

FAIRMOUNT INDIGO PLANNING INITIATIVE

BLUE HILL AVENUE/ CUMMINS HIGHWAY

DRAFT STATION AREA PLAN



CITY OF BOSTON
Martin J. Walsh
Mayor



Boston
Redevelopment
Authority

DRAFT STATION AREA PLAN
JUNE 2014

FAIRMOUNT INDIGO PLANNING INITIATIVE
WWW.FAIRMOUNTINDIGOPLANNING.ORG

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FAIRMOUNT INDIGO PLANNING INITIATIVE

BLUE HILL AVENUE/ CUMMINS HIGHWAY *DRAFT* STATION AREA PLAN

Final Report Contents

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Community Vision
- 3 Strategies and Recommendations
- 4 Implementation and Actions
- 5 Appendices

*An **Executive Summary** of the Station Area Plan is also available at:
www.FairmountIndigoPlanning.org*



View north along Blue Hill Avenue, Mattapan Square

BLUE HILL AVE/CUMMINS HIGHWAY STATION AREA PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Blue Hill / Cummins Hwy Station Area Plan Main Ideas

Across all key findings, recommendations and strategies, several main ideas emerged as part of the Blue Hill/Cummins Station Area Plan. The following six main ideas resonate throughout the plan and report sections that follow.



The historic commercial center of Mattapan Square



The rail overpass at Blue Hill Avenue

Reinforce Vitality of Mattapan Square

Mattapan Square has always been a critical crossroads of community and commerce. This historic strength of Mattapan Square as a center of activity should be a focus for future efforts in the Station Area. Future improvements in Mattapan Square should leverage its position as an important crossroads and transit hub with innovative approaches to local-serving retail uses, upgrading of existing spaces and facades, and adding community-centric activity to advance education, training and employment in the Station Area.

Strengthen Neighborhood Walkability

Reinforcing safe and walkable neighborhoods is critical to accessing transit options and toward supporting a thriving commercial district. Creating a pedestrian environment that is comfortable with improvements to sidewalks, street crossings and streetscape promotes the Station Area as a safe and active community.

Develop Rail Station as a Gateway

The improvements along the Fairmount Indigo Line are unlocking a new era of connectivity in Mattapan. As rail service improves, connections to the surrounding neighborhoods and continuity of the Main Street to the station entries are critically important. The integration of the station into the center of activity will leverage it as an asset and reinforce Mattapan Square as a destination for residents, businesses and visitors and reinforce an essential link to economic prosperity.

Maintain Diversity and Community

It is important to maintain the current community of residents and businesses that comprise the Station Area. Specifically, as the Station Area is improved with access and amenities over time, it is critical that current residents and businesses are not displaced. Several strategies contribute to this objective. First, adding housing units in the Station Area helps to satisfy demand and



The redevelopment catalyst of the Mattapan Health Center



The MBTA rail station in Mattapan Square with the Neponset River in the background

counteract rising rents. Second, encouraging home and business ownership allows the current stakeholders to be a part of future success and growth. Lastly, education and training for residents and businesses elevates the current population into a pattern of long term wealth creation.

Neighborhood Amenity and Services

The Mattapan Community Health Center represents a tremendous effort by the community to enhance the quality of life in Mattapan Square. The new health center is an anchor for the commercial center and for the surrounding neighborhoods. Mattapan boasts an impressive collection of health and community centers and should retain and grow this as a Station Area asset. New community-oriented uses should complement existing resources to reinforce high quality neighborhoods with a high quality of life that are rich with housing, employment, community and entertainment opportunities.

Focus on the Neponset for Recreation

The Neponset River is closely linked to the history of Mattapan and its historic development and a center of trade. A major state, multi-agency, and inter-jurisdictional effort is underway to transform many of portions of the Neponset River into a regional recreation resource. The Neponset River Reservation, Neponset Corridor and Greenway, Neponset River Trail, and Quincy Neponset Riverwalk are all parallel efforts to improve this natural resource and public access to it. The Neponset River provides the Station Area and surrounding neighborhoods with convenient access to a regional recreational resource. The Station Area has direct access and a canoe launch at Ryan Park to the River. Access to the river should be highlighted as an asset of the community in Mattapan Square with river access that becomes a feature of the district.

Key Findings



Prosperity

- 1 Redevelop City-owned Cote Ford Property to bring new investment
- 2 Leverage MBTA Parking Lot Parcel as a community development catalyst
- 3 Improve utilization of existing upper level commercial space
- 4 Strengthen storefront and small business programs
- 5 Expand training and education for local wealth creation



Home

- 6 Maintain affordability and minimize displacement of residents
- 7 Invite mixed-income and mixed-use redevelopment near station
- 8 Infill residential to strengthen neighborhoods
- 9 Expand homeownership programs to build local investment



Place

- 10 Improve character of Mattapan Square Main Streets
- 11 Strengthen gateways at Blue Hill Avenue
- 12 Reinforce culture and public art
- 13 Expand restaurant offerings
- 14 Highlight the Neponset River as a unique asset



Getting Around

- 15 New station entry improvements at Blue Hill/Cummins
- 16 Mattapan Square intersection improvements
- 17 Blue Hill Ave/Cummins Highway streetscape improvements
- 18 Enhanced parking management in Mattapan Square



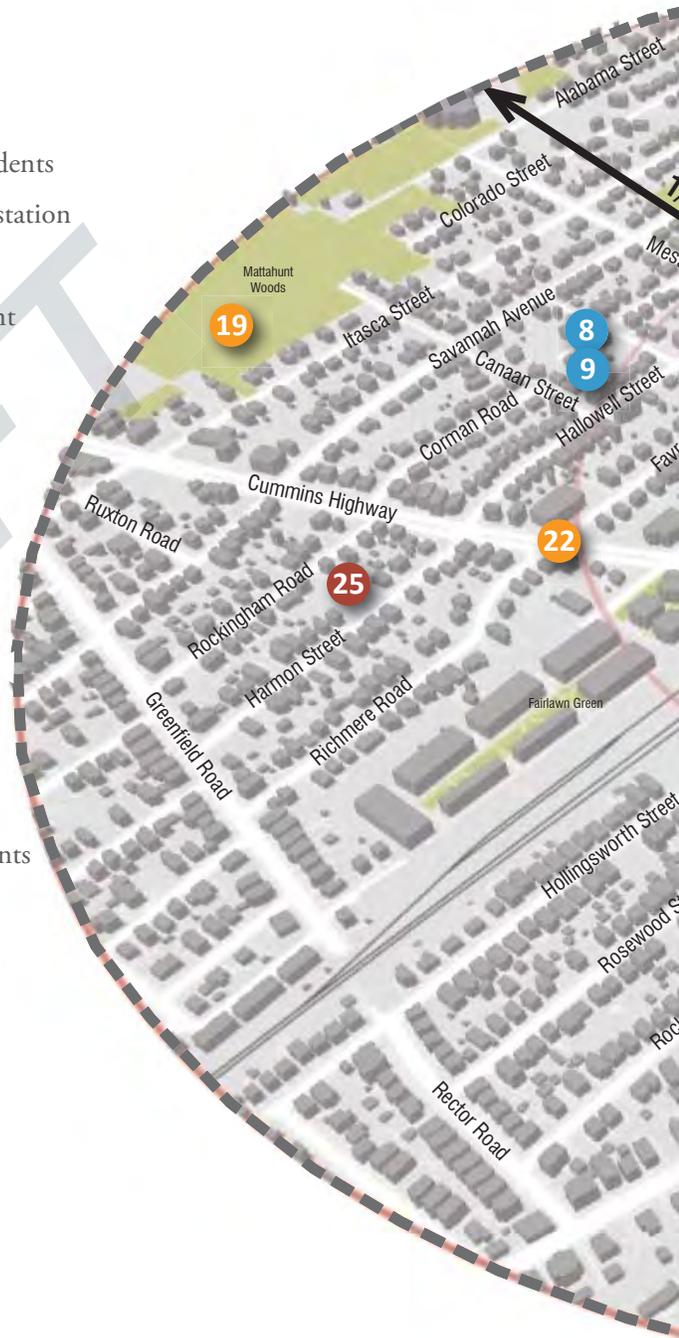
Parks/Public Space

- 19 Improve safe connections to existing parks
- 20 Enhance lighting and safety at existing parks
- 21 Enhance gateway connections to the Neponset River
- 22 Rebalance streetscape and sidewalks for pedestrians



Quality of Life

- 23 Address Station Area crime and safety concerns
- 24 Expand cultural/community/gathering space offerings
- 25 Reinforce community and family orientation





The study area for the Blue Hill Ave/Cummins Highway Station Area Plan within 1/2 mile of the rail station with annotated key findings.

- Legend**
- Existing Blocks
 - Existing Buildings
 - Existing Open Space
 - Main Street District



Fairmount Indigo Corridor

Fairmount Indigo Planning Initiative

In February 2012, the City of Boston launched the Fairmount Indigo Planning Initiative at the historic Strand Theatre in Upham's Corner, Dorchester. The Fairmount Indigo Planning Initiative is a comprehensive community based, corridor-wide planning process that the City of Boston has undertaken with the involvement of community participants and partners.

Boston has a unique opportunity to address the critical need for economic growth and physical improvement along the Fairmount Indigo Corridor, a 9.2 mile transit corridor that runs through some of Boston's most disadvantaged neighborhoods. The communities along the Corridor have experienced poor access to public rail transit - creating significant barriers to economic opportunity for both residents and businesses.

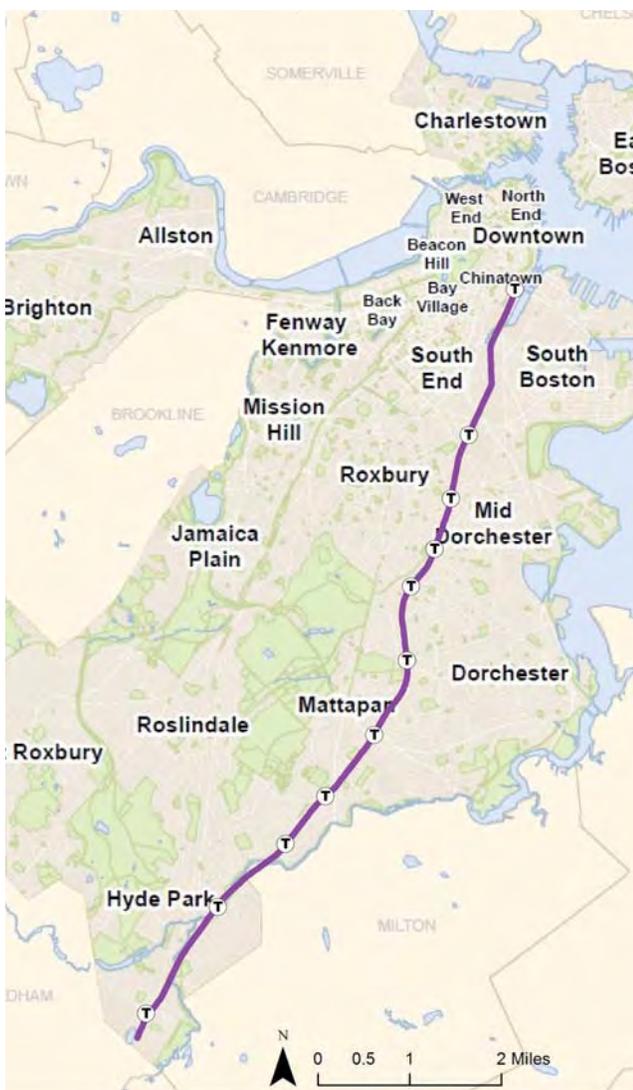
Now with new rail stations operational, residents and local businesses have improved access to economic opportunity both within and beyond the Corridor. The City recognizes the significant potential for growth in the area and looks to capitalize on this momentum.

The Fairmount Indigo Corridor includes rail stations at South Station, Newmarket, Upham's Corner, Four Corners/Geneva Avenue, Talbot Avenue, Fairmount and Readville. A rail station is under design at Blue Hill Avenue/Cummins Highway and potential stations have been discussed at Columbia Road and River Street.

The Fairmount Indigo Planning Initiative is the City's largest planning initiative to date. The City Team, led by the Boston Redevelopment Authority, along with its consultants and the community, have developed a long term strategy for business growth, employment opportunities, housing development, and Corridor branding.

The purpose of the Fairmount Indigo Planning Initiative is to create a shared vision and coordinated set of

The Fairmount Indigo Corridor in the context of the City of Boston's neighborhoods



strategies to unlock greater potential for each of the Station Areas and neighborhoods than would exist for each area acting in isolation. The planning effort focuses upon the following:

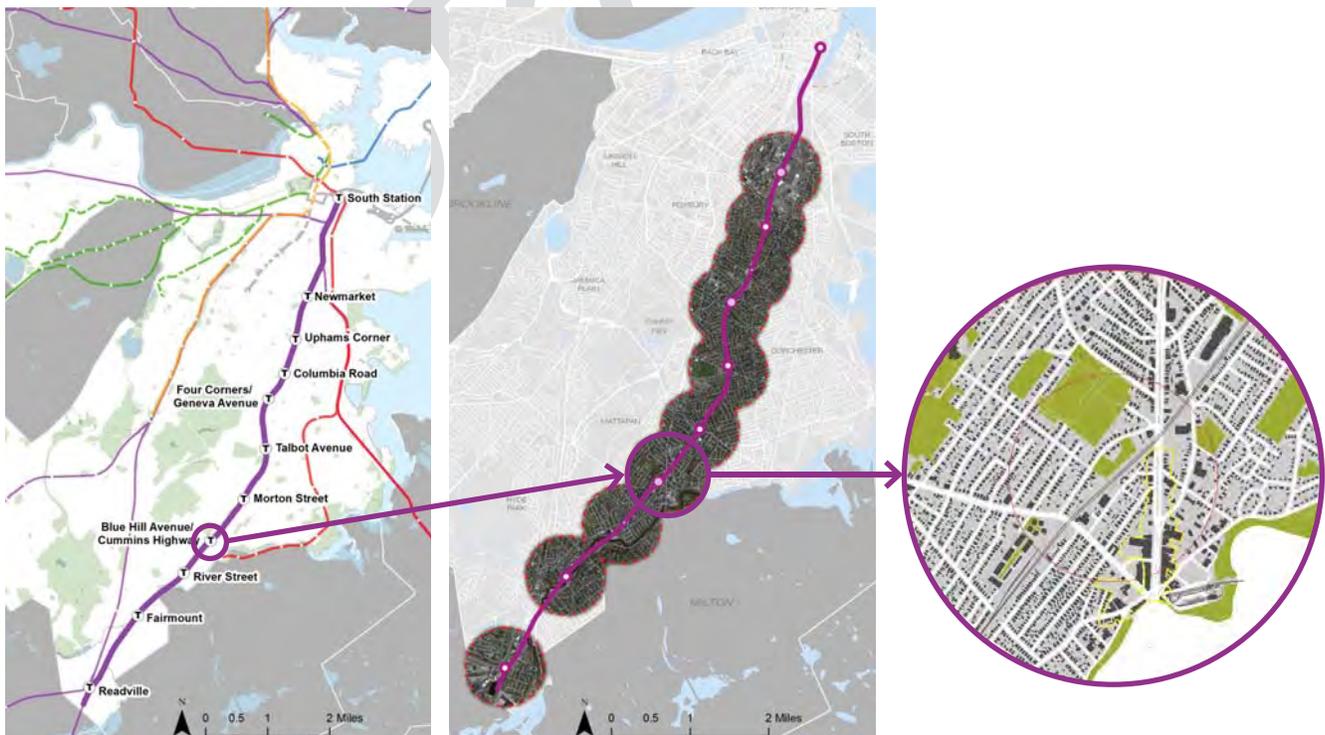
- *Guiding physical and economic development*
- *Encouraging sustainable growth and transit-oriented development (TOD)*
- *Prioritizing economic prosperity for existing residents and businesses*
- *Incorporating existing planning initiatives (City-led and Community-based) into one vision for the future*

The Planning Initiative encompasses two major planning approaches: Corridor-wide Planning and Station Area Planning. The Corridor Plan documents the Fairmount Indigo Corridor process and recommendations for improving the Corridor in the context of the City of

Boston. The Station Area Plans document the Station Area planning at each Station Area. The initial phase of planning will result in Station Area plans at three stations. Blue Hill Ave/Cummins Highway Station Area was the second plan to be undertaken.

Additionally, a Fairmount Indigo Corridor Profile was created in November of 2012 to provide baseline information for a variety of interested parties in the community, elected officials, planners, investors, researchers, and others. Key areas of focus include demographics, business, real estate, infrastructure and quality of life. The profile represents a collaborative effort between City agencies, foundations, and other planning entities. It provides current data and some trends that give a useful framework to inform the planning process.

All reports, profiles and presentations as part of the planning initiative can be found at: www.fairmountindigo.org.



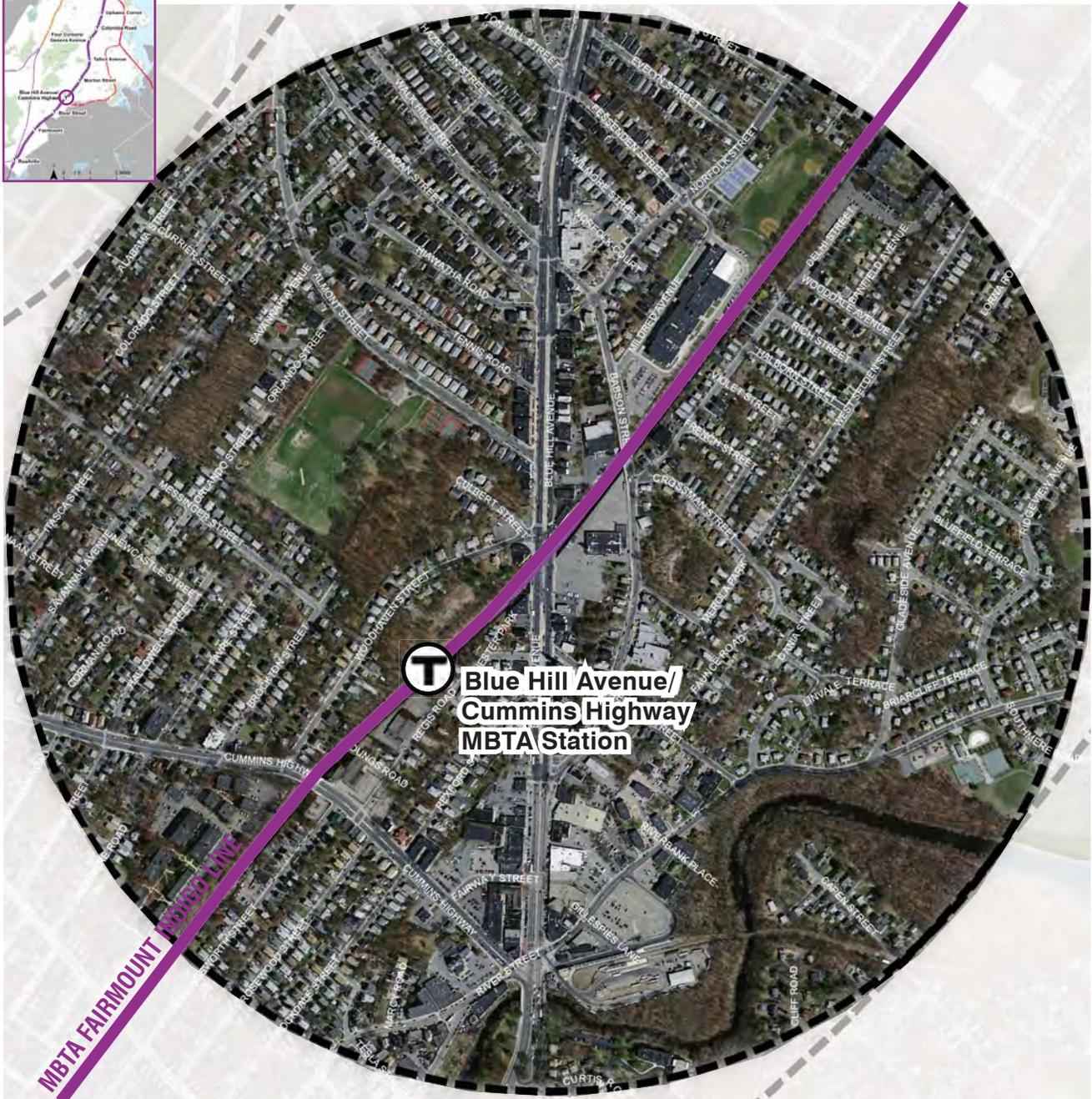
Complementary scales of planning - City-wide (left), Corridor-wide (center) and Station Area (right)

Blue Hill/Cummins Context



Fairmount Indigo
Corridor Context

The study area for the Blue Hill Station Area Plan includes portions of Mattapan within 1/2 mile of the rail station including Mattapan Square.



