

An aerial photograph of the Boston skyline, showing a dense cluster of skyscrapers in the Financial District, including the Hancock Tower and the Prudential Tower. The city extends to the waterfront, with various buildings and infrastructure visible. The image is in black and white.

A NEW WASHINGTON STREET

Boston's Main Street for the New Century

**MAYOR THOMAS M. MENINO'S
WASHINGTON STREET TASK FORCE**

**FINAL REPORT AND
RECOMMENDATIONS**

**A strategy to encourage investment and
redevelopment on Washington Street**



A NEW WASHINGTON STREET:

Boston's Main Street for the New Century

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FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*A strategy to encourage investment and
redevelopment on Washington Street*

Boston Redevelopment Authority /
Economic Development and Industrial Corporation

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May 1997

May 13, 1997

The Honorable Thomas M. Menino
Mayor of Boston
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201

Dear Mayor Menino,

On behalf of the Washington Street Task Force, I am pleased to submit our report and recommendations to you. The recommendations in our report, *A New Washington Street: Boston's Main Street for the New Century*, result from the hard work and commitment of each Task Force member. You challenged us to look to the future and recommend creative ways to revitalize and redevelop Washington Street, one of the City's most important and historic boulevards. We are confident this report responds to your challenge.

Thank you for having the vision to begin the revitalization of the Washington Street Corridor. Your Administration has worked effectively as an active participant with the Task Force, and has helped to make this initiative a success.

Task Force members have generously given their time and talents to this process. Included among these dedicated individuals are neighborhood residents, community activists, business owners, and City officials who have been committed to the revitalization of this historic street, that is at the heart of the South End and Lower Roxbury, a wonderful, diverse community.

As the gateway to Boston, Washington Street should be valued for what it offers the City: an exciting mix of uses; diverse ethnic neighborhoods; significant historic architecture; proximity to downtown, the airport and regional highways; an energetic arts community; and opportunities for new development. For too long, the potential for this area has been undervalued. The time to take action is now as we enter the new century. Thank you for initiating the rebirth of Washington Street.

We hope this report will serve as a pragmatic strategy that guides you and your staff in your efforts to revitalize Washington Street.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Randi Lathrop". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Randi" and last name "Lathrop" clearly distinguishable.

Randi Lathrop
Chair, Washington Street Task Force

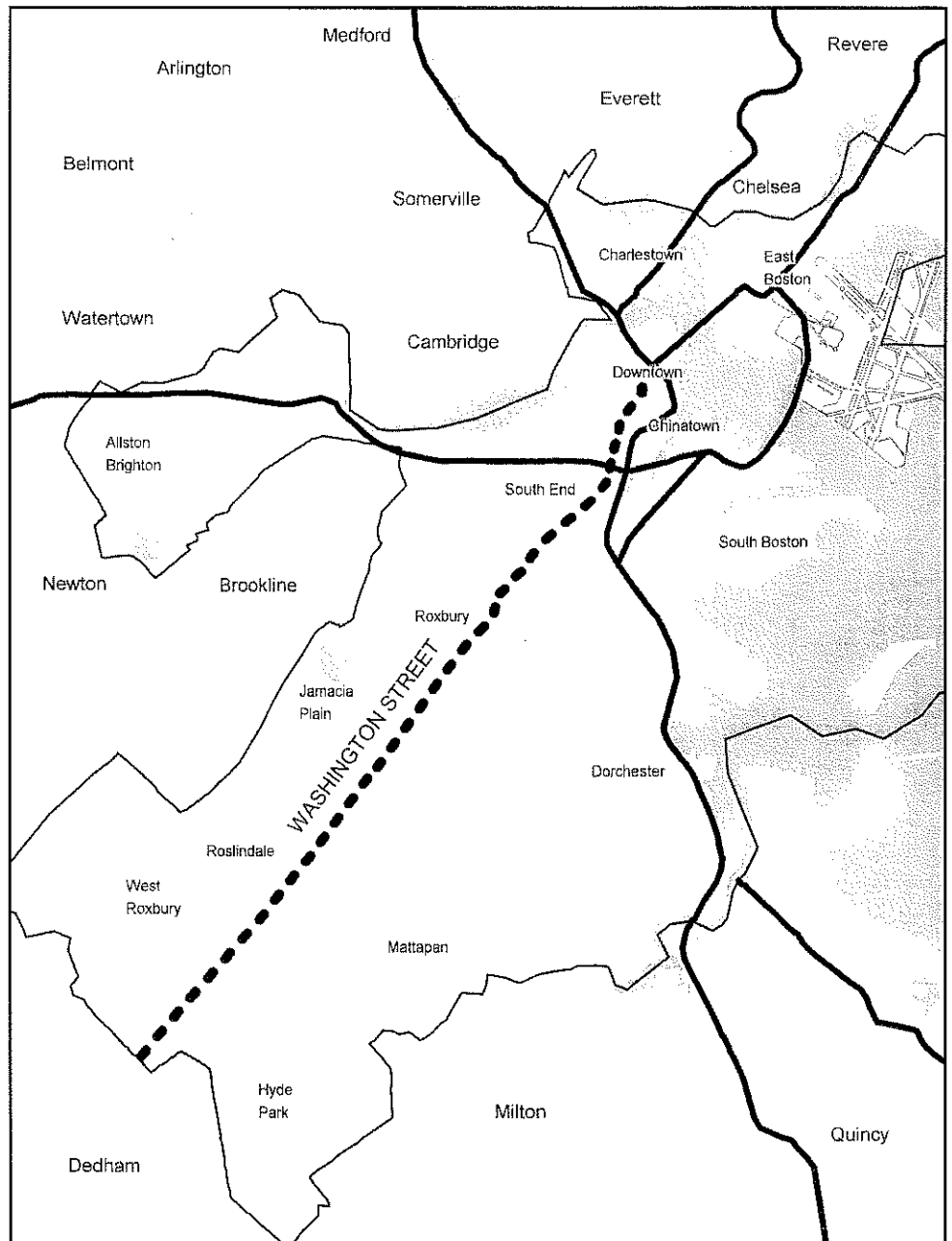


A New Washington Street: Boston's Main Street for the New Century

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Washington
Street links
many of
Boston's diverse
neighborhoods
to downtown
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Executive Summary

In the Fall of 1995, Mayor Thomas M. Menino appointed the 40 member Washington Street Task Force to begin the revitalization effort of one of Boston's most prominent and historic streets. Drawing from a diverse group of residents, community activists, neighborhood business owners, City and State officials, the Task Force began meeting in January 1996 with the goal of recommending aggressive strategies to encourage investment and redevelopment along Washington Street in the South End and Lower Roxbury.

Washington Street is the City's longest — and, perhaps, most historic — street, extending from Downtown Crossing to West Roxbury. With one out of every four Boston residents living within five blocks of Washington Street, it is the common thread in the fabric of many diverse City neighborhoods: Chinatown, South End, Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, Roslindale and West Roxbury. As such, Washington Street clearly qualifies as one of Boston's most important "boulevards."

Challenges

Although the dismantling of the elevated Orange Line transit structure in 1987 opened up unique urban design and development opportunities, this entire area has been poorly served by public transportation since that time. The delay in the installation of the Transit Replacement Service and street reconstruction has had a chilling effect on reinvestment activity by property owners and prospective developers. Washington Street has suffered from years of public and private disinvestment and is in extreme disrepair. Several historic buildings remain vacant and deteriorated.

Assets and Opportunities

Washington Street, however, has enormous development potential as evidenced by these significant assets and opportunities:

- The MBTA will build a transit line along Washington Street connecting the South End, Lower Roxbury and Dudley Square with Downtown Crossing. At a cost of \$52 million to \$55 million, this public transit and infrastructure investment can be leveraged as a stimulus for private investment and as a catalyst for urban revitalization. As part of this project, the MBTA and the Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD) will fund the redesign and reconstruction of Washington Street including new sidewalks, street trees and other amenities.
- Washington Street is a viable business district with more than 150 businesses, located in the corridor between Herald Street to Melnea Cass Blvd. and Shawmut Ave. to Harrison Ave. 50 of these businesses are located directly on Washington Street. There are approximately 375 artists working within the corridor as well.
- With a rental vacancy rate of less than 2%, the South End experienced a robust residential real estate market during 1996. Due to the successful revitalization of adjacent areas of the South End, private developers have started investing in the rehabilitation of historic buildings along Washington Street for condominiums and rental housing.
- Several converging trends along the Washington Street Corridor warrant special attention. Revitalization strategies for this area can capitalize on the synergy created by several dynamic investment trends: new investment in this area by Boston's Asian community; the growing artists community in the Washington Street area of the South End; and the emerging interest by commercial developers in developing retail and restaurants along Washington Street.
- The City of Boston and the Boston Redevelopment Authority / Economic Development and Industrial Corporation (BRA / EDIC) have set the stage for at least \$40 million in new private investment along Washington Street by initiating new projects on publicly owned vacant parcels or in existing buildings.
- Major new developments such as the BioSquare Project have been attracted to the Washington Street corridor because of its strategic regional location near the airport, major highways, and the other medical areas in Boston. Commercial developers are also showing interest in developing retail and restaurants. Investors will renovate the historic Minot hall, a deteriorated 140 year-old brick building, into an antique center with rental space for more than 200 antique dealers attracting customers from throughout metropolitan Boston.
- More than \$40 million of public funds are being invested in the rehabilitation of almost 300 units of affordable housing along Washington Street in the South End / Lower Roxbury. As part of Boston's Enhanced Enterprise Community, the Washington Street corridor community has access to \$22 million in Economic Development Initiative funds to be used in conjunction with Section 108 loans.
- Several notable historic buildings contribute to the Washington Street corridor's urban scale and distinctive architectural character such as the vacant MBTA Power Station and the Alexandra Hotel. These historic structures provide important opportunities for new investment in business and residential development.

Since January 1996, Mayor Thomas M. Menino's Washington Street Task Force has been engaged in an intensive strategic planning process. The following recommendations are the result of this process.

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A Strategy to Encourage Investment and Redevelopment on Washington Street

GOAL ①

Build a New Washington Street

- Rebuild Washington Street and design a new streetscape that includes visual improvements and an active mix of residential, commercial, and recreational uses.
- The City should continue its efforts to ensure that the MBTA and the Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD) begin the reconstruction of Washington Street by Spring 1998.
- Appoint a citizens oversight committee to guide decisions about the design and reconstruction of Washington Street and the Silver Line Transit Replacement Service.
- The City of Boston should continue its successful efforts to improve the parks and public open space along Washington Street.
- The City of Boston should continue current efforts to improve and maintain the Blackstone Elementary School and other city-owned properties.
- Continue to redevelop vacant or underutilized land and buildings along Washington Street.
- Create satellite parking garages on Albany Street or Harrison Avenue to help relieve current parking problems and accommodate future neighborhood commercial expansion. In the Task Force Business Survey, businesses cited the lack of parking as a major impediment to their continued success and future expansion.

GOAL ②

Revitalize Washington Street by creating opportunities for new jobs and businesses.

- Promote the development potential of Washington Street.
- Endorse Mayor Menino's initiative to create a tax-free retail sales zone in designated areas such as the Washington Street corridor.
- Prepare a strategy to promote business loans and technical assistance, available from the Boston Empowerment Center, and business training programs, to the business and property owners on Washington Street.
- Develop partnerships that provide residents with access to jobs and job training in the neighborhood.
- Develop a maintenance program for Washington Street.
- Bring 21st Century technology to Washington Street: encourage local businesses and property owners on Washington Street to wire new buildings for T-1 or other high speed computer network access.

GOAL ③

Promote Washington Street as an exciting destination with diverse ethnic stores, markets and restaurants.

- Re-emphasize the important architectural, social, and cultural history of the area to restore the image and vitality of the street, and create a marketing strategy.
- After street reconstruction, expand the marketing of the South End's successful art related businesses and restaurants to include the diverse ethnic restaurants and food markets along Washington Street.
- Encourage the creation of a district-wide business association to promote and lobby for businesses in the South End and Lower Roxbury.

GOAL ④

Create a new future for Washington Street.

- Build on the success of the recently launched business district revitalization program on Washington Street--called the Washington Street Gateway Mainstreets Program.
- Enact the proposed South End Neighborhood District Zoning which establishes a Neighborhood Development Area (NDA) sub-district along Washington Street. The provisions of the NDA will allow for and encourage a healthy mix of neighborhood uses.
- Incorporate design ideas from the Boston Society of Architects' Washington Street Connections Public Design Workshop / Charrette into long range plans for the Washington Street Corridor.
- Continue to implement the 1993 South End / Lower Roxbury Development Policy Plan which designated the Washington Street Corridor as a Special Study Area.

The Task Force represents a significant undertaking for the City and the South End / Lower Roxbury community. Mayor Menino has repeatedly underscored his commitment to seeing visible and positive change take place on Washington Street. The recommendations of the Task Force are an important step to making change on Washington Street a reality.

Introduction

Since January 1996, the Washington Street Task Force has been engaged in an intensive strategic planning process. In an effort to learn about and involve their neighbors up and down Washington Street, the Task Force has held monthly "brainstorming"—or work—sessions at various locations along the Corridor: the Langham Court Housing Cooperative, the Roxbury Corners Cooperative Housing, City Lights, the Holy Cross Cathedral, the Boston Empowerment Center, the Boston Medical Center, the Blackstone Elementary School, Rebecca's Cafe and the Franklin House. With the staff support from the Boston Redevelopment Authority / Economic Development and Industrial Corporation (BRA / EDIC) and other City agencies, Task Force members explored several strategies to:

- Initiate physical improvements to create a new image for Washington Street.
- Leverage available public funding to design and build a "new" Washington Street.
- Capitalize on proposed transit and infrastructure projects in order to set the stage for new investment and redevelopment on Washington Street.
- Determine and support the needs of local businesses.
- Support existing businesses and encourage new investment.
- Help local businesses gain access to financing.
- Identify opportunities to create new jobs for residents.
- Involve schools and religious institutions in the revitalization of Washington Street.

- Create opportunities for new residential development.

In an effort to understand fully the needs of this area, the Task Force invited people from many sectors to serve on panels and participate in each of these work sessions: bank representatives, community leaders, elected officials, business owners, directors and senior staff from the Boston Empowerment Center and the Boston Main Streets Program, religious leaders, representatives from the Boston Medical Center, members of the Boston Society of Architects and real estate developers.

