

Cleary Square
Draft Plan Document
APPENDICES

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I. ENGAGEMENT REPORT



WHAT WE LEARNED

HOUSING AND REAL ESTATE

Many community members and business owners recognize Cleary Square as a suitable place for more housing within the larger neighborhood context.

We heard from residents about the need for more diverse housing options in Cleary Square. However, there is significant concern that new housing developments will not be affordable. This concern reflects a broader desire for affordable housing that better meets the needs of lower-income households in the area and better supports the current residents. As Cleary Square undergoes development, the community wants measures in place to prevent displacement and ensure long-term housing stability for its low-income population. Additionally, we heard the need to provide multi-generational housing for the community.

Leveraging public land in Cleary Square will be important to increase the housing stock through private developments and provide affordable units. Residents believe that new developments should include a variety of unit sizes, from smaller one-bedroom apartments to larger units suitable for families with children. Such

diversity in housing would help foster a more inclusive community, improving both racial and economic integration and ensuring that all residents, regardless of income, can find a place to live in the neighborhood.

“ *Cleary Square has a lot of kids, it makes sense to prioritize 2-3 bedroom units for affordable housing.* ”

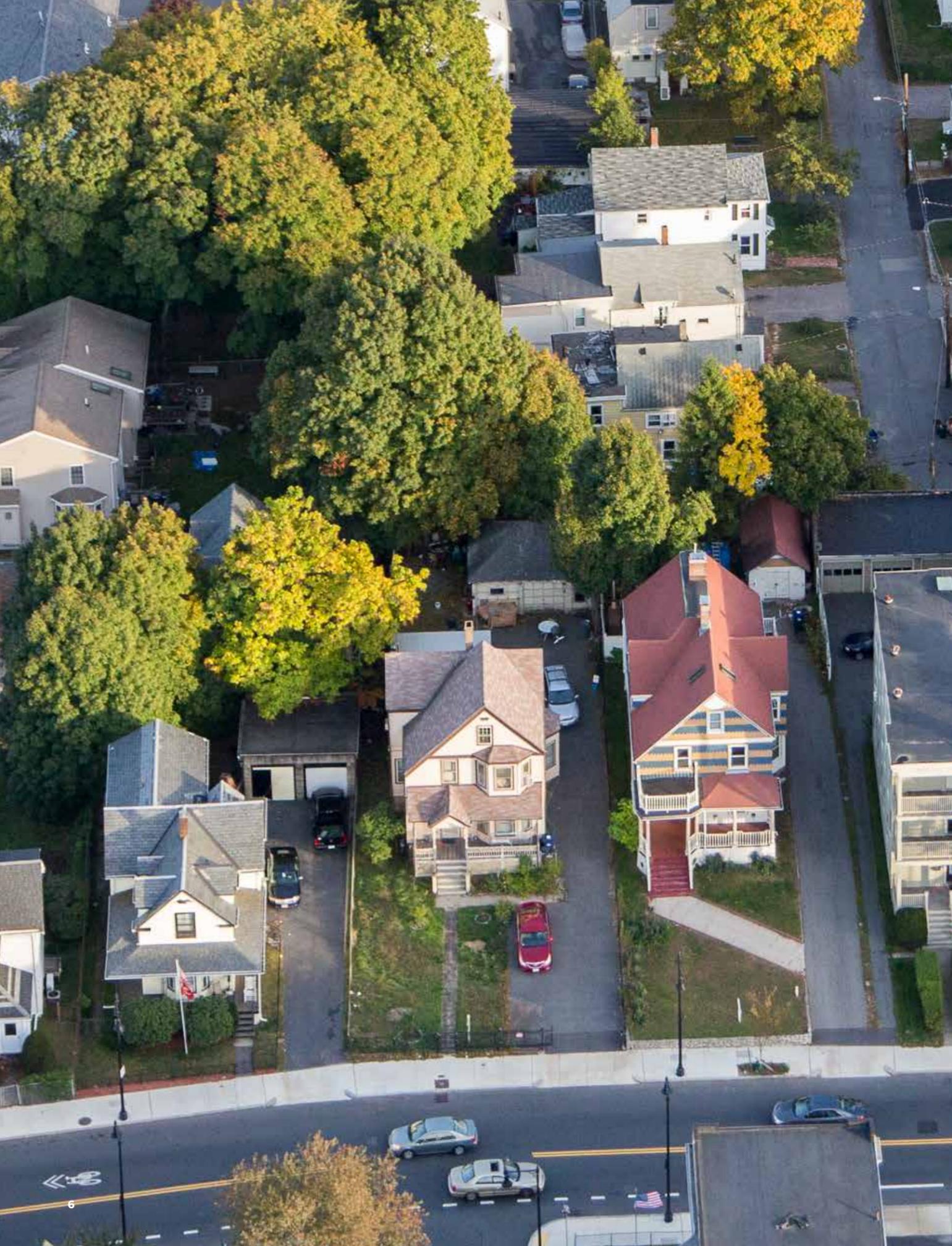
– Draft recommendation survey 10/30

“ *Please please create more invested residents, provide affordable home sales, not rentals!* ”

– Cleary Square Kick-Off 2/25/24

“ *Need for multi-generation housing for new arrivals.* ”

– Educational Housing and Small Business Workshop 3/25/24



SMALL BUSINESS

Throughout our engagement, we found that there is a strong community desire to see support for small businesses that will foster a thriving Square and create a uniquely diverse part of Boston.

Businesses owners and customers highlighted the need to see increased foot traffic and parking access so that they might be better supported. More than half the businesses in Cleary Square operate sometime between 8am and 5pm, with less than 50 businesses open past 9pm. Many owners called for the need to have more foot traffic in the evening to support their businesses. This in tandem with implementing wayfinding signs to better direct people to various local landmarks and businesses would be ideal.

Additionally, the community expressed the want for more nightly programming, activities, and events, to keep the Square active throughout the day, and to give

Cleary more of a connected identity. The community also emphasized the importance of diversity, supporting minority-owned businesses through technical assistance and grant funding.