Station Area Geography

The Station Area planning for Blue Hill Avenue/ Cummins Highway focuses upon an area within a 1/2 mile radius of the station rail platform proposed between Blue Hill Avenue and Cummins Highway. The 1/2 mile radius encompasses the area within which people would most likely walk to transit service at the station. This type of planning boundary is hypothetical and groups together neighborhoods that are adjacent to the transit resource and that will equally benefit from the mobility and access that it provides.

City Context

The Station Area is located near the critical junction of Blue Hill Avenue, Cummins Highway and River Street and has been a historic and important crossroads for Mattapan and the City of Boston. Due to this busy intersection in the street network, Mattapan Square has always been a center of activity and commerce. The neighborhood's transportation network has evolved

over the years from a streetcar hub, but Mattapan Square remains serviced by one of the original street car lines running from Ashmont to Mattapan Square. Historically Mattapan Square has been a key hub for transportation, a location of high volume of activity and a vital commercial center for Boston and Milton. It continues to be Mattapan's main shopping district and accommodates a variety of uses and activities at the center of surrounding residential neighborhoods. The Station Area population is approximately 10,000 people. The Station Area is located on the Neponset River forming the City boundary between Boston and Milton at this location.

Historic Context

Mattapan has a significant history that has been closely associated with Blue Hill Avenue. Blue Hill Avenue was a major transportation line connecting Dorchester, and West Roxbury to downtown Boston in the late 19th century. The City's extensive streetcar network, completed in 1901, had one branch that terminated in Mattapan Square. This connectivity reinforced Mattapan

A historic view in Mattapan Square looking down Blue Hill Avenue



as a critical hub of activity. Mattapan became an early streetcar suburb in Boston and was advertised as “12 minutes to Boston”. As the Jewish community in Boston grew, Mattapan and Mattapan Square, particularly, were a major hub of activity as Jewish immigrants settled predominantly in Dorchester, Roxbury and Mattapan.

The Jewish community grew to the largest in New England and peaked in population around 1940. New immigrants to the Station Area then included Italian and Irish Catholics to total about 40% of the area population in about 1970. Over this time, Blue Hill Avenue developed as a thriving commercial corridor supported by the surrounding and growing residential communities. A trend of residential migration to the suburbs began shortly after World War II and was accelerated in the 1970’s due to a number of contributing factors. In 1968, the Boston Banks Urban Renewal Group (BBURG) was established to make home mortgage funds available to low-income African American families within a designated area, including the northern portion of Mattapan. This attracted more African Americans to the Station Area and accelerated the out-migration of other immigrant populations.

In the same era, the end of Boston’s streetcar system in the 1950’s brought major changes to many of the communities along the Fairmount Indigo Corridor such as Mattapan. The resulting changes in City transportation and commuting patterns contributed to an out-migration of residents and to a pattern of disinvestment in Mattapan. What was once a hub of transportation and activity was now a congested node in a crowded vehicular network with few transportation alternatives.

Today, the demographic composition of the Station Area is predominantly African American. However, a recent influx of Caribbean and Hispanic immigrants have been moving to the surrounding neighborhoods. This is a very brief synopsis of an interesting and multi-layered history that can be more deeply understood with historic resources such as the Dorchester Athenaeum. (www.dorchesteratheneum.org)



A historic view of Mattapan Square

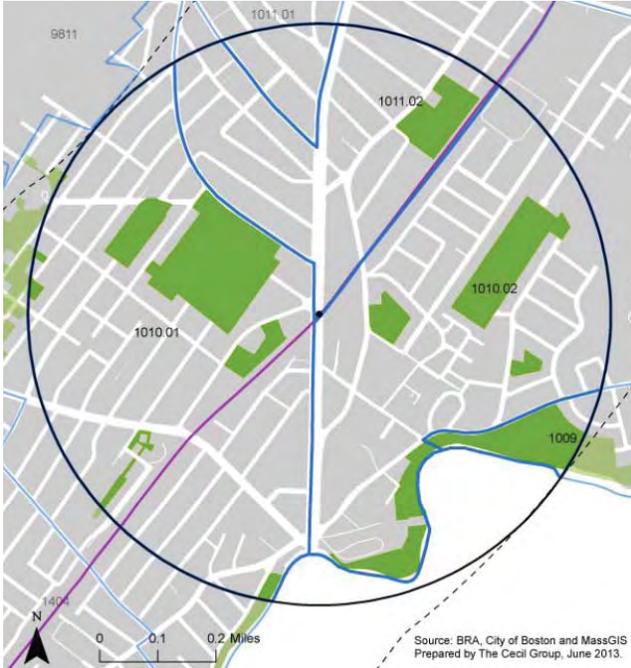
Past Planning Efforts

As a part of this process, previous planning studies have been reviewed and evaluated to carry forward critical recommendations and directions. The following studies were included in this effort:

- Mattapan United Community Interviews (2012)
- Cote Ford Community Planning Workshop (2011)
- Roxbury Mattapan Dorchester (RDM) Transit Needs Study (2010)
- Mattapan Economic Development Action Agenda (MEDI) (2006)

Key Characteristics

As part of the Station Area planning an analysis of the existing conditions and context of the Station Area was prepared for land use, housing characteristics, demographics, transportation, and public space. A comprehensive catalog of this analysis is located in the appendix. The most relevant observations regarding the Blue Hill Ave/Cummins Highway Station Area today are included here. The analysis was completed using data sources from the Boston Redevelopment Authority, the City of Boston, and the U.S. Census 2010 American



U.S. Census Tracts in the Study Area

Community Survey.

The census tracts used in the analysis are shown to the right and include four tracts: 1010.01, 1010.02, 1011.01 and 1011.02. The study area also includes a total of 2,115 parcels. The evolution of Station Area race and ethnicity was highlighted in the discussion of the historic context. Currently, the Station Area as represented by these census tracts is 86% Black, 9.5% Hispanic, and 2% White.

The land use in the Station Area is predominantly residential with 88% of the total parcels used for housing of a variety of types. Tax exempt uses are the second largest land use with 7% of the total parcels used for religious institutions, schools and transit facilities. Commercial land use represents 4% of the total parcels and is concentrated along Blue Hill Avenue. Given the majority residential uses, the average parcel size within the Station Area is modest at 6,900 square feet, less than one quarter of an acre. The largest parcels are concentrated along Blue Hill Avenue.

Of the majority residential land uses in the Station Area, a near majority (48%) of the residences are single family homes. A similar proportion (46%) are 2 or 3 family homes. The remaining amount are multi-family and mixed-use residential units. All of the housing types combined yield an average of 7 units per acre. A block of triple-deckers with few vacant lots results in about 13 units per acre in the Station Area. Only three blocks in the Station Area have a residential density that is greater than 20 units/acre.

Public open space in the Station Area is relatively well distributed and generous. The Station Area's open space comprises 17% of the total area, compared to 15.7% in the City of Boston overall. This open space takes the form of parks, playgrounds, athletic fields and urban wilds and natural areas. The urban wilds are the result of converting vacant and blighted properties resulting from the period of disinvestment into open space resources. Many vacant parcels and properties, approximately 250 parcels, remain in the Station Area. They are typically small lots that are privately owned and evenly distributed throughout the Station Area.



Vacant Parcels in the Station Area

Household income in the Station Area is \$49,261 which is similar to the Boston city-wide average of \$50,684. The relationship between income and rent is important to test in the Station Area. One such measure, is referred to as severely rent burdened, an occurrence of a household spending over 50% of the household income or more on rent. This occurs in the Station Area for approximately 35% of the renter households, as compared to 27% in the entire City of Boston. The income may be marginally lower due to a larger disparity in educational attainment between the Station Area and the City average. The Station Area population (25 years or older) with no more than a high school education is 57.8% as compared to Boston at 49%. This is a measure of rental households which includes approximately 60% of the housing units, the other 40% of housing in the Station Area is owned.

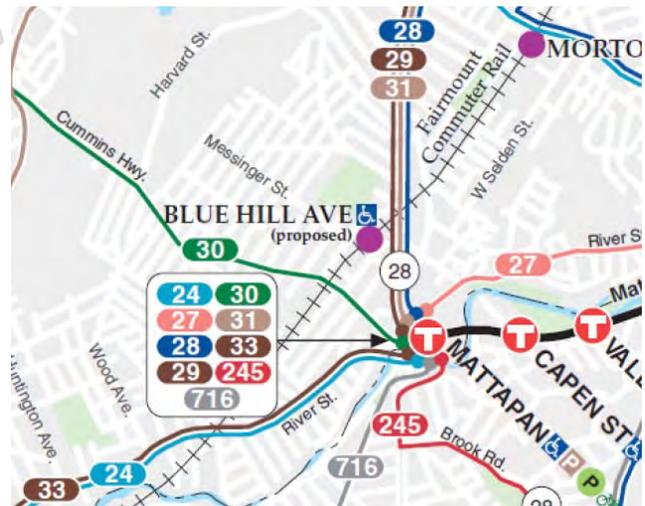
At the center of the residential neighborhoods of the Station Area is the Mattapan Square Main Streets district centered on Blue Hill Avenue. The Main Streets district was designated as a Boston Main Street in November of 2010 and includes the historic commercial center of

Mattapan. The historic commercial center is surrounded by cohesive and diverse residential neighborhoods.

In terms of transportation, Mattapan Square is currently served by one of the original trolley lines that connects to Ashmont Station, a terminus for the Red Line of the MBTA Subway System. The Station Area is served by bus lines on Blue Hill Avenue (Routes 28, 29 and 31). Route 28 travels on Blue Hill Avenue to Ruggles Station on the Orange Line. A bus line on Cummins Highway (Route 30) and a bus lines on River Street (Routes 24, 27 and 33). The proposed Fairmount Indigo Station at Blue Hill Avenue/Cummins Highway was to be a part of new station construction that was completed in 2013 (Newmarket, Four Corners/Geneva, and Talbot Avenue). Community opposition to the station has extended the design process for the station. At the time of this report, the funding for the station is in place, the State has made a commitment to build the station, and construction is anticipated to begin in 2015.



Station Area Land Use with the Main Streets district at the center of residential neighborhoods





A residential street in the Station Area



Mattapan Square on Blue Hill Avenue



Current building and development patterns in the Station Area within 1/2 Mile of the Blue Hill Avenue/Cummins Highway Station with the nearby Mattapan Square Main Street district boundary highlighted in yellow



A view toward Blue Hill Avenue on Cummins Highway, Mattapan Square

BLUE HILL AVE/CUMMINS HIGHWAY STATION AREA PLAN

COMMUNITY VISION

Community Process

At the beginning of the Blue Hill Ave/Cummins Highway planning process, the City of Boston assembled a Working Advisory Group (WAG) comprised of Station Area residents, business owners, advocates and stakeholders. As part of this process, the WAG met with members of the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) and the planning consultant team through a series of public meetings over the course of nine months. Each of the WAG Meetings was open to the public and well attended. Each of the topic areas, strategies and recommendations were discussed in this series of meetings.

The broader community of the Station Area was engaged during a community workshop held in December of 2013. The community workshop was attended by over 100 participants representing the diversity of Mattapan and included discussion of issues and opportunities and a shared vision. This community input is the foundation for the Station Area Plan. A community wide open house was held during June of 2014 to review the Station Area Plan. The process owes much to the dedicated effort and involvement of the WAG as they helped to craft the community vision for the Station Area and shape recommendations that are relevant to and representative of the voice of the community.

Community participation and break-out sessions

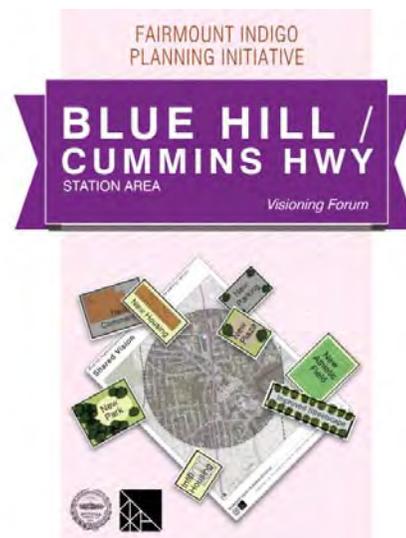


Community Vision

The Community Vision is embodied in the entire Station Area Plan. Each recommendation and strategy is intended to be consistent with the overall vision that was articulated and shared by the community. The Community Vision Statement and Goals that follow are a direct and simple description of the vision for the Station Area and are intended to provide a direction for the community that can be supported by many actions and entities working toward a shared purpose. As implementation of the community vision continues into the future, returning to this statement to consider the continuity of efforts with this shared direction would be an appropriate way to measure progress. The Community Goals add more detail to the Vision Statement.

The vision builds on the rich history of Mattapan Square as a commercial hub in Boston. The Station Area Plan seeks to position Mattapan for new economic prosperity and to reinforce it as an important hub of activity in the Fairmount Indigo Corridor.

Community workshop visioning materials



Icons used throughout the report to organize recommendations



The strategies and recommendations for the Blue Hill Ave/Cummins Highway Station Area Plan are organized into six categories: prosperity, home, place, getting around, parks and public space and quality of life. The Station Area Plan balances recommendations in each topic area to reinforce a high quality livable district and neighborhood. The community vision and Station Area Plan are represented by the complete and complementary collection of these categories and recommendations. All of these elements are intended to improve the Station Area as a vital and thriving place to live, work, shop and visit.

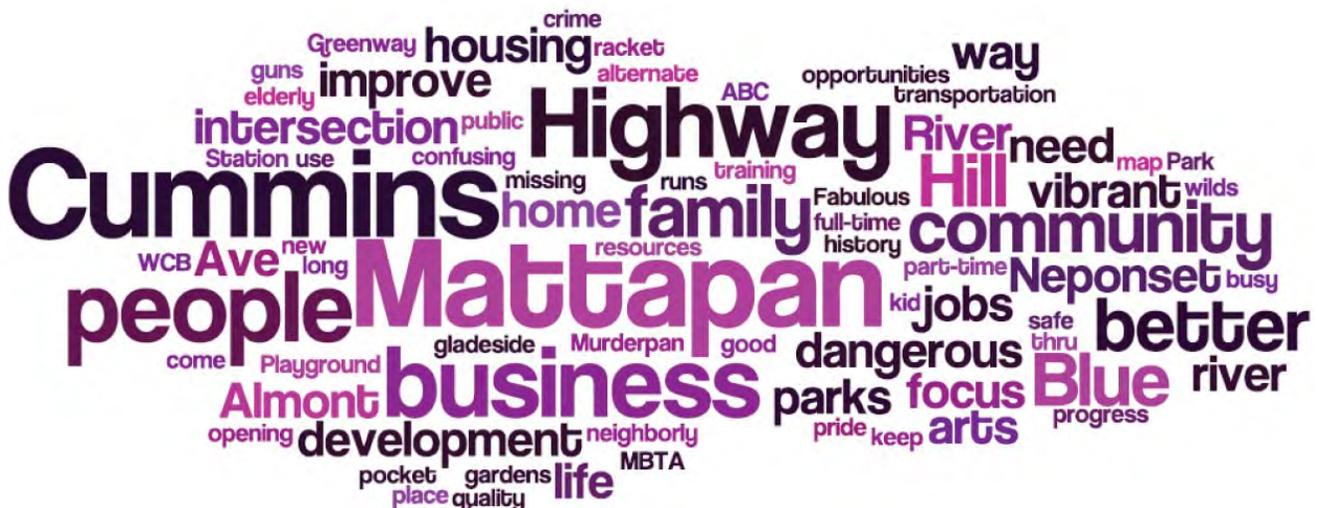
During the community planning process, each category was used to organize conversations, feedback, presentations and discussion. Each of the categories facilitates organizing a focused set of priorities to address specific opportunities or deficiencies in the Station Area. The categories were used to frame break-out group

discussions with the community at the forum and to organize Working Advisory Group meeting agendas.

The recommendations and strategies of the Station Area Plan build from the foundation of the Community vision. In the visioning forum, community members used an aerial map and scaled “game pieces” showing street improvements, new parks, and different types of new development to create a shared vision for the future of the Station Area. The image to the right illustrates the components used in this exercise. The results of this exercise translate directly into the key findings of the plan.

The community was also asked to write down three to four words that they associate with Blue Hill Avenue/Cummins Highway. The community responses were organized into the image below. It is called a word cloud. The size of each of the words relates to the frequency of that word as a community response.

Word cloud results from the community workshop



Community Vision

The community vision was created through a community planning and visioning process that included a community workshop, community open house, and a series of eight meetings with a Mayoral appointed Working Advisory Group (WAG), many in-person visits to each Station Area neighborhood, stakeholder, resident and advocate interviews and an analysis of the existing conditions of the Station Area. The Vision Statement sets a direction for future efforts in the Blue Hill Ave/ Cummins Highway Station Area. The Community Goals add more detail to the statement.



Mattapan Square is the commercial center of the Station Area

Vision Statement

The Blue Hill/Cummins Highway Station Area is a safe and walkable community with high quality residential neighborhoods, a vital commercial and cultural district at Mattapan Square, excellent transit access and affordability.

Community Goals

The goals of the community vision are to:

- Minimize displacement of current residents and businesses to preserve diversity of the community
- Reinforce residential community with safe streets, high quality parks and housing that is renewed while retaining affordability
- Strengthen commercial and cultural activity in Mattapan Square

The Station Area Plan seeks to leverage transit for new economic prosperity and to reinforce the Station Area as an important hub of commercial and cultural activity in the Fairmount Indigo Corridor. The recently built Mattapan Health Center reinforces a health orientation and supporting economy that is evolving within the Station Area and its neighborhood center.

Key recommendations of the community vision have been outlined by topic areas including Prosperity, Home, Place, Getting Around, Quality of Life and Public Space. The Station Area Plan balances recommendations in each topic area to reinforce a high quality livable district and neighborhood.



PROSPERITY



HOME



PLACE



GETTING AROUND



QUALITY OF LIFE



PARKS AND PUBLIC SPACE

Illustrative Vision Plan

An illustrative plan of the community vision is shown below. The illustration reflects the physical strategies that are part of the Station Area Plan including new transit-oriented development near the rail station, new mixed-use development within the Mattapan Square Main Streets district, new infill residential development to stabilize surrounding neighborhoods, streetscape improvements to form gateway enhancements to the Main Street districts and to enhance critical connections to the rail station and surrounding attractions.

- Legend*
- Existing Blocks
 - Existing Buildings
 - Existing Open Space
 - Main Street District
 - Potential Development



Cummins Highway Station Area Plan includes portions of Mattapan within 1/2 mile of the rail station

Illustrative Vision Plan Detail



- Legend
- Existing Blocks
 - Existing Buildings
 - Existing Open Space
 - Main Street District
 - Potential Development
 - Potential Open Space
 - Main Street Gateway



Recommendations illustrated within the study area for the Blue Hill Ave/Cummins Highway Station Area Plan includes portions of Mattapan within 1/2 mile of the rail station



The Mattapan Health Center on Blue Hill Avenue, Mattapan

BLUE HILL AVE/CUMMINS HIGHWAY STATION AREA PLAN

STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS



PROSPERITY



Prosperity

Strengthen local wealth creation in the Station Area through business, training and entrepreneurial support. The following approaches are intended to build prosperity for current residents and small businesses:

- A Focus Redevelopment Investment** - Community supported investment in key properties, such as mixed-use redevelopment at Cote Ford, creates a positive momentum for future redevelopment.
- B Expand Training and Connection** - Connect residents and businesses to new opportunities for training and education to expand economic prosperity in the Station Area.
- C Reinforce Local-serving Businesses** - Match local needs with local businesses and services, recruit missing services and expand locally supported commerce.
- D Add Destination Attractions and Activities** - Build upon assets such as the Neponset, the Health Center and Branch Library to build community attractions and destinations.
- E Targeted Matches for Vacancy and Use** - Create incentive programs, funding and resources to expand utilization of vacant upper floor spaces and to expand availability of modern and code compliant space.