Senior staff from several City agencies have also participated as partners in these sessions including: the BRA / EDIC, the Boston Transportation Department, the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services, the Mayor's Office of Business Services, the Public Facilities Department, the Boston Housing Authority, the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, the Boston Landmarks Commission, the Boston Police Department and the Mayor's Office of Basic Services.

Architecture and urban planning students from the Graduate School of Design at Harvard presented design proposals for Washington Street to the Task Force and, in the process, helped Task Force members to think about Washington Street in new and creative ways.

One of the most significant accomplishments of the Task force has been the successful collaboration between residents and the business community in recommending a comprehensive revitalization strategy.

Even before completing the recommendations in this report, the Task Force has been successful in launching the following initiatives that contribute to the revitalization of Washington Street:

The Task Force has pursued economic development opportunities. The Task Force has been gathering information on development initiatives and techniques and the existing businesses in the area by:

- ☑ Conducting a Business Survey along Washington Street to assess the needs of the businesses, research their customer base, and get their input on potential improvements.
- ☑ Meeting with experts on Business Improvement Districts, Business Associations, and the National Trust's Main Street Program to consider various development initiatives.
- ☑ Meeting with the Mayor's Office of Business Services, the Boston Empowerment Center, and local banks to coordinate and assist access to financing and technical support for local businesses.
- ☑ Conducting an Employment Survey to count the number of employees, and the percentage that live in the area as well.

The Task Force encouraged the formation of the Washington Street Business Association. A goal of the Task Force was to provide the impetus for the formation of a business association focusing on Washington Street in the South End/Lower Roxbury area. The Business Survey was an opportunity for local business owners to articulate their common needs and concerns. The Task Force brought in Babak Bina, president of the Tremont Business Association, to recount his experiences in forming and managing that association. Several business owners, with assistance from Task Force members and Carole Eaton of the Mayor's Office of Business Services, then began to build the foundation for the Washington Street Business Association. They have already drafted and approved

bylaws, and have elected officers. Their inaugural Chairman is James Robertson of Center Street Realty.

Working with the Task Force, the Boston Transportation Department and the Washington Street Business Association developed a parking plan for Washington Street. In the Business Survey that was completed, two-thirds of the businesses cited parking as their number one problem that they faced, and the greatest impediment to the continued success and expansion of their businesses. Studies of the existing parking conditions on Washington Street were conducted and a more comprehensive plan has been developed. Vineet Gupta, Assistant Director of Policy and Planning at the Boston Transportation Department, and an Ex-Officio member of the Task Force, and Ralph DeNisco of the Boston Transportation Department, worked with the Washington Street Business Association to develop this plan. The proposed changes to the existing conditions have now been approved with implementation expected in Spring of 1997.

In response to the recommendations of the Task Force, the City of Boston completed interim street improvements. While major street reconstruction is planned for the future, the business community requested that interim improvements be made to the street. As promised, Michael J. Galvin, Chief of Basic Services for the City of Boston, had the potholes filled, the crosswalks and street lines repainted and had graffiti removed along Washington Street.

Mayor Menino's Washington Street Task Force has successfully advocated for the initiation of the process to reconstruct Washington Street as part of the MBTA's Transit Replacement Project. Due to the efforts of the Task Force and the Boston Transportation Department, the MBTA began to consider design alternatives for the reconstruction of Washington Street

from Dudley to the Downtown Crossing area. In keeping with the MBTA's long-standing commitment to install transit replacement service on Washington Street, this service will be added to the MBTA map as the Silver Line and will provide single fare access to the existing network. The Washington Street Task Force served as the community's umbrella group for the South End/Lower Roxbury portion of the redesign of Washington Street.

Working with the staff of the Boston Main Streets Program, the Task Force and Washington Street Business Association recently launched a business district revitalization and small business assistance program on Washington Street--called the Washington Street Gateway Main Streets Program.

Washington Street
has enormous
development
potential as evi-
denced by several
significant assets
and opportunities
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I. Assets and Opportunities

Washington Street has enormous development potential as evidenced by several significant assets and opportunities described below.

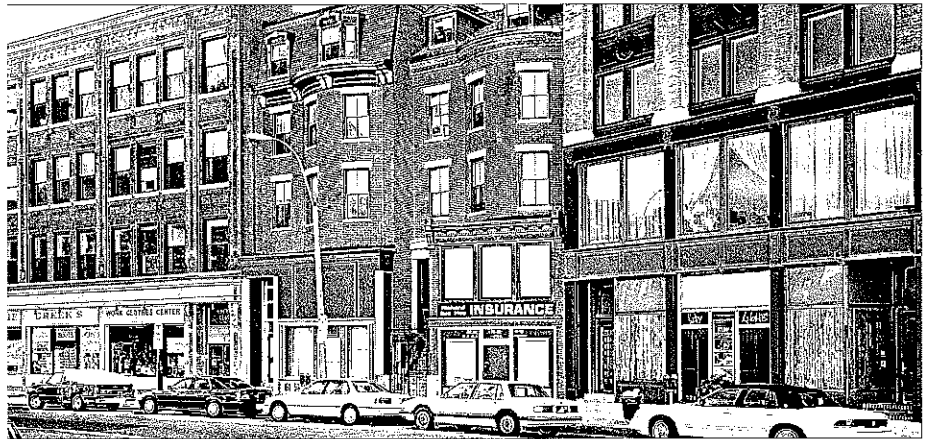
A. MBTA Washington Street Transit Replacement Service Project

The Washington Street Transit Replacement Service Project, at a cost of \$52 to \$55 million, is a significant public transit and infrastructure investment that can be leveraged as a catalyst for urban redevelopment and a stimulus for private investment on Washington Street.

The MBTA is proceeding with the Transit Replacement Service Project along Washington Street connecting Dudley Square and Downtown Boston. As part of the project, the MBTA and the Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD) will allocate funds for the redesign and reconstruction of Washington Street including sidewalks, street trees and street furniture.

In an effort to end the decade long debate regarding the Replacement Service mode and focus on the reconstruction of Washington Street, the City has made the following recommendations to the MBTA:

- The final design for street improvements should commence immediately with construction to begin no later than Spring 1998.
- Design the street so as to accommodate all future transit vehicle modes in a dedicated lane without barriers.
- The replacement service should be established as the Silver Line—a new color on the MBTA permanent transit map.



- Street reconstruction funds should be adequate to construct appropriate streetscape improvements with distinct "stations" rather than bus stops.

- Transit service on Washington Street should start operation by 1999, before, or at the same time that the South Boston Piers Transitway, linking South Boston / Fort Point Channel with South Station, is completed.

- The MBTA should commission a detailed feasibility study of extending the existing Tremont Street tunnel to allow the transit service or Silver Line to travel below grade north of the Massachusetts Turnpike.

- Transfers between the new Washington Street transit line or Silver Line and the rest of the MBTA rapid transit system will be possible on a single fare.

In an anticipated second phase, the electric trolley bus will connect with the South Boston Transitway through an extension of the existing Tremont Street tunnel. This connection will allow for a one-vehicle ride from Dudley Square to Downtown and to South Boston. This second phase is unfunded and no schedule has been set.

B. Washington Street is a viable business district

Despite years of disinvestment, Washington Street is, in fact, a stable business district with more than 200 businesses located in the Washington Street corridor (bordered by Herald Street, Shawmut Avenue, Melnea Cass Boulevard, and Harrison Avenue.) There are approximately an additional 375 art related businesses, mostly independent artists, within this district as well.

A business survey undertaken by the Task Force highlights a number of Washington Street's important assets:

- The businesses within the Washington Street Corridor are extremely diverse both in terms of services they provide and the clientele they serve. Businesses along Washington Street include retail, service, manufacturing, wholesale, and restaurants.

- Washington Street is a regional destination with 67% of the businesses drawing customers from Metropolitan Boston, as well as the South End and Lower Roxbury.



Allen House

- New business owners are investing in Washington Street; one in five businesses surveyed opened in just the past year; and one quarter of those surveyed had active plans for expansion.

- Businesses along Washington Street reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of the South End and Lower Roxbury, with stores catering, in particular, to the Asian and Latino communities. The Task Force seeks to capitalize on this important asset as a way to market Washington Street as a unique business destination.

- With the support and encouragement of the Task Force, local business owners have formed the Washington Street Business Association. The association is working with the Task Force, neighborhood groups, and city agencies to improve the image of Washington Street and advocate the interests of local businesses.

- Large, well-established businesses near Washington Street such as wholesale suppliers, food processing businesses and manufacturers continue to provide decent jobs for working families.

- According to a preliminary survey, small businesses on Washington Street provide jobs to residents of the South End and Lower Roxbury. Most larger employers were not able to give a breakdown of their employees by their neighborhood of residence, but future surveys will try to address this. Small businesses (less than 50 employees,) however, employ 742 people of which 220, or about 30%, live in the South End and Lower Roxbury.

C. New Development on Publicly-owned Vacant Land and in Vacant Historic Buildings

The City of Boston and the BRA / EDIC have set the stage for at least \$40 million in new private investment along Washington Street by initiating new projects on publicly owned vacant parcels or in existing vacant buildings.

The Washington Street Task Force has been a major impetus for developing these parcels which, in some cases, had been vacant for almost 30 years. In 1996, newly-appointed Task Force members urged the BRA / EDIC to begin to implement the South End / Lower Roxbury Development Policy Plan. (see Appendix)

The 1993 South End / Lower Roxbury Development Policy Plan, which resulted from an intensive community planning process, set forth a plan of action. In the Plan, the South End and Lower Roxbury community, in collaboration with the BRA / EDIC, recommended new uses and urban design guidelines for vacant land in the Washington Street Corridor.

As a first step in implementing this Plan, the BRA / EDIC issued Requests for Proposals to the real estate community to develop several large parcels. The response from the real estate developers indicates a strong interest in the potential of the street. Several of these projects described below are in the planning and design stage:

South Park Associates / South End Community Health Center in cooperation with the Blackstone / Franklin Neighborhood Association (BRA Parcel RC-9)

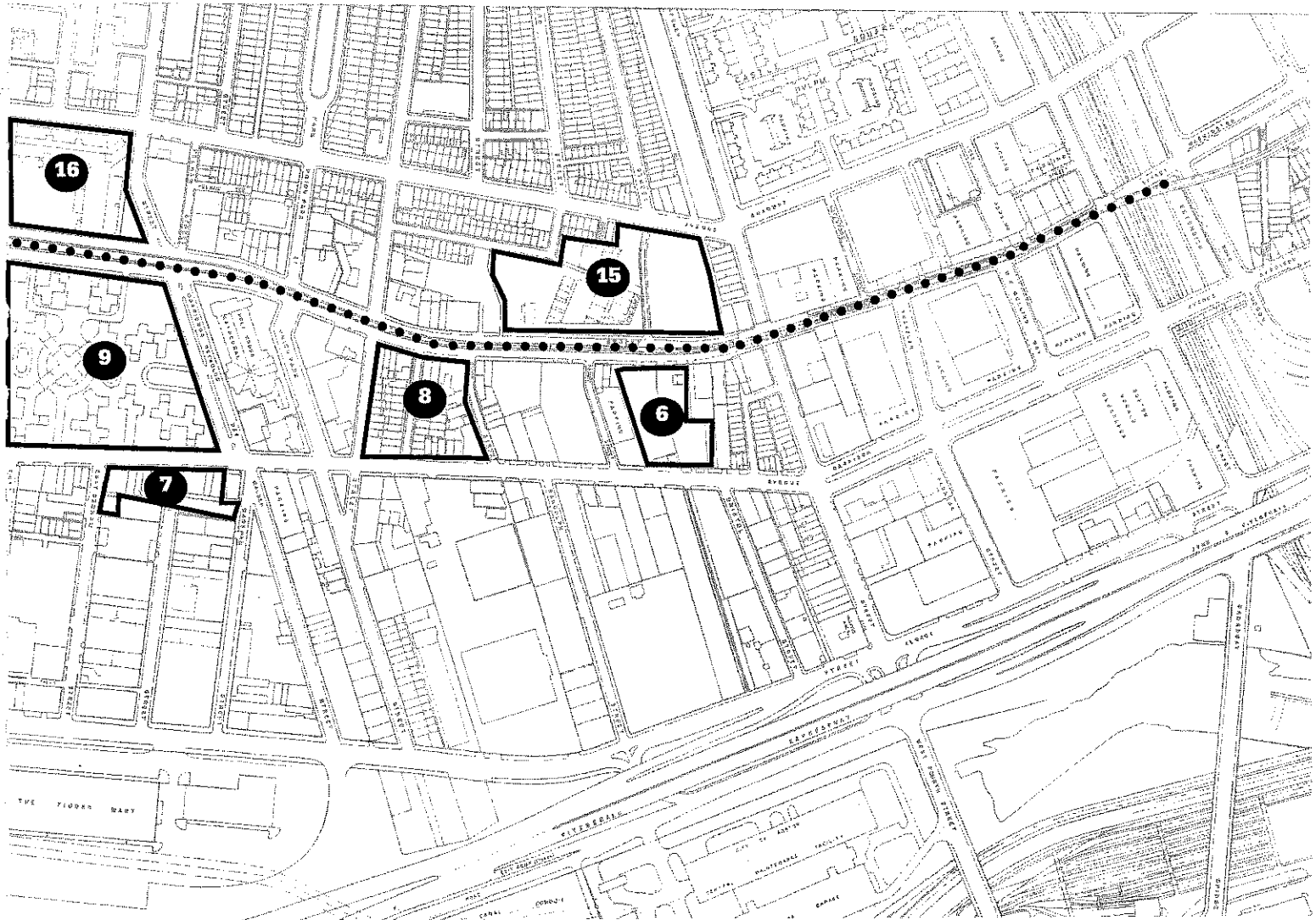
The proposal is for a six story building at 1601 Washington Street that will have ground level retail and house the

SECHC on the second and third floors. Floors 4-6 will contain 39 one and two bedroom market rate residences. There will be nineteen townhouses and 17 single family houses on the restored Cumston Street and two 2-family homes on Shawmut Avenue. An underground parking garage for 118 cars will be built below the main building and townhouses. 5100 SF. of permanent open space/community gardens will be deeded to the South End/Lower Roxbury Open Space Land Trust. The project has an estimated cost of \$23 million.