Additionally, there was a strong push for streamlining permitting processes, filling the vacant storefronts, and encouraging mixed-use developments that could foster both residential and commercial growth. The impact that the River Street Bridge construction has had on local businesses was also discussed numerous times throughout the engagement process.

We heard from residents that there is a need for more businesses that provide casual places for the community to come together, such as cafes, more diverse retail, and entertainment venues. Overall, there was a call for a balance between encouraging new businesses and protecting the existing ones.

“ Empty storefronts detract from the energy of the area and present opportunities for the many potential small businesses that are seeking affordable spaces. ”

– Draft recommendation survey response 1/30/24

“ Name brand stores, might help bring customers ”
– Youth Photo Voice Workshops 7/2

“ Need more opportunities for business to own their properties ”
– Housing and Small Business Workshop 3/25

“ Would like to see restaurants and coffee shops that become neighborhood gathering spaces ”
– Housing and Small Business Workshop 3/25



ARTS AND CULTURE

Community discussions in Cleary Square emphasized the need to expand on existing public spaces and create more vibrant ones that can support artistic and cultural gatherings reflective of the neighborhood's diverse history and character. Participants expressed strong support for increasing the visibility of arts institutions like the Menino Arts Center and enhancing cohesion between cultural and commercial spaces through improved signage, façade improvements, and wayfinding.

“ I want a social club for Black and Haitian intellectuals to come together ”

- Haitian Creole Focus Group

The idea of an integrated “arts block” or “arts corridor” emerged, promoting an ecosystem of visual arts, sculpture, music, and performance venues. Historic buildings like the Everett Theater and underutilized spaces were identified as opportunities for new cultural hubs, coworking spaces, and artist studios. Events like Bridgefest were widely celebrated, with calls for more frequent,

dynamic activations, including markets, pop-up performances, and expanded arts programming at community centers like the Muni and YMCA.

Accessibility, funding, and the need for better street-level engagement—through decorative lighting, murals, and greenery—were recurring themes, alongside a call for simplified permitting processes to support local businesses and creatives. There was also strong interest in intergenerational spaces, makerspaces, and an expanded, more expansive arts corridor that activates Hyde Park Avenue and neighborhood gateways. Strategic investments and coordinated efforts among the city, businesses, and community organizations will help Cleary Square fully realize its potential as a dynamic cultural destination.

“ Hyde Park Festival summer 2023, Food trucks, local restaurants, music, dancing... It brought the community out and connect with neighbors and people you haven't seen in years. It was also great exposure for the local food spots ”

- Cleary Square Kick-off 2/25



“ Spanish specialty food grocery store ”

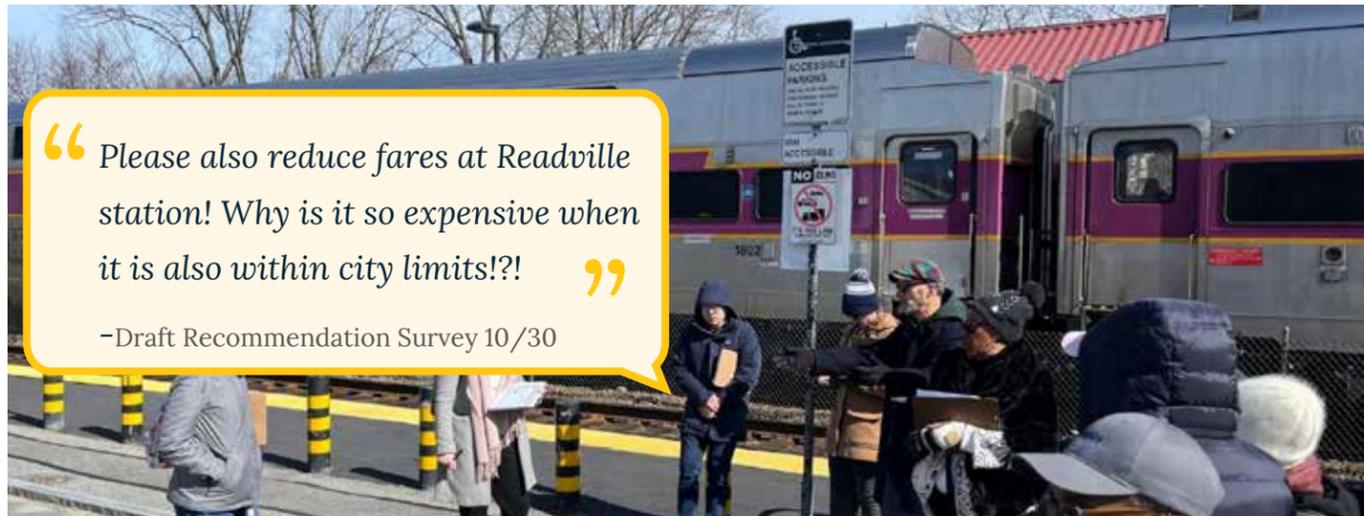
-Spanish Speaking Visioning Focus Group 5/23

“ More activities for youth; more theatre ”

-Spanish Speaking Visioning Focus Group 5/23

“ Everett Square Theater has so much potential and would love to see it developed into a gathering space (a community movie theater similar to the one in Dedham would be great). ”

- Draft Recommendations Survey 10/30



“Please also reduce fares at Readville station! Why is it so expensive when it is also within city limits!?”

-Draft Recommendation Survey 10/30

TRANSPORTATION

Community members have expressed the need for improved transportation infrastructure in Cleary Square to support its growth and residents. Specifically, community members expressed a need for more parking, more frequent public transportation services, and reduced traffic throughout the Square. Additionally, we heard residents want to see a more streamlined and affordable public transit service by adding Hyde Park to Zone 1A on the Commuter Rail. Many community members in Cleary Square rely on bus services and expressed the need for safer, high quality bus stops to meet the transit demand in the square and create more inviting public spaces. Similarly, there were many comments to improve the Commuter Rail stations, making them more accessible with high-level platforms.