Potential Redevelopment of Key Sites

Commercial/Light Industrial (Gross Square Feet)	17,000
Residential (Units)	UP TO 300
Retail (Gross Square Feet)	40,000

The following area calculations are based upon hypothetical redevelopment scenarios on (5) sites near the station and Mattapan Square selected by the Station Area Working Advisory Group (WAG). Potential redevelopment would require reinvestment in private property. The scenarios tested the scale and feasibility of potential redevelopment at these key locations.



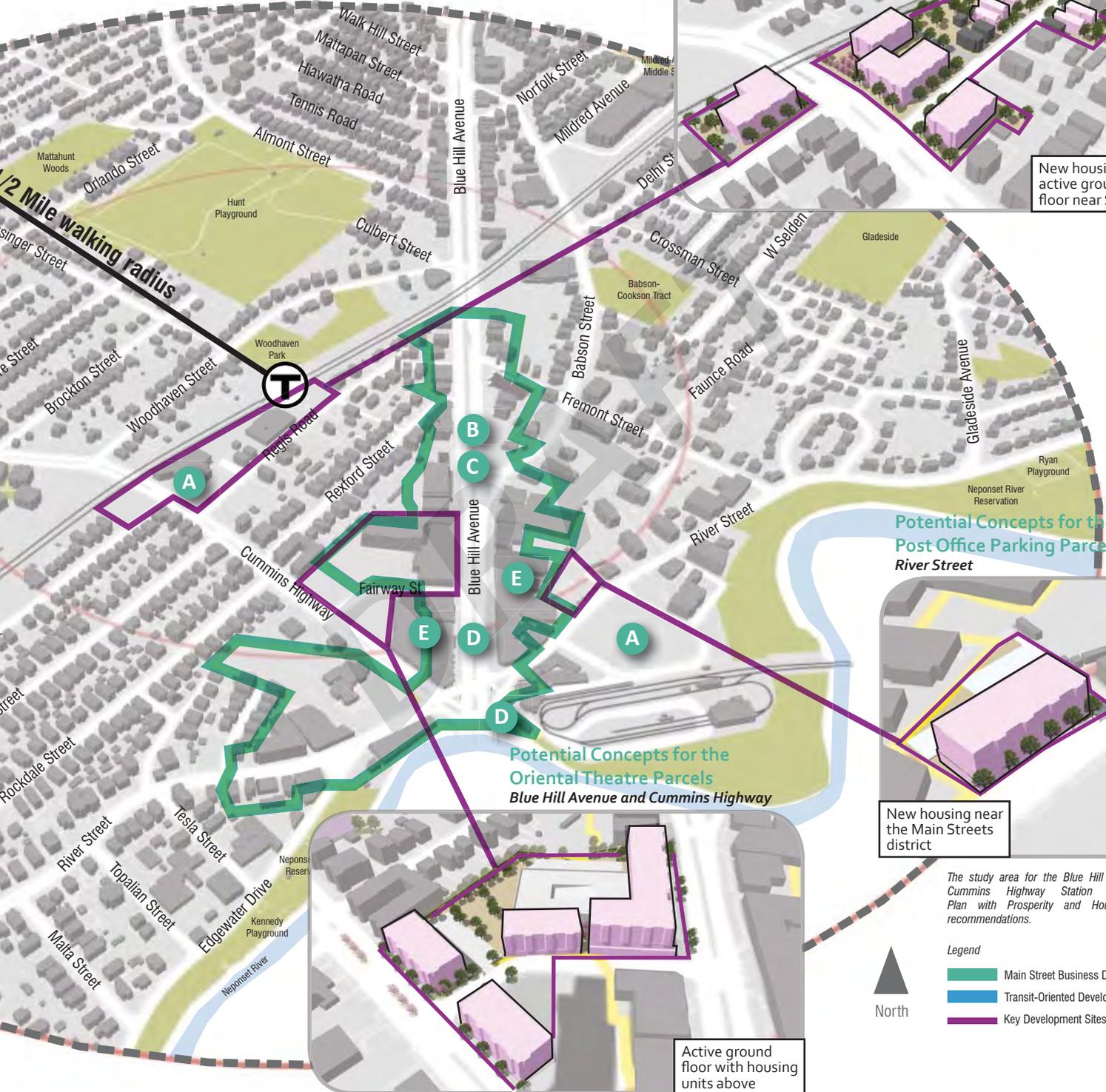
The illustrations to the right do not represent final designs, but were part of an analytical process used to understand and establish community priorities and visioning.



Potential Concepts for the Cote Ford Parcels
Cummins Highway and Regis Road



New housing and active ground floor near Station



Potential Concepts for the Post Office Parking Parcel
River Street



New housing near the Main Streets district

Potential Concepts for the Oriental Theatre Parcels
Blue Hill Avenue and Cummins Highway



Active ground floor with housing units above

Legend

- █ Main Street Business District
- █ Transit-Oriented Development
- █ Key Development Sites



The study area for the Blue Hill Ave/ Cummins Highway Station Area Plan with Prosperity and Housing recommendations.



Prosperity

This section of recommendations is focused on prosperity for the residents and businesses of the Blue Hill Ave/Cummins Highway Station Area with a focus on economic development. From the perspective of the real estate market, the Station Area is at a critical point in its revitalization. A long history of disinvestment in Mattapan has turned to stability and a growing collection of successful enterprises and neighborhood amenities is emerging.

In general, however, unlike some other neighborhoods in Boston, market forces alone have not been sufficient to support revitalization in Mattapan Square. Much of the recent economic activity has been made possible through a combination of public and private supports including land write downs, private foundation grants, tax credits and low interest loans. The Mattapan Health Center is a great example of this type of partnered success.

The recent and continued improvements of the rail service along the Fairmount Indigo Line further enhances Mattapan as a desirable location for new economic activity and a sustained pattern of revitalization in surrounding neighborhoods. The existing station at Morton Street has a direct impact to the portions of the adjacent neighborhoods, but is not close enough to Mattapan Square to incentivize redevelopment. The station at Blue Hill Ave/Cummins Highway would bring a significant new economic development resource to the community.

The addition of market rate housing and an expanded population base within walking distance to the Mattapan Square Main Streets District provides additional proposed activity and strategic economic resources to support the retention and renewal of retail uses. By leveraging City-owned real estate assets and continuing to focus on strategic infrastructure investments, redevelopment near the rail station can help to activate the neighborhood core and catalyze other revitalization efforts nearby.

The market for commercial office space is not a primary target for redevelopment given the distance from downtown and highway access considerations. If new commercial space is to be feasible as a development component, then a commercial tenant for that space must be identified and committed to the location and space, prior to development. A build-to-suit situation, as opposed to a speculative office development, is not likely to be successful in the current market context.

The existing population base supports an active retail district with few vacancies. The types of goods and services provided saturate a market niche of low cost merchandise and restaurants. Members of the community have expressed an interest in attracting other retailers that may provide a broader offering of local goods and services, office supplies or other gaps in the retail market today. Expansion of retail activity and growth is dependent upon new residential redevelopment. Ideally, this redevelopment would occur in or near the Main Streets district and near the rail station.

Strategic Growth in the Station Area

The following 10-year growth capacities were identified for the Station Area through a build-out analysis that examined the potential for new growth in relation to existing patterns of use, development and susceptibility to change. The following targets represent an average of a range that has been established for each metric based upon an analysis of existing land use patterns.

Population Capacity	Percent Increase
89	1.6%
Employment Capacity	Percent Increase
85	3.2%
Building Area Capacity	Percent Increase
424,000	6.8%

This potential capacity will only be redeveloped if the Station Area can attract reinvestment. Several opportunities exist in the real estate market. The market



for new transit-oriented housing is a strength of the area. New commuter and resident serving retail that complements the vitality of the retail that already exists in Mattapan Square today is another opportunity. Lastly, increasing the strength of existing social services and labor force training is an opportunity for the Station Area to reinforce a cluster of services focused on serving local residents in Mattapan Square.

Building upon these potential opportunities, the Station Area Plan includes the following approaches to reinforce the prosperity in the Station Area:



property in the Station Area. It is a property that will be publicly disposed of by the Department of Neighborhood Development.

Another publicly owned property with the potential to add capital investment is the MBTA parking lot in Mattapan Square. The parking lot has been through a public disposition process twice, but has not resulted in redevelopment. A successful project at the Cote Ford property could create a reconsideration of development potential at the MBTA parking lot.



A Focus Redevelopment Investment - Community supported investment in key properties, such as mixed-use redevelopment at Cote Ford, creates a positive momentum for future redevelopment. The market studies and feasibility testing of redevelopment on key sites has shown that redevelopment in the Station Area is difficult under current market conditions. Generally, the potential revenue that would be possible from the investment is not enough to sufficiently cover the cost of redevelopment.

In this economic context, it is important to focus redevelopment efforts at a few key locations that are publicly owned. Positive investment at these key publicly owned properties can then help to shift the calculation of cost and revenue to invite future private investment in other properties located in the Station Area. The Cote Ford site is the most prominent and visible of this type of

B Expand Training and Connection - Mattapan Square is a center of resident training and services and should be expanded as a center of opportunity and success. Existing training centers like ABCD's Mattapan Family Service Center, should be promoted and built upon as a resource for residents. An expanded focus on new opportunities on the Fairmount Indigo line should be created with direct connections to jobs in Newmarket and near South Station. Connect residents and businesses to new opportunities for training and education to expand economic prosperity in the Station Area.

In addition to resident training and education, a more robust set of support and training programs designed for local business training and connection should be piloted and given a home in Mattapan. This may provide a productive use to a vacant space in Mattapan Square. The success of local businesses is important to the health of the

Main Street district and critical to local jobs and wealth creation. The entrepreneurial spirit of local immigrant communities should be leveraged into new local businesses and then given assistance to keep the enterprise successful.



C Reinforce Local-serving Businesses - The feasibility of the redevelopment scenarios on the following pages shows that revitalization in Mattapan Square will not be a development-centric approach. This is not bad. The built environment of Mattapan Square will not change dramatically, but the quality and appearance of storefronts and businesses can be improved and upgraded over time. In Mattapan Square, it is not a matter of needing to build more space, it is more important to get the highest and best uses within the space that already exists.

The existing ground floor space on Blue Hill Avenue is valued and should be retained and enhanced. The need is not for new space, but for programs to improve storefronts, improve parking and improve pedestrian access. In the space that does exist, it is important to maximize utilization of the space. In that regard, it is important to match local needs with local businesses and services, recruit missing services and expand locally supported commerce.

D Add Destination and Attractions - One strategy for building community anchors, amenity and activities is already successfully underway and should be continued. The addition of excellent destination attractions and activities is a way to

bring focused investment to the Station Area and provide shared community benefits. These assets include the Neponset River, the Mattapan Health Center and Mattapan Branch Library.

The Mattapan Health Center and Mattapan Branch Library both involved many years of advocacy, coalition building, partnerships and public funding, but result in a shared community amenity that anchors private investment in the Station Area. Future attractions and investments should be planned and become part of focused community advocacy. Several potential components of this nature have been discussed by the community through this process.

The first new attraction is the focus of much activity, the Neponset River. The extension of the Neponset River Greenway and Reservation through Mattapan Square will become a significant attraction and community anchor for Mattapan. Defining Mattapan Square as a gateway to this resource is an important community supported element to leverage this natural resource and other state and local investments on the Neponset.

The second new attraction is a longer term prospect that is more ambitious, to create a community theatre at the Oriental Theatre property. Reinforcing Mattapan as a cultural, entertainment and arts center was a shared theme of the community vision and this would be one way to add an arts and cultural destination to the





Station Area. This approach would require long term advocacy, public/private partnerships and project champions to bring to fruition, but would provide a shared community attraction.

E Targeted Matches for Vacancy and Use -

As mentioned, the creation of new space in the center of Station Area activity, Mattapan Square is difficult. It is important to use every space and property that is available productively in the Station Area. In Mattapan Square this suggests a targeted approach to filling storefront vacancies as a first priority and cataloging and creating a strategy for filling upper level vacancies second. The upper level vacancies may be more difficult to resolve due to building code, use and occupancy issues. It may require the creation of incentive programs, funding and resources to expand utilization of vacant upper floor spaces and to expand availability of modern and code compliant space. This would add positive activity to Mattapan Square and increase utilization of existing space.

A similar approach to targeting vacancies for specific uses should be used throughout the Station Area. Vacant properties represent an underutilized asset in the Station Area. It is important to use every space and property productively in the Station Area to reinforce stability and economic activity. For vacant properties, this suggests a targeted approach to filling residential uses in existing neighborhood streets. It may require the creation of incentive programs, funding and resources specifically designed to attract local contractors and developers to build multiple contextually-sensitive homes on multiple lots in a particular area.

This type of opportunity may not occur by market forces alone, but should be seen as an opportunity for targeted economic development in the Station Area that can build local stability and prosperity.



Key Redevelopment Scenarios

The following key sites were selected with the Working Advisory Group (WAG) and analyzed for potential redevelopment to explore implications relating to land use, urban design, zoning and community benefits. Each of the redevelopment scenarios are consistent with the Community Vision and inform strategic and implementation recommendations.



The study area for the Blue Hill Ave/ Cummins Highway Station Area Plan showing the (5) key redevelopment sites that were tested using hypothetical development scenarios



Key Development Sites

In testing this market context, four key sites were selected to examine the development potential and feasibility of redevelopment in the Blue Hill Ave/Cummins Highway Station Area. Key sites were selected based upon the following criteria – sites contributing to and consistent with the community vision, high impact sites that can leverage Station Area investment, underutilized sites that are potentially susceptible to change, and sites that are currently completely or partially under public control. The four key sites were tested with hypothetical redevelopment programs that examined the physical fit on the site and the economic feasibility of each concept.

As highlighted in the implementation section of the plan, the testing of development scenarios on the key sites has been informative in terms of the scale and characteristics of potential development that is seen as desirable in the community. Many important community goals have been formulated and articulated through this planning process and have been explored through this exploration of key development sites. The illustrations of each concept do not represent final designs, but were part of an analytical process used to understand and establish community priorities and visioning.

1 Cote Ford Property



2 Mattapan Square #1



3 Mattapan Square #2



4 Post Office Parking



1 Cote Ford Property

820 Cummins Highway and 30 Regis Road

The Cote Ford property includes a former automobile dealership and service center that is now a City-owned brownfield site. In addition to the main property, several other publicly and privately owned vacant lots on Cummins Highway and Regis Street are vacant and potentially available for redevelopment. The Cote Ford properties have been vacant since 1993 and encompass 3.2 acres or approximately 150,000 square feet. The Department of Neighborhood Development is currently leading a community process to establish development guidelines for disposition of the publicly owned Cote Ford parcels for redevelopment. Under any potential redevelopment scenario, the site would require environmental remediation for future reuse.

Significance to Blue Hill/Cummins Station Area

The location is a key site for Mattapan due to its direct adjacency to the future rail platform and condition as a vacant and blighted property adjacent to a residential neighborhood and Cummins Highway. The property has strong potential to expand residential and mixed-use activity to better connect Mattapan Square along Cummins Highway to create an attractive gateway at the rail station.

Potential Redevelopment Program

It is important to clarify the nature and purpose of the redevelopment scenarios that were tested through this community process. The studies represented here are at a conceptual level only and do not represent a development proposal or project. Any actual redevelopment proposal in the future is subject to the financial and feasibility analysis of a development proponent and will be subject to public review before proceeding to implementation. The studies depicted are hypothetical and used as a tool to better understand implications for feasibility,

community visioning and scale of redevelopment. In addition, the Working Advisory Group has not endorsed any of the potential scenarios.

The scale of the property could accommodate multiple buildings and could support a multitude of redevelopment programs. A variation of (4) redevelopment scenarios has been tested to understand the physical and financial constraints of the property. The general approach undertaken in the development scenarios was to create a mixed-use program that would add residents and activity to the Station Area. Each scenario's potential redevelopment program is outlined separately.

Feasibility of Redevelopment

The proforma testing of the potential development programs is also outlined separately for each scenario. In general, the most economically viable redevelopment scenario needs to create enough of a critical mass in the development program to support redevelopment costs, but must remain modest enough to avoid additional cost premiums associated with structured parking and mid-rise construction. Simply, a potential project is most feasible if it is neither too big nor too small.

Use and Design Guidelines

The scale and density of development on this property should balance the transit-oriented location with the context of the residential homes on Regis Street. A mixed-use project would meet community goals for extending ground floor activity in this location. Community space, for use in part by the Mattapan community, should be a part of the development program. As required by the City of Boston the redevelopment should meet LEED Certifiable requirements at a minimum and should pursue the highest level of sustainability attainable.



Existing conditions and parcel characteristics at the Cote Ford properties in the Station Area

Parcel	Address	Owner	Land Area (SF)	Building Area (GSF)
1	820 Cummins Highway	City of Boston	40,166	49,458
2	30/32 Regis Road	City of Boston	56,913	14,250
3	Regis Road	City of Boston	6,250	0
4	Regis Road	Cummins Development Co LLC	12,500	0
5	Cummins Highway (2 parcels)	Cummins Development Co LLC	16,616	0
6	Cummins Highway (4 parcels)	Cummins Development Co LLC	19,403	0
TOTAL			151,848	63,708

1 Cote Ford Property

820 Cummins Highway and 30 Regis Road

Scenario 1





Bldg	Bldg Floor Area (SF)	Bldg Height (Stories; FT)	Bldg Total Area (GSF)	Active Ground Floor (NSF)	Office (NSF)	Other (Educ.) (NSF)	Resident Units	Parking Provided (Spaces)	FAR
1	10,700	5; 55'	53,500	8,000	0	0	36	34	2.17
2	6,700	5; 55'	33,500	5,000	0	0	22	20	2.17
3, 4 (EACH)	1,580	2.5, 34'	3,950	0	0	0	2	2	0.63
5	7,600	3, 34'	22,800	0	0	0	19	22	0.74
6-11 (EACH)	1,580	2.5, 34'	3,950	0	0	0	2	2	0.63
12	6,700	4; 45'	26,800	4,000	0	0	17	20	1.61
13	8,370	4; 45'	33,480	6,000	0	0	21	24	1.72
			177,980	23,000	0	0	131	136	1.17

Scenario 1 Potential Redevelopment Program

This scenario provides active ground floor uses at the rail station gateway on Cummins Highway with residential uses on upper floors and Regis Road. The total building area would consist of approximately 175,000 square feet (SF), with an active ground floor of retail or commercial space of about 23,000 SF. This redevelopment program includes approximately 130 residential units. It is all supported by about 135 parking spaces on site. This potential redevelopment program fits within the existing zoning characteristics Gateway Development Area Overlay District. Lastly, the potential number of residential units may exceed the housing density desired by the adjacent community.

Scenario 1 Feasibility of Redevelopment

Of the scenarios tested, this potential redevelopment program is the most feasible showing a positive result in the financial proforma testing. The advantages of this scenario include the retail portion of the program to support feasibility. The scale of the development allows the construction type to be stick built which is less expensive. The feasibility is burdened by the cost of demolition and some structured parking. The potential for the City to partially write-down the cost of land would further assist feasibility.

1 Cote Ford Property

820 Cummins Highway and 30 Regis Road

Scenario 2





Bldg	Bldg Floor Area (SF)	Bldg Height (Stories; FT)	Bldg Total Area (GSF)	Active Ground Floor (NSF)	Office (NSF)	Other (Educ.) (NSF)	Resident Units	Parking Provided (Spaces)	FAR
1	17,500	2; 40'	35,000	0	0	30,000*	0	24	0.87
2	19,000	1; 38'	19,000	0	0	17,000*	0	22	0.33
3	1,580	2.5, 34'	3,950	0	0	0	2	2	0.63
4	1,580	2.5, 34'	3,950	0	0	0	2	2	0.63
5	1,580	2.5, 34'	3,950	0	0	0	2	2	0.63
6	6,700	4; 45'	26,800	4,000	0	0	17	20	1.61
7	8,370	4; 45'	33,480	6,000	0	0	21	24	1.72
			126,130	10,000	0	37,000	44	96	0.83

Scenario 2 Potential Redevelopment Program

Considering the need for access to education in the Station Area, the potential of the Cote Ford property as an educational use was tested. The potential redevelopment program, based on similar educational developments, was able to accommodate approximately 300 students and a stand-alone gymnasium facility for a total of about 40,000 square feet. Additionally, other vacant properties were able to accommodate residential infill projects that totaled approximately 45 units. Parking was provided for approximately 90 vehicles.

Scenario 2 Feasibility of Redevelopment

The feasibility of the educational use is also positive, but it is conditional. The condition is that the educational user (City or Charter School) would need to be identified and committed prior to redevelopment. Similar to the market context for commercial office space, a speculative development of this kind would not work, but if a build-to-suit user can be identified then it would be feasible.