The Allen House

The Allen House is located at 1682 Washington Street and contains about 16,000 square feet. The BRA / EDIC has designated New Boston Housing Enterprises to rehabilitate and redevelop it into 11 market rate condominiums.

The redevelopment of the Allen House offers some important lessons. The investment by the City of Boston of more than \$600,000 in the structural stabilization of this historic property and the demolition of decayed interior wood flooring and walls enabled the Boston Redevelopment Authority to make this largely neglected property marketable to the real estate community. By taking much of the financial risk out of this project for prospective developers, the Boston Redevelopment Authority, with assistance and support from the Boston Landmarks Commission was able to attract serious redevelopment proposals. This investment in historic preservation has already proven to be a catalyst for private investment along this part of Washington Street.



• • • Proposed Transit Line and
Street Reconstruction

1. South Park Residential Development /
South End Community Health Center
2. Allen House
3. Porter House
4. Parcels 9 and 10
5. Old Boston Restorations Residential Development
6. Laconia Condominiums
7. New Police Station

8. Parcel 32 Archdiocese Residential
and Mixed-Use Development
9. Cathedral Housing Project
10. Grant Manor
11. Mandela
12. Blackstone and Franklin Squares
13. South End Historic Burial ground
14. Ramsay Park
15. Peter's Park

16. Blackstone Elementary School
17. BioSquare
18. Boston Medical Center
19. Langham Court Housing
20. Roxbury Corners Housing and Retail
21. Parmelee Court Housing

Laconia Condominiums (BRA Parcel SE-120)

The parcel is adjacent to the former Red Fez and contains approximately 39,874 SF. The current proposal is for two buildings that will contain about 95 units of housing, including affordable housing for artists and market rate units, parking and gallery space. There will be retail fronting on Washington Street. The Old Dover Neighborhood Association worked with the developer throughout the process. The developer, Laconia Associates, estimates development costs at \$11.4 million and expects to begin construction in 1997.

Parcels 9 and 10

The parcels are located on either side of Melnea Cass Boulevard between Washington Street and Shawmut Avenue. They total 126,000 SF and also contain transportation easements. Proposed plans from the Mayor's Citizen Advisory Committee call for institutional and residential development with some retail. Retail would be focused on the corner of Washington Street and Melnea Cass Boulevard. The Public Facilities Department, in agreement with other agencies, is coordinating the disposition process and has held a series of community wide meetings to solicit neighborhood input prior to issuing a Request for Proposals.

New Police Station

The Public Facilities Department, the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services and the Boston Police Department are proposing to build a new Area D-4 Police Station on Harrison Avenue adjacent to the existing fire station, one block away from Washington Street. The proposed \$5 million Police Station will be built on BRA / EDIC and City-owned land parcels on Harrison Avenue across from the Boston Housing

Authority's Cathedral Housing Development. The proposed project will include 48 off-street parking spaces on a Harrison Avenue parcel adjacent to the Police station; about 7500 SF of this parcel will be improved for use as basketball courts and other types of recreational open space for the benefit of neighborhood residents. Construction is scheduled to start in Spring 1998.

Old Boston Restorations

Old Boston Restorations, as part of the BRA's South End Neighborhood Housing Initiative, has proposed to build new housing on BRA Parcels R 11B and 11C.

Parcel 32C

The BRA / EDIC has tentatively designated the Archdiocese as developer of Parcel 32C. The Archdiocese has proposed to build a new high school and housing with retail uses fronting on Washington Street.

D. Housing Redevelopment

Public agencies are investing more than \$40 million in the rehabilitation of almost 300 units of affordable housing along Washington Street in the South End and Lower Roxbury. The major housing re-hab projects are described below:

The Cathedral Public Housing Project

The Boston Housing Authority is investing \$11.4 million in the re-hab of 110 units as part of Phase 2 of this major renovation. Phase 3, consisting of an additional \$8 million for 46 units, a community center and exterior landscaping and fencing, went out to bid in December 1996. Phase 4 will receive funding in 2000.

Grant Manor

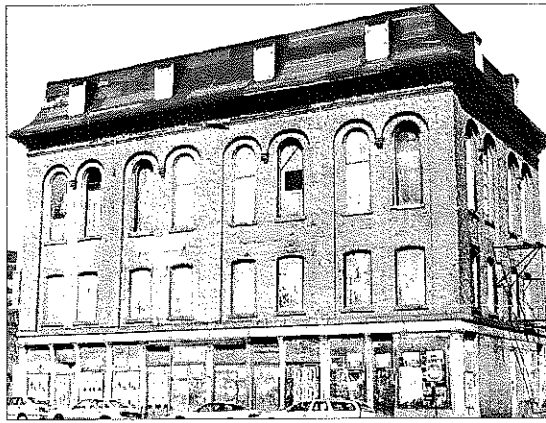
The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) are investing \$18.4 million in the rehabilitation and new construction of the 187 unit Grant Manor housing development, the first Demonstration Disposition planned along the Washington Street corridor. The project is in the schematic design phase with a construction start anticipated in the 1997. The HUD-sponsored Demonstration Disposition Project will pay for development costs to sell HUD-foreclosed housing projects to tenant organizations. Funding is for building rehabilitation, new construction, demolition (to de-densify projects) and site improvements.

Mandela

Mandela, a 276 unit Section 8 low-income assisted housing project across the street from Grant Manor, is the first large scale affordable housing project in Boston of the HUD portfolio re-engineering program. As the first project in this program, Mandela will be the subject of new Section 8 rules that call for the elimination of project-based subsidies. Mandela is also the subject of bankruptcy proceedings. As part of these proceedings, the Bankruptcy Court and the U.S. Trustees Office has appointed an independent trustee who has recommended a proposed plan for re-organization to the court. The Trustee has further recommended that the United South End / Lower Roxbury Development Corporation and The Community Builders implement this plan and redevelop Mandela.



Franklin Square



Minot Hall

E. Open Space Improvements

Parks along Washington Street—in particular, the historic Blackstone and Franklin Squares—are important assets for this community. The Boston Parks and Recreation Department (BPRD) is in the process of completing major improvements to the parks and open space along Washington Street.

Peter's Park

In the last three years, major improvements have been made to the park infrastructure. These include reseeding the baseball field, new equipment for the tot lot, resurfacing two basketball courts, rewiring and repair of all light fixtures, and repair of water lines to park fountains.

Ramsay Park

The City of Boston is installing a memorial to Captain David L. Ramsay on the walkway near Mandela and has allocated funding to improve the baseball field. Construction is expected in the Fall, 1997.

Blackstone and Franklin Squares

Columbia Square was laid out in 1801 by Charles Bulfinch as a large grass ellipse bisected by Washington Street. Later renamed Blackstone and Franklin Squares, both featured dolphin fountains and were enclosed by an elaborate cast iron fence. (The original fencing can still be seen in front of the Church of the Immaculate Conception on Harrison Avenue.) The current fencing was installed in the 1980's. Each square is the size of Copley Square in the Back Bay, and together they are the largest passive greenspace in the South End. These two parks are dramatically underfunded. The Boston Parks and Recreation Department recently installed new acorn lights in Blackstone and Franklin Squares at a cost of

\$215,000, however major improvements are needed: a new drainage system, new benches, historic signage, and restoration of the fountains, as well as regrading of the sod and tree care. The Boston Parks and Recreation Department should also seek a source for \$1.25 million in funding to replace existing fencing with the original design.

South End Burial Ground

The City of Boston has allocated \$300,000 through FY 1997 to restore the burial grounds. The design phase is nearly completed and the plan went out to bid in December 1996. New signs were installed in the Fall 1996. The grounds have been opened to the public during house and garden tours.

F. Private Investment Trends

Several converging investment trends in the Washington Street Corridor warrant special attention. Revitalization strategies for this area should capitalize on the synergy created by the following trends:

A robust real estate market

With a residential rental vacancy rate of less than 2%, the South End experienced a robust residential real estate market during 1996. For the first time in recent memory, private developers have been investing in the rehabilitation of historic buildings along Washington Street for condominiums and rental housing.

An encouraging recent trend has been the construction of new townhouses on vacant lots in neighborhoods near Washington Street, Massachusetts Avenue, Bradford Street, Shawmut Avenue and Cumston Street. The strong demand for housing in this area is beginning to justify the cost of new

residential construction which typically is much more than that of renovating existing townhouses.

A growing artists community

The South End is home to one of Boston's largest artists communities, centered along the Washington Street Corridor and in the adjacent historic industrial loft building district along Harrison Avenue. There are approximately 375 art-related businesses, mostly independent artists, within this area. Each September, the United Artists of the South End host the well-publicized South End Open Studios weekend which in recent years has attracted 10,000 visitors from throughout metropolitan Boston.

Investment in the Washington Street corridor by Boston's Asian community

Nearby Chinatown is enjoying a "renaissance" fueled, in part, by investment from Hong Kong. Similar investment is renewing the South End Washington Street corridor neighborhood with new stores, markets and housing development.

Commercial investment

Commercial developers have also shown interest in developing retail uses and restaurants. Investors are currently proposing to rehabilitate historic Minot Hall, a deteriorated 140 year-old brick building on Washington Street and West Springfield Streets, into an antique center that will rent space to more than 200 antique dealers. At present, a purchase and sale agreement has been signed on the property, which has been vacant since 1979, and a financing package using public and private funds is being put together for this million dollar project.

The Washington Street Corridor, is strategically located near the juncture of three major regional highways: the Massachusetts Turnpike, the Southeast Expressway and the Central Artery.
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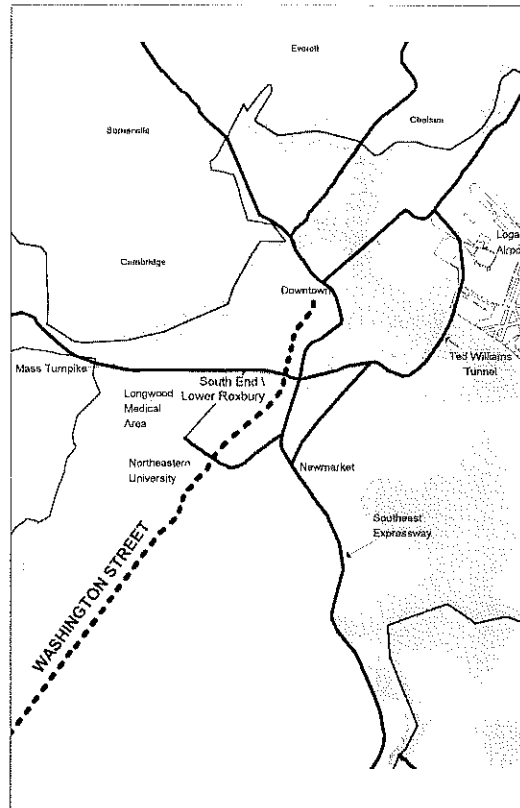
G. Washington Street's strategic location in the metropolitan area

To better understand the development potential of Washington Street, this area must be viewed in a city-wide and regional context. The Washington Street Corridor, including Harrison Avenue and Albany Street, is strategically located near the juncture of three major regional highways: the Massachusetts Turnpike, the Southeast Expressway and the Central Artery. The new Ted Williams Tunnel allows direct access to Logan International Airport from the South End. In addition, Washington Street intersects with the Melnea Cass Boulevard allowing direct access from Lower Roxbury to the Southeast Expressway and the Central Artery.

Proximity to the regional highway system allows businesses greater access to the Washington Street Corridor from Downtown Boston and the entire metropolitan area. These major highway improvements make this area a desirable location for new business.

There is a real opportunity to market the benefits of the Washington Street Corridor's strategic location and compete with the suburbs for future business development. The South End / Lower Roxbury Development Policy Plan, adopted by the BRA / EDIC in 1993, proposed several public initiatives to capitalize on this opportunity to encourage broader business development which will bring jobs to the corridor as stated below:

"This area has the potential to offer many of the advantages that make suburbs attractive to commercial enterprises—accessibility, affordable land costs and rent in the Harrison Avenue area proposed public transit, labor force and



vacant land parcels that allow for large floor plates—plus some additional attributes such as the proximity to the airport, medical institutions and distinctive residential neighborhoods."

H. The BioSquare Development

BioSquare is a joint venture with Boston University Medical School to develop 16 acres adjacent to the expressway as a regional center for research and commerce. The \$500 million BioSquare project has benefited from the Washington Street Corridor's accessible location near major highways, the airport, and the other medical areas in Boston. Already completed is the 200,000 square foot Center for Advanced Biomedical Research. Plans

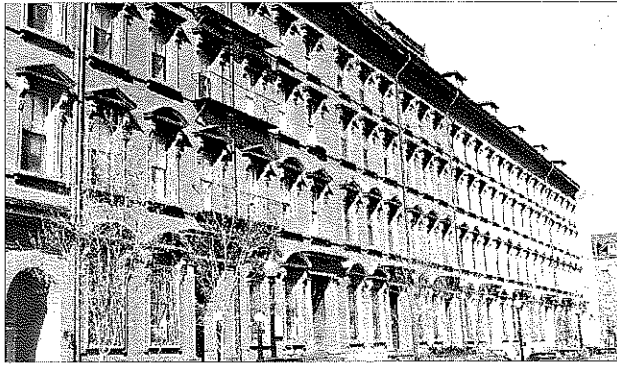
for the near future call for 2.5 million square feet of building space including three research and office buildings, a parking garage, and hotel. There have been several commitments made to the South End community including linkage dollars, financial assistance to other South End institutions, the City Labs training program, and construction jobs as well as permanent jobs for South End residents. The development will have retail space fronting on Albany Street, and 39% open space.

I. The Boston Medical Center

The Boston Medical Center is the largest employer in the Washington Street Corridor with 5,138 full and part time employees. The Boston Medical Center is working with Mayor Menino and others to develop a health insurance product that would bring people to this part of the City. Outreach to the community is a priority for the Center and they are looking into ways to improve local access.

