priorities</b>	<b>Description</b>
Retail Enhancement	Storefront improvements; promotion and marketing of events.
Economic Revitalization	Promotion of business loans and technical assistance; creation of business association.

Security and Safety	Collaboration with the Boston Police Department; new Police premise in the area.
Building Restoration/Renewal	Design of a new streetscape, including visual improvements and mix of residential, commercial and recreational use.
Local services/provisions (housing, leisure, etc.)	Creation of parking garages for commercial expansion; provision of affordable housing.
Cultural enrichment	Art business encouragement; artistic murals; history of Washington Street explained on kiosks.
Natural Beauty, Green Space and biodiversity	Improvement and beautification of parks and public open spaces.

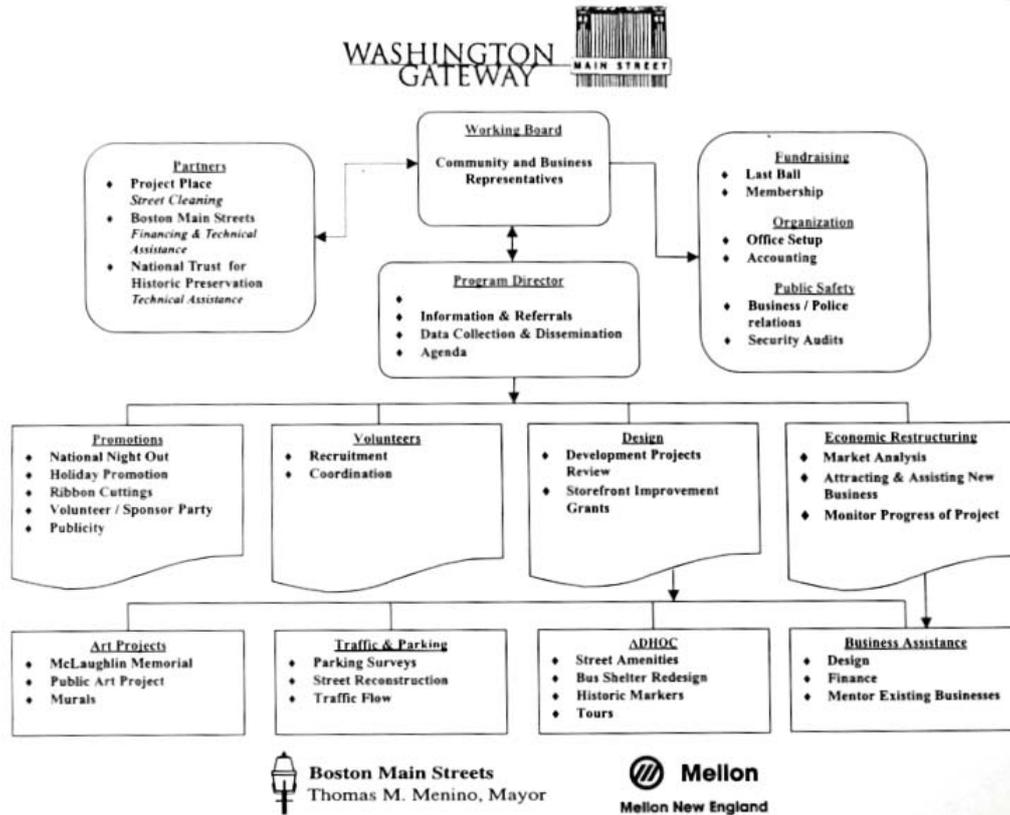
Source: Survey Form

Interests in constructing and restoring commercial and residential buildings called for the involvement of the private sector, which was strong from the very beginning of the project, both financially and operationally. The public sector was of course in charge of convincing the private sector to invest in the neighborhood: the Boston Redevelopment Authority was the most involved in the decision of the use of publicly owned vacant land (about 3 acres) and parcels to restore. Given this power, the involvement of Washington Gateway in the decision making process was ensured. Since the creation in 2005 of the Boston Main Street Foundation<sup>5</sup>, partnerships and sponsorships are much more concentrated, whereas before executive managers were in charge for lobbying the private sector for their own Main Street projects. In the case of Washington Gateway, a Business Association was also created in order to lobby for investments in the neighborhood.

As highlighted in Section 4, the Main Street is a “governance platform” which implements the vision of the development of a specific area with the participation of partners, stakeholders and the community, with its representatives and committees. In the specific context of Washington Gateway the involvement of all these components was high: business associations, religious leaders, artists, retailers, bank representatives and residents were all active participants in the planning process.

**Image 4: the Organizational Structure of Washington Gateway**

<sup>5</sup> The Boston Main Street Foundation is a non-profit organization created in 2005 to support individual Main Street projects throughout the city of Boston.



Source: Washington Gateway Main Street, "Organization Chart", Unpublished report, Boston, 2005; reported in Esen [2006]

As shown in Image 4, WGMS has formed a specific committee for the recruitment and coordination of volunteers instead of the Organization Committee, whose functions have been shifted to the Board of Directors.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation usually recommends forming a Board of Directors with the involvement of stakeholders representative of the community. In this case, Washington Gateway Board of Director is mainly composed by those residents who have skills and contacts to make communications and procedures easier between the Main Street and the public/private sector. The overlapping membership between city agencies, local organizations and WGMS facilitates partnership building and a broad involvement in the project. Currently, the Board includes advisors of the City of Boston and of the Boston Redevelopment Authority, law firm and financial consultants, LEED<sup>6</sup>'s professionals, besides civil engineers, business owners and commercial lenders.

With a total cost of \$571 millions between 1997 and 2010<sup>7</sup> the whole project went through different phases. Initially, efforts were targeted on the physical construction and renewal of the area, in terms of infrastructure, housing and services. Also a big effort was made to convince developers and property owners to invest in the distressed

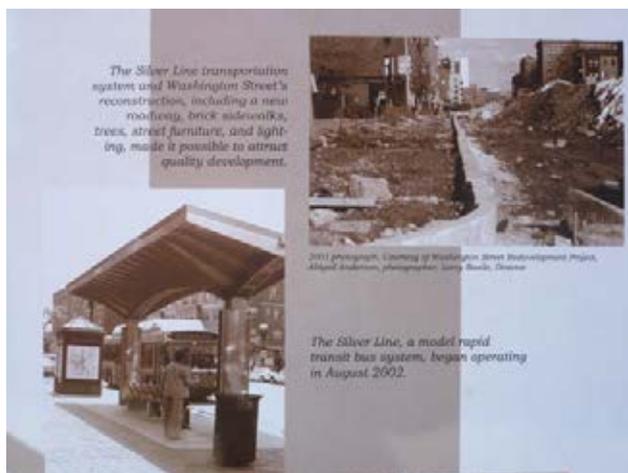
<sup>6</sup> Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) is a suite of rating systems for high performance "green" buildings developed in 2000 by the U.S. Green Building Council.

<sup>7</sup> Source: Washington Gateway Statistical Summary 1997-2010

neighborhood but at the same time, to match their needs with those of the community.

Between 1996 and 1997 and following a request from the City of Boston, the MBTA began an intense design work together with community residents and through the coordination of the new Washington Gateway Main Street. Since 1987 when the elevated railway was demolished, the MBTA was not successful in its replacement project. Due to the lack of funding, the opposition of the community and costs inefficiencies, by 1996 plans to repave Washington Street were still not approved. At the same time, interest on the many underused properties in the area was increasing and property owners and developers “*were anxious to improve the look of the street*”<sup>8</sup>. In 1997 elected officials signed a consensus “Framework of Implementation” to reconstruct the street and physical transformation began in 1999: brick sidewalks, granite curbing and crosswalks, lighting, and sheltered canopies were built and the new Silver Line Bus Rapid Transit was put in place [Image 5].