1 Cote Ford Property

820 Cummins Highway and 30 Regis Road

Scenario 3





Bldg	Bldg Floor Area (SF)	Bldg Height (Stories; FT)	Bldg Total Area (GSF)	Active Ground Floor (NSF)	Office (NSF)	Other (Educ.) (NSF)	Resident Units	Parking Provided (Spaces)	FAR
1	21,700	9; 95'	158,700	17,000	0	0	134	92	3.95
2	13,700	8; 85'	83,200	0	0	0	70	64	2.71
3	13,800	7; 75'	71,400	0	0	0	60	52	2.71
4,5,6 (EACH)	1,580	2.5, 34'	3,950	0	0	0	2	2	0.63
7	6,700	4; 45'	26,800	4,000	0	0	17	20	1.61
8	8,370	4; 45'	33,480	6,000	0	0	21	24	1.72
			385,430	27,000	0	0	308	258	2.54

Scenario 3 Potential Redevelopment Program

This scenario was intended to test the limit of physical fit to better understand financial feasibility. Active ground floor uses would be located at the rail station gateway on Cummins Highway with residential uses on upper floors and Regis Road. The total building area would be approximately 385,000 square feet (SF), with an active ground floor of retail or commercial space of about 27,000 SF. This redevelopment program includes approximately 300 residential units. It is all supported by about 250 parking spaces on site.

This potential redevelopment program does not comply with the existing zoning characteristics of the Gateway Development Area Overlay District as it exceeds the

maximum building height. Additionally, the scale of development exceeds the existing housing scale on Regis Road and the character of Mattapan more generally.

Scenario 3 Feasibility of Redevelopment

The feasibility of this potential redevelopment program is negative. While the higher redevelopment density translates to better efficiency in more rentable square feet per gross square feet and creates more retail space to cover costs, the cost of mid-rise construction is too much to overcome. Additionally, this potential program requires more structured parking and the cost premiums associated with each structured parking space are difficult to overcome. This scale of redevelopment also poses a greater market risk for the development proponent.

1 Cote Ford Property

820 Cummins Highway and 30 Regis Road

Scenario 4





Bldg	Bldg Floor Area (SF)	Bldg Height (Stories; FT)	Bldg Total Area (GSF)	Active Ground Floor (NSF)	Office (NSF)	Other (Educ.) (NSF)	Resident Units	Parking Provided (Spaces)	FAR
1	3,280	2; 30'	6,560	0	0	0	4	0	0.66
2 thru 19 (EACH)	1,580	2.5, 34'	3,950	0	0	0	2	2	0.63
20	3,280	2; 30'	6,560	0	0	0	4	0	0.66
21 thru 24 (EACH)	1,580	2.5, 34'	3,950	0	0	0	2	2	0.63
			100,020	0	0	0	66	48	0.66

DRAFT

Scenario 4 Potential Redevelopment Program

This scenario is an example of two and three family residential homes designed to fit within the context of the existing neighborhood. The total building area would consist of approximately 100,000 square feet (SF) and include approximately 65 residential units. It is all supported by about 50 parking spaces dispersed on the individual sites. No active ground floor uses are included at Cummins Highway or near the rail station entry. This potential redevelopment program is allowable within the underlying zoning characteristics.

Scenario 4 Feasibility of Redevelopment

The feasibility of this scale of development is negative. The advantages are that it does not include any structured parking. The disadvantages are that this type of develop does not attain any efficiencies in cost on a per unit basis. The costs of building structure, exterior envelope and building utilities are spread across a lower density, but the costs are relatively fixed. Also, the absence of retail contributes to a negative feasibility.

1 Cote Ford Property

820 Cummins Highway and 30 Regis Road

Conclusions

The scale of redevelopment is the key to its feasibility. The unit rent or sale price achievable in the Station Area require a careful balance of the costs and revenue. Additionally, a middle scale of redevelopment provides more opportunity to include the type of community amenities and benefits desired. The community vision is for a mixed-use redevelopment that adds positive activity near the station and Mattapan Square while respecting the scale of the existing neighborhood, providing space for community use and attaining a high level of sustainability with the development.

The results of the analysis show a narrow window of feasibility. Unless a proposed development can achieve this balance of cost and revenue, or receive external financial assistance to fill the gap in feasibility, the property will continue to remain vacant and blighted. Other institutional or educational uses that are build-to-suit, such as the Mattapan Health Center, may also be feasible as a site of this scale and transit characteristics is difficult to find in the Boston area. In the larger context of the Station Area, the Cote Ford property is important as a potential catalyst for redevelopment and investment in other locations, like vacant residential lots. A successful redevelopment project at Cote Ford would help to create a momentum for other positive change.



② Mattapan Square #1

926 Cummins Highway and other properties



Existing conditions and parcel characteristics at the Mattapan Square properties in the Station Area

	Address	Owner	Land (SF)	Bldg (GSF)
1	926 Cummins Highway	Cifrino-Mattapan Realty Corp	40,827	33,780
2	10 Fairway Street	Ten Fairway LLC	11,764	35,256
3	1633 Blue Hill Avenue	Primpas Louis V Trsts	3,825	7,500
4	1641 Blue Hill Avenue	Lee Jack	3,818	10,209
5	1651 Blue Hill Avenue	Ivanv LLC	3,009	9,000
6	1659 Blue Hill Avenue	Lombardi Joseph	3,119	9,507
7	1671 Blue Hill Avenue	Lombardi Joseph	4,078	7,882
8	Cummins Highway	Cifrino Paul J Trst	3,680	0
		TOTAL	74,120	113,134

② Mattapan Square #1

926 Cummins Highway and other properties



The block that is framed by Blue Hill Avenue, Cummins Highway and Fairway Street is one of the most visible features of Mattapan Square. The block is divided into narrow privately owned parcels at the Blue Hill Avenue frontage and a large privately owned parcel at the Cummins Highway frontage. The block currently provides active retail uses including banking, offices, apparel, supermarket and restaurant space. The existing buildings are one and two stories. A sizeable portion of the Cummins Highway and Fairway Street frontage is a surface parking lot.

Significance to Blue Hill/Cummins Station Area

This block is a gateway feature for Mattapan Square from a number of directions. It is one of the most prominent corners on arrival into Boston from the south. It is a critical segment of the pedestrian route between the Blue Hill/Cummins Highway Station and Mattapan Square. It is a critical block at the heart of the retail and active ground floor uses in Mattapan Square.

Potential Redevelopment Program

Under any circumstance the ground floor spaces with frontage on Blue Hill Avenue and Cummins Highway should remain active retail uses to provide active storefronts in the high volume heart of the Main Streets district. The hypothetical redevelopment scenario tested the feasibility of adding more uses through the addition of upper level floors and additional building frontage along Cummins Highway consistent with the strategy of adding mixed-use activity in the Station Area. The fit studies yield about 40,000 sq. ft. of active ground floor uses and over 100 residential units on upper floors. The higher density redevelopment would include portions that are 4 and 5 story buildings. The additional building massing on the upper levels would be setback from the storefront facades to retain the rhythm and pattern of storefronts that currently exist in Mattapan Square. Parking would be provided at the center of the block and structured below some of the building footprints.



Bldg	Bldg Floor Area (SF)	Bldg Height (Stories; FT)	Bldg Total Area (GSF)	Active Ground Floor (NSF)	Office (NSF)	Other (Educ.) (NSF)	Resident Units	Parking Provided (Spaces)	FAR
1	13,000	4; 46'	51,000	10,000	0	0	39	47	2.07
2	6,200	1; 17'	6,200	6,200	0	0	0	20	2.07
3	20,000	5, 55'	97,800	22,400	0	0	73	47	2.07
			155,000	38,000	0	0	112	94	2.07

Feasibility of Redevelopment

The feasibility of this redevelopment scenario was negative. The advantages of this type of redevelopment approach include its prime Mattapan Square location, the strong revenue potential that retail uses provide, and the less expensive stick-built construction of the concept. The disadvantages of this type of redevelopment approach include the high cost of land acquisition and assembly of well-located, separately owned parcels. The high cost of demolition of the active uses and an insufficient overall density to replace the value of the existing uses adds to the negative feasibility further. The parking that will be provided is expensive and likely insufficient to meet demand even at the modest proposed density of the concept.

The study of this redevelopment concept illustrates the need for substantial density to create a feasible project when it is replacing existing uses that have value. Also, it illustrates the difficulty in promoting change that includes adding density and uses where the ground floor uses that exist have disproportionately more value than upper floor uses.

Use and Design Guidelines

In general, the use and design guidelines are the same for the existing buildings or proposed future buildings. The critical properties with frontage on Blue Hill Avenue and Cummins Highway must have an active ground floor use that is directly oriented to and addressing the street. The active ground floor should have a transparent storefront facade that contributes to an active and vital Main Street whether the store is opened or closed. Upper floor uses should be commercial use that supports activity in Mattapan Square or residential use that adds resident support to the businesses in the district.

The two-story scale of Mattapan Square should be reinforced through building setbacks and articulation of the facade to minimize the impact of upper levels above two stories. Parking areas should be concealed from Blue Hill Avenue and Cummins Highway and located at the rear or center of the block with landscape buffers at its edges.

3 Mattapan Square #2

Fairway Street, 1595 Blue Hill Ave. and others



Existing conditions and parcel characteristics at the Mattapan Square properties in the Station Area

	Address	Owner	Land (SF)	Bldg (GSF)
1	Fairway Street	City of Boston	14,956	0
2	1595 Blue Hill Avenue	Fifteen-95-1609 Blue Hill Av	61,296	60,968
3	Fairway Street	S-BNK Mattapan Blue LLC	18,093	0
4	1613 Blue Hill Avenue	A Hirsch Realty LLC	6,967	13,400
5	1617 Blue Hill Avenue	S-BNK Mattapan BLE LLC	6,875	12,100
6	1589 Blue Hill Avenue	In Joon Shik TS	7,051	10,574
		TOTAL	115,238	97,042



3 Mattapan Square #2

Fairway Street, 1595 Blue Hill Ave. and others



Bldg	Bldg Floor Area (SF)	Bldg Height (Stories; FT)	Bldg Total Area (GSF)	Active Ground Floor (NSF)	Office (NSF)	Other (Educ.) (NSF)	Resident Units	Parking Provided (Spaces)	FAR
1	7,700	4; 47'	30,200	4,900	0	0	12	20	1.05
2	18,000	5; 65'	91,900	41,100	33,900	0	0	112	1.05
			122,100	46,000	33,900	0	12	132	1.05

The block north of Fairway Street in Mattapan Square with frontage at Blue Hill Avenue and Cummins Highway is another critical location in the district. Currently, the frontage at Blue Hill Avenue is active, but the center and rear of the site is all surface parking. The block is divided into (5) parcels that are privately owned and (1) parking lot that is City-owned. The current uses include retail, convenience services, and offices.

Significance to Blue Hill/Cummins Station Area

Historically, this block was the site of the Oriental Theatre. The Oriental was a themed movie house that operated for nearly 50 years after opening in 1929. The building is currently the Capitol Electric Supply Company. As part of the community visioning process, many community members expressed the desire for a cultural or entertainment anchor in Mattapan Square. This historic structure may provide an opportunity

3 Mattapan Square #2

Fairway Street, 1595 Blue Hill Ave. and others



Bldg	Bldg Floor Area (SF)	Bldg Height (Stories; FT)	Bldg Total Area (GSF)	Active Ground Floor (NSF)	Office (NSF)	Other (Educ.) (NSF)	Resident Units	Parking Provided (Spaces)	FAR
1	7,700	4; 47'	30,200	4,900	0	0	24	29	1.23
2	22,000	5; 65'	112,000	19,800	0	0	92	159	1.23
			142,200	24,827	0	0	116	188	1.23

for reuse in the future. Additionally, the block adds important frontage activity to both Blue Hill Avenue and Cummins Highway.

Potential Redevelopment Program

The potential redevelopment concepts for the block were tested with two major approaches. The first was to include reusing the Oriental Theatre as an entertainment and cultural venue, a community theatre for Mattapan.

The second was to remove the Oriental Theatre structure to provide more site area for redevelopment and interior of the block parking. Both scenarios would maintain the number of parking spaces to be displaced as part of the reuse of the parking lot.

The first approach builds up active ground floor uses at Blue Hill Avenue and Cummins Highway around the revitalized Oriental Theatre. This includes about 45,000



Square Feet of ground floor space. Additionally, building from its adjacency to the Mattapan Health Center the redevelopment concept includes about 30,000 Square Feet of upper level office space and a modest 10 units of upper floor residential units. The redevelopment concept is supported by about 130 parking spaces that are provided as surface parking at the center of the block and parking underneath the footprint of the building at Cummins Highway. This maintains the (42) spaces that are currently provided in the City-owned parking lot.

The second approach removes the Oriental Theatre building and focuses redevelopment on a mixed-use retail and residential program. This includes about 25,000 Square Feet of active ground floor space and approximately 115 upper level residential units. This is all supported by a large surface parking lot that provides about 190 parking spaces while maintaining the (42) spaces that are currently provided in the City-owned parking lot.

Feasibility of Redevelopment

The feasibility of either redevelopment approach is negative. The first approach, including the revitalization of a community theatre, is a very difficult redevelopment program to make feasible and the theatre would require a large subsidy for renovation and operation. The advantages of both approaches are the prime Mattapan Square location, the strong revenue potential of retail uses in this location, and the potential for the City to write-down the cost of the publicly owned parcel of land. The disadvantages include a high cost of acquisition and assembly of land, a high demolition cost, a high rehab cost (if the theatre is included), an insufficient additional density to overcome the value of the existing productive uses and insufficient parking provided to meet demand.

The two scenarios illustrate the need for substantial density where existing improvements have value and

the difficulty of promoting change where ground floor uses have disproportionately more value than upper floor uses. In the case of the reuse of the theatre, it also illustrates the difficulty of private sector redevelopment to provide non-revenue producing uses.

Use and Design Guidelines

In general, the use and design guidelines are the same for the existing buildings or proposed future buildings. The critical properties with frontage on Blue Hill Avenue and Cummins Highway must have an active ground floor use that is directly oriented to and addressing the street. The active ground floor should have a transparent storefront facade that contributes to an active and vital Main Street whether the store is opened or closed. Upper floor uses should be commercial use that supports activity in Mattapan Square or residential use that adds resident support to the businesses in the district.

The predominant two-story scale of Mattapan should be reinforced through building stepbacks and articulation of the facade to minimize the impact of upper levels above two stories. Parking areas should be concealed from Blue Hill Avenue and Cummins Highway and located at the rear or center of the block with landscape buffers at its edges.

If a community theatre or entertainment destination is desired by the community this may be a great central location for such an attraction. However, the parties involved must be aware of the difficulty in providing such a community amenity and should seek public partners, subsidies and other sources of income to create a sustainable approach to a costly and potentially low revenue producing use.

4 Post Office Parking Property

459 River Street



	Address	Owner	Land (SF)	Bldg (GSF)
1	459 River Street	City of Boston	26,825	0
		TOTAL	35,900	0

The City of Boston owns a surface parking lot at 459 River Street. The parking is near to Mattapan Square and across the street from the MBTA parking lot on River Street.

Significance to Blue Hill/Cummins Station Area

This property could be the location of a modest redevelopment that would contribute positive activity to River Street and add activity near Mattapan Square. As a gateway into the district, it is not contributing to a positive image as a surface parking lot. However, it is providing parking for the district.

Potential Redevelopment Program

The redevelopment concept is proposed to add residential uses near Mattapan Square that can support business activity in the district. The redevelopment of the site maintains (42) City parking spaces and adds additional parking under the footprint of the proposed building.

Feasibility of Redevelopment

The feasibility of the redevelopment is negative due to the cost of structured parking underneath the building footprint. If the redevelopment were supported only by surface parking at the rear of the site with no structured parking the feasibility would be positive. The advantages



Bldg	Bldg Floor Area (SF)	Bldg Height (Stories; FT)	Bldg Total Area (GSF)	Active Ground Floor (NSF)	Office (NSF)	Other (Educ.) (NSF)	Resident Units	Parking Provided (Spaces)	FAR
1	9,200	4; 50'	36,600	0	0	0	38	60	1.06
			36,600	0	0	0	38	6	1.06

of the redevelopment concept include an excellent TOD location, the potential for the City to write-down the cost of the land and no demolition cost. The disadvantages from the perspective of the district is reducing the amount of available parking for Mattapan Square in exchange for more active uses.

This redevelopment approach and potential site illustrate the importance of low land and site costs, and supporting redevelopment with surface parking. It also illustrates the importance of proximity to transit and the benefit it brings to a vacant site that can support redevelopment.

Use and Design Guidelines

In a location that is not directly in the Main Street district it is not as important to provide an active ground floor use. A development program that focuses on residential uses may be more appropriate to increase the number of residents near the district. The scale of the development should be consistent with the surrounding context and contribute to building frontage and a consistent streetscape along the roadway. Parking should be provided to the rear of the property with a single access point from the primary road.



HOME

The *Home* section addresses the issues and opportunities associated with the supply of and demand for housing in the Blue Hill Ave/Cummins Highway Station Area. Strategies and recommendations focus on reinforcing the neighborhoods of the Station Area as desirable places to live and aligning the characteristics of new housing opportunities with the Community Vision.



Home

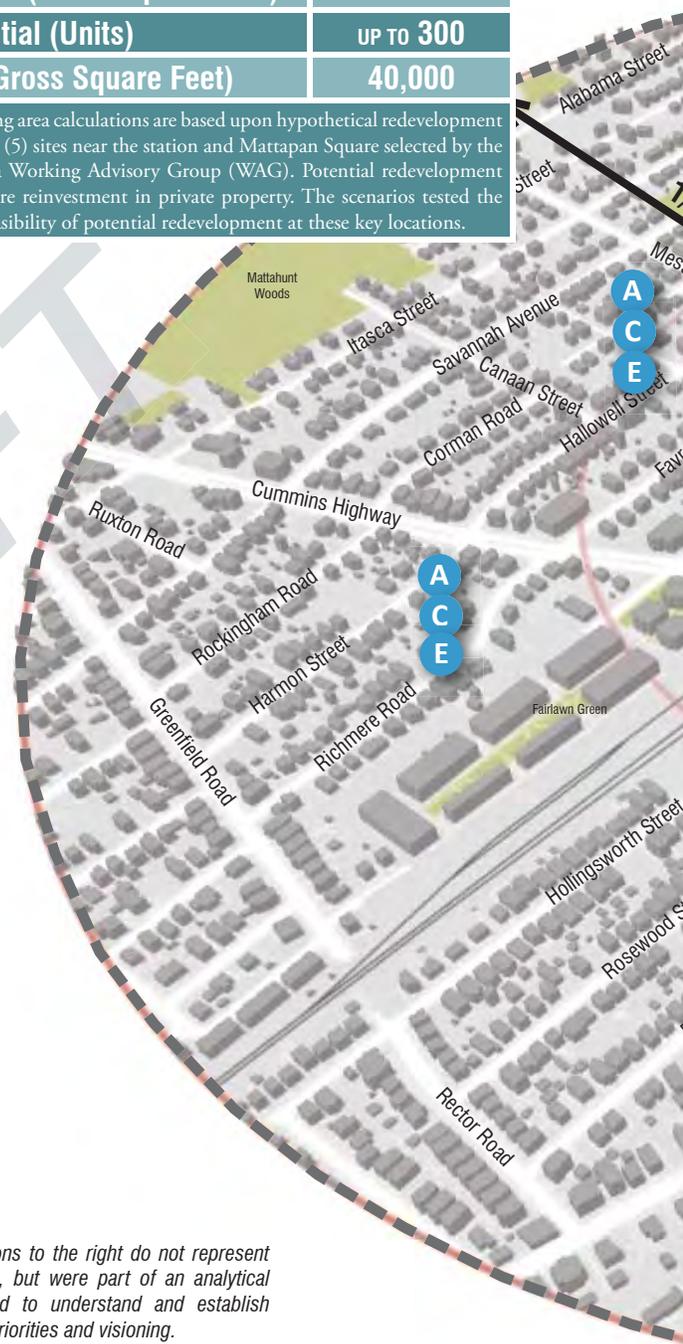
Provide new mixed-income housing opportunities near the station and stabilize existing neighborhood streets to support vitality and prosperity. The approach to housing in the Station Area focuses on the following:

- A Retain Diversity and Affordability** - The creation of new housing should expand opportunity for mixed-income diversity, homeownership and senior housing. New units should add quality housing choices that add supply as part of a strategy to retain area affordability.
- B Focus Transit-oriented Housing** - New housing units should be focused on properties adjacent to the transit stations and Main Streets district to reinforce walkability.
- C Add Neighborhood Infill** - Vacant neighborhood properties should be utilized as new housing to stabilize residential streets.
- D Expand Mixed-use Activity** - Upper level residential units should be added to the Main Street district to add vitality and economic activity.
- E Improve Housing Quality and Sustainability** - Create incentive programs for upgrading housing quality, utility infrastructure, and sustainability with energy and building envelope modifications or facade improvements.