There was positive feedback on the walkability of the square, but many residents mentioned concerns around pedestrian safety and suggested adding safe bike infrastructure and measures to slow traffic. Finally, the bridge closure was an important issue for residents as it affects the flow of traffic, accessibility of the Square, and vitality of the businesses on the block.

“I walk here with my kids all the time, and cars speed way too much! Crossing the street and side streets should be safer.”

- Draft Recommendation Survey 10/30

OPEN SPACE AND RESILIENCY

Many Cleary community members enjoy activities such as walking and biking and appreciate the benefits of the pocket park and additional small open spaces in the Square. However, stakeholders expressed the need for improvement to existing public spaces and the creation of more public space for recreation and gathering. The community has identified the Pocket Park as a heavily used site in need of improvements and upgrades. They have worked on and off with different organizations to develop different design studies for the site and have explored funding opportunities for improvements, but more support is needed.

Members of the community have also identified the activation of the Neponset River as an opportunity to create more green space within walking distance of the Square. Similarly, enhancing the connection between the River and the Square was another popular theme throughout engagement, with community members calling for a more accessible bike and pedestrian path.

The community has highlighted the issue of heat islands in the area and proposed solutions like planting more trees, creating additional green spaces, and

potentially adding green infrastructure to reduce heat. Additionally, there is a push for better use and maintenance of existing public spaces, with an emphasis on improving safety and making them more family-friendly. Overall, there's a desire to make the area more inviting, accessible, and sustainable.

“Fairmount Street needs street trees”

-In-Person Visioning Workshop 5/29

“Make open spaces more inviting and more activation. More signage to make it more accessible.”

- In-Person Visioning Workshop

“The river is so cut off from Hyde Park residents. It would be wonderful to have river front access”

- Draft Recommendation Survey 10/30

LAND USE AND DESIGN

We heard a strong interest from the community for mixed-use buildings, with a focus on affordable housing and minority owned businesses. Community members identified the areas near MBTA stations as priorities for housing growth. We also heard a desire to retain the character of small storefronts and second-story office spaces in the existing commercial area and allow opportunities for new businesses and desired commercial uses, such as family sit-down restaurants, coffee shops, and a diversity of retail that serve different income levels.

There is also consistent feedback to maintain the feel of the Square by preserving historic buildings and landmarks, and using more traditional materials such as brick for new developments, although some residents have also expressed interest in seeing more modern and diverse architectural styles in new development. Along with design concerns, the community called for a more transparent zoning process with clearer communication and more opportunities for community input.

Cleary community members want to prioritize the creation of more green spaces, such as rooftop gardens and pocket parks, and use permeable surfaces

to support sustainability. Additionally there were calls to improve storefront facades, activate vacant spaces, and enhance pedestrian safety. Improvement to the public realm was a strong theme throughout our engagement, and many community members discussed the need to create more connections to Cleary Square to give it a more connected identity. Specifically, there were calls to stitch together community anchors through the implementation of an arts corridor, creating welcoming entrances to the Square, and improving the connections between open spaces and connecting to the Neponset River.

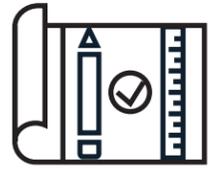
“ First floors should primarily be used for retail businesses. ”
- Draft Recommendation Survey 10/30

“ Yes - the west side of the square would benefit from some restaurants/retail. It would be great to have a cafe/eating establishments at the corner of River Street and Gordon Ave/Business St. ”
- Draft Recommendation Survey 10/30



SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT EVENTS + KEY TAKEAWAYS THAT INFORMED RECOMMENDATIONS

Hyde Park is a community characterized by its cultural and racial diversity, and the following summary highlights the team’s efforts to engage a broader and more inclusive audience throughout the planning process. This section of the report summarizes around 30 community engagement events led or attended by planning staff that informed the Plan for Cleary Square.



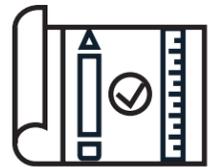
COMMUNITY GROUP MEETINGS / ONE-ON-ONE CONVERSATIONS

January - April 2024

Engagement Phase: *Pre-launch Engagement*

Before the launch of the Cleary Square: Squares + Streets planning process, the Planning team met with a total of 15 stakeholders and community groups to discuss the upcoming process and brainstorm effective engagement strategies for reaching target populations.

What staff learned from these conversations were important takeaways about the historical context of the Square. Residents also talked to staff about the layout of the Square, including the disconnect between the two sides of River Street. This context and lived experience that planning staff heard was key to understanding how to inform the upcoming community engagement process.



BUSINESS CANVASSING

February 16, 2024

Engagement Phase: *Pre-launch Engagement*

The Cleary Square: Squares + Streets team spent a day canvassing the businesses and cultural institutions in the planning area. Many business owners engaged in discussions with staff members about the upcoming community engagement process, and staff received 70 responses to the business and cultural space survey that each business received.

Similar to the one-on-one conversations, this form of engagement helped the Planning Department get a better understanding of community experiences and expectations. This canvassing provided important information about the types of businesses in Cleary, and the lived experiences of employees, customers, and visitors. All of this information was helpful in determining next steps of the planning process.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION	KEY TAKEAWAYS THAT INFORMED RECOMMENDATIONS
Housing	Impacts of housing construction on access to local businesses, as well as pressure of new housing development on existing parking and traffic, more supports need for unhoused populations
Transportation	More clear signs to direct people to open parking spots, and desire for proposals to have more creative parking solutions given the lack of parking for business patrons. Negative impact of the closure of the River St. bridge on local businesses



COMMUNITY SURVEY

February 14 - April 4, 2024

Engagement Phase: *Listening & Learning*

The Squares + Streets Community Survey was launched on February 14, 2024 and remained open until April 4, 2024. The survey helped us gather early information from plan constituents about specific goals, concerns, and opportunities for the planning area. The results of the survey informed subsequent phases of engagement and to gauge community preferences early on in the process.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION	KEY TAKEAWAYS THAT INFORMED RECOMMENDATIONS
Housing	Development of more housing near transit and creation of new pathways for affordable housing balanced with concerns about too much height and/or density coming to the square
Transportation	Some concerns about impacts to traffic and parking as well as the River St. bridge closure. Appreciation for affluence of transit options, balanced with desire for improved safety for pedestrians and cyclists