**Image 5.: Picture showing the street reconstruction.**



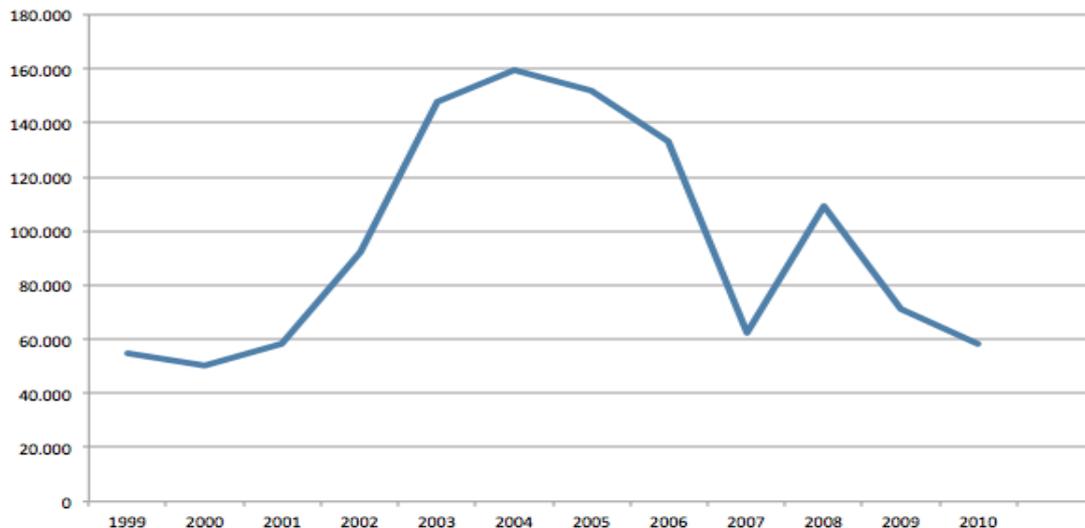
*The Main Street program worked with MBTA to redesign bus shelters and kiosks at each bus stop that show maps and historical information about the area.*

Source: Picture was taken from one of the informational kiosks located along the Silver Line's bus stops on Washington Street.

At the beginning, public support in form of grants [Chart 1] was significant especially in the form of CDGB (Community Development Grant Blocks) but also funding by HUD (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Planning) and MassHousing were available to prevent the displacement of current communities often associated with gentrification.

**Chart 1: Public support for Washington Gateway 1999-2010**

<sup>8</sup> Boston Silver Line Final Report, September 2005



The city focused on housing opportunities for a range of family household incomes and of all 1766 new or renovated housing units 1056 were affordable [image]<sup>9</sup>.

**Image 5 and 6: Examples of affordable housing in the Washington Gateway district**



*Pictures were taken by the author in Washington Street and Lenox Street and show different architectural features for affordable housing.*

Starting from the Silver Line Transit Replacement Service project, a citizens oversight committee was appointed to guide decisions about the design and reconstruction of Washington Street.

Mixed-use zoning was adopted in order to maintain the commercial historic spine and the housing identity of the neighborhood [Image 7], meaning retail stores at ground level and apartments above. Being small retail shops at the core of the project, many of them were assisted to preserve the differentiation of the neighborhood, both in terms of the mixed-use of space and of different target of population. A great effort was made for the improvement of storefronts, renewing the cast iron arcades and trims [Image 7].

<sup>9</sup> Source: Washington Gateway Statistical Summary 1997-2010

**Image 7: An example of storefront renewal on Washington Street**



*This picture captures the architectural character of the neighborhood, with a ground-floor dedicated to retail businesses and housing units above*

Maintaining and empowering local resources was set as a main goal, both in terms of entrepreneurship and occupation. Opportunities for new jobs and businesses were created, also encouraging local banks to implement small business lending initiatives, promoting technical assistance and business loans [Image 8 and 9]. This effort was fully supported by the creation of a district-wide business association to promote and lobby for businesses in the whole South End and Lower Roxbury.

**Image 8 and 9: Foodie's and the Don Quijote Market**



*Foodie's and the Don Quijote Market are examples of the effort to retain diverse and ethnic businesses in spite of the increase in market values. While the first was assisted by WGMS to maintain jobs for local residents, the latter was supported to remain on Washington Street and serve the Hispanic ethnic group.*

Nonetheless, as investments began to flow in the area and remarkable number of new shops opened, interests of national chain stores arose. In this regards, an example is the Walgreens store on Washington Street which, in the words of Randi Lathrop, once the neighborhood was revitalized, decided to invest in the area and its now the most profitable store of its chain in Boston because of its proximity to the South End Community Health Centre [Image 10 and 11] and the Boston Medical Centre.

**Image 10 and 11: the South End Community Health Center and the Boston Medical Center.**



*The South End Community Health Centre, a project by Washington Gateway Main Street and example of the mixed-use of the building. On the ground floor some specialist stores such as Walgreens, while other floors are residential.*



*The Boston Medical Center is highly involved in WGMS and it is currently developing the research center BioSquare.*

With the partnership of the National Trust for Historic Preservation many historic buildings were renewed, such as the Historic Federal-era and Victorian structures that were listed and designated on the National Register of Historic Places [Image 12 and 13]. Also, many buildings were renewed with intermixed contemporary developments, giving the neighborhood a particular architectural character.

**Image 12 and 13: Victorian row houses; the CityBank renovated building**



*Seventy percent of Washington Gateway is within a National Historic District designed by the National Register of Historic Places.*



*The marble and granite building constructed in the Renaissance Revival style between 1911 and 1917 and renewed with the help of South End Historical Landmarks and the Boston Redevelopment Authority. The renovated building - featuring three new floors of glass set back from the existing building - hosts the South End branch of CityBank, which also comes with a \$75,000 pledge over a three-year period to support the Washington Gateway Main Street Program.*

The City of Boston attended the effort of improving the parks and public open spaces along Washington Street [Image 14 and 15], together with improving and maintaining some city-owned properties and redeveloping vacant or underutilized land and building.

**Image 14 and 15: Franking Square and the playground in Peter's Park**



*Franklin Square, one of the twin squares on Washington Street, was designed by Charles Bulfinch.*

*One of the two renovated playgrounds on Washington Street.*

The architectural, social and cultural history of the area was re-emphasized through a new marketing strategy, encouraging art-related businesses [Image 16 an 17] and restaurants, making the corridor a destination for local services, home furnishings, art and dining.

**Image 16 an 17: The SoWa Market; mural in Peter's Park**



*The SOWA Open Market, with art galleries, a Vintage Market and a Farmer Market. The SoWa district (South of Washington), a former brick factory redeveloped by GTI Properties at the beginning of the new millenium.*

*One of the many murals made by local artist to beautify the area. The artist community is a backbone of the development of the entire area, especially between Washington Street and Harrison Avenue where art galleries are located.*

Today, promotion and marketing are the most important activities of Washington Gateway. The *ad hoc* committee organizes several fundraising events such as “NeckTies”, an annual dining event with the participation of many restaurants or “SoWa Winter Lights” and “SoWa Holiday Market”, organized by artists from the SoWa district; “City Sidewalks” encourages

local residents and the rest of Boston to shop and dine in the South End [Image 18].