Potential Redevelopment of Key Sites

Commercial/Light Industrial (Gross Square Feet)	17,000
Residential (Units)	UP TO 300
Retail (Gross Square Feet)	40,000

The following area calculations are based upon hypothetical redevelopment scenarios on (5) sites near the station and Mattapan Square selected by the Station Area Working Advisory Group (WAG). Potential redevelopment would require reinvestment in private property. The scenarios tested the scale and feasibility of potential redevelopment at these key locations.



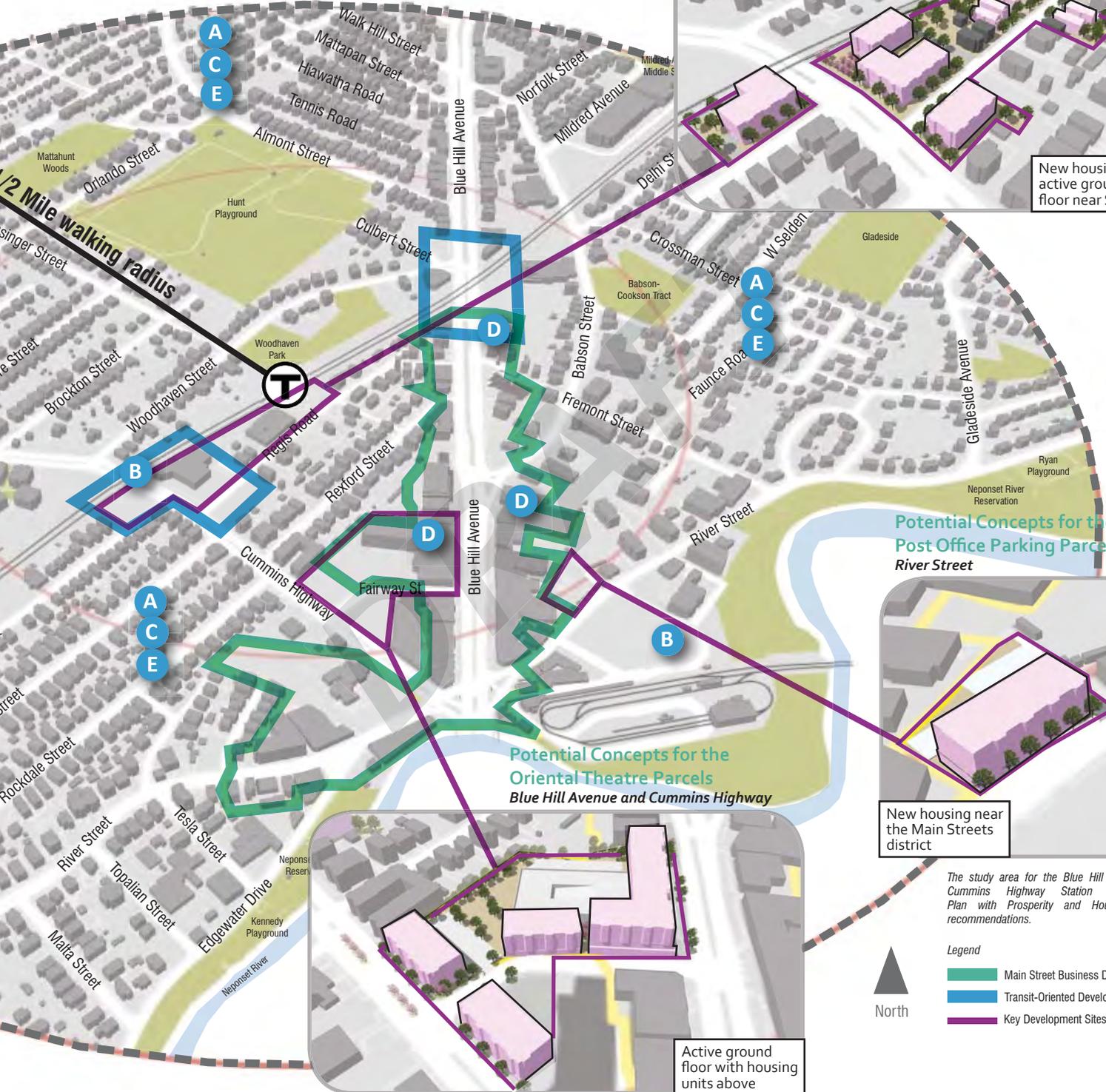
The illustrations to the right do not represent final designs, but were part of an analytical process used to understand and establish community priorities and visioning.



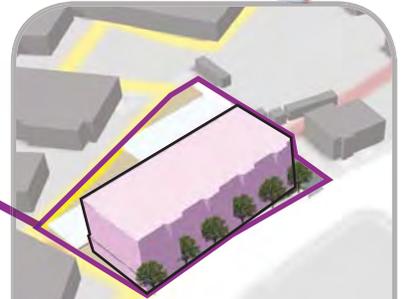
Potential Concepts for the Cote Ford Parcels
Cummins Highway and Regis Road



New housing and active ground floor near Station



Potential Concepts for the Post Office Parking Parcel
River Street



New housing near the Main Streets district

Potential Concepts for the Oriental Theatre Parcels
Blue Hill Avenue and Cummins Highway



Active ground floor with housing units above

Legend

- █ Main Street Business District
- █ Transit-Oriented Development
- █ Key Development Sites





Home

Many of the recommendations and focus of the Station Area Plan have been on the Mattapan Main Streets District and area immediately surrounding the rail station. However, it is important to reiterate that the majority of the land use within the Station Area is residential. Therefore reinforcing the Station Area as a safe and attractive place to live is critical to supporting many of the other goals and ambitions of the Community Vision.

The historic housing stock in the Station Area has been retained and reasonably well-maintained, creating attractive tree-lined blocks of homes. The Mattapan Square Main Street district provides convenience for goods and services within walking distance of many of the homes. The addition of new housing is critical to adding supply to the housing needs in this area, but also to stabilize the neighborhoods and to add new residents and activity to the Main Street district. More housing is necessary to add demand to meet the community vision of new retail uses. Many of the blocks within the Station Area neighborhoods are interrupted with vacant lots and would be an ideal location to add new residential units that are in the scale and context of surrounding neighborhoods.

Other potential housing sites are located adjacent to the rail station or Main Streets districts. These locations should be considered for mixed-use residential development that also brings an active ground floor to a critical location. All new housing in the Station Area should have certain characteristics to be consistent with the vision for the Station Area. New housing units should be mixed-income and should provide workforce housing units to retain income diversity in the neighborhoods. The approach to housing in the Blue Hill Ave/Cummins Highway Station Area focuses on the following characteristics:



A Retain Diversity and Affordability - One of the unique characteristics of the Station Area is the diversity of the community that calls it home. As the Station Area is improved over time, it is critical to the health of the community that the current community is retained and that affordability for a diverse population is maintained.

The creation of new housing should expand opportunity for mixed-income diversity, homeownership and senior housing. New units should add quality housing choices that add supply as part of a strategy to retain area affordability. Workforce housing units should be included in new development of any scale, including 3 unit infill projects. Larger redevelopment projects should include workforce housing units at a percentage that is higher than currently required by the City. Additional senior housing opportunities should be provided as part of neighborhood revitalization. As a part of all housing types, local homeownership should be reinforced, including condominiums and two-family homes.

B Focus Transit-oriented Housing - New transit-oriented housing of a density higher than the surrounding context would help the Station Area to support new amenities, vital retail and transit services that are desired by the community. This type of development and investment may not yet be feasible from a real estate market perspective, but it should be consistently located in the future. New transit-oriented housing units should be



focused on properties adjacent to the transit stations and Main Streets district to reinforce activity and walkability.

This type of redevelopment should be carefully considered in the context of the surrounding neighborhoods to maintain the character of the Mattapan community while adding investment to support the amenities desired by the community. Transit-oriented housing should be designed to fit into the context with architectural treatment and building disposition on the site that reinforces primary streets with active ground floor uses. All parking provided must be concealed within the development site. Site plan and amenities should reinforce walkability. Redevelopment projects of a transit-oriented scale should also provide community benefits for improvements to public and community gathering space.



C Add Neighborhood Infill - An inventory of currently vacant properties in the Station Area has been created, refer to the figure on the following page. The majority of vacant parcels are privately owned and evenly distributed throughout the residential streets in the Station Area. The vacant parcels are not contributing positively to a stable neighborhood and not supporting the Main Streets district. Vacant neighborhood properties should be systematically redeveloped and utilized as new housing to stabilize residential streets.

Under other circumstances, vacant parcels may also be used to increase the network of publicly accessible open space, but as highlighted in the following “Parks and Public Space” section, the Station Area has a generous proportion of existing public space. Adding new residential units to these properties would provide additional residential activity and in some cases remove blighted properties from neighborhoods.

New units should contribute to the overall strategy of retaining diversity and affordability in the Station Area. At least one housing unit per infill property should be made available as workforce housing and homeownership programs should encourage local ownership. Ownership options should also include programs to create local ownership of two and three family homes to build opportunities for local homeowner/landlords.

D Expand Mixed-use Activity - The major activity corridors in the Station Area should be reinforced with mixed-use activity to reinforce continuity in ground floor activity and walkable commercial districts. This focus of creating a continuity of active ground floors should occur on Blue Hill Avenue, Cummins Highway and River Street in and around Mattapan Square. The use above the active ground floor should be residential to bring new activity to support the retail activity.

Additionally, this type of mixed-use activity should be added to the Main Streets district. Many of vacancies in the Main Streets district are

upper level commercial spaces that are difficult to lease. One solution would be to provide a program that would assist in the conversion of this space to code compliant residential units. This type of upper level residential unit should be added to the Main Street district to add vitality and economic activity.

home improvements, facade repairs or energy retrofits and could be geographically targeted to improve the housing quality on specific residential streets in the Station Area.



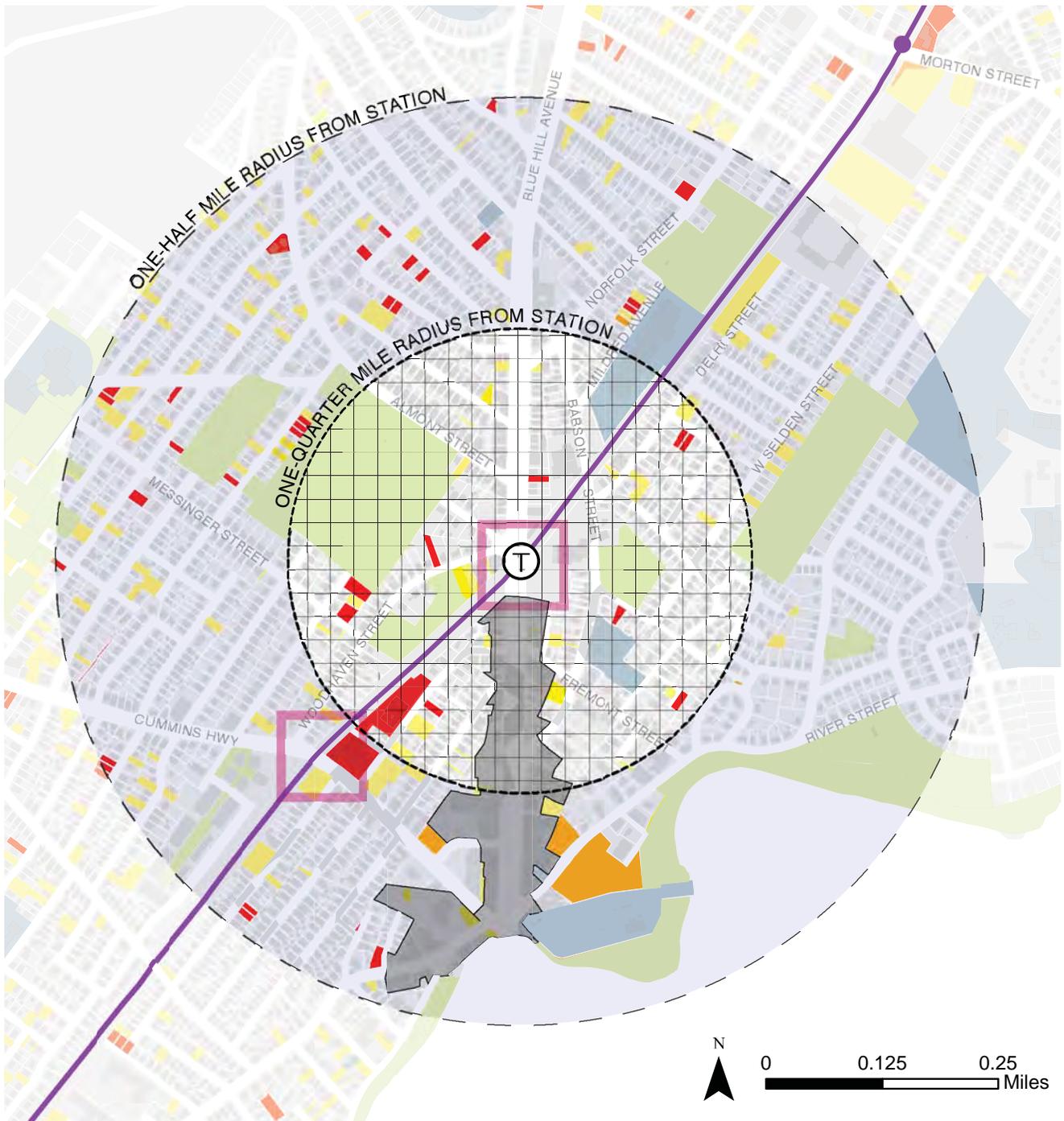
E Improve Housing Quality and Sustainability

- The final strategy of the housing component of the Station Area Plan is to reinforce the quality, energy efficiency and sustainability of the existing housing stock in the Station Area. This strategy could include the creation of neighborhood incentive programs for upgrading housing quality, utility infrastructure, and sustainability with energy and building envelope modifications or facade improvements. This type of program could be available to resident homeowners or landlords to improve the quality of housing for owners and renters.

Several such programs already exist at the State and City level to assist in home improvement such as Rebuilding Together and a variety of financial assistance programs offered by the Department of Neighborhood Development (DND). DND programs are designed for assistance to owner occupied single to four-family homes like HomeWorks HELP, Senior Home Repair, and Renovation Assistance for Triple Decker Owners. The programs offer interest free loans for specific



Source: BRA, City of Boston, MassGIS & 2011 ACS 5-Year Estimate. Prepared by The Cecil Group, June 2013.



BLUE HILL / CUMMINS HIGHWAY

EXISTING ANCHORS

- Open Space
- City or MBTA owned

POTENTIAL CHANGES

- Vacant, City-acquired by foreclosure
- Vacant, publicly-owned
- Vacant, other owner

ACTION PLAN

- Station Gateway / Brand Beacon Site
- Main Street Enhancement: *Mattapan Square Main Street District*
- Station Focus Area
- Strengthen Neighborhood



PLACE

The *Place* section deals with the physical environment of the Blue Hill Ave/Cummins Highway Station Area and how the elements of the environment contribute to a positive sense of place. Strategies and recommendations deal with the characteristics and qualities of neighborhoods and places that create desirable places to live, work, and shop.



Place

The historic and cultural narratives of Mattapan Square are diverse and strong. The Station Area's character and physical environment should reflect the longevity of the location as an important City node and crossroads:

- A Enhance Vibrancy of the Square** - Storefront, streetscape and public realm improvements should be used to improve the character and attractiveness of Mattapan Square and reinforce it as a vital center of the community.
- B Connect Vitality to the Station** - Activity and vitality of Mattapan Square should be extended on Blue Hill Avenue and Cummins Highway to the rail station entries.
- C Reinforce Family-oriented Streets** - Surrounding residential streets should be reinforced as safe and walkable places that connect neighborhoods to transit and centers of activity with continuous walks, marked crossings, and expanded street trees.
- D Preserve and Maintain Character** - Community pride must be reflected in the preservation, maintenance, appearance and general attractiveness of the physical environment and character of the Mattapan Community.





The study area for the Blue Hill Ave/ Cummins Highway Station Area Plan with Place and Getting Around recommendations.

- Legend
- Core of Vitality at Station Area
 - Key Routes to Station



Place

Place is a category of recommendations that is concerned with the character and quality of the physical environment. The physical environment is the composition of the buildings, streets, and landscape that define the look and feel of the Blue Hill Avenue/Cummins Highway Station Area. The configuration of these components can help to contribute to a positive sense of the place or can communicate negative signals about the community.

Cultivating a positive sense of place in the Station Area is very important to the vitality of the Main Street District and to reinforcing the safety and walkability of the surrounding neighborhoods. A positive sense of place also benefits the use of the rail station and attracts residents and visitors alike.

In terms of a positive, strong and memorable sense of place, the Station Area has several assets that should be highlighted. Historically, Mattapan Square has been a center of commerce and activity, a trade post for Native Americans and settlers on the Neponset, a critical crossroads in the streetcar network, and a thriving center surrounded by neighborhoods of immigrants. This legacy is important today and it has left a coherent and cohesive Main Street district and commercial center. The physical environment should reflect this rich history and reveal the deeper meaning and narrative of place.

The experience of a place is continuous, but a few key locations and moments send a lasting message about how the Station Area is perceived. For a rail passenger, the experience of place begins on the platform, up the ramp and onto Blue Hill Avenue or Cummins Highway. For many drivers, the experience of the Station Area includes Blue Hill Avenue. The critical moments in creating a memorable and positive experience is at the gateway moments of entry into the main center of activity. The physical environment should provide visual cues for attractive and stable neighborhoods with well-maintained streetscape, inviting and generous places to walk, and active and attractive storefronts and shops.

These features are the primary recommendations to enhance the sense of place in the Station Area:



- A Enhance Vibrancy of the Square** - In regard to a sense of place, a really strong center of activity can become the heart of a community. A strong place can provide a shared foundation and source of pride for the community to build other positive activity upon. For the Station Area, this center is the Mattapan Square Main Streets District. Mattapan Square is already a memorable place with a low vacancy rate for storefronts and a high amount of activity on the sidewalks and street. Targeted improvements would leverage the strengths that already exist to advance Mattapan Square as a vibrant neighborhood center.

Targeted improvements should include storefront, streetscape and public realm improvements and beautification to enhance the character and attractiveness of Mattapan Square and reinforce it as a vital center of the community. Key corners, gateway sites and locations with high visibility should be part of a first phase of improvements targeted at enhancing the visual vibrancy of Mattapan Square. Additionally, properties that are thought to have a negative impact on the sense of place should be addressed by working with the owners to make attainable improvements.

Storefront improvements can be subsidized by City of Boston programs such as Restore



Boston offered through the Office of Business Development. The Mattapan Square Main Streets program can help to facilitate the identification of improvements and connection to appropriate City programs. One minor storefront modification that would have a big impact on the perception of place would be the removal of security gates and roll-down doors that get closed during off-hours. This type of storefront treatment gives a very negative impression when not open for business.



B Connect Vitality to the Station - The positive ground floor activity and vitality that occurs in Mattapan Square should be continued down Blue Hill Avenue and Cummins Highway to the Blue Hill Ave/Cummins Highway Rail Station entries. The entries are both very close to the existing boundaries of the Main Street district. The extension of a continuous pedestrian-oriented neighborhood center to the station entry would integrate the neighborhood and transit assets.

The expanded ground floor activity should be complementary to the Main Street businesses that already exist and should likely target more resident and commuter-oriented convenience and services. It is most important to maintain the health and the strength of the core of Mattapan Square in terms of a sense of place. The extension of the activity to near the station is intended to be a part of a gateway that would draw visitors and residents into Mattapan Square from the station.



C Reinforce Family-oriented Streets - The primary street network and related commercial activity and higher traffic volume is clearly defined in the Station Area. The primary street network includes Blue Hill Avenue, Cummins Highway and River Street. The remaining streets in the street network of the Station Area are primarily residential neighborhood streets. Accordingly, the residential streets surrounding the Station Area should be reinforced as safe and walkable places that connect neighborhoods to transit and centers of activity with continuous walks, marked crossings, and expanded street trees.