J. The South End Neighborhood Housing Initiative (SENHI)

The South End Neighborhood Housing Initiative (SENHI) is a major commitment by the Boston Redevelopment Authority / Economic Development and Industrial Corporation (BRA / EDIC,) non-profit community developers and private for-profit developers to build attractive, affordable housing in the South End and Lower Roxbury. At a total development cost of \$ 50 million, non-profit and private developers have built limited-equity cooperatives and rental housing on publicly-owned vacant land or in dilapidated buildings along the Washington Street corridor. SENHI comprises six mixed-income housing developments with a total of 307 units—two thirds of which are



Rowhouses on Blackstone Square

affordable to low and moderate income families. Built to market-rate design standards, several SENHI project—including Langham Court, Roxbury Corners and Parmelee Court—have won national architectural awards, including the 1993 Honor Award given to Langham Court by the American Institute of Architects.

SENHI has already contributed to the revitalization of Washington Street in several ways: first, the architecture and urban design of each project has improved, and made more viable, the quality of the physical environment. In addition, each project provides a home to committed individuals and families who have a vested interest in the revitalization of their Washington Street neighborhood.

K. Historic and Architectural Resources along Washington Street

Washington Street is one of Boston's longest and oldest streets. Stretching today from the heart of downtown Boston to the Dedham town line, Washington Street traverses many of the City's neighborhoods. From 1630 when Boston was settled, until the filling of the South End and Lower Roxbury occurred in the nineteenth century, Washington Street was the only land bridge connecting the Town of Boston, located on the Shawmut Peninsula, with the settlements to the south including Roxbury and Dorchester.

Washington Street is in the South End Historic Landmark District, the largest intact Victorian rowhouse district in the nation. Under Chapter 772 of the 1975 Mass. Acts, the South End Historic Landmark District regulates changes to exterior architectural features within

the district. Several notable historic buildings contribute to Washington Street's urban scale and distinctive architectural character. These historic structures, some of which are vacant, provide important opportunities for new investment in business and residential development.

The South End is a national model for historic preservation and economic development. A 20% tax credit is available for a certified rehabilitation of historic buildings for commercial, industrial and rental residential purposes. The historic tax credit program is administered by the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Staff from the Boston Landmarks Commission assists businesses and real estate developers in understanding the District design guidelines, in order to expedite the review process.

L. Availability of low-interest loans and technical support from the Boston Empowerment Center

Most of the Washington Street Corridor is within the Federal Enhanced Enterprise Community Zone. The Menino Administration has set up the Boston Empowerment Center to help businesses within the designated Enhanced Enterprise Community Zone by providing technical support, low-interest business loans and other services. Many businesses on Washington Street are eligible for assistance and resources at the Boston Empowerment Center. As part of Boston's Enhanced Enterprise Community, the Washington Street Corridor community has access to \$22 million in Economic Development Initiative funds to be used in conjunction with Section 108 loans.

M. An effective local constituency in support of new development

The Washington Street Task Force has become an effective constituency in support of new development proposals which contribute to the redevelopment and revitalization of Washington Street. Predictable support from the community at public hearings is an important incentive for developers as they go through the regulatory and zoning approval process. This pro-active constituency for revitalization and redevelopment, which includes residents, business owners and community leaders, is a major asset.

Washington Street has suffered from years of disinvestment. The street is in extreme disrepair and in need of major reconstruction and several historic buildings remain vacant and deteriorated.

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II. Challenges Facing Washington Street

Inadequate Public Transit Service

Although the dismantling of the elevated Orange Line transit structure in 1987 opened up unique urban design and development opportunities, this entire area has been under served by adequate public transportation since that time. The delay in the installation of the Transit Replacement Service and street reconstruction has had a chilling effect on reinvestment activity by property owners and prospective developers.

Business Concerns

The most frequently cited problems from the Task Force Business Survey were as follows:

- Physical deterioration of the street. Business owners expressed the sentiment that "Washington Street is like a forgotten street," pointing to the large pot holes, ripped up sidewalks, poor quality of street repairs and trash strewn vacant lots. New street design and reconstruction and lighting fixtures are a priority.
- Lack of parking. Business owners cited inadequate parking as the most significant challenge faced by their business. Large sections of on-street parking are taken up by downtown commuters; double parked cars are ticketed and towed. Business owners expressed a high level of frustration with the lack of consistent enforcement and suggested that meters with residential parking after 6 pm be implemented. A comprehensive parking plan for Washington Street was recommended.

- Perception of crime. Business owners stressed that while the reality of crime along Washington Street, particularly during the day, is not significant, the perception of crime remains a problem. Prostitutes and drug dealers are often found loitering near Massachusetts Avenue and the Cathedral Housing Project. The Boston Police Department has been successful in reducing the crime rate in this area by 20%.

- Need for better services. The two issues most often raised were the need for better lighting along the corridor, and the need for better snow removal and a new transportation system.

Social isolation of the Washington Street Corridor

Washington Street has become the "back-yard" to Downtown and the rest of the South End. There is a need to integrate Washington Street into the social and commercial fabric of its bordering neighborhoods: Chinatown, South Boston, and Lower Roxbury. Physical barriers—the Turnpike, the Southeast Expressway—make this connection with adjacent neighborhoods difficult and contribute to the perception of the Washington Street corridor as an isolated area.

Need for Jobs and Opportunities for Economic Advancement

The Washington Street Corridor has a very diverse population in terms of race, ethnicity, income and age. *Washington Street Corridor: A Socio-Economic Analysis*, prepared and published by the South End Neighborhood Action Program of ABCD (SNAP)—a companion report to this Washington Street Task Force report—provides a socio-economic and demographic profile of the area. As indicated in this report, there are wide disparities in terms of income, poverty and levels of unemployment

in the census tracts along the Washington Street Corridor. The report states that: "A large proportion of the minorities belong to younger age groups whose economic advancement will depend also on the educational, training and employment opportunities provided within and around the neighborhood."

A major challenge will be to encourage investment and redevelopment that provides opportunities for economic advancement to low-income youth who live along the Washington Street Corridor.

III. Redevelopment Strategies

GOAL 1

Build a New Washington Street

Recommendations:

1. Rebuild Washington Street and design a new streetscape that includes visual improvements and an active mix of residential, commercial and recreational uses.

The reconstruction of Washington Street is of primary importance to the successful redevelopment and revitalization of the street. Street reconstruction funding from the MBTA should include new sidewalks, lighting, benches and planters that conform to the design standards mandated by the South End Landmarks District Commission, as well as new trees and landscaping.

As part of the Washington Street transitway project or *Silver Line*, the MBTA and the Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD) will allocate funds for the re-design and reconstruction of Washington Street. The MBTA will fund transit improvements and MHD will fund the street re-construction. This project is a unique opportunity to restore Washington Street to its historic prominence as one of Boston's most important streets.

The Task Force recommends that the following objectives guide the implementation of the *Silver Line* and street reconstruction project:

- Create an exciting streetscape that dramatically changes the current image of Washington Street. Create a strong visual identity for the street.
- Consider the *Silver Line* as a major capital investment that will stimulate redevelopment along Washington Street.

- Use this project as an opportunity to design and rebuild the street to accommodate a new transit line from Dudley Square to Downtown Crossing, thereby connecting the Washington Street Corridor to the rest of the City by transit.

- Build attractive sidewalks and crosswalks with amenities that will encourage pedestrians to come to Washington Street and encourage foot traffic to support businesses.

- The MBTA should further supplement funding beyond the initial allocation if necessary to re-build Washington Street.

- Support infrastructure improvements that encourage investment and community revitalization along Washington Street sooner rather than later.

- Ensure that the transit service selected for Washington Street is inherently permanent in nature, with major capital expenditures and physical improvements made now to indicate a commitment to install a system that is viable for the long term.

- Establish Washington Street as a multi-modal transportation spine that provides regional linkages to the significant human, economic development, and cultural resources in Roxbury, the South End, and Chinatown.

- Develop an urban design plan that closely integrates street improvements and stations with the surrounding residential areas and businesses. This urban design plan should not result in the closing of residential side street that intersect with Washington Street.

In the Fall 1996, the MBTA presented several conceptual street design alternatives to the South End and Lower Roxbury communities. After lengthy discussions with the MBTA, Task Force members identified the concept illustrated on the following pages as the option which best responds to the concerns, interests and vision articulated in this Report. Further, the Task force identifies several priorities concerning this alternative:

- In the interest of initiating transit service as soon as possible, the Task Force has chosen to support all potential transit vehicle modes, and strongly urges that the reconstruction of Washington Street based on this design alternative begin no later than Spring 1998.

- To ensure the viability of businesses along Washington Street, this alternative should be designed in such a way to preserve almost all current on-street parking.

- While the Task Force endorses this design, in concept, many important details must be resolved. "Recommendation 3: Appoint a citizens oversight committee to guide decisions about the design and reconstruction of Washington Street"—articulates a community review process through which Task Force members can work with MBTA consultants as they proceed with the design of the Silver Line Project.

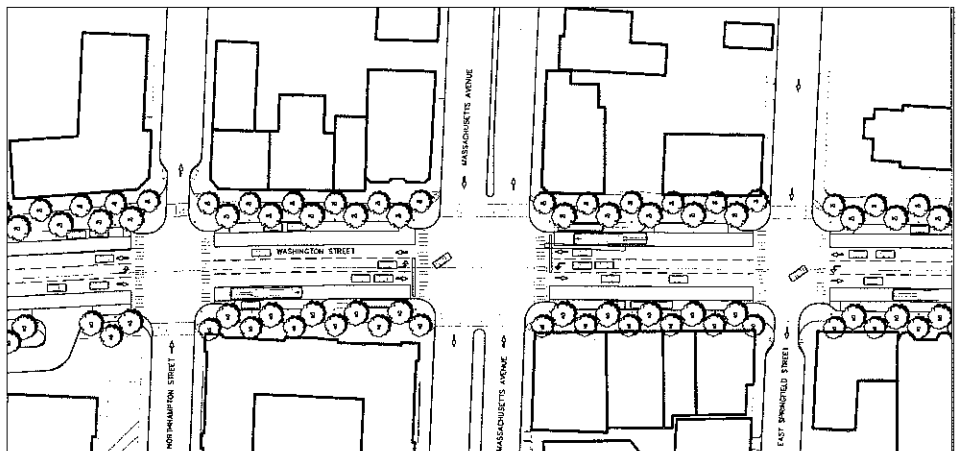
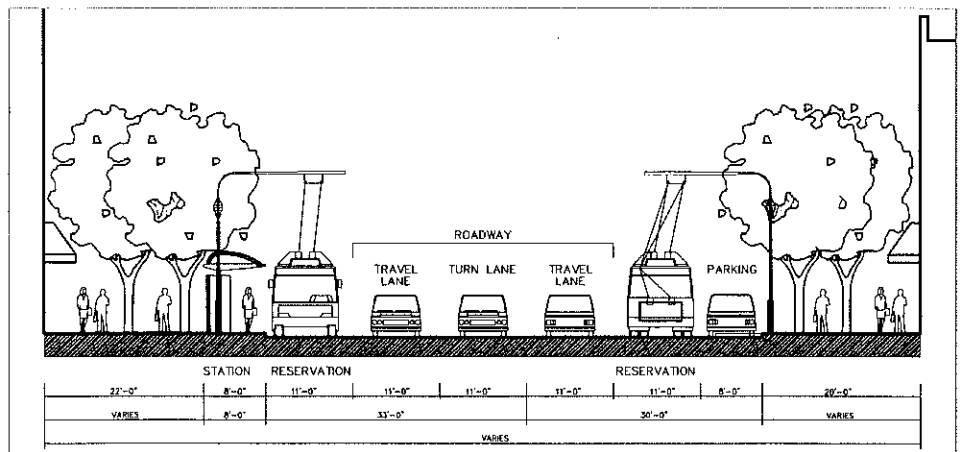
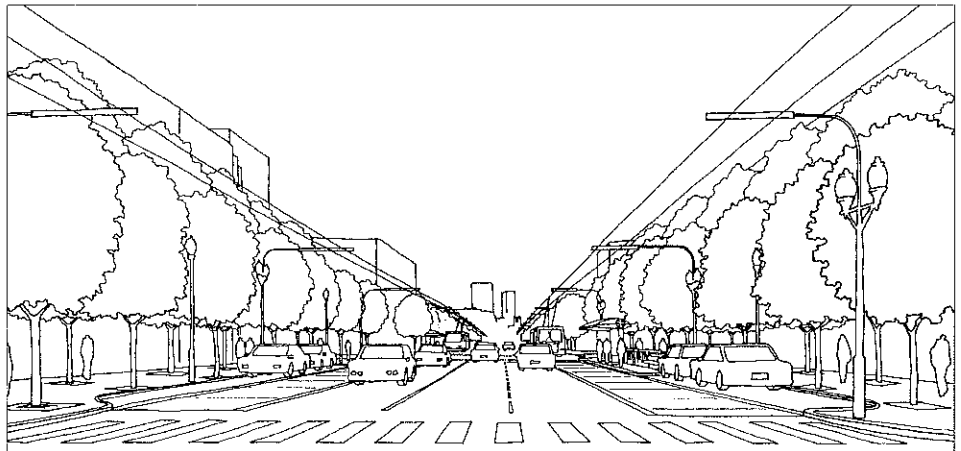
- The terminus of the Transitway should allow for good connections to Downtown Crossing and, in a future phase, transit service should be extended south of Dudley Square along Blue Hill Avenue to Mattapan Square. Several priorities concern locations outside the focus area of the Task Force. Members, however, see these priorities as important to the Washington Street Corridor within the South End and Lower Roxbury.

2. The City should continue its efforts to ensure that the MBTA and the Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD) begin reconstruction of Washington Street by Spring 1998.