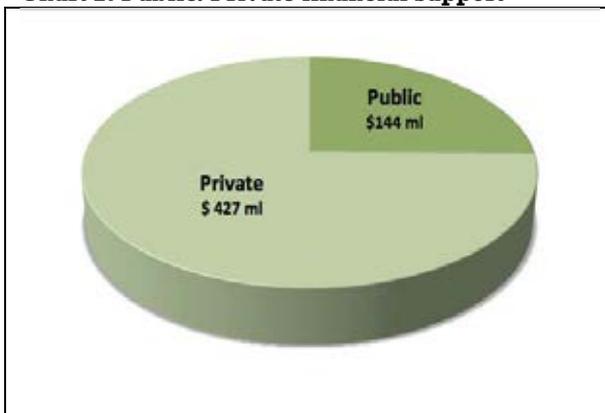
**Image 18: Leaflets of some events by Washington Gateway**



*City Sidewalk, NeckTies and the SoWa Holiday Market are few example of the promotion activity of WGMS.*

To conclude this brief description of the project, it is worthy to analyse a statistical summary of Washington Gateway Main Street. In 13 years the overall cost of the project was \$571 millions, of which \$144 millions as public contribution and the remaining part as private investments [Chart 2].

**Chart 2: Public/Private financial support**



Source: Washington Gateway Statistical Summary 1997-2010

Of these costs, \$13,2 millions were invested in the business sector: 61 net new business were opened and 582 new jobs created.

For about 50 retailers, design and grants were provided for storefront improvements.

About 1.100 parking spaces were created and 1.766 housing units were built or renovated, of which

1.056 are affordable. Finally, \$2.8 millions were invested in open space improvements.

A detailed map of all developments and business improvement project is shown in Image 19.



A good indicator of developments led by Washington Gateway can be deduced by household data: the overall number of units increased up to 20% in the area - especially by non family households -, more than in the rest of the neighborhood (15%). Occupancy (24%) increased, particularly by owners and vacant units are mostly for seasonal, recreational and occasional use.

In the last ten years, although a general improvement of the quality of educational attendance, unemployment sharply increased, probably as a consequence of the economic crisis. But the sectorial occupation changed: whereas “information” and “art, entertainment and recreation” lost respectively 44% and 36% of employees, wholesale trade and finance and real estate increased their proportion. Relevant for this case is the increase in retail employment, which grew up to 17% respect to a more moderate increase in the neighborhood (10%) and in the city (7%). Also significant was the shift in the service sector, counting a higher percentage in the project area (51%) with respect to the district (21%) and the city level (11%).

Finally, data<sup>10</sup> show an increase in residential market values: particularly in the last decade housing units more than doubled their rate. In return, many affordable housing are located along Washington Street, especially at the border with Roxbury and Tremont Street.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Washington Gateway is an example of the Main Street regeneration strategy, which was put in operation considering concrete local opportunities and threats. The flexible four-point model was moulded following the leverage of historic preservation on the one hand and of commerce on the other, with the general goal to make this part of the neighborhood an attractive destination for residents, visitors and businesses.

Following different steps, WGMS first developed a strong and comprehensive vision with the involvement of the community and the main stakeholders, such as religious and community-based organizations. This “visioning” process has been assured also thanks to a wide participation made possible by the creation of an *ad hoc* Volunteer Committee, which helped to achieve a broad consensus. Significantly, more than 22.600 hours of volunteered work helped to the accomplishments of the program.

In its first years of operation, when development interests were weak, the action plan focused mainly on infrastructural improvements and organizational capacity, building networks with businesses and with the public sector, especially with the Boston Redevelopment Authority. In this regard, the special composition of the Board of Directors, with its high skilled staff working also in local organizations and in the City, was very important for partnership building.

Once the interests of the private sector increased, Washington Gateway’s Design Committee worked with developers to review proposal

---

<sup>10</sup> Source: City of Boston website

and to preserve historical, social and economical aspects of the area, matching different needs and solutions. The strong involvement of the committee was ensured by the BRA's great amount of publicly owned vacant land and parcels, so that developers were forced to take into great consideration its proposals.

The Economic Restructuring Committee worked to attract new businesses and investments, but also to retain local resources threaten by gentrification phenomena. The experiences of Foodie's and Don Quijote Market are significant of this commercial effort, while besides the business assistance, the committee also supported the provision of affordable housing, making the neighborhood accessible to diverse ethnic, age and income group.

Today the Promotion Committee is very active to organize fundraising events with the involvement of retailers and artists. This effort generates media coverage and improves public awareness of Washington Gateway project.

As mentioned before, statistical data show that Washington Gateway has had a valuable impact on the area in terms of reducing vacant units and landlordism absentee, also providing rents for touristic attractiveness. Consequences of gentrification, especially due to the increase in market values, have been alleviated through the provision of affordable housing and the retention of a diverse business mix that serves the area's varied population.

Taking into consideration effects of the economic crisis, it is difficult to interpret data on labour force. However, sectorial composition shows that there has been an increase in retail, wholesale trade and business services in the project area, more than proportional respect to neighborhood and city level.

To conclude, Washington Gateway has been successful in the implementation of a context-base regeneration strategy. Emphasis on preserving the historical and economic features of the area results in a more attractive destination both for visitors and businesses. A strong and consensual vision allowed to ensure community participation and to build an effective partnership for a development-oriented revitalization process.

## **REFERENCES:**

Boston Redevelopment Authority. (1988). South End Neighborhood Profile. Boston, Massachusetts.

Coca-Stefaniak, J. A., Parker, C., Quin, S., Rinaldi, R., & Byrom, J. (2009). Town centre management models: A European perspective. *Cities*, 26(2), 74-80.

City of Boston: <http://www.cityofboston.gov/> [Accessed April 12, 2012]

Dane, S. G. (1997). Main Street success stories. National Main Street Center; National Trust for Historic Preservation;

- Dono, A. L., & Glisson, L. S. (2009). Revitalizing main street: a practitioner's guide to comprehensive commercial district revitalization. (A. L. Dono, Ed.) Washington, DC: Main Street, National Trust for Historic Preservation/National Trust Main Street Center.
- Geisman, B. (2004). A Renaissance in Neighborhood and "Main Street" Business District. *Economic Development Journal*, (2), 65-72.
- Greenwood, A., & Hillmer, J. (2002). Using Public-Private Partnership to Redevelop Historic Landmarks. *Economic Development Journal*, (3), 37-42.
- Hemphill, L., Mcgreal, S., Berry, J., & Watson, S. (2006). Leadership, Power and Multisector Urban Regeneration Partnerships. *Urban Studies*, 43(1), 59-80.
- Jones, A., & White, S. D. (2010). Creekside District: a Case for the Main Street Approach. *Economic Development Journal*, 9(2), 46-54.
- Kemp, R. L. (Ed.). (2000). Main Street Renewal. A Handbook for Citizens and Public Officials (2000th ed.). Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers.
- McDaniel, L. (2002). The Main Street Approach to Revitalizing Communities. *Appalachia*, 35, 16-20.
- Medoff, P., & Sklar, H. (1994). Streets of Hope: The Fall and Rise of an Urban Neighborhood (p. 337). Boston, Massachusetts: South End Press.
- National Trust for Historic Preservation: <http://www.preservationnation.org/> [Accessed April 12, 2012]
- Robertson, K. A. (2004). The Main Street Approach to Downtown Development: An Examination of The Four-Point Approach. *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, 21(1), 55-73.
- Robertson, K. A. (1995). Downtown Redevelopment Strategies in the United States: An End-of-the-Century Assessment. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 61(4), 429-437. Routledge.
- Robertson, K. A. (2002). Main Street Partnering. *Economic Development Journal*, (78), 53-59.
- Seidman, K. (2004). Revitalizing Commerce for American Cities. A Practitioner's Guide to Urban Main Street Programs. Washington DC: Fannie Mae Foundation.
- Shephard, J. C. (1992). Leadership through Partnerships. The National Trust's Main Street Program as a Community Economic Development Tool. *Urban Design and Preservation Quarterly*, 15(1), 20-27.
- Torre, B. D. (2005). Commercial Revitalization in Union Square: An Analysis of Main Street Applied to a Multi-ethnic Business District. Unpublished thesis in Urban Studies, Massachusetts Institute Of Technology.
- Watson, R., & Shields, C. (2008). From Main Street to the Governor's Office: an Alliance for Economic Redevelopment. *Economic Development Journal*, 7(1), 32-37.