One strategy to reinforce family-oriented streets is to be careful with overall traffic and circulation patterns traveling through the Station Area. Unintentionally, pushing traffic to use a residential street as a cut-through or bypass would be an unintended mistake of other efforts and should be avoided. Traffic calming, landscape and safe pedestrian routes are critical on residential streets that may attract more traffic such as Almont Street, Norfolk Street, and Babson Street.

D Preserve and Maintain Character - Community pride must be reflected in the preservation, maintenance, appearance and general attractiveness of the physical environment and character of the Mattapan Community. As promoted by Mattapan United, the Mattapan community hopes to be a place where all residents are proud to live and identify Mattapan as home. Building a shared

community pride in a place is significant in bringing people together. It is important that with every improvement and investment the community can continue to recognize itself and build its shared sense of pride.

This requires a balance of preservation, maintenance and investment that has been successfully implemented with new projects such as the Mattapan Branch Library and the Mattapan Health Center. Other Station Area anchors such as the Jubilee Church and St. Angela's provide visual landmarks that define the character of the physical environment of Mattapan. The residential streets with two and three family homes, on-street parking and sidewalks punctuated by older trees is a major contributor to the visual character of the community as a residential and family-oriented neighborhood. Just as it is important not to displace the residents, businesses and culture that form the heart of the current community, it is equally important to be considerate of the existing built environment, patterns of use, and the landmarks that contribute to a sense of place in Mattapan.





PROSPERITY



HOME



PLACE



GETTING AROUND



PARKS AND PUBLIC SPACE



QUALITY OF LIFE

DRAFT



GETTING AROUND

The *Getting Around* section focuses on issues and opportunities related to transportation in the Blue Hill Avenue/Cummins Highway Station Area. Strategies and recommendations focus on improving all mobility options in and around the Station Area.

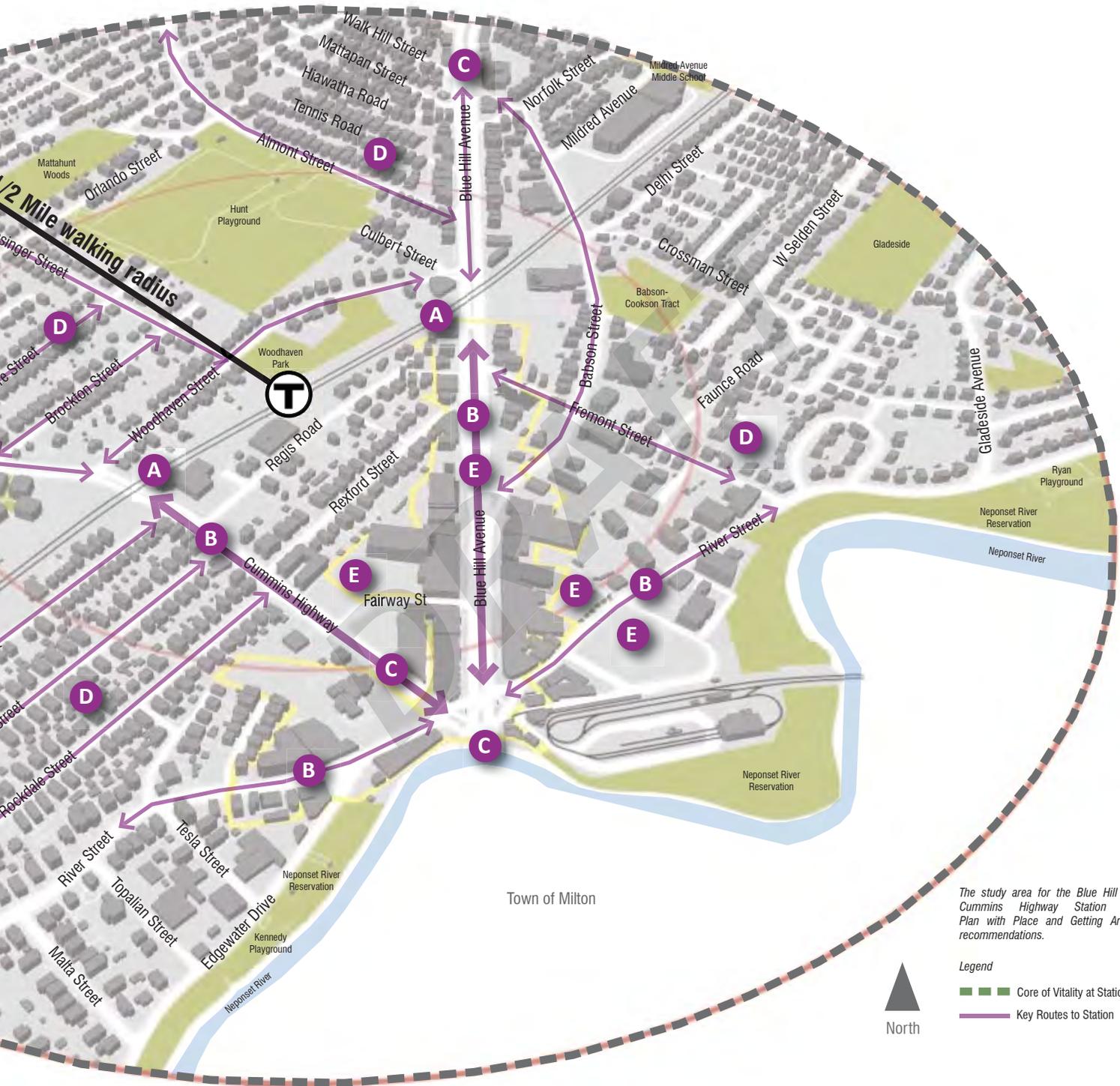


Getting Around

The new rail station at Blue Hill Avenue/Cummins Highway would enhance connections to downtown. The following approaches enhance connection and circulation within the Station Area for all modes of transportation and leverage the new transit investment:

- A Enhance Station Entries** - Improve pedestrian crossings near stations with considerations for bus transfers and vehicle pick-up and drop-off.
- B Reinforce Public Realm Connections** - Enhance public realm between Mattapan Square and station entries.
- C Reduce Congestion and Improve Circulation** - Develop an improvement plan with funding for future study for vehicular and pedestrian circulation improvements at the primary intersection of Mattapan Square.
- D Increase Neighborhood Walkability** - Add pedestrian crossings, curb extensions, and wider sidewalks at primary residential streets leading to transit locations.
- E Manage Parking** - Optimize convenient parking for Mattapan Square, particularly on Blue Hill Avenue, increase utilization and efficiency of off-street parking lots.





The study area for the Blue Hill Ave/ Cummins Highway Station Area Plan with Place and Getting Around recommendations.

- Legend
- Core of Vitality at Station Area
 - Key Routes to Station





Getting Around

Getting Around is a category of recommendations focused on improving mobility and transportation options in the Blue Hill Ave/Cummins Highway Station Area. This set of recommendations examines improvements across all modes of transportation (rail transit, walking, bus transit, bicycling and driving). It also examines the relationship of each form of travel to the rail station entries to improve access and connectivity to the Fairmount Indigo line. The Station Area Plan focuses on the transportation options and network of streets located in the study area within a 1/2 mile radius of the rail station.

The public street network can be improved for all modes of transportation to emphasize a sense of place, reinforce walkability, increase bike and vehicle safety and reduce congestion for buses and cars. A compact and walkable community supports transit. In 2009, the City of Boston launched a Complete Streets Initiative to provide both great public spaces and sustainable transportation networks (www.bostoncompletestreets.org). A “Complete Street” is an approach to the allocation and use of the public realm to meet the needs of all users of the street. This approach is consistent with the considerations of this study to optimize mobility within the Station Area for all.

Across each mode of transportation, key recommendations are intended to be consistent with a Complete Streets approach to improve connectivity and mobility:

- **Rail**—A key feature to better integrate rail connections is the concept of a “mobility hub” located adjacent to the station. A mobility hub enhances connectivity at the transit station by providing seamless access to the rail system, reinforcing the rail station as an important gateway into Mattapan and adding a convenient transfer point for other modes of travel. As rail service on the Fairmount Indigo line continues to improve, in frequency and integration

with the subway system, the mobility hub and the emphasis it places on the Station Area will benefit residents, businesses and visitors.

- **Pedestrian** – A safe and walkable environment for pedestrians is critical for connecting the rail station, the Main Street district, and the surrounding neighborhoods. Pedestrian connections are particularly important to fulfill Mattapan Square’s ambitions as a walkable commercial center that is a destination for visitors and surrounding neighborhoods. Walking is combined with nearly every other form of transportation and comprises at least a portion of any trip. The pedestrian environment should be safe, attractive, and accessible.
- **Bus Transit** – Mattapan Square represents a hub of transit options, particularly for the confluence of bus lines. The bus stop locations nearest to the Blue Hill Ave/Cummins Highway Station should be integrated with a mobility hub. The mobility hub would provide a plaza and streetscape treatment to create a physical environment that reinforces easy and convenient transfers between rail and bus. Additionally, bus service and schedules should be optimized to allow for conveniently timed transfers.
- **Vehicular** – Many of the issues highlighted for vehicles include congestion, issues with the main intersection in Mattapan Square and limited parking. Roadway improvements can improve congestion and traffic flow. Vehicular patterns must balance city-wide travel routes with local safety and walkability. The walkable commercial core of Mattapan Square should be marked with recognizable gateways to assist in managing vehicular speeds while enhancing access to parking. Vehicular pick-up and drop-off areas should be integrated with the Mobility Hub near the rail station.
- **Bicycle** – Bicycle accommodations that link the station to existing bicycle network should be added consistent with the Boston Bikes Network with a focus on Blue Hill Avenue, Cummins Highway and the Neponset Greenway. Bicycle amenities should be



provided at the rail station including bicycle racks and Hubway stations. In addition bicycle amenities should provide adequate short- and long-term bicycle parking facilities at the station.

Across improvements to each of the modes of travel, a few areas of emphasis emerged with the community to improve mobility for the Station Area. These features are the primary recommendations to improve getting around the Blue Hill/Cummins Highway Station Area:



A Enhance Station Entries - At the time of the writing of this report, the Blue Hill/Cummins Highway Station was at the 60% design level. Construction completion is anticipated in 2015 or later. The design of the station is for a center-island high level platform with a canopy. The station access will occur via accessible and covered ramps from street level at Cummins Highway and Blue Hill Avenue. The integration of the station entries at the street level into busy street frontage conditions at Blue Hill Avenue and Cummins Highway is an important aspect of public realm improvement in the Station Area.

At Blue Hill Avenue, improved pedestrian crossings near stations and Woodhaven Street and a mid-block crossing to the south between Woodhaven Street and Regis Road would enhance pedestrian access to the station entry. The station entry on Blue Hill Avenue must also integrate bus stops north and south bound to reinforce transfers. Vehicular

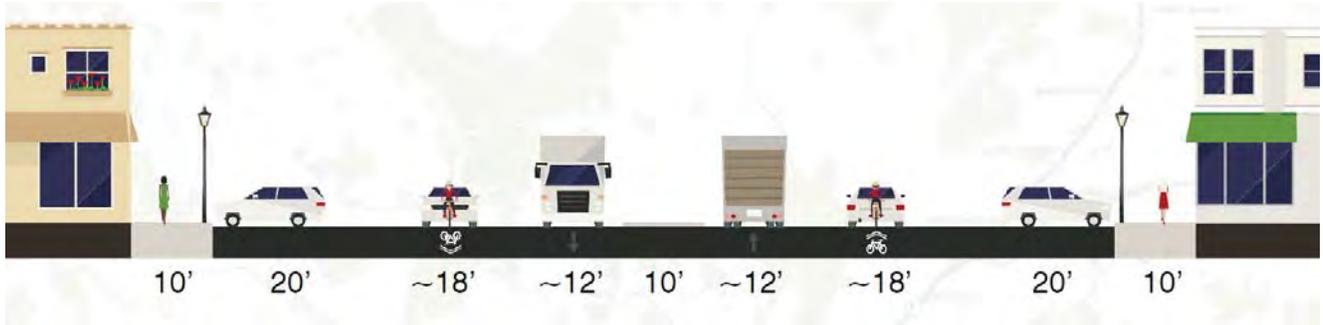
pick-up and drop-off is difficult to accommodate at the Blue Hill Avenue entry, particularly with the high demand for northbound left turns onto Culbert or Woodhaven Street. Additionally, the overpass has a number of heavy utility lines that need to be coordinated with access and station entries.

At the Cummins Highway entry, opportunities exist for improving pedestrian crossings near the entry and providing pedestrian refuge with center island medians. The potential to consolidate bus stops on Cummins Highway may provide opportunities along with the frontage of the Cote Ford redevelopment site to provide a modest vehicular pick-up and drop-off area. Curb cut and business access on Cummins Highway toward Mattapan Square should be consolidated to side streets and improved to favor continuity of the pedestrian environment.



B Reinforce Public Realm Connections - Enhancing the public realm between Mattapan Square and the station entries is important to leverage the transit investment. Public realm improvements on the primary roads, Blue Hill Avenue, Cummins Highway and River Street, would have the most impact on improving circulation and enhancing the pedestrian environment in the Station Area.

Blue Hill Avenue

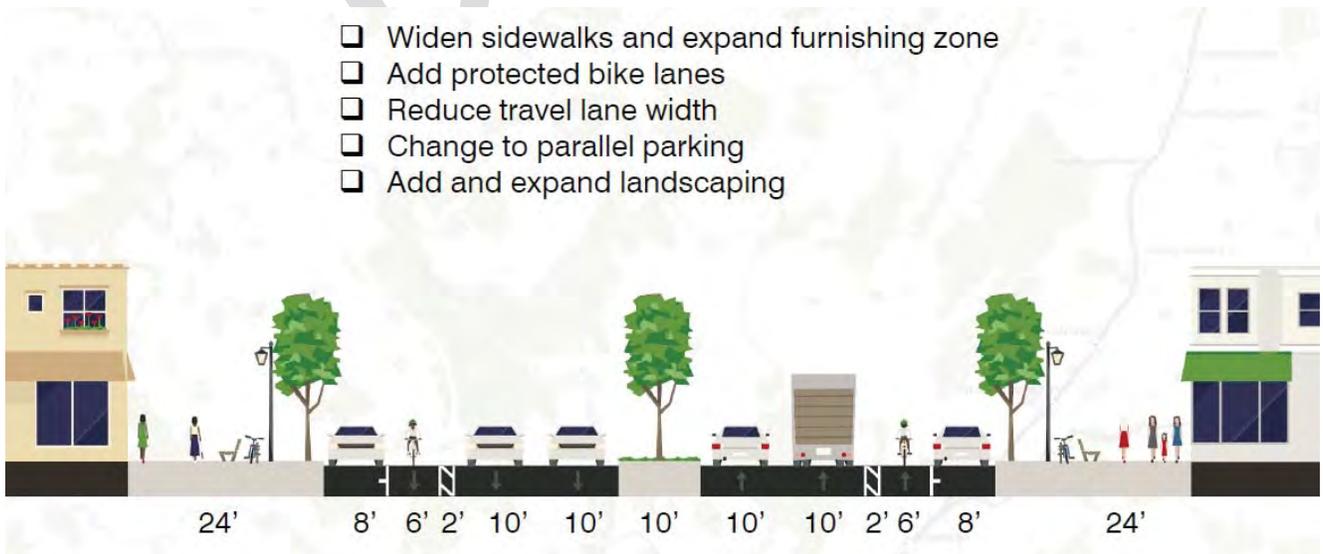


In the Complete Streets typology, Blue Hill Avenue is a Neighborhood Main Street. A Neighborhood Main Street is the center of the neighborhood's economy, hub for bus routes and destination walking and biking trip, provides short term parking and loading access for local businesses and should prioritize walking, bicycling and transit.

The community priorities and goals for public realm improvement on Blue Hill Avenue include:

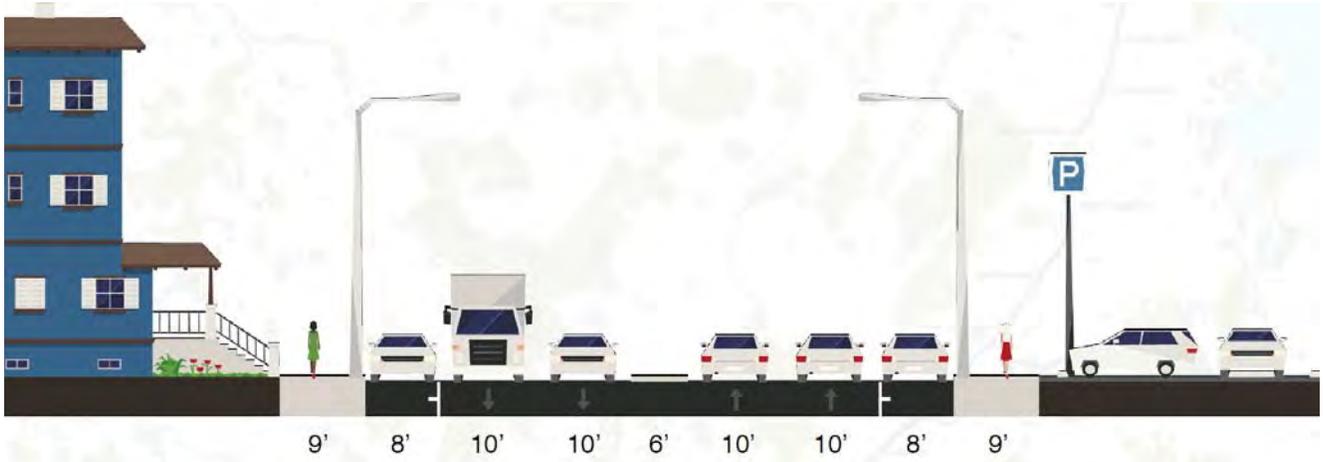
- Reinforce a walkable Main Street atmosphere
- Reinforce a sense of place through the landscape, streetscape and intersection/crossing treatments
- Improve pedestrian safety - sidewalk width, curb cuts, crossings, lighting, lights/signalized crossings
- Visually reduce the roadway width
- Improve bicycle connections and safety
- Don't impede the flow of traffic
- Don't reduce the number of parking spaces in front of businesses

- Widen sidewalks and expand furnishing zone
- Add protected bike lanes
- Reduce travel lane width
- Change to parallel parking
- Add and expand landscaping





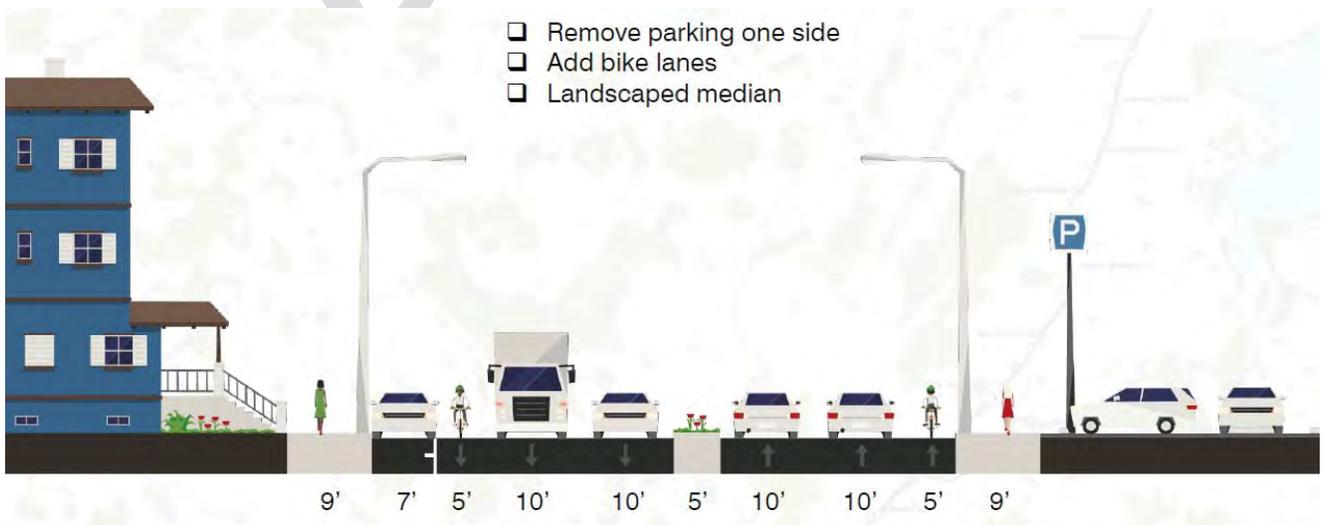
Cummins Highway



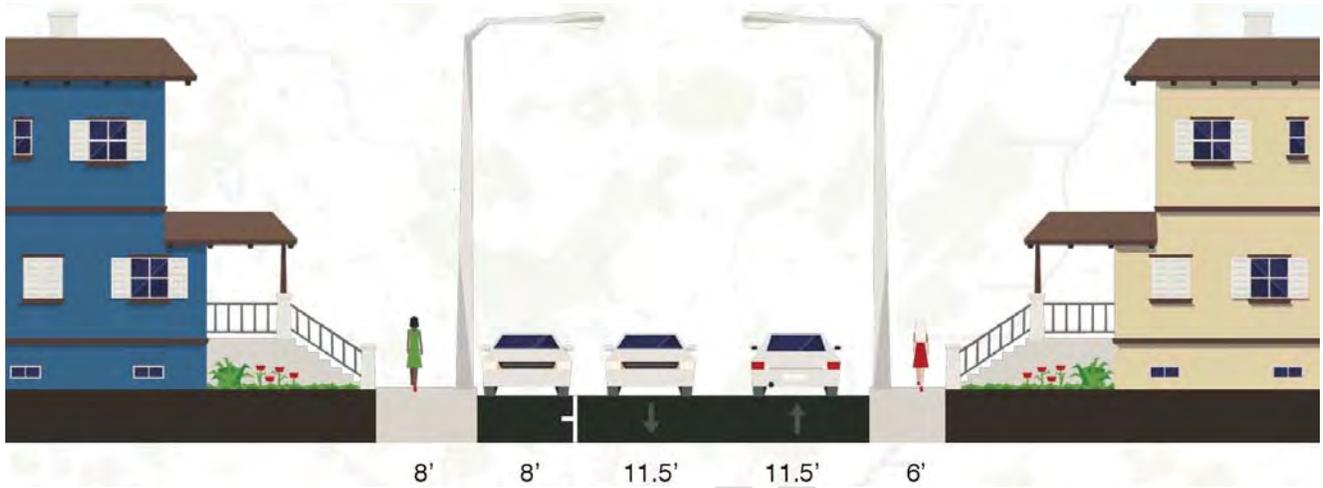
In the Complete Streets typology, Cummins Highway is a Neighborhood Connector. A Neighborhood Connector is a through street that provides continuous walking, bicycle and bus routes, it meets the needs of people passing through but must be balanced with the needs of those living on the street, and the design should consider efficient movement of vehicles and transit, comfortable bike and pedestrian facilities and safe intersection crossings.