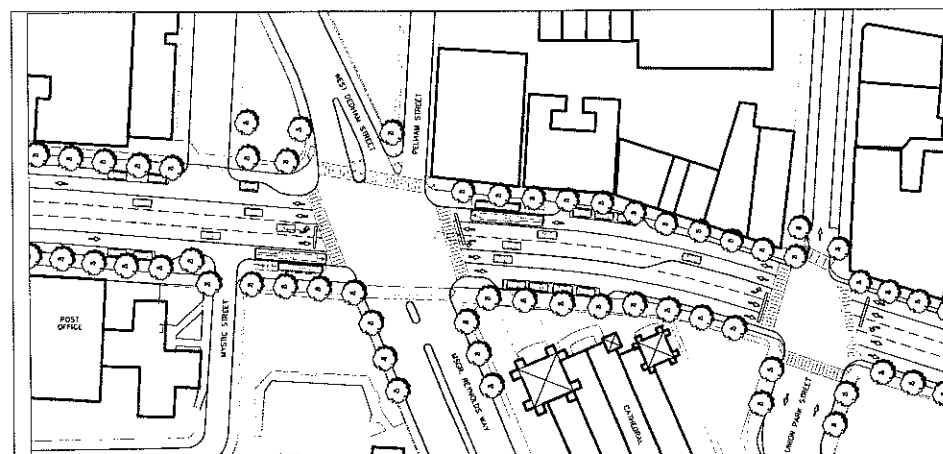
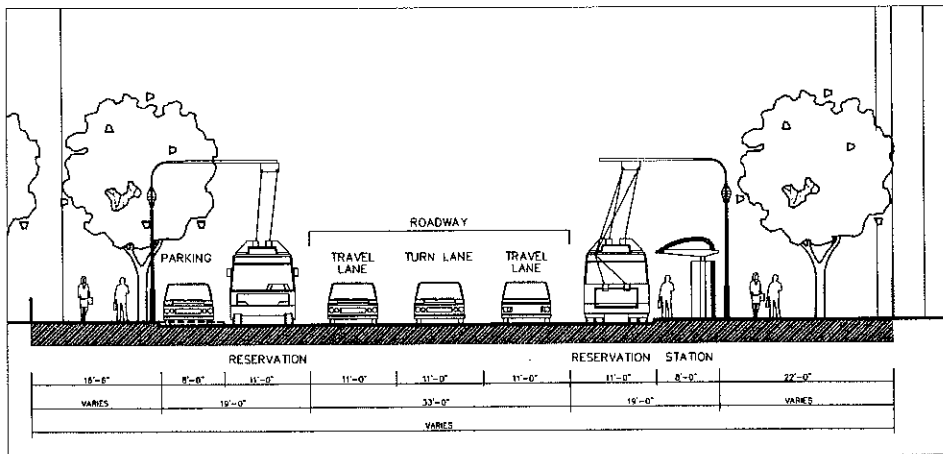
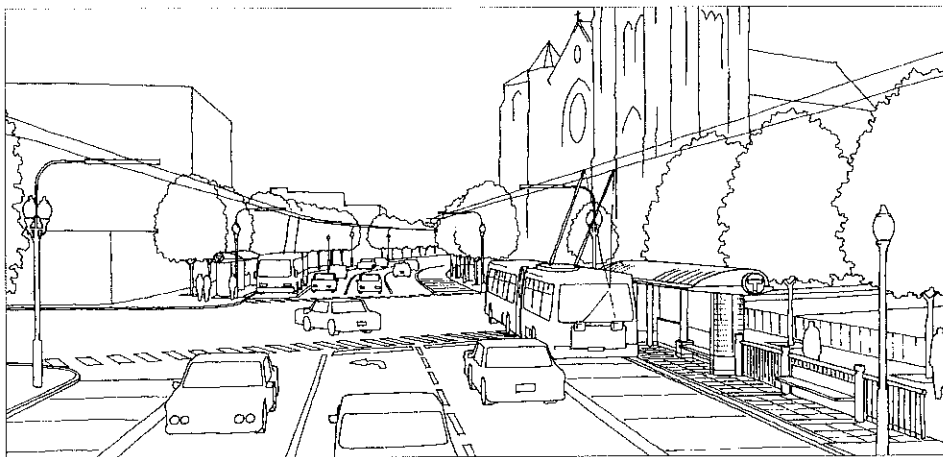
In a recent joint letter to State Transportation Secretary James J. Kerasiotes, Mayor Thomas M. Menino and nine other Boston elected officials urged the State to begin immediately the reconstruction of Washington Street as part of the long-delayed transit service replacement project. The City should continue this effort to ensure that MHD embark on a major re-design and reconstruction initiative for Washington Street as part of the MBTA's *Silver Line* project. To make such an initiative a reality, the City should make every effort to include required construction funds to be included in the State Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP.)

The objective of this initiative should be the same as the Boston Boulevard Project, as stated at the Boston Boulevard Project Workshop in May 1996:

"The mission of the project is to create a plan that will connect neighborhoods, cultural amenities, open space areas, business districts and downtown locations, and better integrate them into the public realm...Each street is being designed to reinforce it's unique visual character or to create a new public image, taking into consideration all of it's users: cars, trucks, public transit, bicyclists, businesses, residents and pedestrians in general."



Views at
Massachusetts Avenue



Views at Holy Cross

3. Appoint a citizens oversight committee to guide decisions about the design and reconstruction of Washington Street and the Silver Line Transit Replacement Service.

- The Task Force recommends the appointment of a citizens oversight committee, comprised of residents from Chinatown, the South End/Lower Roxbury, and Dudley Square, to review and guide decisions about the design and reconstruction of Washington Street. Design decisions regarding the width of sidewalks, placement of signs, markers, street furniture, treeways and landscaping are crucial for a successful streetscape. The committee should monitor appropriate agencies—MBTA, MHD, Boston Transportation Department (BTD) and the BRA/ EDIC—and sponsor design review meetings for the benefit of the wider community.

- Seek funding to commission an urban design consultant to develop guidelines for Washington Street and work in collaboration with the Citizens oversight committee who will be reviewing the MBTA Transit Replacement Service Project and street improvements. As an alternative, assign and budget design staff from the BRA / EDIC to work with the committee.

- Require that public agencies and private developers use these guidelines as they make design decisions about the reconstruction of the street and new development projects. Developers should present their proposed projects in the architectural context of Washington Street in order for the community to assess the degree to which their proposals meet these guidelines.

- Coordinate public streetscape improvement programs with signage installation to reduce clutter and enhance visual cohesiveness.

- The citizens oversight committee should ensure that all street design proposals associated with the Silver Line project comply with the standards and criteria of the South End Landmark Commission and the requirements of the Boston Transportation Department (BTD.)

4. The City of Boston should continue its successful efforts to improve the parks and public open space along Washington Street.

The parks along Washington Street are major assets used by the whole South End/Lower Roxbury community. The City of Boston should continue current efforts to make these parks more viable as both recreational resources and passive open spaces to this community. The viability and attractiveness of the parks and other public open space are essential to the redevelopment and revitalization of Washington Street. Undertaking the following strategies will help achieve this goal:

- Public/Private partnerships and ongoing environmental education programs are necessary to create an attitude of stewardship within the community. This will be essential to Washington Street becoming a vital urban boulevard. A partnership plan should be created with the Boston Parks and Recreation Department in the South End and Lower Roxbury. Constituent Services representatives from the Boston Parks and Recreation Department should continue to work with the community on maintenance issues for each park along the Washington Street corridor.

- Identify additional funds through Henderson or Brown Funds, and Inter-modal Surface Transportation Enhancement Act Program (ISTEA). Review funding policy for playgrounds and parks.

- Identify funding options by reviewing the City Capital Improvement budget for Washington Street. Lobby for specific projects on a cyclical basis by specifying line items that pertain to Washington Street. Refer to the Open Space Plan for Boston, prepared by the Boston Parks and Recreation Department in April, 1996.

- Neighborhood Associations and Tenants Organizations should assume responsibility for tree stewardship on the cross streets. Businesses and institutions should be responsible for trees along Washington Street and Harrison Avenue.

The following recommendations about specific parks, open spaces and particular elements of the streetscape will further help in achieving this goal.

Peters Park

The Boston Parks and Recreation Department should work with the community to create a master plan for the park that would include an enhanced the Washington Street entrance, eliminating the chain link fence, softening the harsh lighting around the basketball courts, adding a wrought iron fence and completing perimeter tree plantings. The best way of viewing Peters Park as a neighborhood resource is to consider it as a "town green" of neighborhood "common." Undeveloped properties surrounding the park should be developed in a way that capitalize on the park's amenities and green space. Currently, abutting houses put back walls to the park and further accentuate the park's isolation.

South End Burial Ground

Find a local organization that can form a partnership with the Parks Department to help them make it more accessible to visitors as part of the historic marketing of Washington Street.

Blackstone/Franklin Squares

Major improvements are needed: a new drainage system, new benches, historic signage, and restoration of the fountains, as well as regrading of the sod and tree care. The recent urban Self-Help grant application for landscape restoration was not funded. At least \$500,000 for landscape restoration and \$1.25 million to replace fencing needs to be secured.

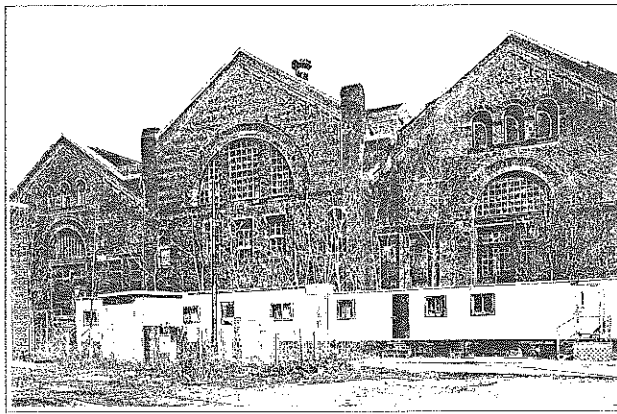
Street Trees

A tree stewardship initiative should be created. Sidewalk design criteria must take into account street tree's cultural requirements. Utilize the best available tree planting technology, as presented in the BSLA's Urban Street Tree Planting Symposium Report.

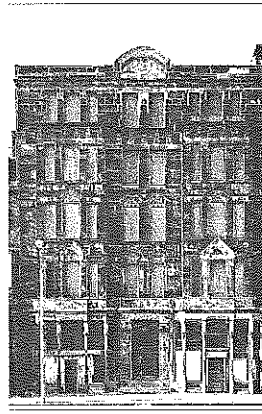
5. The City of Boston should continue current efforts to improve and maintain the Blackstone Elementary School and other city-owned properties.

Schools, such as the Blackstone Elementary School, are important community resources and their design should enhance connections to the neighborhood. In the case of the Blackstone School, the current physical design of the building, built in the 1970s, no longer accommodates today's needs. The building was originally designed to front on Shawmut Avenue and turn its back to the old Orange Line elevated transit structure on Washington Street. As a result there is no entrance on Washington Street today.

The Blackstone Elementary School and the neighboring Blackstone Community School are underutilized assets that need to be physically improved for the children who attend these schools, and also made accessible to the broader community. The Blackstone School is especially significant



MBTA Power Station



Alexandra Hotel

because it is the largest elementary school in Boston and its educational program is the focus of many corporate "partnership" efforts. Improving the physical characteristics of these facilities will have an impact on the experience of the children that attend these schools, as well as the life of the surrounding community.

- The City of Boston should seek funding to hire a design consultant to develop for a Master plan for the school complex. The plan should seek solutions to the following needs:
- Lack of greenspace / playground in the interior courtyard
- Insufficient faculty parking
- Reestablish the building line along Washington Street
- Reconnecting the building to the community.
- Improve entryway signage to both schools
- Update technology by wiring classrooms for internet access
- The City of Boston should seek funding for and work with the Blackstone to build a greenspace / playground. The Blackstone School should use "Schoolyards Initiative" funding to develop preliminary greenspace planning.
- The City should seek funding to remove the existing chain link fence and erect a new fence which better reflects the architectural character of the surrounding neighborhood.
- Address the lack of adequate parking for teachers and staff at the school. Consider ways to make available a parking facility that could accommodate the needs of residents, businesses and institutions on Washington Street, such as the Blackstone School. "Recommendation 7: Create satellite parking garages on Albany Street or

Harrison Avenue to help relieve current parking problems and accommodate future neighborhood commercial expansion" discusses this idea further.

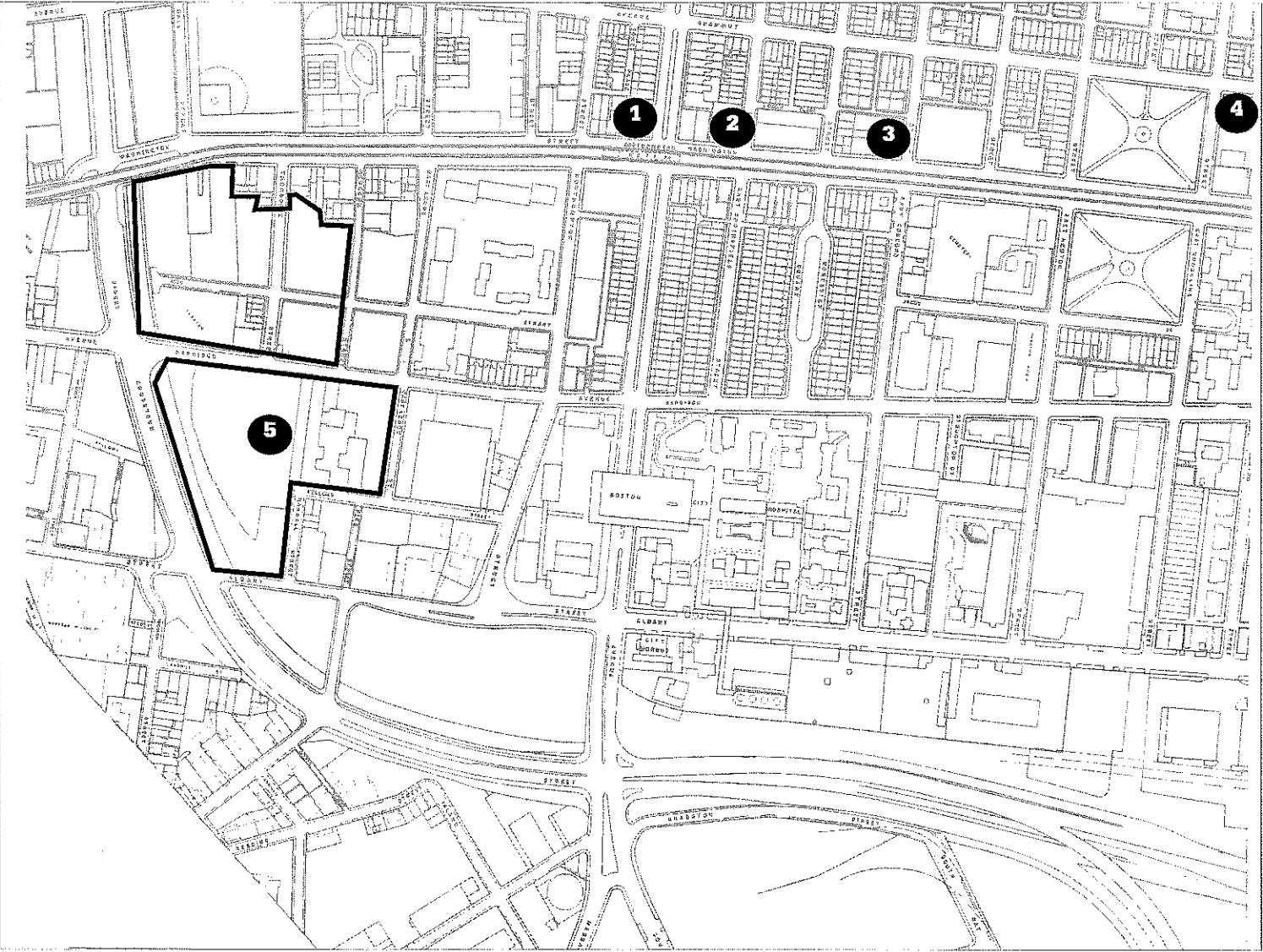
6. Continue to redevelop vacant or underutilized land and buildings along Washington Street.