Small Business	Further activation of the ground floor in Cleary Square by providing a wider variety of businesses and retail types. More liveliness in the Square at night, along with improved maintenance and cleanliness
Arts and Culture	Appreciation for all of the community institutions including the Menino Arts Center and locally and BIPOC owned businesses. Desire for more opportunities for community connection and festivities
Land Use and Design	Concerns about increases to height and density balanced with desire for more active and vibrant ground floor that encourages community connection along with the development of affordable housing
Open Space and Resiliency	Explore opportunities to enhance and create green spaces, desire for more trees and greenery to improve vibrancy and walking experience



KICK-OFF EVENT

February 25, 2024

Engagement Phase: *Listening & Learning*

The Cleary Square: Squares + Streets kick-off open house was held at Hyde Park Municipal Building. This was the first community engagement event held to introduce residents to Squares + Streets and officially begin the community process. Community members were given several opportunities to provide initial feedback on their vision for how Cleary Square should look and function in the future. There were a number of activities that participants could rotate through including a graphic facilitation station, a community mapping exercise, and an oral storytelling table. These events allowed the community to envision a future of Cleary Square and discuss housing, transportation, small business development, and active public spaces.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION	KEY TAKEAWAYS THAT INFORMED RECOMMENDATIONS
Housing	Keep housing affordable by supporting a robust housing market, with rentals and ownership opportunities. Additionally, create more affordable housing for seniors to allow residents to age in place.
Transportation	Call for more parking in the Square to bring in more visitors and safe streets to make it a more walkable neighborhood. Supporting a multi-modal neighborhood by improving public transportation.
Small Business	Desire for retail that serves a wider diversity income levels and families, more casual places for community and youth to connect with each other
Arts and Culture	Addition of more public art installations and cultural events to make Cleary an unique destination
Land Use and Design	More restaurants and places for people to gather, such as coffee shops. Keeping the “feel” of Cleary Square, by maintaining similar, historic aesthetics and design features.
Open Space and Resiliency	Planting and maintaining greenery in the Square, such as street trees and flowers, to foster more enjoyable places to gather outside.



COFFEE HOURS AND OFFICE HOURS

March - May, 2024

Engagement Phase: *Listening & Learning*

The coffee hours and office hours (held at a local Starbucks and the Hyde Park branch of Boston Public Library) were an informal venue to continue discussions after the kick-off event and familiarize the Cleary Square Squares + Streets Plan with community members that were not able to participate in the kick-off event.



CLEARY SQUARE EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOP - ZONING

March 18, 2024

Engagement Phase: *Listening & Learning*

At the Zoning Workshop, which was held at the Hyde Park YMCA, Planning Department zoning planners introduced zoning as a tool that guides development and contributes to a community development mindset. The second half of the workshop was a facilitated activity to think about how proposals for community development projects created by participants during the workshop would have to interact with existing zoning regulations in Cleary Square. Some groups also focused on asking clarifying questions about the existing Squares+ Streets zoning and overall process for developing zoning maps.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION	KEY TAKEAWAYS THAT INFORMED RECOMMENDATIONS
Land Use and Design	Need community connection through a mixed-use building that includes a ground-floor use, such as a bakery or coffee shop, along with shared parking arrangements
Housing	Prioritize affordable family units and condos. Integrate residential use with existing commercial-use spaces to create more cohesion throughout the square



COMMUNITY WALKING TOUR

March 24, 2024

Engagement Phase: *Listening & Learning*

The Planning Department and Boston Transportation Department staff hosted a walking tour around Cleary Square that asked the community for input on a number of areas including transportation, buildings, arts & culture, and open space. Participants of the walk shared their perspectives on the study area and offered ideas for improvements through these feedback sheets.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION	KEY TAKEAWAYS THAT INFORMED RECOMMENDATIONS
Transportation	Provide safer walkways for pedestrians and build infrastructure to support safer driving. Make the Square more pedestrian friendly. Address bridge closure on River Street.
Open Space and Resiliency	Create better and safer open spaces for community members. Add more shaded areas to combat heat island effect, and to create a more walkable square



CLEARY SQUARE EDUCATION WORKSHOP - HOUSING AND SMALL BUSINESS

March 25, 2024

Engagement Phase: *Listening & Learning*

This workshop, held in-person at the Hyde Park YMCA, was designed to provide more information on existing City of Boston (CoB) housing and small business tools that can be used to achieve community goals through Squares + Streets Plans. Participants were asked to respond to a series of housing and business data specific to Cleary Square and interpret how this data relates to their community development goals. The link to all of the completed activity sheets is [here](#).

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION	KEY TAKEAWAYS THAT INFORMED RECOMMENDATIONS
Housing	More affordable rental and ownership housing, and zoning for additional dwelling units (ADUs)
Small Business	Address storefront vacancies and facade improvements for business. More ownership opportunities for minority-owned businesses



WHAT WE'VE HEARD EVENT

April 8, 2024

Engagement Phase: *Listening & Learning*

At this virtual meeting, staff reviewed the engagement timeline, and asked the community to respond to and refine the themes and community goals developed to-date. Attendees completed live polls in response to an Engagement Themes Survey and a Community and Cultural Assets Mapping survey. The feedback results included the meeting poll results, engagement themes survey results, and Community and Cultural Assets Mapping survey results.

The main goal was to enhance transparency in the community planning process by keeping Cleary Square community members informed and up to date with the comments and emerging themes shared by the broader community.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION	KEY TAKEAWAYS THAT INFORMED RECOMMENDATIONS
Land Use and Design	Maintain a similar design for new developments that matches Cleary Square character. New development should incorporate green infrastructure. Preserve historic and cultural landmarks and buildings, including the Library and Everett Theater.
Arts and Culture	Preserve existing art installations throughout the Square, including the Library's Historic Garden. Increase cultural programming.