The community priorities and goals for public realm improvement on Cummins Highway include:

- Improving the pedestrian connection between Mattapan Square and the Station entry
- Improving pedestrian safety - sidewalk width, reducing and consolidating curb cuts and improving crossing
- Visually reduce roadway width
- Improve bicycle connections and safety



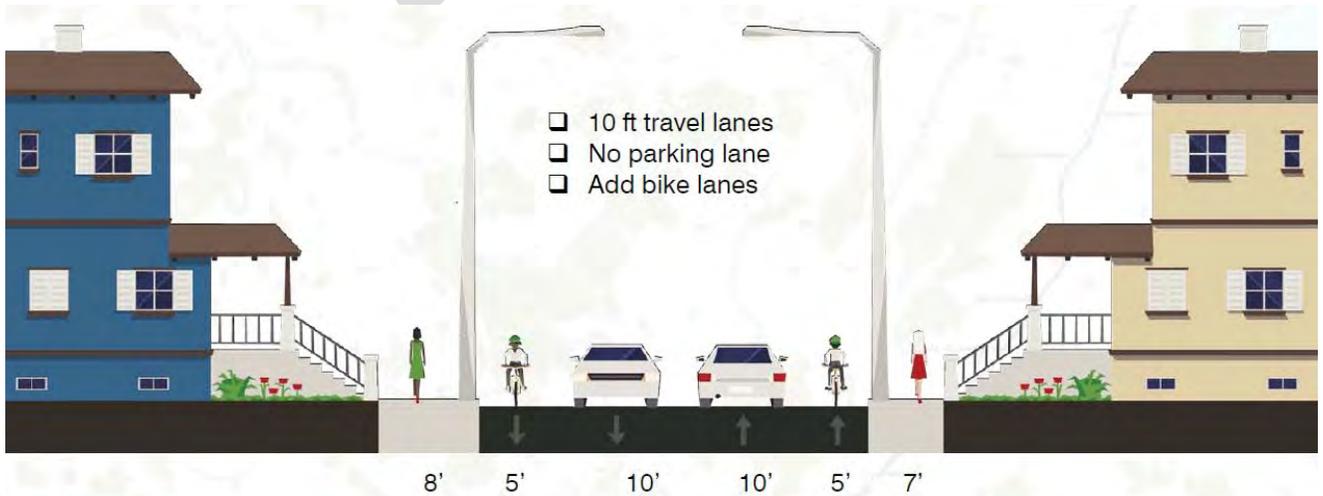
River Street



In the Complete Streets typology, River Street is a Neighborhood Connector. A Neighborhood Connector is a through street that provides continuous walking, bicycle and bus routes, it meets the needs of people passing through but must be balanced with the needs of those living on the street, and the design should consider efficient movement of vehicles and transit, comfortable bike and pedestrian facilities and safe intersection crossings.

The community priorities and goals for public realm improvement on River Street include:

- Enhance connections to the Neponset River
- Reinforce connections to Ryan Park
- Improve pedestrian safety - increase sidewalk width, add pedestrian crossings
- Improve bicycle safety





C Reduce Congestion and Improve Circulation

- Develop an improvement plan with funding for future study for vehicular and pedestrian circulation improvements at the primary intersection of Mattapan Square with a focus on Blue Hill Avenue.

A major component in the Station Area that must be addressed to impact congestion and improve circulation is the intersection of Blue Hill Avenue, Cummins Highway and River Street. The intersection is complicated by its geometry, complex travel movements and heavy traffic

volume. The following recommendations present a short, mid, and long term approach to improving a very complex intersection.

Short-Term:

- Install pedestrian signals with countdown displays and accessible pedestrian signal push button assemblies to replace existing equipment (where applicable).
- Install tactile strips at pedestrian ramps that currently do not have them.
- Install a crosswalk between the splitter islands on the east side of the intersection (near River Street and the Mattapan T Station), connecting existing pedestrian ramps.
- Evaluate the potential for traffic signal timing adjustments to reduce congestion and improve pedestrian safety.
- Observe existing pedestrian activities to determine if additional desire lines exist, or if existing pedestrian crosswalks are underutilized. The results of this task will inform/guide the mid-term strategies listed below.

- Perform an origin-destination study for traffic movements within Mattapan Square, particularly for movements that are currently prohibited at the intersection (such as left turns and through movements from River Street). The results of this study will inform/guide the long-term strategies listed below.

Mid-Term:

- Evaluate the feasibility of modified traffic signal phasing and geometric changes to reduce congestion such as allowing left turns from Cummins Highway to Blue Hill Avenue, and changes to lanes for the Blue Hill Avenue northbound approach.
- Evaluate the feasibility of installing a crosswalk across the Blue Hill Avenue northbound approach, in terms of physical impacts and impacts to operations. This ties into the pedestrian observations noted earlier, and may also include studying the feasibility of installing additional crossings.
- Coordinate jurisdictional agencies (City of Boston, DCR, Town of Milton) to evaluate the benefits and impacts of potential geometric changes to the roadways and traffic configurations.

Long-Term:

- Perform a feasibility study and analysis to investigate the potential for design alternatives for the Mattapan Square (such as lane reductions or consolidation of splitter islands), in terms of physical impacts and impacts to operations and multi-modal access.
- Work with the MBTA to evaluate the possibility of modifying access and egress points at the Mattapan MBTA Station busway to ease vehicular congestion in Mattapan Square.
- Evaluate the feasibility of either re-routing River Street to intersect with Cummins Highway (potentially at Fairway Street), or closing Cummins Highway between Mattapan Square and Fairway Street (re-directing Cummins Highway traffic to

the Blue Hill Avenue/Fairway Street intersection). Either option would eliminate one of the two intersection approaches east of Blue Hill Avenue, which may be beneficial to traffic operations at Mattapan Square.



D Increase Neighborhood Walkability - Reinforcing Station Area and neighborhood walkability is critical to offering alternatives to driving. Several issues and opportunities in the pedestrian network around the rail station have been identified. The sidewalks are generally in good condition, but the width varies. Sidewalk widths should be made as consistent and generous as possible within existing right-of-ways. The sidewalks on the railroad overpass are in poor condition. The station entries should be integrated and improved with public realm improvements at Blue Hill Avenue and Cummins Highway. Blue Hill Avenue offers pedestrian refuges at the median, but has some delay for crossing with the signal.

The walkability of the Station Area could be further improved by adding pedestrian crossings at all intersections and at mid-block crossings where near a station entry. Adding curb extensions to intersections to shorten the crossing distance for pedestrians and reduce turning speeds for vehicles. Curb cuts for businesses negatively impact pedestrian routes and could be consolidated or reduced.

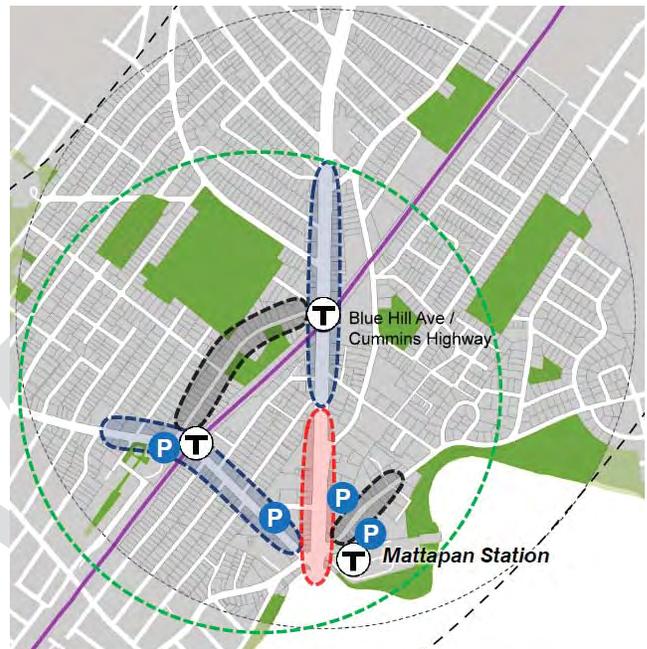


E Manage Parking - Optimize convenient parking for Mattapan Square, particularly on Blue Hill Avenue, increase utilization and efficiency of off-street parking lots. Parking is an important component of any commercial and retail district. Parking and circulation in Mattapan Square are complicated by the high volume of traffic on Blue Hill Avenue and the complexity of the intersection at Blue Hill Avenue, Cummins Highway and River Street. Additionally, the parking needs of the retail district are immediately adjacent to the parking needs of residential neighborhoods and the parking needs of transit facilities.

The first step of implementing an appropriate parking management plan in the Station Area is to perform a complete parking utilization analysis. This type of analysis will confirm where parking is underused, where capacity issues exist and provide a sound basis for advancing a strategy to align parking demand with parking supply and location. A generalized approach to parking management is depicted in the diagram and calls for the following:

- Encourage turnover of prime spaces on Blue Hill Avenue to support the business district
- Encourage long-term parking in off-street lots and improve pedestrian connections to the center of activity on Blue Hill Avenue
- Promote shared parking among uses wherever possible

- Encourage a “park once” and walk to destination strategy with enhanced parking and destination wayfinding
- Maximize on-street parking available through design of curbs and roadway



Potential Parking Zones

- Prioritize customer parking
- Encourage turnover of spaces
- Coordinate with abutters to manage curb space near MBTA stations
- Protect resident parking
- Long-term parking (public lots) priced to encourage:
 - All day parking for employees
 - Parking over 2 hours
 - Strengthen pedestrian connections & wayfinding



PARKS AND PUBLIC SPACE

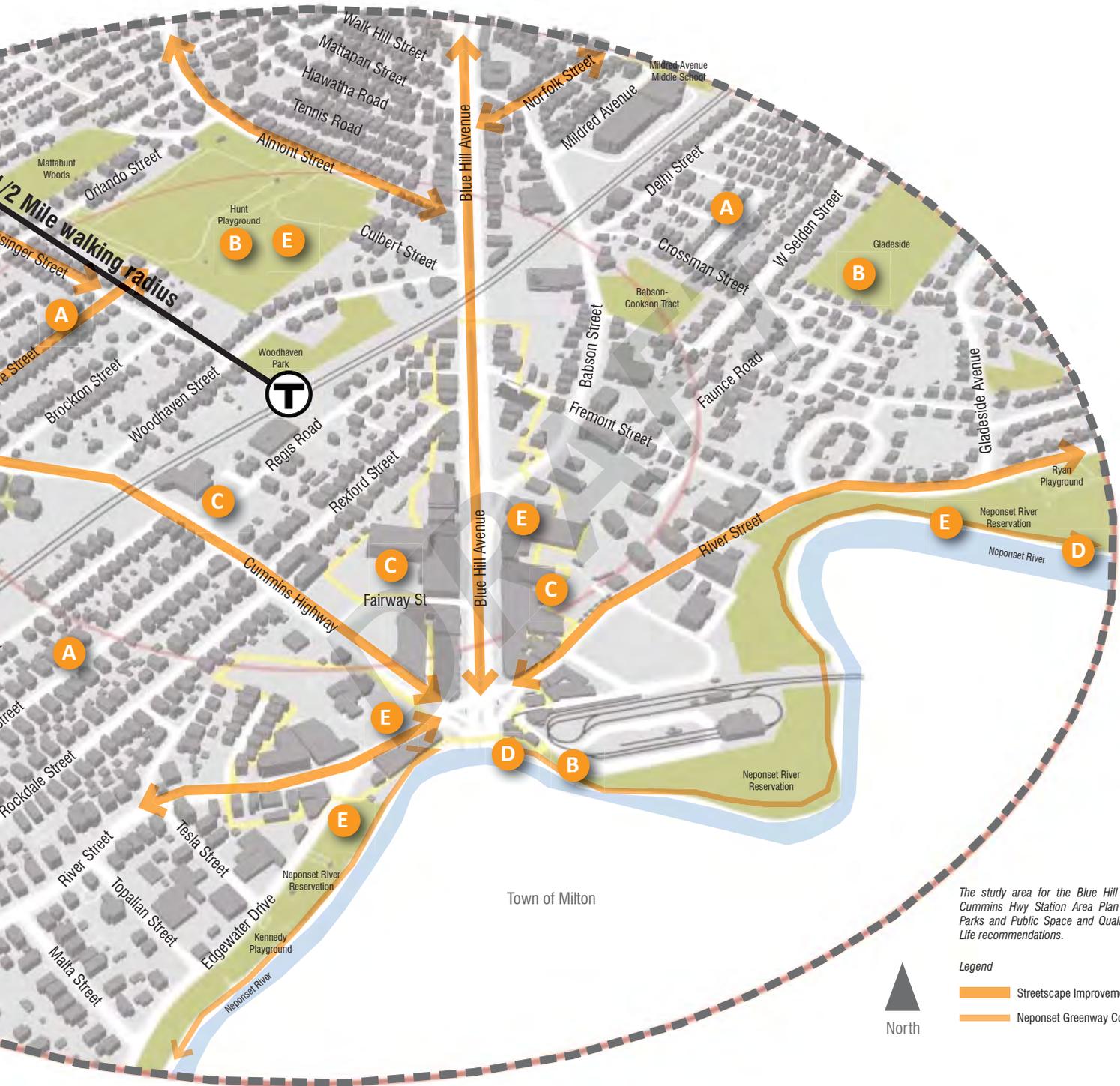


Parks and Public Space

Publicly accessible open space is well-distributed around the Station Area (relative to other neighborhood averages). Rather than add new open spaces, access, use and safety of existing resources should be enhanced. The following approaches have been identified to improve neighborhood open space amenities:

- A Enhance Pedestrian Access and Walkability** - Add pedestrian crossings, curb extensions, and other amenities at primary residential streets leading to parks and public space.
- B Improve Lighting and Safety** - Parks and public spaces should be enhanced with additional lighting and maintenance to reinforce visibility and safety.
- C Create Development Requirements** - New development should require considerations for improvements to parks, streetscape, infrastructure or new open space.
- D Expand Neponset River Access** - Public access to the Neponset River and future Neponset Greenway for bicyclists and water recreation should be enhanced at Mattapan Square.
- E Reinforce Family-Oriented/Youth Activity** - Recreation activities, playing fields and playgrounds should be reinforced with equipment to emphasize families and youth.





The study area for the Blue Hill Ave/ Cummins Hwy Station Area Plan with Parks and Public Space and Quality of Life recommendations.

- Legend
- Streetscape Improvements
 - Neponset Greenway Concept Plan





Parks/Public Space

The City of Boston has approximately 15% of its total land area as a percentage of land that is publicly accessible open space. The Blue Hill Avenue/Cummins Highway Station Area provides more publicly accessible open space than this City-wide average. As redevelopment occurs the preservation and creation of open space to retain this community resource is the same proportion is important. A portion of the vacant lots within the Station Area that may presently be used as communal open space, may not be dedicated open spaces and could disappear if redeveloped.

Public space in the Station Area fulfills several important functions for the surrounding neighborhoods by providing a community recreation resource, gathering place, green space, amenity and urban agriculture sites. New public spaces should fill in the gaps in the existing network of resources and complement broader patterns of open space networks in the City. New public space resources should not duplicate existing amenities, but provide a more comprehensive network of amenities that are responsive to the community's needs. The following approaches have been identified to improve neighborhood access to strategically located open space amenities:

- A Enhance Pedestrian Access and Walkability -** The existing open spaces are relatively large and well distributed throughout the Station Area neighborhoods. A shared community issue with the existing open spaces was difficulty with access to the amenity. The first strategy to improve Station Area open space is to improve safe pedestrian access to the primary open spaces.

A network of primary residential streets should provide a well-marked and well-lit route to primary public spaces in the Station Area. This network should include streets such as Almont



Street, Favre Street, Norfolk Street. Along these routes the pedestrian environment should be improved by adding pedestrian crossings, curb extensions, lighting, benches and other amenities to enhance pedestrian access.

- B Improve Lighting and Safety -** One of the most difficult issues with parks and public space in the Station Area is the perception and reality of public safety. Many community members have referenced safety, crime and security as one of the main issues with the parks and public space today. Several factors contribute to the perception of safety in the Station Area and many are addressed directly by this plan. One aspect of the public spaces that can contribute to the sense of safety and security is the lighting.

Lighting in parks should be relatively uniform and avoid dark areas. Light trespass onto adjacent properties or light pollution upward into the sky





should be minimized. Active areas of the parks should maintain a minimum lighting level of (1) foot-candle of light to provide illumination for safety purposes. The contrast between light areas and dark areas should be minimized as much as possible. Athletic activity areas should be designed with lighting for the purposes of the activity, but should minimize glare and light-spill into adjacent areas and properties.

Parks and public spaces should be enhanced with additional feature and focused lighting to reinforce visibility. Lighting maintenance is important to retain a safe and well-lit parking environment.



C Create Development Requirements - As new investment and redevelopment occur in the Station Area potential impacts to the community should be offset by amenities and improvements that would maintain or improve the quality of life in the Station Area. New development should require considerations for improvements to existing parks, streetscape, and infrastructure. Improvements to existing parks and public spaces may include enhanced lighting, enhanced park equipment and amenities (playgrounds, tot lots, dog parks). New publicly accessible open space or community gathering space is another amenity that would be desirable to the community. A lack of community gathering space was a frequent issue highlighted by the residents that could be

a valuable community benefit integrated into a future development project.



D Expand Neponset River Access - Among the large public space resources the Station Area has to offer, it features a very unique public space and recreation access opportunity in its adjacency to the Neponset River. Public access to the Neponset River and future Neponset Greenway for bicyclists and water recreation should be enhanced as a feature at Mattapan Square and a highlight of the Station Area.

The Neponset River is a historic waterway with a rich history in Boston and the surrounding communities as a trading post, a site of industrial activity and most recently as a recreation resource. The Neponset River Greenway is designed to connect eleven urban wilds through Hyde Park, Mattapan, Dorchester and the Town of Milton. The Greenway will be a ten mile multi-use trail from the mouth of the river to the Fowl Meadows and Blue Hills Reservation and connecting out to the Boston Harbor. While this is an immense network for recreational use, it is important that the Greenway's presence be reinforced locally in Mattapan Square.