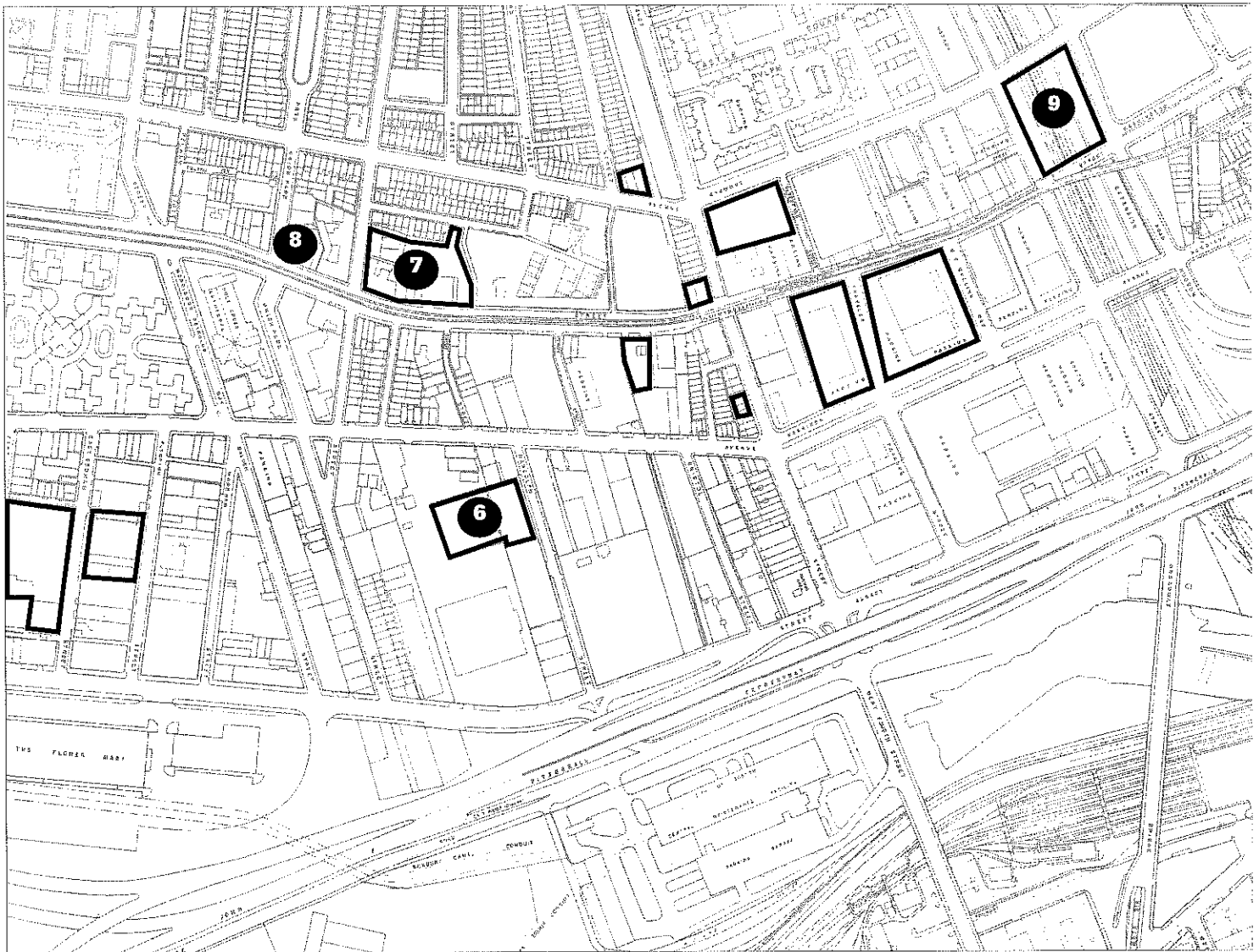
- The BRA / EDIC and PFD should issue Requests for Proposals for vacant in-fill parcels around Franklin Square in accordance with the guidelines of the South End / Lower Roxbury Development Policy Plan.
- Appropriate City agencies should study potential development opportunities in the South End Municipal building on Blackstone Square. The South End Community Health Center will vacate this building when it consolidates its programs in the new facility on BRA / EDIC Parcel RC-9. This move will open up opportunities for new uses within this important building.
- The Boston Housing Authority (BHA) should advertise a Request for Proposals to purchase and rehab the Chatham, a current BHA-managed residential building. Non-profit community development corporations and private for-profit housing developers have expressed an interest in redeveloping this property. In the absence of issuing a Request for Proposals, the BHA should continue to work with community groups to rehab and improve the property. The BHA should focus, in particular, on improving the appearance of the street level retail space.
- Appropriate City agencies should assist the efforts of private developers to facilitate the review and permitting process.
- The City should explore possible incentives that will encourage property owners to develop privately-held land or buildings, such as the historic Alexandra Hotel, that have remained vacant for extended periods.
- Consider the site of the former

Westinghouse facility for shopping facilities that would expand on the regional destination nature of Mings and the 88 Supermarket, and provide additional day and night attractions.

- The historic but vacant MBTA "Power Station" on Harrison Avenue is a unique building that offers possibilities for a creative and innovative development. The BRA / EDIC should initiate discussions with the MBTA and explore the feasibility of making this property available for redevelopment. The architecture and interior space might accommodate a large produce or flower market (to accommodate the needs of the regional wholesale flower distribution industry centered in the South End.) Other options might include commercial ventures that benefit from large public "market-type" spaces. All re-use options should be considered.
- The BRA / EDIC should consider undertaking a development feasibility study of the Harrison Avenue / Albany Street Corridor adjacent to Washington Street. This study should identify development opportunities on vacant parcels, study any current impediments to development and consider ways to promote the Washington Street Corridor / Harrison Avenue area, which is home to a vibrant artists community, as a special "arts" district with galleries and related businesses. This feasibility study could serve as an update to the 1993 South End / Lower Roxbury Development Policy Plan.
- The BRA / EDIC should consider the feasibility of developing the air rights over the Massachusetts Turnpike between the South End and Chinatown. Any study of air rights should include participation by residents from both these communities in cooperation with Tent City Corporation, IBA, and the Asian Community Development Corporation. Properly-designed development over the Turnpike could serve as a more inviting link between the South End, and the Downtown and Chinatown. Air rights

Future Redevelopment Opportunities along Washington Street Corridor





- 1** Alexandra Hotel
2 Minot Hall
3 The Chatham
4 South End Municipal Building
5 Former Stride Rite Site
6 MBTA Power Station
7 Hub Motors Site
8 Former Bank Building
9 Turnpike Air Rights
☐ Vacant and Under-Utilized Parcels

development at this location could provide opportunities for open space, housing and commercial uses that could benefit the adjacent communities and make future business activity more viable along Washington Street.

7. Create satellite parking garages on Albany Street or Harrison Avenue to help relieve current parking problems and accommodate future neighborhood commercial expansion.

■ Encourage future private developers to build below grade and / or structured parking in excess of the spaces required by zoning as part of new projects which could then be leased to businesses and residents along Washington Street. Make below grade parking a requirement in future requests for proposals for redevelopment City and BRA owned vacant land.

■ The Boston Transportation Department should fund a study that documents current levels of off-street parking and capacity for additional spaces. As part of the study, the Boston Transportation Department should take the lead in negotiating possible arrangements that make space in existing facilities (such as the Boston Medical Center or E.I. DuPont) available to businesses, schools and churches during off-peak hours (for example, space on Sunday mornings could be leased by churches along Washington Street.)

■ Designate areas and vacant parcels where structured parking should be encouraged. Structured parking garages could incorporate street level retail space.

■ The design of the proposed Police Station on Harrison Avenue should be modified to include below-grade parking. Consider a second phase addition to the proposed Police Station on Harrison Avenue that includes a parking garage on Parcel 54 (where at-grade parking is being proposed.)

Consider the viability of building a parking garage on this site (or other available sites) in conjunction with a private developer; such a parking facility could provide space for the police, Cathedral Housing tenants, Blackstone School staff, medical staff at nearby hospital and research facilities and, on Sunday mornings, worshippers at the Holy Cross Cathedral and other places of worship.

■ Address critical parking problem on Washington Street between Herald and East Berkeley Streets. Develop a parking plan to ensure the continued success of the businesses in this area.

8. Re-consider the one-way traffic flow along Washington Street between East Berkeley Street and the Massachusetts Turnpike.

Current one-way traffic between East Berkeley Street and the Turnpike precludes a direct traffic connections from Downtown Crossing to the South End area of the Washington Street Corridor. A direct flow of traffic from Downtown along Washington Street will increase the viability of businesses in this area.

Goal ②

Revitalize Washington Street by creating opportunities for new jobs and businesses.

Recommendations:

1. Promote the development potential of Washington Street

■ Designate a liaison from the Mayor's Office of Business Services to take the lead on the following initiatives:

■ Prepare a package to promote the investment potential of Washington Street, for distribution to real estate developers, the banking community, and the business community.

■ Encourage banks to open full service branches; set up regular meetings to update banks development activity.

■ Include Washington Street in the Bright Times for Boston Business marketing initiative sponsored by the Public Facilities Department. Prepare a prospectus highlighting available space and vacant land for development (including both public and private property.)

■ Publish a One-Stop Shopping Guide for developers that outlines applicable agency regulations and incentives programs.

2. Explore the possibility of expanding business training programs, such as the BankBoston's Open for Business pilot project or the grass-roots training program, This Neighborhood Means Business, to the Washington Street Corridor.

BankBoston's Open for Business pilot project in Egleston Square is a locally run program that provides business training and expertise to area business as well as providing loans. This program reaches out to minority businesses and helps them achieve their financial goals, and in turn provides a new client base for the bank.

This Neighborhood Means Business, a multi-lingual program designed to strengthen local neighborhood businesses, offers practical training to small business owners in bookkeeping, marketing, regulations, and store display. Merchants who complete the program are eligible for loans up to \$50,000. The program is a project of Federated Dorchester Neighborhood Houses, Inc., and was developed in collaboration with the Massachusetts Attorney General, the Suffolk County District Attorney, the City of Boston, and Fleet Bank.

3. Endorse Mayor Menino's initiative to create a tax-free retail sales zone in designated areas such as the Washington Street Corridor.

The Task Force endorses Mayor Menino's effort to persuade State lawmakers to pass tax incentive legislation aimed at attracting business to Boston's Enhanced Enterprise Community zone which includes most of the Washington Street Corridor in the South End and Lower Roxbury. Incentives include the following:

- Eliminate the 5% sales tax on retail goods sold by stores in designated neighborhoods.
- \$3,000 tax credit over five years to any company that hires a person who lives within a designated zone such as the Washington Street Corridor.
- Elimination of the sales tax on construction material and equipment for firms building or expanding in a designated zone such as the Washington Street Corridor.
- Matching federal job and construction grants with \$12 million in state funds.
- A tax credit for firms doing at least \$1 million of new business with a firm in the designated zone.
- A 5% tax credit for firms donating computers with 486 microprocessing chips and training teachers in the Boston Public Schools.

In addition, the Task Force recommends extending this proposed tax-free retail zone to include all of the Washington Street Corridor within the South End and Lower Roxbury—even those areas that are outside the Enhanced Enterprise Community zone.

4. Encourage local banks to implement a small business lending initiative along the Washington Street Corridor.

New businesses along Washington Street often cannot obtain funding from normal channels such as small business loans from banks and other lenders. Participants in the Boston Society of Architects Washington Street Connections Public Design Workshop / Charrette addressed this problem by proposing a small business lending initiative called, "Boston's Main Street—Back to the Future!" Recognizing the potentially higher risk of start up businesses located in areas like Washington Street, this proposed lending initiative is structured along the following lines:

- Area banks would fund a loan pool dedicated to supplying small business loans of under \$100,000 for new businesses in the Washington Street Corridor which might otherwise have difficulty obtaining funding through the Small Business Association (SBA) and other regular banking sources.
- Loan applications would be submitted to a loan officer or officers whose time has been volunteered by participating banks. Initial underwriting would occur and a loan presentation would then be made to a lending committee comprised of representatives of the participating banks and community representatives of all of the neighborhoods along the corridor.

■ By utilizing the knowledge base of the community, loan applications for businesses which have little or no possibility of success would be rejected. Approved applications would have the imprimatur of the community behind them, giving them a better chance of survival than might be otherwise expected of startups.

■ Loan losses would be spread among the participating banks proportionally to the investment in the pool, reducing risk to an

acceptable level for all size banks. Loan income would also be allocated according to investment. Because of the volunteer aspects of the underwriting and administration, return on investment should be at market, even with slightly higher loss rates than might be experienced in the regular bank portfolio.