SPANISH SPEAKING FOCUS GROUPS AND BLOCKWALK

May 15 & 23, 2024

June 10th, 2024

Engagement Phase: *Listening & Learning*

These events were for Squares + Streets planning staff to connect with local Spanish speakers in a more casual setting (at Rincon Caribeno and the Hyde Park Muni). The events were conducted entirely in Spanish with the help of Spanish speaking interpreters. It was an opportunity for community members to learn about the planning and community planning process. More importantly, it was a chance for members to share their own vision of what they want to see in their neighborhood.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION	KEY TAKEAWAYS THAT INFORMED RECOMMENDATIONS
Small Business	Encourage more ground floor commercial use in the center of the Square. Make Square more accessible to visitors to increase customer base for small businesses
Housing	More affordable housing for families with additional parking



HAITIAN CREOLE SPEAKING FOCUS GROUP BLOCKWALKS

May 7, 16, 21, 30, 2024

Engagement Phase: *Listening & Learning*

Staff, alongside Haitian-Creole interpreters, hosted pop-ups at the local Haitian businesses including Fan Fan Bakery and Little Haiti Restaurant. This provided an opportunity for primarily Haitian-Creole speaking residents and regulars to learn about Squares + Streets. Participants had the option to complete an activity about what they appreciated and wanted to see improved in the Square. Some of the feedback gained from the focus groups include more culturally relevant spaces and monuments to highlight the contributions of the Haitian community within the square. They also want more clear avenues to accessing city grant opportunities to further expand local Black owned businesses.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION	KEY TAKEAWAYS THAT INFORMED RECOMMENDATIONS
Transportation	More frequent bus and commuter rail services to allow more people to come to the Square. Address the bridge closure and provide better wayfinding to the businesses that are there
Arts and Culture	Desire for more spaces for cultural gatherings for the Haitian community. Addition of culturally significant art or memorials in the Square.
Small Business	Desire for more diverse types of businesses in the Square and businesses that are open for late night events and activities. More parking to make businesses more accessible



VISIONING WORKSHOPS

May 30, June 5, 2024

Engagement Phase: *Visioning & Plan Drafting*

The Planning Department & partner City of Boston departments held two (2) visioning sessions - one held in-person at the Hyde Park YMCA and one held virtually using Zoom and the Miro activity platform. At these sessions, community members were able to provide direct feedback on a variety of topics, including housing and small business support, open space and public realm activation, transportation safety improvements, and different building types to inform a future zoning map amendment.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION	KEY TAKEAWAYS THAT INFORMED RECOMMENDATIONS
Housing	More multi-generational housing to attract more people. Concerns around displacement and increasing rent
Transportation	Address congestion in the Square, affecting bus routes and pedestrian safety. Reconfigure streets to create more public space around pocket parks. Provide more parking

Small Business	Diversify the types of businesses. Encourage and support businesses such as restaurants, cafes, food markets. Activate groundfloor spaces with commercial uses
Arts and Culture	Take underutilized spaces and preserve them for art installations and cultural events or activities. Expand the Pocket Park to allow for larger events, like Bridgefest
Land Use and Design	Well constructed buildings that match the aesthetic and feel of the neighborhood. As new developments go up, ensure that there are still green spaces and green infrastructure
Open Space and Resiliency	Add more street trees and greenery along the main streets of the Square. Provide more open spaces, such as community gardens or dog parks



ZONING DEEP DIVE WORKSHOP

August 1, 2024

Engagement Phase: *Informational*

The Cleary Square Zoning Reform Team presented the six (6) new Squares + Streets Zoning Districts that were adopted into the Boston Zoning Code in April 2024. This meeting offered a closer look at the Squares + Streets zoning districts, including their overall goals and opportunities and how they differ from one another. This meeting was an informational event to go over the zoning districts and answer any questions about zoning.



LAND USE FRAMEWORK SURVEY

August 2, 2024 - September 1, 2024

Engagement Phase: *Visioning & Plan Drafting*

We created the Land Use Framework Survey to gather additional feedback on the community's vision for the built form and uses in Cleary Square. The survey let participants choose specific areas within Cleary Square (by either choosing pre-drawn areas or drawing their own on a map) and then answer questions about land use and design preferences in that area, including what uses should be allowed and what buildings should look like. The survey received 48 responses.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION	KEY TAKEAWAYS THAT INFORMED RECOMMENDATIONS
Land Use and Design	Support for high-density housing in Cleary Square. When asked how many units should be allowed per building, participants' median response was 54 units. There were also many comments about the importance of housing and the opportunity of increasing housing near the two commuter rail stations. The majority of respondents supported the allowance of retail, residential, community spaces, restaurants, and offices throughout the existing commercial areas. Desire to improve open spaces and connections around the Neponset.



POP-UPS

March 2, 2024 , June 15, 2024, July 12, 19, 26, 2024, August 2 & 17, 2024
Engagement Phase: *Listening & Learning*

Pop-ups at youth events including Hyde Park Youth Day, Bridgifest events, local Juneteenth Celebrations, and bus stops in order to expand outreach to more BIPOC residents. This allowed staff to interact with residents of the Square that typically would not have engaged with the planning process. Most of these engagement events were for Planning staff to meet and engage with community members in a more informal setting. They were for staff to show up for community members and be present with the community. These events were also an opportunity for Planning staff to advertise upcoming events and get more community involvement.

BUS STOP POP-UP WITH TRANSPORTATION STAFF	
TOPICS OF DISCUSSION	KEY TAKEAWAYS THAT INFORMED RECOMMENDATIONS
Transportation	Improve bus stops by having wider sidewalks, adding crosswalks and lights for pedestrians. Increase bus frequency, improve bus system. Cleaner public spaces and streets.