Walzer, N., & Kline, S. (2001). An evaluation of approaches to downtown economic revitalization. In M. A. Burayidi (Ed.), *Downtowns. Revitalizing the centers of small urban communities*. (pp. 249-274). Routledge.

Waxman, A. (1999). Utilizing Economic Theories of Retail to Revitalize Inner-city Neighborhood Business Districts: The Case of Uphams Corner Main Street. Unpublished thesis in Urban Studies, Massachusetts Institute Of Technology.

## **INDEX OF INTERVIEWS:**

Interview with Nick Fedor, Executive Director WGMS  
Interview with Randi Lathrop and Johnatan Greeley, BRA  
Interview with Jovita Fontanez, DND

## **GLOSSARY:**

BRA - Boston Redevelopment Authority  
DND – Department of Neighborhood Development  
WGMS - Washington Gateway Main Street

**VALENTINA BRATTELLI - FOCUS UNIT**

## **THE EAST BOSTON MAIN STREETS INITIATIVE**

### **ABSTRACT**

The report is aimed at analyzing one of the main retail revitalization strategy developed in US so far, that is the Main Street Approach, as it has been developed in the East Boston main commercial district.

East Boston Main Streets (EBMS) is a public-private partnership initiative of Boston Main Streets Program, that has been operating in East Boston since 1995. Its main aim is to revitalize the commercial district by initiating private and public improvements and promote commerce by assisting local businesses through financial and technical assistance, façade improvements and community events coordination.

The report is an attempt to identify weakness and strengths of EBMS strategy so as to develop a critical framework that highlights the crucial elements for the success of this kind of initiative.

The report is divided in 4 main sections. The first one develops an in-depth examination of the urban and socio-economic context both at neighborhood and area level, with particular attention to relevant changes occurred over the last decades. From this analysis East Boston results to be a working class and multiethnic ethnic neighborhood, with low-medium socio-economic conditions (per capita income, level of educational attainment and housing prices are lower the Boston citywide level). With regard to the commercial district context, the analysis identified some significant weaknesses such as a low urban environment quality and problems of social inclusion due to the high presence of immigrants in the area. The second section is aimed at analyzing the strategy and the form of partnership adopted within the EBMS, while the third one investigates results and impact of the initiative. On the whole, EBMS seems not to have been able to significantly impact the urban and socio-economic fabric of the area by initiating a broaden and comprehensive regeneration process. Even though important results have been achieved with regard to the credibility of the initiative among community stakeholders and local development associations, EBMS action has been too narrow and focused on superficial interventions not linked to the local context. This can be explained mostly as a consequence of its small annual budget and of the weakness of the partnership implemented. Furthermore, as highlighted in section four, the broader development context of the area suffers from the delay of significant development projects that will impact dramatically the commercial district, thus contributing towards creating a long transaction period during which EBMS has not been able to contribute as a proactive actor both in terms of

proposals and concrete actions for the district physical development nor has been able to expand its political influence upon the whole planning process.

Finally section four, by putting together the previous sections findings, highlights two critical elements for the success of the Main Streets initiatives. Firstly, the importance of adapting strategy and structure of the initiative to the specificity of local context rather than reproduce the standard Main Street Approach. Secondly, the key role of public-private partnership, not just as a means of securing further financial resources, but as a way for building relevant political alliances essential for gaining city agencies attention on local problems.

## **PART A**

### **Classification of the initiative and description of the area**

#### **Brief description of the initiative**

East Boston Main Streets is a public-private partnership initiative of Boston Main Streets Program.

East Boston Main Streets has been operating in East Boston since 1995. Its main aim is to assist local businesses by providing funding, technical assistance, façade improvements and community events coordination. Its mission is *"to create vibrant business districts by initiating private and public improvements, promoting commerce and supporting efforts that improve the quality of life for everyone who lives, works and does business in East Boston."*

Regarding the EBMS management, East Boston Gateway Inc. is the non-profit organization in charge of managing the initiative. The EBMS board is composed mainly of local businesses and residents (about 70% of the total members). Also the Police department, the East Boston Chamber of Commerce, Massport and the Sovereign Bank hold some seats in the board.

EBMS has made many efforts to improve the East Boston commercial district, but the scale of its impact is limited because of its small annual budget of just over \$100,000. Even though some efforts have been made in order to implement an integrated approach, the initiative results to be focused on storefronts improvement projects and its main role appears to be that of facilitating communication and creating networks between local businesses and other private or public entities so as to improve the commercial district.

As a Main Streets Project, the East Boston Main Streets analysis allows one of the main retail revitalization strategies developed in US so far to be deepened and compare it to Italian most recent

similar experiences such as CCNs. The peculiarity of the East Boston Main Street district's urban and socio-economic context might help to understand opportunities and/or obstacles while adopting an integrated approach to urban commercial districts revitalization. East Boston Main Street district is the commercial core of one of the most important multiethnic neighborhood in Boston, characterized by affordable housing prices, high presence of historic buildings and low quality of physical environment. In recent years urban planners attention has begun to focus on the area, where public investments are converging and a wide regeneration process is being undertaken.

### **The East Boston neighborhood**

East Boston is located across the harbor from downtown Boston and extends three miles along a slender strip of land north and west of Boston Logan Airport.

As a result of its location, it has always been an independent neighborhood, culturally and geographically distinct from the rest of the city and has a long history as a point of entry for immigrants. As for 2010 Census figures, East Boston is home to 7% of the City of Boston's residents, with a population estimated at 40,508 in 2010. Most people in East Boston are people of working age - 50% of the population is between 25 and 54, compared to about 43% in Boston citywide. Comparing these figures with those of 1990, the number of people of working age has increased of about 8%. Only 16% of East Boston residents are over the age of 55 in 2010, compared to 25% in 1990. This difference is the result of recent changes in population composition, due to the consistent arrival of Latino population over the last decades.

In 2010 the median household income \$43,927 and the per capita income is \$22,822, lower than the Boston's median ones that are respectively 50,684 and 31,856.

The unemployment rate is 9% and sectors offering more employment opportunities are Construction, Retail trade, Professional, scientific and management, Educational, health and social services, Accommodation and food services.

The level of educational attainment is a great deal lower in East Boston than in the rest of the city. While 37% of Boston population is high school graduate and 38% hold a bachelor or graduate degree, in East Boston most of the population (73%) is high school graduate and just 14% hold a bachelor or graduate degree.

As for the housing tenure, the 2010 Census data show 92% occupancy for East Boston's 15,854 housing units. 27% of residents own their own homes, while 73% of residents rent, compared to housing tenure rates of 34% owner-occupancy and 66% rental citywide.