- A similar but separate initiative could be started for a micro loan program (under \$10,000,) or an existing group offering such services could be identified for community referral.

5. Prepare a strategy to promote business loans and technical assistance available from the Boston Empowerment Center to businesses and property owners on Washington Street.

- With assistance from the Washington Street Business Association, encourage local businesses and property owners on Washington Street to take advantage of the business assistance programs and loans available at the Boston Empowerment Center as part of the Enhanced Enterprise Community initiative.
- Leverage resources, including loan programs to small businesses and training opportunities, available at the Boston Empowerment Center, for the revitalization of Washington Street.

6. Develop partnerships that allow residents access to jobs and job training in the neighborhood.

- Consider funding a coordinated effort through community based organizations to provide South End / Lower Roxbury residents with job readiness training.
- Consider funding a job bank in collaboration with community based organizations where neighborhood employers can list employment openings.

- Develop partnerships between employers and service agencies that can provide training to match skills and job requirements.

7. Create an action plan to address security concerns and consider alternatives to solid storefront grates.

- Request that staff from the Mayor's Office of Business Services, Boston Landmarks Commission, Boston Empowerment Center and the Boston Police Department to work on this action plan with the Washington Street Business Association, neighborhood associations and other community organizations.
- Research solutions to area business security which provide sufficient security while enhancing perception and aesthetics. Use expertise from the Main Streets Programs, the Blue Hill Avenue Initiative, Boston Landmarks Commission and initiatives from other cities such as Philadelphia's Center City District.
- Encourage the installation of mesh grates inside storefront windows.
- Develop an Request for Proposals for group insurance for Washington St. businesses that would allow a group effort to remove solid grates and reduce individual costs.
- Increase police presence on the street with bike and foot patrols.
- Develop community policing program with Boston Police Department and Boston Housing Authority police involving foot patrols.
- If appropriate, consider patrols by Boston Park Rangers on horseback in the parks along Washington Street (similar to mounted patrols at Jamaica Pond.)

- Continued and constant attention to graffiti removal.

- Provide sufficient street and security lighting, especially on side streets off Washington Street.

- Publicize the successful efforts by the Boston Police Department to dramatically reduce crime in this area during the past year. Positive publicity would dispel inaccurate perceptions of Washington Street as a high crime area.

8. Develop a maintenance program for Washington Street.

- As part of the effective on-going delivery of city services, liaisons – or contact persons – in each of the following agencies should continue to work with the community and the Washington Street Business Association on maintenance plans for the street: the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, the Boston Transportation Department, the Inspectional Services Department, the Public Works Department and the Office of the Chief of Basic Services. These agencies should develop maintenance plans for the street with input from the community.
- The Washington Street Business Association and local neighborhood groups should recruit "Co-Block Captains" to coordinate a maintenance program. "Co-Block Captain teams" should include co-captains from the local neighborhood group and the Washington Street Business Association respectively.
- The Washington Street Business Association should consider hiring people from local social service agencies such as the Pine Street Inn and Project Place to collect litter and maintain plantings.

As an example of this type of program, the Newbury Street League and the Downtown Crossing Association are partners in Clean

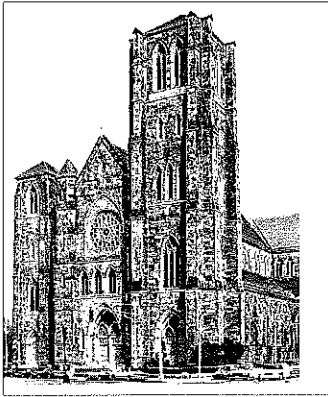
Corner..Bright Hopes (CCBH), a program that promotes economic self-sufficiency among homeless adults. Businesses hire people from Project Place to help keep the sidewalks clean, give directions, and promote business events. These jobs are funded by a HUD grant and managed by the City of Boston's Public Facilities Department.

- The Washington Street Business Association and the Public Works Department should continue to work together to develop a comprehensive snow removal plan.

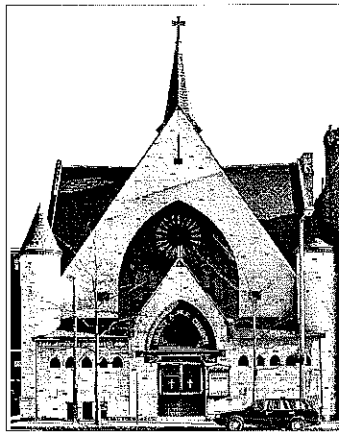
9. Bring 21st century technology to Washington Street: encourage local businesses and property owners on Washington Street to wire new buildings for T-1 or other high speed computer network access.

A T-1 telephone connection allows for voice, video, and data transmission at 1.5 million bits per second or about 150 times faster than a standard phone line. High speed Internet access has become a value-added amenity that has filled new residential buildings and commanded higher rents from New York City to San Francisco. As high speed communications and information access becomes increasingly important, the installation of such an amenity is being seen by Realtors as a valuable new asset for attracting businesses and residential tenants.

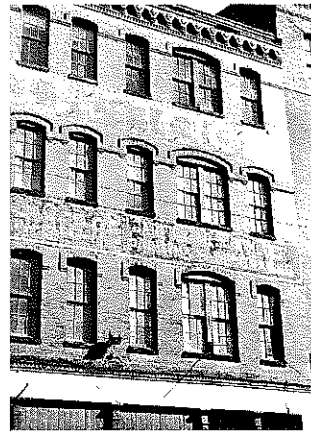
- In future Request for Proposals for redevelopment on publicly-owned vacant land, wiring new construction for high speed computer access should be strongly encouraged.
- Request that the Mayor's Office of Business Services and other appropriate agencies conduct informational seminars on how to access the latest technological information.



Holy Cross Cathedral



Grant A.M.E. Church



Historic loft building

Goal ③

Promote Washington Street as an exciting destination with diverse ethnic stores, markets and restaurants.

Recommendations:

1. Re-emphasize the important architectural, social and cultural history of the area to restore the image and vitality of the street, and create a new marketing strategy.

- Form a working group to develop a program to feature and promote the heritage of Washington Street. Members should include representatives of the Washington Street Business Association, neighborhood associations, and the South End Historical Society.
- Secure funding for a cultural resource inventory of Washington Street properties. Under direction of the Boston Landmarks Commission, engage a consultant to inventory the historic buildings, sites, and places and events along the Washington Street corridor.
- From the inventory, develop public information and marketing materials such as a guide to Washington Street.
- Work with the Bostonian Society to install markers along Washington Street as part of their city-wide marker program administered in conjunction with the Boston Landmarks Commission and neighborhood organizations such as the South End Historical Society. Develop the marker program to serve as the foundation for a "historical trail".
- Complete the installation of the South End Historic District street sign program for Washington Street. The sign program is administered by the Boston Transportation Department in conjunction with the Boston

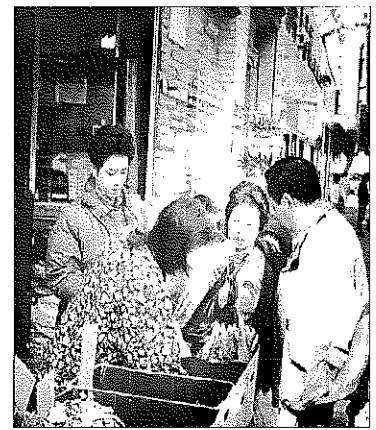
Landmarks Commission, and with funding assistance from the South End Historical Society.

- As part of the reconstruction of Washington Street, explore the design of additional street furnishings such as signs that say "Welcome to the South End and Lower Roxbury", hanging flower baskets, and banners. Consider flowering trees to line street.
- Assist the Washington Street Business Association to create a "South End Minute" that would air with local business TV advertisements.
- After street reconstruction, the Mayor's Office of Business Services and other City agencies should begin discussions with representatives of Boston's hotel and restaurant industry on ways to market restaurants and stores in the South End and Washington Street to new visitors
- After street reconstruction, expand walking tours (such as the Boston By Foot program) and trolley bus tours to include historic landmarks along Washington Street, such as the Holy Cross Cathedral, and restaurant and retail areas in the South End with assistance from the Greater Boston Visitors Bureau. The Washington Street Business Association and the Tremont Street Business Association should work with the Mayor's Office of Business Services and other City agencies to foster this initiative to visit important historic landmarks along Washington Street, such as the Holy Cross Cathedral.

One example is the Multicultural Youth Tour of What's Now (MYTOWN), a one-mile history trail that marks the history of the African-American and other ethnic communities in the South End since the last century, and the contributions of influential individuals that hailed from these communities. The New York Echoing Green Foundation

funded research for this project with a \$30,000 grant. Tours are conducted by 17-23 year olds.

- Develop a liaison between staff of the South End Landmarks District Commission and the Washington Street Business Association to assist business owners in preparing design review applications.
- Organize a special course at the Boston Center of Adult Education or other venues for adult evening and weekend courses, such as the Brookline Adult and Community Education Program and the Cambridge Center for Adult Education, on the architectural and social history of the South End and Lower Roxbury, in general, and the Washington Street Corridor, in particular. This course might involve weekend "walking tours" of the area that include visits to the growing number of popular restaurants in the area and arts events at the Boston Center for the Arts and other locales. This course could coincide with the South End Open Studios Day each September. Most of these studios are concentrated in, or near, the Washington Street corridor.
- With assistance from the Washington Street Business Association, encourage local businesses to participate in programs offered at the Boston Empowerment Center that provide funding and technical assistance to design creative storefront window displays and other physical improvements that contribute to more effective marketing of products and services provided by Washington Street businesses, and enhance the image of the area.



2. After street reconstruction, expand the marketing of the South End's successful art related businesses and restaurants to include the diverse ethnic restaurants and food markets along Washington Street.

- Promote Washington Street as a unique art, retail and restaurant destination within the City and the Metro area. To meet this objective, appropriate City agencies, with support from the Washington Street Business Association, should seek funding for a consultant to recommend marketing strategies for the area, and, in the process, study examples of efforts to 'market' similar areas in other cities. As part of this study, the consultant should consider the feasibility (and interest) in a Neighborhood Business Improvement District on Washington Street as a long-term goal.

- There are many precedents for a "New" Washington Street. Several cities across the United States boast unique districts with a multi-ethnic, "international" ambience that benefits, in some cases, from the presence of artist communities. The International District in Seattle, active with Asian stores and markets, abuts Pioneer Square, an historic artists loft district. SoHo and Tribeca in New York, and Little Havana in Miami are examples of exciting urban districts. New York's "NoHo" district is evolving into a dynamic place that is home to an emerging community of computer and electronic media entrepreneurs.

- Create and sponsor a Washington Street Cultural and Arts Organization that organizes and promotes monthly events including an Arts Festival in the streets, parks and stores in conjunction with the South End Open Studio Days event. The organization should celebrate the ethnic and cultural diversity, history of Washington Street and the 375 artists that work in the area. The City of Boston Office of Cultural Affairs, with assistance from the United South End Artists

Association, could take a lead in this effort by soliciting members from community-based groups, neighborhood associations and the Washington Street Business Association to serve in this Organization.

- The Mayor's Office of Business Services should work with real estate brokers and local businesses to attract and market space for restaurants and food markets. Ask the Mayor's Office of Business Services to prepare a one page summary of their services to hand out to businesses. The Mayor's Office of Business Services has a special role as a "clearinghouse" that matches new restaurants and stores in search of space with opportunities along Washington Street.

- Washington Street Business Association should encourage evening street activity by having local businesses stay open later one night a week. Notify residents' associations and area newspapers to promote the initiative.

3. Encourage the creation of a district-wide business association to promote and lobby for businesses in the South End and Lower Roxbury.

- Create a South End/Lower Roxbury Business Association that serves as an umbrella group for existing business and merchants groups: the Tremont Street Business Association, the Newmarket Business Association and the newly-formed Washington Street Business Association.

- The proposed South End/Lower Roxbury Business Association, modeled on the highly-effective Back Bay Association, could be funded by annual dues within the district. The large number of diverse businesses in the South End/Lower Roxbury form a sufficient critical mass to financially support the creation of a business association.

- Hire an executive director of the proposed South End/Lower Roxbury Business Association —on a full or half-time basis—to promote and lobby for the business community in the South End/Lower Roxbury.

A model for this association is The Back Bay Association is a 300 member business association that promotes business development and the Back Bay, and serves a liaison between public and private sectors on permits, zoning, security, and public improvement projects. Members include property owners, businesses, restaurants, hotels, schools, and churches.

Goal 4

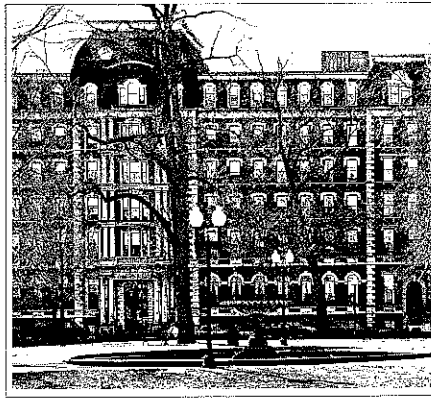
Create a new future for Washington Street.

Recommendations:

1. Build on the success of the Boston Main Streets Program.

- The Boston Main Street program is a public/private initiative of the City of Boston and the National Trust for Historic Preservation to revitalize neighborhood business districts. "The Main Street approach is a comprehensive approach to providing merchant groups and community residents with the tools and information necessary for their historic community center to compete in today's marketplace. Its four key elements, design, community organization, promotion, and economic restructuring, help neighborhood Main Street organizations capitalize on their unique historical, cultural, and architectural assets while also addressing the many economic development needs around small business retention and recruitment in light of strong competition from shopping malls and discount retailers."

- The Boston Main Streets recently launched the Washington Street Gateway Main Streets Program. This program can be



Franklin House

an effective initiative through which to implement many of the strategies recommended by the Task Force: marketing strategies, business training programs, storefront design improvements and small business loans.

Initiate redevelopment projects that build on the success of the City's Main Streets programs already established in several neighborhoods. With the recent designation of the Gateway Main Streets program, Washington Street now links five of the City's Main Streets programs including: Chinatown, Dudley Square, Egleston Square and Roslindale Square. Washington Street, in its entirety, reclaims its historic role as Boston's "Main Street" connecting several neighborhoods with Downtown Crossing.