SMALL BUSINESS FOCUS GROUP

August 8, 2024

Engagement Phase: *Listening & Learning*

The City of Boston Planning Department and the Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion hosted a Small Business Focus Group as part of the Squares + Streets Plan Area. This session gathered valuable insights from local business owners and members of the business community to help shape the planning process and inform recommendations that can support and enhance our local businesses. Some of these conversations include concerns about the limited capacity of first generation owned businesses in the Square to engage with the planning process. In turn, planning staff discussed what kinds of technical services would be most beneficial to the community.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION	KEY TAKEAWAYS THAT INFORMED RECOMMENDATIONS
Small Business	Provide a clear anti-displacement framework for small businesses. Creation of a “Social District” and allow for large outdoor events that small businesses can host.





YOUTH FOCUS GROUPS

March 2, 2024 , June 15, 2024, July 12, 19, 26, 2024, August 2, 2024
August, 17th, 2024

Engagement Phase: *Listening & Learning*

Staff hosted two (2) youth pop-up workshops. One, outside of the Hyde Park Municipal Building, engaged with youth attending local summer camp programs for a photovoice activity. This activity allowed kids to take photos of places and things around the Square that they saw, smelled, heard, and felt. The second youth focus group was a graphic facilitation visioning workshop hosted at the local YMCA. Participants were able to narrate what they wanted in their neighborhood and a Planning Department staff was able to capture it visually.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION	KEY TAKEAWAYS THAT INFORMED RECOMMENDATIONS
Small Business	Want more diverse businesses that offer activities and services for youth in the Square, such as educational and recreational spaces.
Open Space and Resiliency	Activate open space in the Square with youth events, including art and sports activities. Create safe open spaces to allow community youth members to gather.



BLOCK WALKS

August 27, 2024 , Sept. 1, 24, 2024, Nov 19, 21, 2024, Dec. 3, 2024

Engagement Phase: *Community Vetting*

In an effort to expand outreach and engage with residents who typically do not or cannot attend larger community meetings, the Planning Department team held a series of Block Walks through the Square. Staff, alongside Spanish and Haitian-Creole interpreters, facilitated six walks before and after the release of the draft recommendations, in order to meet business owners and people who frequent the Square where they are at.

Thien Simpson, Hyde Park Main Streets Director, partnered with the team on several of these walks. The intention of these walks were to build interpersonal relationships by consistently showing up in the Square, while informing and gathering valuable feedback to incorporate to this planning process.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION	KEY TAKEAWAYS THAT INFORMED RECOMMENDATIONS
Small Business	Provide clearer understanding of existing City of Boston programs that exist to help small businesses. Improve the visibility of businesses through storefront improvements and wayfinding signs throughout the Square.



ARTS AND CULTURE FOCUS GROUP

October 10, 2024

Engagement Phase: *Listening & Learning*

The Squares + Streets project team, in close partnership with the Urban Design team, convened an Arts & Culture Focus Group to explore a key recommendation that emerged from the engagement process: the development of an Arts and Culture Corridor in Cleary Square. The event gathered a diverse group of arts organizations, local businesses, and artists to collaboratively envision a built environment and neighborhood identity that fosters and amplifies Cleary Square’s cultural vibrancy. The focus group was structured into four small discussion groups, each reflecting on

Cleary Square’s existing artistic strengths, its potential as an arts corridor, and steps needed to make this vision a reality. Participants included representatives from local arts organizations, small businesses, community groups, and the city.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION	KEY TAKEAWAYS THAT INFORMED RECOMMENDATIONS
Arts and Culture	Establish an arts corridor with large-scale public art to enhance street appeal and sense of place. The arts corridor should foster economic development, cultural tourism, and youth engagement. The corridor should offer diverse and inclusive events, including, interactive maker spaces for all ages, performance venues, and arts festivals expanded Bridgefest and consistent Open Studios events



DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS IDEAS RECEPTIONS (SCARES + TREATS!)

October 30, 2024, November 16, 2024

Engagement Phase: *Community Vetting*

Staff, alongside Spanish and Haitian-Creole interpreters, hosted a Halloween themed pop-up Ideas Reception at the Pocket Park on River Street, atypical to a traditional public meeting. The intention was to support a dialogue between staff and community members and to let participants engage with the draft recommendations in a less traditional format. It was held in the Pocket Park so planning staff could utilize existing community space, which encouraged more diverse participation (around 96% from communities of color). An additional Ideas Reception was hosted on the weekend at the Hyde Park Municipal Building to accommodate additional participants’ availability.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION	KEY TAKEAWAYS THAT INFORMED RECOMMENDATIONS
Housing	Increase density by adding more affordable housing. Address anti-displacement with potential new development.

Transportation	Improve pedestrian safety by adding infrastructure to calm traffic. Create more accessible spaces in the Square, such as commuter rail stops and pedestrian pathways
Small Business	Promote nightlife for restaurants and provide support and guidance for applying for liquor license. Encourage and provide more diverse options for food markets
Arts and Culture	Public spaces should feature art installations and community events. Establishing an “arts block” with visual arts, music, and theater would strengthen the creative ecosystem and sense of identity in Cleary Square
Land Use and Design	Develop more of the center of the Square. Leave opportunities to develop more green spaces, including along the Neponset River
Open Space and Resiliency	Make current open spaces more cohesive in the Square. Create a corridor to connect Cleary Square at the Neponset Greenway to Stonybrook





DRAFT RECOMMENDATION PUBLIC SURVEY

October 30, 2024 - January 14th, 2025

Engagement Phase: *Community Vetting*

Along with the two receptions, the Planning Department released two variations of a survey for the public to provide feedback on the draft recommendations. Planning staff received 133 responses from these surveys, and the public’s rankings for each draft recommendation within each topic area.

Much of the feedback was about the Arts and Culture topic and discussed the need to create more of a cultural identity for Cleary Square by creating an Arts Corridor. Many residents have commented that it would be great to have more public art and events to create more cohesion in the Square.

Similarly, the most popular comments we received about Open Space and Resiliency were about creating more and improving the gathering spaces in Cleary Square. For the Transportation theme, common feedback we received was about the Commuter Rail. Specifically to continue to make Cleary Square more accessible by advocating for lower MBTA fares and higher frequency service.