As a gateway to the United States, East Boston began receiving waves of immigrants in 1845. First arrived Canadian shipbuilders and longshoremen and then, from 1845 to 1860, a flow of Irish laborers. In the 1890s, Scandinavian and Eastern European Jewish immigrants largely replaced the Irish, then replaced from 1916 by Italians immigrants. By the 1960s, the population had once again started to change with the arrival of many Latino immigrants. In 1980, the neighborhood's population was 3% Hispanic/Latino and 97% non-Hispanic/Latino; while in 1990 it was 17% Hispanic/Latino and 83% non-Hispanic/Latino. By 2000 and 2010, these figures had changed respectively to 39% and 52% Hispanic/Latino and 60% and 48% non-Hispanic/Latino. More recently, immigrants from Morocco and Somalia, as well as rising numbers of Asians have arrived in the neighborhood.

While East Boston makes up only 7% of the City of Boston's total population in 2010, it is home to more than 20% of the city's Hispanic population. The Hispanic population is most heavily concentrated near Central Square, and makes up a clear majority of the population in the EBMS district and the adjacent streets.

In 2009, nearly 60% of East Boston's five thousand Spanish-speaking households were linguistically-isolated. This rate is a great deal higher than Boston's citywide rate of 35% for Spanish-speaking households. Linguistic isolation is also a challenge for other language groups, including speakers of Portuguese (38% linguistically isolated) and Vietnamese (67.5% linguistically-isolated)<sup>1</sup>.

### **The area: the East Boston Main Street commercial district**

Located in East Boston's southwestern commercial core, the EBMS commercial district is a dense commercial corridor, connecting Maverick Square to Central Square through Meridian Street. The District encompasses adjacent blocks around the squares, for a total area of 0.16 square kilometres. It is home to 195 service and retail businesses, that serve 16,421 inhabitants.

The commercial district is dominated by small stores, while there are just four national chain stores (Shaw's, Walgreens, CVS, and Marshalls). These are located in Liberty Plaza (Central Square), the only area in the district where bigger commercial footprints can be accommodated. In fact, the rest of the buildings are historic and their commercial spaces are relatively small by contemporary retail standard (their average size is just 124 square meters).

The business community is primarily Latino and includes both well-established enterprises and start-ups.

---

<sup>1</sup> These data are available at <http://www.ebmainstreets.com/resources/ebms-mit-project-english.pdf> [accessed 27 April 2012]

Even though the stores in the district are a mix ranging from restaurants to convenience shops, clothing boutiques to salons, the district can support a greater diversity of stores than currently exists, but the limited commercial vacant land (3%) restricts the opportunity of attracting new businesses in the short term.

With regard to the district's architectural history, roughly 83% of the 403 buildings that lie within the East Boston Main Streets boundary were built between 1800 and 1945. The quality of building maintenance varies significantly across the district. Buildings in the best condition are located along Meridian Street between Maverick and Central Squares. Poorer maintenance conditions are found along the side streets, particularly Bennington Street, Maverick Street and Meridian Street north of Central Square.

Also the quality of the physical environment differs across the EBMS commercial district. Street furniture is not uniformly distributed throughout the area. There are plenty of benches in newly renovated Maverick Square, but very few along Meridian Street. Despite the high rate of foot traffic, the streets are largely oriented toward automobiles (sidewalks are at a maximum only 3 meters wide). Along some sections of Meridian Street—the most important walking corridor of the district—the sidewalks are even less wide. It is also worth noticing a lack of connections to existing surrounding popular areas, like the waterfront and the recently completed Greenway.

Though the East Boston Main Streets district is well known for its variety of shops and restaurants, the environment itself is less appealing with gaps in the streetscape that can make it unpleasant for visitors to walk from one area of the district to the next.

East Boston commercial District is well connected to downtown Boston via roads and transit. The Blue Line stop in Maverick Square offers passengers a few minutes ride to Downtown Boston. In the other direction, five buses stop in Maverick Square, offering passengers connections to the neighboring areas of Winthrop, Revere, and Chelsea.

The EBMS district has benefited from considerable public investment over the last five years, including the renovation of Maverick Square T Station, the planned redesign of Central Square and the federal funding for the new East Boston Neighborhood Health Center

## **PART B**

### **The initiative: main purposes, strategies and partnership**

## **The Start-up**

East Boston Main Streets has been operating in East Boston for 17 years since 1995.

It started with the Chamber of Commerce that was concerned about some problems in the area. In the early '90s there were some economic downturns as well as population began to change due to the arrival of many new immigrants from Central and South America.

The business district suffered from poor physical conditions, state of decay of most of the buildings, public safety concerns and a lack of common purpose among business owners. Basically it was a transition period that was negatively affecting the retail activities in the area.

For these reasons the Chamber of Commerce got together with different community stakeholders including banks, community development corporations, non-profit organizations, business owners and residents to request a Main Streets program for East Boston. In 1995 with some seed money from private institutions and local banks along with funds from the City of Boston, which financed most (58%) of the start-up costs, a plan for the East Boston Main Streets was approved.

## **Main purpose and strategies**

In accordance with the Main Streets "4-point approach", East Boston Main Streets maintains four standing committees that reflect the project main objectives: design (aimed at improving the physical environment of East Boston commercial district); promotion (aimed at marketing East Boston's commercial district to neighborhood residents, investors, visitors, and others); economic restructuring (aimed at strengthening the existing economic base of East Boston's commercial district by helping existing business become stronger and by recruiting new businesses) and organization (aimed at building collaborative partnerships between a broad range of groups and organizations, recruiting volunteers and collaborating with partners representing the whole community so as to include a large range of perspectives into its action).

With regard to the first objective, that is design and physical improvement of the area, EBMS has launched in 1995 a storefront improvement project, within which storefront design guidelines were developed to set up a homogeneous system of signage and facades in keeping with the area's historical character. More than 50 storefronts have been renovated so far. EBMS storefront improvement project has also been aimed at improving safety perception in the area, by removing security grates and signs that obscure windows.

Furthermore, some beautification efforts have been carried out such as the banner and the signage projects, aimed at communicating EBMS commercial district and the surrounding popular areas to

visitors. Other actions have addressed cleanliness issue through the installation of new public trashcans, and with volunteers to participate in clean-up and beautification initiatives.