2. Continue to implement the 1993 South End / Lower Roxbury Development Policy Plan which designated the Washington Street Corridor as a Special Study Area.

The South End / Lower Roxbury Development Policy Plan is a master plan to encourage and guide development in the South End / Lower Roxbury. The Development Policy Plan completes the 1965 Urban Renewal Plan by establishing new guidelines for the redevelopment of cleared vacant and underutilized parcels. The Plan also recommends a range of community oriented land uses on vacant parcels: housing, open space, neighborhood retail, and new and expanding business development. (See appendix)

3. Enact the proposed South End Neighborhood District Zoning which establishes a Neighborhood Development Area (NDA) sub-district along Washington Street.

The proposed South End Neighborhood District Zoning draft establishes Neighborhood Development Areas (NDA). The purpose of the Neighborhood Development Area is to promote the siting and design of any new development in a manner that is sensitive to the adjacent residential areas in the South End Neighborhood District and to enhance the economic development of the Washington Street corridor. The NDA zoning provisions allow for and encourage mixed use development.

4. Coordinate current and proposed infrastructure and street improvements projects along Washington Street from Downtown Crossing to Roslindale Square.

- Appoint a coordinator from the most appropriate City agency (and staff as necessary) to oversee design review by the appropriate agencies and to implement infrastructure and street improvement projects along Washington Street from Downtown Crossing to Roslindale Square.
- Adopt appropriate street lighting fixtures and traffic signs that identify Washington Street as a "historic transit" corridor that links the neighborhoods with Downtown Boston.

5. Incorporate design ideas from the Boston Society of Architects' Washington Street Connections Public Design Workshop / Charrette into long range plans for the Washington Street Corridor.

In May 1997, the Boston Society of Architects will publish a report with the recommendations from the Washington Street Connections Public Design Workshop / Charrette. This report should be used as a catalogue of innovative ideas for the redevelopment of the Corridor.

The Boston Society of Architects organized the Washington Street Connections Public Design Workshop / Charrette in September, 1996. Over 100 community leaders, public officials, architects, urban planners and leaders from the City's business community participated in the Charrette and spent a weekend "brainstorming" about a vision and plan of action for the entire Washington Street Corridor from Downtown Crossing to Forest Hills and beyond. Participants envisioned Washington Street as the City's "neighborhood boulevard" that links many diverse neighborhoods with Downtown Boston. Some of the recommendations which emerged from this effort included the following:

- Reinforce neighborhood business centers along the Corridor through design and development projects.
- Establish clear architectural "gateways" to neighborhoods like Chinatown and Dudley Square which mark the importance and prominence of these centers along the Corridor.
- Build more "pedestrian-friendly" architecture in areas along the Corridor dominated by 1960s urban renewal housing projects and institutional developments.

- Link Washington Street to parks like Franklin Park and the Southwest Corridor Park.
- Reinforce the identity and image of the Corridor by lining the street with distinctive trees and organizing parades.
- Most participants endorsed the MBTA's replacement transit service on Washington Street after ten years of public debate.
- The most important recommendation was to create community-based Task forces in each of the neighborhoods along the Corridor—modeled on the Mayor's current Washington Street Task Force. As recommended, the efforts of each Task Force would be coordinated by an "umbrella" group—or corridor-wide committee.

6. Support local community efforts to form an advisory committee that would focus on the Washington Street Corridor from Downtown to West Roxbury, and include representatives from the neighborhoods along the Corridor.

Modeled on the current Washington Street Task Force, this Advisory Committee could offer ideas about ways to encourage investment and redevelopment along the entire Washington Street Corridor.

The Boston Society of Architects worked closely with the Mayor's Washington Street Task Force as they organized the Public Workshop / Charrette. Given this productive collaboration, a corridor-wide Advisory Committee could collaborate with and seek pro bono expertise and technical assistance from the Boston Society of Architects.

With one of every four Boston residents living within five blocks of Washington Street, this Corridor holds great importance for the City and warrants special focus by an advisory committee of residents, community leaders, elected officials and business representatives.

7. Designate the Washington Street Corridor, from Downtown Crossing to West Roxbury, as a major component of the anticipated Boston 400 Plan.

- Incorporate the Washington Street Corridor into the Boston 400 public planning process. The Boston 400 Plan will be a city-wide blueprint that maps out the city's growth to the year 2030. The Washington Street Corridor is a key element that links many of the city's diverse neighborhoods to Downtown.
- Use the recommendations from this strategic planning effort as the basis for a coordinated initiative to redevelop vacant and underutilized land, and rebuild Washington street — from Downtown to West Roxbury — as Boston's most important neighborhood boulevard.

8. Reconvene the Task Force in one year and update Task Force members on the implementation of the goals.

The following chapter of this report, IV. Next Steps / Implementation, outlines a recommended plan of action and timetable. In one year from the completion of this report, the Task Force should be reconvened and updated on the implementation of this plan of action.

IV. Next Steps / Implementation

The following recommended plan of action identifies public agencies and other parties that could take a lead in achieving each respective goal. A timetable is also included in this recommended plan of action.

GOAL 1

Build a New Washington Street

	AGENCIES	WHEN
1.1		
Rebuild Washington Street and design a new streetscape that includes visual improvements and an active mix of residential, commercial and recreational uses.	MBTA, MHD BTD, PWD	SPRING 1998
1.2		
The City should continue its efforts to ensure that the MBTA and MHD begin the reconstruction of Washington Street by Spring 1998.	BTD, PWD	SPRING 1998
1.3		
Appoint a citizens oversight committee to guide decisions about the design and reconstruction of Washington Street.	BTD, BRA	1997

BEC - Boston Empowerment Center
 BHA - Boston Housing Authority
 BPRD - Boston Parks and Recreation Department
 BPD - Boston Police Department
 BRA - Boston Redevelopment Authority
 BSD - Boston School Department
 BTD - Boston Transportation Department
 ISD - Inspectional Service Department
 MBTA - Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
 MHD - Massachusetts Highway Department
 MOBS - Mayor's Office of Business Services
 OCA - Office of Cultural Affairs
 PFD - Public Facilities Department
 PWD - Public Works Department
 SEHS - South End Historical Society
 SELDC - South End Landmarks District Commission
 USEAA - United South End Artists Association
 WSBA - Washington Street Business Association

1.4	The City of Boston should continue its successful efforts to improve the parks and open spaces along Washington Street.	BPRD	1998
1.5	The City of Boston should continue current efforts to improve and maintain the Blackstone Elementary School and other City-owned properties.	BSD, PFD	1998
1.6	Continue to redevelop vacant or under-utilized land and buildings along Washington Street.		
	Vacant In-fill parcels	BRA	1997
	South End Municipal Building	BRA	1999
	Chatham	BHA	1998
	Vacant MBTA Power Station	BRA	1998
1.7	Create satellite parking garages on Albany Street or Harrison Avenue to help relieve current parking problems and accommodate future neighborhood commercial expansion.		
	Parking Study	BTD	1998
	Police Station Garage	BPD, PFD	
1.8	Re-consider the one-way BTD traffic flow along Washington Street between East Berkeley Street and the Massachusetts Turnpike.		1998

GOAL 2

Revitalize Washington Street by creating opportunities for new jobs and businesses.

	AGENCIES	WHEN
2.1		
Promote the development potential of Washington Street.	MOBS	1998
2.2		
Explore the possibility of expanding business training programs, such as BankBoston's Open For Business pilot project or the grassroots training program, This Neighborhood Means Business, to the Washington Street corridor.	BEC, MOBS	1998
2.3		
Endorse Mayor Menino's 1997 initiative to create a tax-free retail sales zone in designated areas such as the Washington Street corridor.		
2.4		
Encourage local banks to implement a small business lending initiative along the Washington Street corridor.	BEC, MOBS	1998
2.5		
Prepare a strategy to promote business loans and technical assistance available from the Boston Empowerment Center to business and property owners on Washington Street.	BEC, MOBS	1998
2.6		
Develop partnerships that allow residents access to jobs and job training in the neighborhood.	BEC, MOBS	1998

GOAL 2	AGENCIES	WHEN	GOAL 3	AGENCIES	WHEN	GOAL 4	AGENCIES	WHEN
2.7 Create an action plan to address security concerns and consider alternatives to solid storefront grates. Grates Patrols Group insurance	PFD, WSBA BPD, BPRD MOBS	1997	3.2 After street reconstruction, expand the marketing of the South End's successful art related businesses and restaurants to include the diverse ethnic restaurants and food markets along Washington Street.			4.4 Coordinate current and proposed infrastructure and street improvements along Washington Street from Downtown Crossing to Roslindale Square.	BRA, BTD, SELDC	2000
2.8 Develop a maintenance program for Washington Street. Liaison: Parks Liaison: Parking and enforcement Liaison: Code violations Liaison: Street and sidewalk maintenance Snow Removal Plan	BPRD BTD ISD PWD PWD	1997	Arts Festival Marketing 3.3 Encourage the creation of a district-wide business association to promote and lobby for businesses in the South End /Lower Roxbury.	USEAA, OCA MOBS, WSBA WSBA	2000 2000	4.5 Incorporate design ideas from the Boston Society of Architects' Washington Street Connection Public Design Workshop / Charrette into long range plans for the Washington Street Corridor. 4.6 Support local community efforts to form an advisory committee that would focus on the Washington Street Corridor from Downtown Crossing to West Roxbury, and include representative from the neighborhoods along the corridor	BRA, MBTA BRA	2000 2000
2.9 Encourage local businesses and property owners on Washington Street to wire new buildings for T-1 or other high speed computer network access.	BRA, MOBS	2000	<hr/> GOAL 4 Create a new future for Washington Street.			4.7 Designate the Washington Street Corridor, from Downtown Crossing to West Roxbury, as a major component of the anticipated Boston 400 Plan.	BRA	1997
<hr/> GOAL 3 Promote Washington Street as an exciting destination with diverse ethnic stores, markets and restaurants.				AGENCIES WHEN		4.8 Reconvene the Task Force in one year and update Task Force members on the implementation of the goals.	BRA	May 1998
3.1 Re-emphasize the important architectural, social and cultural history of the area to restore the image and vitality of the street, and create a new marketing strategy. Working Group/Funding Marketing	SELDC MOBS, WSBA	2000	4.1 Build on the success of the Boston Main Streets Program. 4.2 Continue to implement the 1993 South End / Lower Roxbury Development Policy Plan which designated the Washington Street corridor as a Special Study Area. 4.3 Enact the proposed South End Neighborhood District Zoning which establishes a Neighborhood Development Area (NDA) sub-district along Washington Street.	WSEA BRA BRA	1997 1997 1998			

APPENDIX 1993 South End / Lower Roxbury Development Policy Plan

MAJOR OBJECTIVES

Guide urban land development and encourage economic growth in the South End / Lower Roxbury while enhancing the historic architectural character of this neighborhood.

- Create a master plan that represents a common vision and consensus, shared by a diverse community, about how the South End / Lower Roxbury should grow over the next twenty years.

- Capitalize on the South End / Lower Roxbury's strategic location and growth potential to stimulate economic development that will bring jobs and business opportunities to the community.

- Weave together and mend the historic urban fabric disrupted by the Urban Renewal Program in the 1960s. While affirming the original objectives of the 1965 Urban Renewal Plan – economic revitalization and social diversity – the Plan recommends urban design strategies to rectify the physical failures of urban renewal planning.

COMMUNITY CONSENSUS BUILDING

The South End / Lower Roxbury Development Policy Plan is the result of an extensive three-year long open planning process initiated by the Mayor, that involved diverse members of the community. A 28-member working group of residents, community activists, business representatives and several public agencies worked collaboratively to overcome major disagreements and forge a consensus and vision of how their community should grow in the future.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Development policy plan is the basis for new zoning and an initiative to make publicly-owned vacant land available for redevelopment. The Board of Directors of the BRA,

the city's planning agency, adopted the Plan in May 1993, and will recommend the new zoning for approval by the City's Zoning Commission.

URBAN DESIGN STRATEGIES

The Development Policy Plan recommends a range of urban design strategies to guide future development in the South End / Lower Roxbury and meet its major objectives. The most important strategies are as follows:

- Restore and extend the historic pattern of street blocks in the South End / Lower Roxbury. Urban renewal planning in the 1960's seriously disrupted the urban fabric of the South End / Lower Roxbury. To restore this historic urban fabric, the Plan extends the street block pattern out onto large areas of vacant and underutilized land. By imposing this "street grid" on large development sites, the Plan ensures that the scale of new development in these areas is in keeping with the architectural context of the South End / Lower Roxbury.

- The Plan also extends the historic street grid through "superblocks" which urban planners created in the 1960's by closing off existing streets and combining small blocks in order to build large public housing and institutional projects. The "superblock" site layout of these projects violates the historic street pattern of the South End / Lower Roxbury and socially isolates the residents of these projects from the larger community. Through the implementation of this strategy, the Plan seeks to re-integrate "superblocks" into the South End / Lower Roxbury.

- Encourage the creation of prominent focal points and preserve existing view corridors. The Plan identifies future development parcels that offer opportunities to create architectural focal points that terminate existing view corridors.

- Designate vacant land around new and revitalized parks for new housing and neighborhood retail uses in order to encourage mixed-income family housing near attractive open spaces. By concentrating new housing around these areas, the Plan creates a new constituency of residents who will have a sense of proprietorship for these open spaces.

- Designate vacant infill parcels in residential neighborhoods for housing development.

- Establish height limits which are comparable with the architecture of the South End / Lower Roxbury. The Plan establishes flexible height limits that will allow for extensive development in areas of high growth potential while protecting against detrimental impacts of high-rise buildings on the architectural integrity of the South End / Lower Roxbury. These recommended height limits reflect an important urban design concept of the Plan: the area closest to the Expressway is designated for high-rise development which incrementally steps down to the mid-rise scale of buildings along Albany Street, and finally to the low-rise scale that predominates in the rest of the South End.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Report and
Recommendations

May 1997

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**Special
Acknowledgements**
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*former Chief Economic
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Edith Li,
*former Assistant to the
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Photo Credits
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