It is important for the Station Area to provide a gateway into this immense network of open spaces that connects directly to Mattapan Square. A new public park near the bridge at Blue Hill

Avenue could provide an access point for bicycles and pedestrians as well as recreational and boating equipment rentals. The connection to the Neponset is valuable for residents, but also valuable for local businesses. If visible and well connected, Mattapan Square could become a resource for food and convenience shopping for other recreational users of the Neponset Greenway.

demands of the neighborhoods. In addition to recreational activities, the public open spaces are also used as community gathering places. Seating and tables would reinforce this type of activity to meet a stated community need.



E Reinforce Family-Oriented/Youth Activity

- The Station Area is well appointed with open space resources that are large and relatively well-distributed. However, the presence of open space alone is not often enough to provide a recreation resource for the surrounding neighborhoods. The space that is provided must be enhanced by amenities and equipment that are matched to the type of recreation needs of the community. In general, the residents have stated that recreation activities, playing fields and playgrounds should be reinforced with equipment to emphasize families and youth. This emphasis may include amenities for sport and playing fields (backstops, nets, basketball courts, etc.) and playground equipment for younger children.

Providing public spaces with adequate amenities, while maintaining flexibility and meeting the needs of a diverse and varied population is a difficult balance. It is important that the largest portions of open space be designed to retain flexibility and meet the space requirements of many different recreational activities to meet the



PROSPERITY



HOME



PLACE



GETTING
AROUND

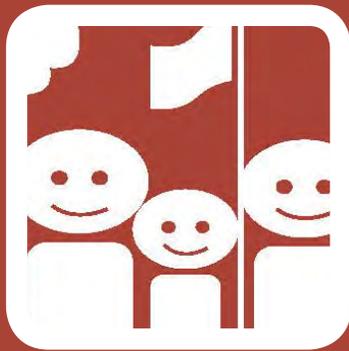


PARKS AND
PUBLIC SPACE



QUALITY
OF LIFE

DRAFT



QUALITY OF LIFE

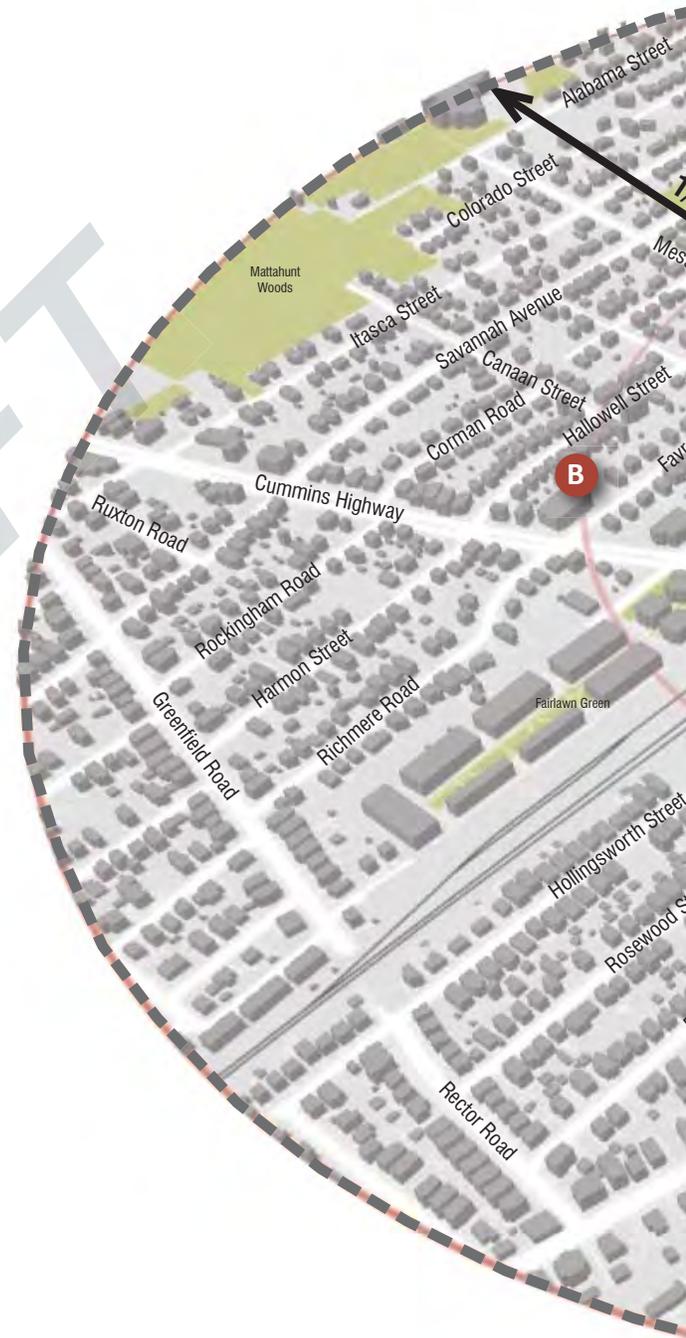
The *Quality of Life* section deals with issues not captured by the other section topics, but also focuses on Arts and Culture in the Blue Hill Ave/Cummins Highway Station Area. Strategies and recommendations focus on the most important aspects of the Station Area that affect the daily life of residents and businesses.

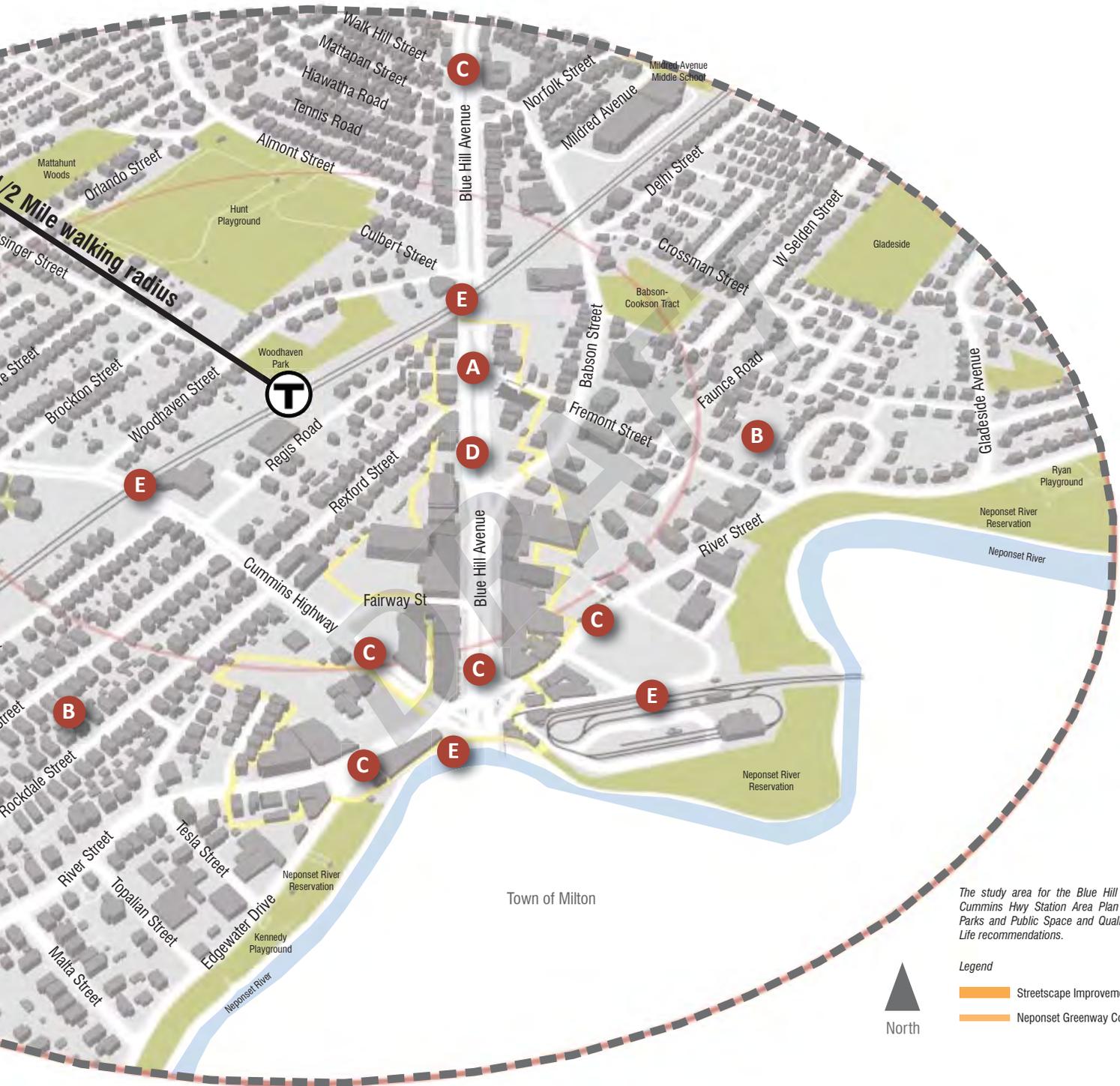


Quality of Life

The Station Area is anchored by the Main Streets district and quality of life enhancing amenities, such as the Mattapan Health Center. The following approaches build upon existing amenities to improve quality of life:

- A Narrate History and Culture** - Celebrate the local history, community, arts and culture by expanding public art, sculpture, arts programs and community events.
- B Enhance Public Safety** - Build community perception, respect and safety with residents and businesses support for positive activity and community stewardship.
- C Address Traffic and Parking** - Develop street improvements to balance high traffic volumes and parking needs in Mattapan Square and promote alternative modes of transportation.
- D Build Opportunity and Success** - Focus partnerships and programs on local wealth creation and youth development. Create a new paradigm of success stories and opportunity in Mattapan.
- E Expand Sustainability** - Build capacity for alternative modes of transportation, community gardens, energy upgrades and housing improvements.





The study area for the Blue Hill Ave/ Cummins Hwy Station Area Plan with Parks and Public Space and Quality of Life recommendations.

- Legend
- Streetscape Improvements
 - Neponset Greenway Concept Plan





Quality of Life

Nearly all of the recommendations of the Blue Hill Avenue/Cummins Highway Station Area Plan directly or indirectly address and improve quality of life in the Station Area. The Quality of Life category of recommendations is intended to address any other specific improvements to quality of life that were not discussed in other categories. The term quality of life may be defined differently in other contexts, but for this study quality of life refers to the ability of the attributes of a place, its character, amenities and environment, to positively or negatively affect the daily life of residents, businesses and visitors.

More than any other category, negative aspects that cause daily inconvenience, nuisance or safety issues are difficult to look past. If negative quality of life issues persist, other positive aspects, amenities or improvements are overshadowed. Public safety and safety for youth in particular was a major issue that was raised in many conversations with the community. This must be addressed to create the appropriate context for the other positive elements to flourish. Additionally, traffic and parking were consistently raised as major quality of life issues and are related to public safety and other quality of life issues.

The following approaches build upon existing amenities to improve daily quality of life:

- A Narrate History and Culture** - One of the components of the community vision is to reinforce Mattapan Square as an arts and cultural destination. An arts and cultural focus in the community and built environment also contributes to a high quality of life for residents. A celebration of the local history, community, arts and culture would focus attention on the cultural and historic aspects of Mattapan. An expansion of efforts already underway should include expanding public art, sculpture, arts programs and community events that celebrate local culture.

Mattapan Square already has an evocative sculpture marking the gateway into Boston from Milton. The Rise/Gateway to Boston sculpture consists of two 20 foot sculptures located at the intersection of Blue Hill Avenue, Cummins Highway and River Street. The sculpture celebrates the narrative of the history of Mattapan with figures representing the Mattahunt tribe, Massachusetts' 54th Regiment and the changing faces of immigrant populations in the community.

The expansion of public art in the form of murals, sculptures and streetscape components should be focused on Mattapan Square to reinforce the vitality of the Main Street and to highlight the historic and cultural stories that occurred there. Additionally, vacant spaces in the district could be considered for temporary use for art programs exhibits or temporary events designed to bring the community together around art and culture.





B Enhance Public Safety - Building positive activity in the community and bringing it out into the public realm is an important aspect of sustaining community and enhancing safety in the Station Area. The general appearance, maintenance and cleanliness of the environment is an important reflection of community involvement and public safety.

Grassroots efforts to clean up and maintain the areas surrounding the station can have a large impact on the perception of public safety. Build community perception, respect and safety with resident and business support for positive activity and community stewardship. Businesses can contribute to a positive perception by removing security gates and roll-down gates that create a negative perception of the area when the store is closed.

A continued and direct relationship between community leaders and residents with the District B-3 Boston Police Department. Community stewardship to build productive partnerships between the community, police, neighborhood watch groups and other organizations is an important part of reinforcing public safety. Engaging the youth in all of these efforts is very important to reinforce positive involvement and reinforce safety for families in the community.



C Address Traffic and Parking - Traffic and congestion are a major issue that can have a negative impact on the daily quality of life of residents in the Station Area. A strategic and long term approach to developing street improvements to balance high traffic volumes and parking needs in Mattapan Square, creating safe and convenient neighborhood circulation and promoting alternative modes of transportation will all address traffic and parking issues over time.

In terms of traffic, many specific issues are addressed in the “Getting Around” section of the Station Area Plan. Generally, improving traffic and congestion must be a multi-faceted and long term approach. The addition of viable and convenient transit options to the Station Area gives residents and businesses more choices for getting around. Reinforcing the Station Area as a pedestrian friendly and walkable environment also provides more choices and opportunities to make short trips locally on foot.

Focusing vehicular improvements at the center of Mattapan Square and on Blue Hill Avenue, Cummins Highway and River Street is appropriate as has been described. However, a holistic approach to circulation must be followed to protect the surrounding residential streets from increased traffic volume to retain safe and family-oriented neighborhoods.

Refinements to parking management policies may also be needed over time to reinforce convenient and available high-turnover parking near Mattapan Square on Blue Hill Avenue. Also, retaining on-street parking on residential streets for residents. A resident parking policy may be desirable in the future as the dynamics of parking around the new rail station become better understood.

D Build Opportunity and Success - Importantly, all of the improvements to quality of life, the physical environment, amenity and transit will not make a difference if individuals feel disconnected from success and feel marginalized by limited

opportunities. The Station Area must become a center of positive activity and a conduit for success for surrounding residents and businesses. Partnerships and programs that focus on local wealth creation and youth development should be highlighted as a consistent and important feature. The intention should be to create a new paradigm of success stories and opportunity in Mattapan.

The Fairmount Indigo Corridor is intended to reinforce connections to opportunity and success between the Station Areas, Corridor opportunities in other location and downtown Boston. Mattapan Square can play an important role in creating connections to opportunity by providing a physical collection of resources for training, job placement, and business training and partnership programs. Vacant space in storefronts or upper level spaces on Blue Hill Avenue could be used temporarily to provide training and neighborhood business incubator space to get residents connected to jobs and to reinforce opportunities for locally-owned businesses and entrepreneurial opportunities.

expanding energy upgrades, renewable energy and housing improvements in the neighborhoods. A more detailed framework for sustainability in the Station Areas has been developed as part of the Fairmount Indigo planning effort and has been included in the appendix of this Station Area Plan.



E Expand Sustainability - Many components of the Station Area Plan expand the sustainability of the community, environmentally, economically and socially. Several of the strategies of the plan expand sustainability explicitly, such as creating new community gathering spaces, building capacity for alternative modes of transportation, expanding community gardens and local food sources, and



PROSPERITY



HOME



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AROUND



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Cummins Highway view toward the Cote Ford property, Mattapan

BLUE HILL AVE/CUMMINS HIGHWAY STATION AREA PLAN

IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTIONS

Blue Hill Ave/Cummins Hwy Implementation Actions

The Implementation Actions are the critical components of Station Area strategies highlighted as actionable items.

The community vision outlined for the Blue Hill Ave/Cummins Highway Station Area is not achieved through a single action or solution, but through a series of purposeful and strategic changes that position the Station Area for a positive and incremental evolution over time. This continuum of positive change is already underway and can be expedited with the following key actions:



Invite Positive Investment at Cote Ford

The Station Area would benefit from market-based private investment to redevelop underutilized properties. One such property, the Cote Ford site, is City-owned and will be publicly disposed for redevelopment. This property and process are important to build momentum for investment at a critical location adjacent to the new rail station and can bring increased vitality and activity to Cummins Highway and Mattapan Square while better connecting the station and the Main Streets district. The community should set high expectations for reuse of

the property consistent with the community vision of mixed-use redevelopment with community space and the highest attainable level of sustainability. Under any reuse scenario, environmental issues on the site must be appropriately remediated.



Strengthen and Improve Mattapan Square

The Mattapan Square Main Streets district is the focus of commercial and community activity nearest the station. It is important to strengthen and improve the character and business environment of the Square to build positive activity near the station and to anchor the community. A Storefront Improvement program with a revolving loan fund, a business improvement district or small business assistance grants can all assist in the improvement and beautification of Mattapan Square.

The local Main Street district should be empowered to create programs and connections that reinforce opportunities, links and connections on the Fairmount Indigo Corridor. Parallel efforts between other Corridor Main Streets districts should be reinforced in Mattapan Square. In particular this effort should look for complementary cultural and public arts efforts that could expand this aspect of the Station Area.



Improve Traffic in the Square

The critical intersection at the center of Mattapan Square between Blue Hill Avenue, Cummins Highway and River Street, should be the focus of additional study and strategic circulation improvements. Short term improvements may include pedestrian signals with countdown displays, additional crosswalks, and adjustments to signal timing. Additional study should focus on an origin-destination study of traffic movements, feasibility study of traffic signal phasing modifications or geometric changes and a investigation of potential design alternatives.

Develop Innovative Resident, Small Business and Entrepreneurial Training

Mattapan Square should not only be a center of commercial activity, but also a center of innovative training and resource centers for residents, small businesses and entrepreneurs. Programs and partnerships should focus upon adding productive uses to upper floor vacancies dedicated to building the capacity for local wealth creation and prosperity.



Rebalance Blue Hill Avenue Public Realm

Public realm improvements to Blue Hill Avenue should be considered according to Boston’s Complete Streets guidelines to rebalance the needs of all users of the roadway including vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians. Improvements must prioritize the importance of Blue Hill Avenue as a city-wide connector and a source of high volumes of traffic that support businesses, but also should be a safe and comfortable walking environment for shopping and leisure.



Enhance Streetscape at Cummins Highway

The connection between the Rail Station entry and the center of Mattapan Square on Cummins Highway is critical for pedestrian access and connectivity. Streetscape enhancements should improve the safety, accessibility and comfort of walking conditions on the north side of Cummins Highway. Curb cuts on Cummins Highway should be relocated to side streets wherever possible to consolidate vehicular access and enhance continuity of pedestrian routes.



Image Credit: DCR/MassDOT Neponset River Corridor Trail image for Mattapan Square

Enhance Connections to the Neponset River

Physical and functional connections to the unique natural asset of the Neponset River should be reinforced in Mattapan Square. Enhanced physical connections should be examined at the MBTA Mattapan Trolley station, pedestrian crossings at Blue Hill Avenue and public space and plazas down to the river. Functional

connections should be explored for complementary businesses, recreational opportunities and public realm improvements that build upon this unique asset.



Retain a Diverse Resident and Business Population

The diversity of the Station Area, culturally, racially and socio-economically should be retained and built upon as a primary asset of the Station Area. Station Area strategies to reinforce this effort include adding new housing units to help retain Station Area affordability over time, including a mix of incomes as part of new development projects, and building local wealth through training, education, entrepreneurship and homeownership.

The long term dynamics of transit improvements and land value will tend to push rents higher over time. A homeownership program that empowers the local community to invest in Station Area property helps to prevent displacement and to connect residents directly to long term benefits. This type of program may require a partnership between community development corporations, lending institutions and the City to provide education, investment and capital resources. This type of program could be coupled with an effort to revitalize problem properties and neighborhood issues sometimes associated with absentee landlords.



Maintain Community Voice and Presence

One of the greatest strengths of the Station Area is the very engaged and informed community of residents, advocates and business owners who support and represent the collective voice of the community. It is important to maintain this voice as part of the implementation tools and stewardship focused around the Station.

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FAIRMOUNT INDIGO CORRIDOR



CITY OF BOSTON
Martin J. Walsh
Mayor



Boston
Redevelopment
Authority

BLUE HILL AVENUE/CUMMINS HIGHWAY
DRAFT STATION AREA PLAN
JUNE 2014

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