The main feedback for the Housing theme discussed the need for more affordable housing, especially for families. Along with this, the most common comments we received about Land Use and Design were about rezoning the Square to allow for more mixed-use buildings, that would allow for more multi-family housing, but also activate ground floor spaces and vacant stores.

Finally, the top comments we received about the Small Business recommendations called for more diversity of businesses in the Square, and the need for more amenities, such as grocery stores and recreational spaces.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION	KEY TAKEAWAYS THAT INFORMED RECOMMENDATIONS
Housing	Increase density by adding more affordable housing. Address anti-displacement with potential new development.
Transportation	Improve bus and commuter rail services, including fares, frequency, physical improvements to stops. Establish Bluebike stations, and overall provide safe bike infrastructure. Enhance public safety.
Small Business	Making small business resources accessible digitally, and available at local community centers. More opportunity for late night dining as a tenant of night life expansion.
Arts and Culture	Enhance the Pocket Park outside the Post Office and create a new public park along the Neponset River.
Land Use and Design	Allow for more residential units in the center of the Square and mix-use development. Allow for new businesses and development but ensure green space is attached to any new project.
Open Space and Resiliency	Plant and maintain street trees along main streets. Incorporate green infrastructure in new development. Help develop a new pocket park in front of the Hyde Park Municipal Building



SPANISH SPEAKING FOCUS GROUP AND BLOCK WALK WITH COUNCLIOR PEPÈN

May 5, 2025

Engagement Phase: *Community Vetting*

The Cleary Square Team hosted Spanish speaking focus group and block walk with Councilor Pepèn with residents and business owners to ask questions about the plan, and discuss priorities.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION	KEY TAKEAWAYS THAT INFORMED RECOMMENDATIONS
Transportation	Ensure that Cleary Square is accessible for workers and customers, including by maintaining or improving the availability of parking.
Small Business	Beautify the area (such as with street trees and other plantings) to attract visitors and increase customer base for small businesses.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION	KEY TAKEAWAYS THAT INFORMED RECOMMENDATIONS
Housing	Providing affordable housing to allow residents to age in place. Focus on family size units and buildings.
Transportation	Maintain parking for current residents and ensure enough parking for customers to support local businesses. Maximize space along with parking to allow for more businesses, housing. Adding traffic lights and key intersections to improve safety.
Small Business	Highlight city resources that exist for small businesses to do things like improve storefront facades
Open Space and Resiliency	Incorporate green infrastructure into new development, including new parking (for example adding solar panels on top of parking lots).



CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS FOCUS GROUP

May 21, 2025

Engagement Phase: *Community Vetting*

Staff hosted a virtual focus group with civic leaders in Cleary Square to discuss the plan. While all were welcome, the Cleary Team specifically reached out to Black civic leaders in Cleary. The event was an opportunity for leaders and advocates to ask questions about the Plan, and provide high level feedback to our draft recommendations and planning process.

KEY DISCUSSION THEMES

1. VISION AND ASPIRATIONS

- Participants envisioned a vibrant corridor with affordable maker spaces, arts-focused retail, and intergenerational creative spaces.
- Large-scale public art, murals, and sculptures should enhance street appeal, reflect community identity, and define a sense of place.
- Improved lighting, greenery, and active storefronts should create a welcoming environment.
- Many questioned the idea of a strict linear corridor and instead suggested a clustered, neighborhood-wide arts ecosystem.
- Hyde Park Ave and gateways like Truman Parkway should integrate into the corridor.

2. COMMUNITY IMPACT AND ACTIVATION

- The arts corridor should foster economic development, cultural tourism, and youth engagement.

- Hyde Park needs more accessible event spaces; existing venues like Zaz and Park 54 should host more arts programming.
- More co-working and performance spaces should activate vacant or underutilized buildings.
- Bureaucratic barriers, including difficult permitting processes and lack of city investment in Hyde Park's arts scene, remain major concerns.

3. EXISTING STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Menino Arts Center, The Switch, and Riverside Theatre serve as key cultural assets.
- The Everett Theater could become a catalyst for arts and performance with proper investment.
- Public spaces like Meadow Landing and the Pocket Park should feature art installations and community events.
- Establishing an “arts block” with visual arts, music, and theater would strengthen the creative ecosystem.

- A centralized arts promotion structure (website, kiosks, coordinated marketing) would improve visibility.

4. CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS

- Funding remains a major challenge—both for physical spaces and ongoing programming.
- City bureaucracy, gentrification concerns, and disconnected business engagement pose barriers.
- Lack of transit-accessible event spaces, parking issues, and unclear zoning regulations hinder activation.
- The permitting process remains overly complex, discouraging grassroots arts initiatives.

5. PROGRAMMING AND FUTURE ACTIVATION

- The corridor should offer diverse and inclusive events, including:
- Interactive maker spaces for all ages
- Poetry, music, and performance venues

- Food and arts festivals
- Expanded Bridgefest and consistent Open Studios events
- A public kitchen for community cooking workshops and a third space for teens would serve unmet needs.
- More visibility for arts programs through signage, lighting improvements, and structured event promotion should enhance awareness.



II.

CLEARY SQUARE BUSINESS MEMO



INTRODUCTION

Cleary Square is a historic commercial district approximately seven (7) miles to the south of Boston in the northeast corner of the Hyde Park neighborhood. It retains a number of historic buildings and has a diverse retail mix of restaurants and shops, as well as a considerable amount of informational, financial, and professional and business services. This area is serviced by the Hyde Park and Fairmont station as part of the MBTA Commuter Rail.

Cleary Square, anchored by the intersection of River Street and Hyde Park Avenue, has traditionally served as the business and community center of the Hyde Park neighborhood. It is also surrounded by an abundance of historic, environmental, and cultural amenities, as well as a large residential population. The geographic radius of the Cleary Square plan area is \approx of a mile around the main commercial intersection in Cleary Square, Hyde Park Avenue and River Street. This includes the main commercial area adjacent to the commuter rail stations and Logan Square.

Larger anchor establishments in the Square include Shaw's Supermarket, a full-service grocery store, the Hyde Park branch of the Boston Public Library, the Hyde Park YMCA, several schools including the Boston Trinity Academy, and a USPS post office.