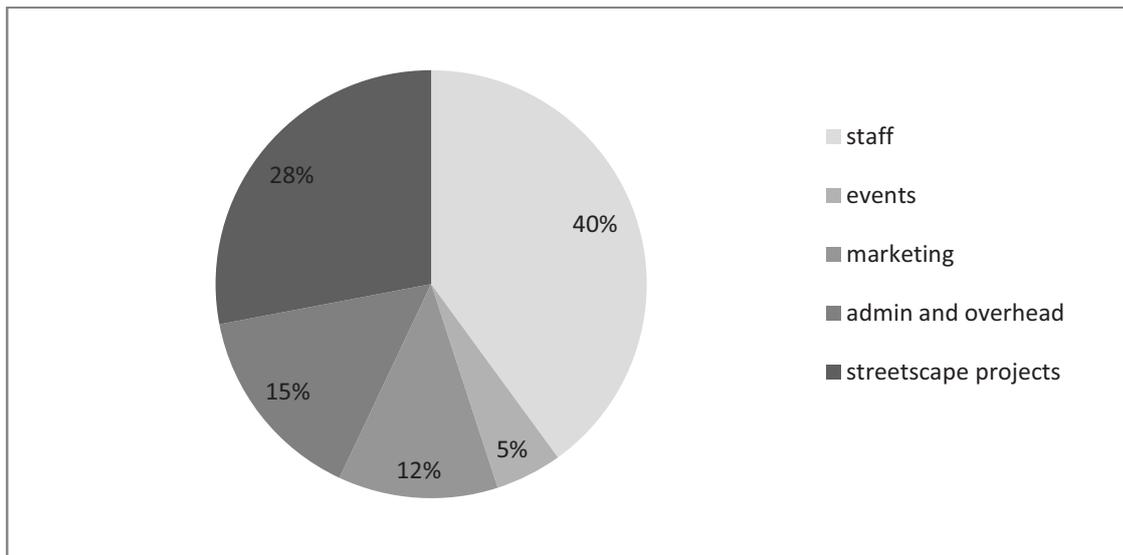
Moving to the second main objective of the initiative, that is advertising and retail promotion, EBMS strategy has been focused on events organization and communication through the web and the newsletter service. The two annual events organized by EBMS are the Taste of Eastie (a fundraising event that usually features 25 to 30 local food establishments) and the Kindergarten parade (within which, through the participation of more than 30 local businesses and in collaboration with the EBMS partners, every child starting kindergarten in East Boston receives a backpack and school supplies). Furthermore, EBMS organized two annual networking breakfasts and some retail promotion events (such as the Small business Saturday) apart from partnering regularly with local NGOs and associations on shared events. Some examples are: the historic walking tour of Maverick and Central Squares in collaboration with the Boston Preservation Alliance (2010) and the East Boston healthy fitness walk in collaboration with the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center (2010).

With regard to economic restructuring, according to EBMS leadership, the Economic Restructuring Committee has been dormant for several years. EBMS efforts have mostly concerned local business retention and enhancement. In particular, EBMS has helped small businesses to get technical assistance and financing by developing a consistent network linking businesses with specialized training opportunities, business and financial services providers such the Main Street Partners and the Boston Buying Power programs. Furthermore, in 2011 EBMS participated in a four month study by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, aimed at developing a comprehensive revitalization plan for East Boston Main Streets, whose recommendations could just partially be implemented because of the limited EBMS budget. However, EBMS has incorporated the MIT study results as part of its work plan so as to find external private and public supporters.

Moving to the EBMS organization, the board is composed of 10 voluntary members plus 5 ex-officio members representing local entities and institutions involved in the initiative. East Boston Main Streets meets regularly with city officials from Police, Transportation, Parks, Public Works, City council and neighborhood services and partners with many community organizations in order to carry out shared actions and projects. Local businesses are both beneficiaries and supporters of EBMS activities, but no businesses association has been constituted nor membership fee is required. A fundamental role is played by the 100 volunteers that help especially on events and beautification projects.

As shown in the graph below, most of expenditures in 2011 have been for the storefront improvement project along with staff and administration costs. This clearly reflects the strategic priorities of the initiative.

**Figure 1 - EBMS expenditures 2011.**



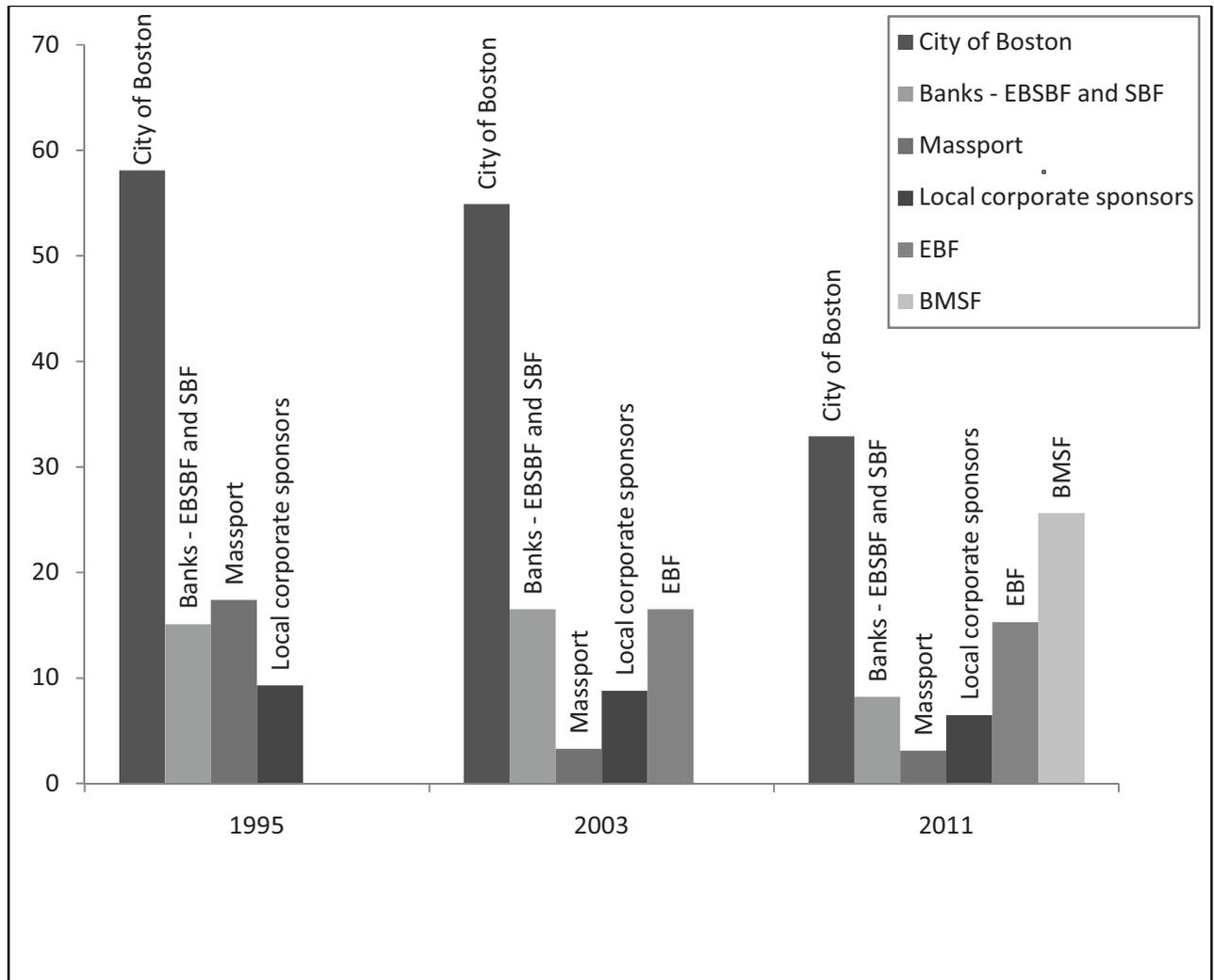
*Source: East Boston Main Streets Annual Report 2011.*

### **The partnership**

The kind of partnership implemented within the EBMS initiative can be defined as an informal public-private partnership, within which no formal agreement is required. It can rather be regarded as a broad process of cooperation among the City of Boston, local businesses and community organizations for the development of East Boston commercial district. To reveal this broad process of cooperation it might be useful to draw a distinction between who funds, who manages and who supports the initiative.

With regard to the sponsors, figure 2 shows the financial contributions of the main sponsors since the beginning of the initiative in 1995. The City of Boston is the only public sponsor of EBMS, while the others are mainly Banks, non-profit foundations and local corporations. In particular, it can be pointed out how the number of sponsors has increased over the years, broadening the funding basis of the initiative. Even though the City of Boston remains the major sponsor of EBMS, the importance of private funding has grown significantly. While public funds pushed the start-up of the EBMS, the initiative is now mainly private funded.

**Figure 3 - EBMS sponsors 1995-2003-2011**



*Source: Moulaison, C. (2011). Executive Director of East Boston Main Street. Interview. 21 February.*

Moving to the EBMS management, East Boston Gateway Inc. is the non-profit organization in charge of managing the initiative. The board is composed of 10 members plus 5 ex-officio members. 40% of the board members are business owners and around 30% residents. Since the beginning, the Chamber of Commerce represents one of the most influent partners of EBMS, holding two seats in the board. Also the Police department, the East Boston Saving Bank and Massport hold seats in the board, as ex-officio members. Considering the key role that ex-officio members might take in Main Street projects in order to expand the project capacity by advocating and facilitating funding for its revitalization goals, it is

important to stress out the fact that, apart from the Police department representative, no other city agencies representatives are in the board. EBMS strategy to get city agency staff to participate in the initiative is rather based on holding regular meetings with city agency leadership. In fact, East Boston Main Streets meets monthly with city officials from Police, Transportation, Public Works, City council and neighborhood services in order to gain their attention and collaboration on district problems.

As for the partners supporting the initiative, EBMS collaborates regularly with many community organizations on shared actions and projects. Most of EBMS manager efforts have been aimed at building trusted relationships with local NGOs and association so as to develop a shared vision and a strong cooperation. The local businesses are both beneficiaries and supporters of EBMS activities, but no membership is required nor has a retailers association been created.

## **PART C**

### **Initiative outcomes: effects and impacts**

Even though EBMS has made many efforts to develop an integrated approach, its action has affected just partially the development of the whole area. As a consequence of its small annual budget of just over \$100,000, the strategy results to be too narrow, just focused on storefront improvement projects. On the other hand, as a result of the weakness of the public-private partnership implemented, EBMS main role appears to be that of facilitating communication and creating networks between local businesses and other private or public entities so as to improve the commercial district, with low political influence and weak lobby capacity.

Most of interventions have been punctual and not able to address the main problems of the local context. With regard to the physical improvement of the area, the initiative has been focused on storefront improvement projects while other aspects have been left aside such as the presence of underutilized public spaces and the unevenly distribution of street furniture and infrastructures. The physical environment of the district, apart from the renovated Maverick Square, remains car-friendly rather than facilitating pedestrian experience. Moreover, the storefronts improvement project itself has not pushed significantly the renovation of the entire buildings, considering that by 2009 about 49% of buildings in the area had never been renovated.

Cleanliness still remains a problem while the public safety problem has been better addressed through the steady collaboration with the Police Department.

As for the promotion activities, the EBMS has offered some neighborhood-scale annual events targeted at building a sense of community among the East Boston residents, but the strategy seems not to have been able to capitalize on the rich social capital existing in the neighborhood and on its strong multiethnic identity. Moreover, larger annual festivals or wider advertising campaigns, which would have promoted the neighborhood to the broader city and region have not been realized, thus limiting the promotion opportunities of the commercial district.

With regard to economic restructuring, the role of the Economic Restructuring Committee has been marginal. Basically, the strategy has been business retention oriented and no program of new business attraction/creation or a comprehensive plan for the economic development of the area has been created.

As for the organization and partnership issues, the political influence of EBMS seems to be low due to the lack of city agencies representatives in its board and to the weakness of its planning capacity, while its credibility among other private stakeholders and sponsors represents one of its main strengths as well as its capacity to broaden the funding basis of the initiative over the years. While good results have been achieved with regard to the large number of volunteers involved in the initiative, the research indicates a low participation of Latino businesses in EBMS.

## **PART D**

### **Conclusions**

Two main planning documents provide a framework for the East Boston economic and physical development - the *East Boston Master Plan* (BRA, 2000) and the *East Boston Municipal Harbor Plan* (BRA, 2002). Several other projects regarding the EBMS commercial district and the adjacent area have been approved but most of them have been delayed until economic conditions get better. Most of the planning efforts concern the revitalization of the East Boston waterfront and the adjacent areas, where further commercial space, residential units and open spaces are foreseen. These projects are expected to strongly impact the EBMS commercial district by bringing new residents and broadening the commercial activity in the area. Moreover, the reactivation of many spaces underutilized for decades is foreseen with particular attention to the creation of a green-space network with part of the Greenway recently completed and other parks planned. On the whole, the development foreseen will produce relevant changes in the harbor areas and encourage residents and visitors to spend more time in the East Boston commercial district through the creation of stronger connections to the waterfront.

Furthermore, the EBMS district has benefited from considerable public investment over the last five years, including the renovation of Maverick Square T Station, the planned redesign of Central Square and the federal funding for the new East Boston Neighborhood Health Center. In the near future, the renovation of Central Square, funded by the Boston Transportation Department, will change dramatically the physiognomy of the commercial district. The project includes park renovation, wider sidewalks, reverse angle parking, conversion to one-way streets for several thoroughfares and the relocation of bus stops, while the new health center in Maverick Square has the potential to be a regional draw to the district.

While these projects represent a great opportunity for the future of EBMS, the delay in their implementation has limited so far the revitalization of the area.

Within these projects EBMS role has been basically that of facilitating meetings, monitoring progress, ensuring materials and helping to minimize negative impacts during the planning and construction period. Its contribution as a proactive actor both in terms of proposals and concrete actions for the district physical renewal has been minimum as well as its political influence upon the planning process. Moreover, while the renovation of Maverick Square and the planned one of Central Square represent two far-reaching projects that will completely change two major areas in the district, in the Meridian Street corridor no significant interventions are foreseen, thus contributing to reproduce the problems of physical discontinuity of the commercial district. On the one hand, the delay in the planned development projects is postponing the large-scale investment required in order to foster the whole regeneration process. On the other hand, the delay has been an impediment to the development of EBMS long-term planning capacity, by creating a long transaction period that is not finished yet. While smaller-scale improvements could have complemented the larger-scale investments being undertaken by the City, EBMS strategy has been too narrow, mostly focused on storefront renewals. Small-scale investments, such as the reactivation of underutilized public spaces and the enhancement of street furniture and physical infrastructures, could have had a stronger impact on the district revitalization. These smaller interventions could have balanced recent investment on the squares by improving Meridian corridor, thus contributing towards improving the district low environmental quality.

The inability of EBMS strategy to impact the physical renewal of the area might be explained as a consequence of the kind of partnership implemented. The lack of city agencies representatives in the board of EBMS has made it hard to gain city department attention and to develop influential political allies to funding commitments for smaller-scale projects that should have contributed toward the area physical conditions improvement. The creation of a stronger public-private partnership should have

been of the utmost importance not only in order to gain further economic resource, but also for setting up an "urban leadership", able to develop an integrated approach for the revitalization of EBMS district. While the EBMS strategy seems to have been weak with respect to the involvement of city agencies, the credibility and the strong partnership created with the numerous local private institutions and development entities can be regarded as one of EBMS main strengths. By working with these organizations, EBMS has been able to pursue multiple-scope projects that, on the one hand, have contributed towards enhancing the credibility of the initiative among the community and, on the other hand, have broadened the number of private sponsors and volunteers, whose involvement is vital for the long-term development of the initiative.

Despite this, strong potential partnerships such as that with NOAH (an organization focused on community development and housing services) which might have secured further funding or increased the lobby capacity for the district development, have not been realized as well as some important committees, such as the Economic Restructuring one, have had a marginal role, limiting the capacity of EBMS to deal with urgent problems in the district.

The above considerations make clear the importance to address partnership issues not only as a way to an end, but also as a purpose worth pursuing.

Moreover, EBMS seems to have failed in facing the problem of cultural diversity and integration of the different racial and ethnic groups living in the district. Language and cultural differences are still barriers to communication and cooperation among groups and most of Latino businesses cannot serve varied consumer preferences. Most of the shop signs and menus are just in Spanish as well as most of Latino retailers do not speak English. While EBMS has made many efforts in order to encourage businesses to translate their menus into English, no bilingual staff has been hired nor EBMS meeting materials, handouts, and websites have been translated into Spanish, thus creating obstacles to mutual understanding and cooperation. Despite the strong neighborhood identity and its special character as a working class and multiethnic community, EBMS seems to not have been able to valorize this specific identity by promoting a culture of multilingualism and leveraging the significant social capital present in the district.

To conclude, two main factors seem to have limited the success of the initiative: the weakness of the public-private partnerships implemented and the inability to address local context priorities. The initiative seems to follow the standard Main Street approach rather than adapt its structure and objectives to the real needs of the local context. Also as a consequence of the little budget, the strategy should have been focused on the creation of strong public-private partnerships as a way for increasing

financial resources and building a strong urban leadership, rather than encompassing multiple purposes but weak actions that are not able to push significant changes in the urban and socio-economic fabric of the area.

The creation of a strong public-private partnership appears thus to be the most important element for urban Main Streets Programs as a means for setting up a comprehensive regeneration strategy within which retail can represent a lever for the urban development.

## **PART E**

### **References**

Barnett, J. (1996). *The Fractured Metropolis*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Bradbury, S. L. (2011). An Evaluation of Iowa's Rural Main Street Program. *Journal of Rural and Community Development*, 6 (2), 71–84

Boston Redevelopment Authority (2000). East Boston Master Plan. Available at: <http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/pdf/PlanningPublications/East%20Boston%20Master%20Plan.pdf> [Accessed April 25, 2012]

Boston Redevelopment Authority (2000). East Boston Municipal Harbor Plan. Available at: <http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/pdf/PlanningPublications/East%20Boston%20Waterfront%20Municipal%20HarborPlan.pdf>

Brown L. J., Dixon D; Gilham O. (2009). *Urban Design for an Urban Century*. Hoboken, N.J: Wiley

City of Boston: <http://www.cityofboston.gov/> [Accessed April 25, 2012].

Coca-Stefaniak, J. A., Parker, C., Quin, S., Rinaldi, R., & Byrom, J. (2009). Town centre management models: A European perspective. *Cities*, 26(2), 74-80.

Dane, S. G. (1997). *Main Street success stories*. National Main Street Center; National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Di Pietro, M. (2011). Development Director at East Boston Social Center. Interview. 06 March.

Dono, A. L., & Glisson, L. S. (2009). *Revitalizing main street : a practitioner's guide to comprehensive commercial district revitalization*. (A. L. Dono, Ed.) Washington, DC: Main Street, National Trust for Historic Preservation/National Trust Main Street Center.

East Boston Main Streets: <http://www.ebmainstreets.com/> [Accessed April 25, 2012].

East Boston Main Streets. Annual Report 2007. Document made Available during the interview at the EBMS Office.

East Boston Main Streets. Annual Report 2008. Document made Available during the interview at the EBMS Office.

East Boston Main Streets. Annual Report 2011. Document made Available during the interview at the EBMS Office.

Fontanez, J. (2011). Neighborhood Business Manager at the City of Boston Department of Neighborhood Development. Interview. 28 February.

Geisman, B. (2004). A Renaissance in Neighborhood and "Main Street" Business District. *Economic Development Journal*, (2), 65-72.

Greenwood, A., & Hillmer, J. (2002). Using Public-Private Partnership to Redevelop Historic Landmarks. *Economic Development Journal*, (3), 37-42.

Hemphill, L., Mcgreal, S., Berry, J., & Watson, S. (2006). Leadership, Power and Multisector Urban Regeneration Partnerships. *Urban Studies*, 43(1), 59-80.

Jones, A., & White, S. D. (2010). Creekside District: a Case for the Main Street Approach. *Economic Development Journal*, 9(2), 46-54.

Keating, W. D., Krumholz N., Star P. (1996). Revitalizing urban neighbourhoods. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.

Kemp, R. L. (Ed.). (2000). Main Street Renewal. A Handbook for Citizens and Public Officials (2000th ed.). Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers.

McDaniel, L. (2002). The Main Street Approach to Revitalizing Communities. *Appalachia*, 35, 16-20.

Moulaison, C. (2011). Executive Director of East Boston Main Street. Interview. 21 February.

Moulaison, C. (2011). Executive Director of East Boston Main Street. Interview. 25 January.

National Trust for Historic Preservation: <http://www.preservationnation.org/> [Accessed April 24, 2012]

Robertson, K. A. (2004). The Main Street Approach to Downtown Development: An Examination of The Four-Point Approach. *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, 21(1), 55-73.

- Robertson, K. A. (1995). Downtown Redevelopment Strategies in the United States: An End-of-the-Century Assessment. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 61(4), 429-437. Routledge.
- Robertson, K. A. (1997). Downtown Retail Revitalization: a review of American development strategies. *Planning Perspectives*, 12 (1997) 383–401.
- Robertson, K. A. (1999). Can Small-City Downtowns Remain Viable?. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 65(3), 270-283.
- Robertson, K. A. (2002). Main Street Partnering. *Economic Development Journal*, (78), 53-59.
- Robertson, K. A. (2004). The main street approach to downtown development: an examination of the four-point program. *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, 21 (1), 55-71.
- Sagalyn, L. B. (2007). Public/private development. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 73 (1), 7-22.
- Seidman, K. (2004). Revitalizing Commerce for American Cities. A Practitioner's Guide to Urban Main Street Programs. Washington DC: Fannie Mae Foundation.
- Seidman, K. F.(2011). Senior Lecturer in Economic Development at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Interview. 02 February.
- Shephard, J. C. (1992). Leadership through Partnerships. The National Trust's Main Street Program as a Community Economic Development Tool. *Urban Design and Preservation Quarterly*, 15(1), 20-27.
- Torre, B. D. (2005). Commercial Revitalization in Union Square. An Analysis of Main Street Applied to a Multi-ethnic Business District. Unpublished thesis in Urban Studies, Massachusetts Institute Of Technology.
- U.S. Census Bureau (2010) American FactFinder: <http://factfinder2.census.gov/> [Accessed February 15, 2012].
- Watson, R., & Shields, C. (2008). From Main Street to the Governor's Office: an Alliance for Economic Redevelopment. *Economic Development Journal*, 7(1), 32-37.
- Walzer, N., & Kline, S. (2001). An evaluation of approaches to downtown economic revitalization. In M. A. Burayidi (Ed.), *Downtowns. Revitalizing the centers of small urban communities.*(pp. 249-274). Routledge.

Waxman, A. (1999). Utilizing Economic Theories of Retail to Revitalize Inner-city Neighborhood Business Districts: The Case of Uphams Corner Main Street. Unpublished thesis in Urban Studies, Massachusetts Institute Of Technology.

Zielenbach, S. (2000). The Art of Revitalization. New York: Garland Publishing.

## **Glossary**

**BRA** – Boston Redevelopment Authority;

**EBMS** - East Boston Main Streets

**EBSBF** - East Boston Saving Bank Foundation

**SBF** - Sovereign Bank Foundation

**BMSF** - Boston Main Street Foundation

## **PART F**

### **Iconography of the case studies**