This area presents an opportunity to leverage existing commercial uses and transportation assets such as the commuter rail stations and high-frequency bus service so that the benefits of rapid transit, walkable stores and services, and open spaces are made available to more households.

Neighborhood business districts like Cleary Square contribute to the formation of community, including gathering spaces, pocket parks for special events, and long-established small businesses that residents have come to patronize over the years. During the community engagement process, residents and other stakeholders in Cleary Square emphasized the importance of maintaining the local business character of the Square by ensuring the long-term success of existing businesses even as new investment and zoning are introduced.

In conversations with business owners in Cleary Square, staff noted several concerns from business owners, including the possibility of future rent increases and resultant displacement, the availability of parking and general transportation access for their customers, and the need for more City programs to support smaller neighborhood business districts like their own.

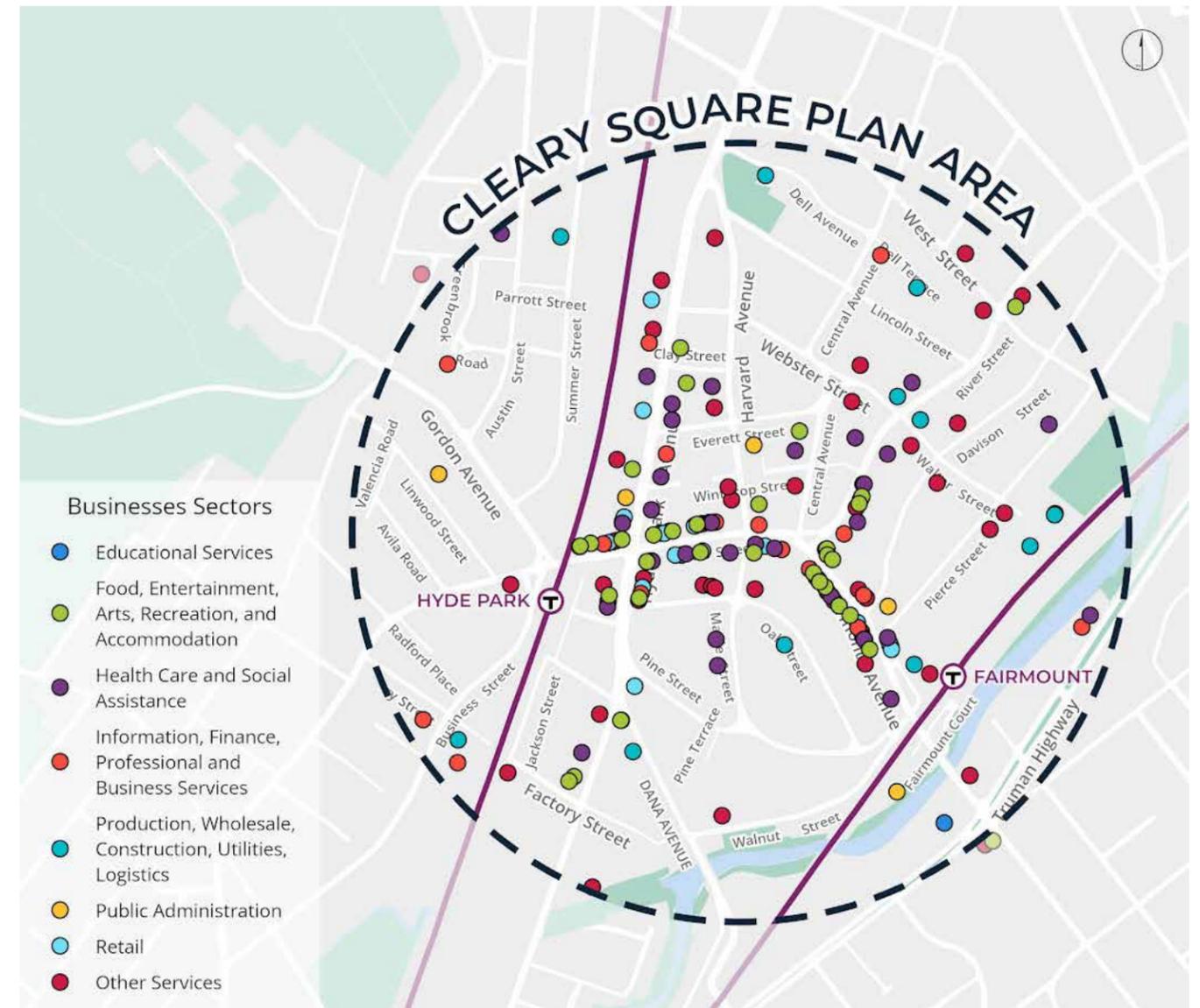
BUSINESS COMPOSITION AND EMPLOYMENT

Cleary Square has a total of 381 business establishments and employs roughly 1,120 people. As seen in the chart below, there are a variety of business establishments in the planning area. The top 3 most common categories are the following: Other Services (which includes personal care and repair/maintenance services), Information, Finance, and Professional and Business Services, Food, Entertainment, Arts, Recreation, and Accommodation Services, and Retail. Many of these dominant business sectors are not necessarily the best at driving foot traffic through the square, demonstrating a need for a wider variety of active ground floor services.

PAYROLL JOBS AND BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS IN CLEARY SQUARE				
	PAYROLL JOBS		BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS	
	#	%	#	%
All Industries	1,120	100.0%	381	100.0%
Production, Wholesale Trade, Construction, Utilities, and Logistics	17	1.5%	42	11.0%
Information, Finance, and Professional and Business Services	412	36.8%	84	22.0%
Educational Services	8	0.7%	8	2.1%
Health Care and Social Assistance	210	18.8%	38	10.0%
Retail Trade	215	19.2%	56	14.7%
Food, Entertainment, Arts, Recreation, and Accommodation Services	155	13.8%	56	14.7%
Other Services (including personal care and repair/maintenance services)	103	9.2%	91	23.9%
Public Administration (payroll job data not available)	--		6	1.6%

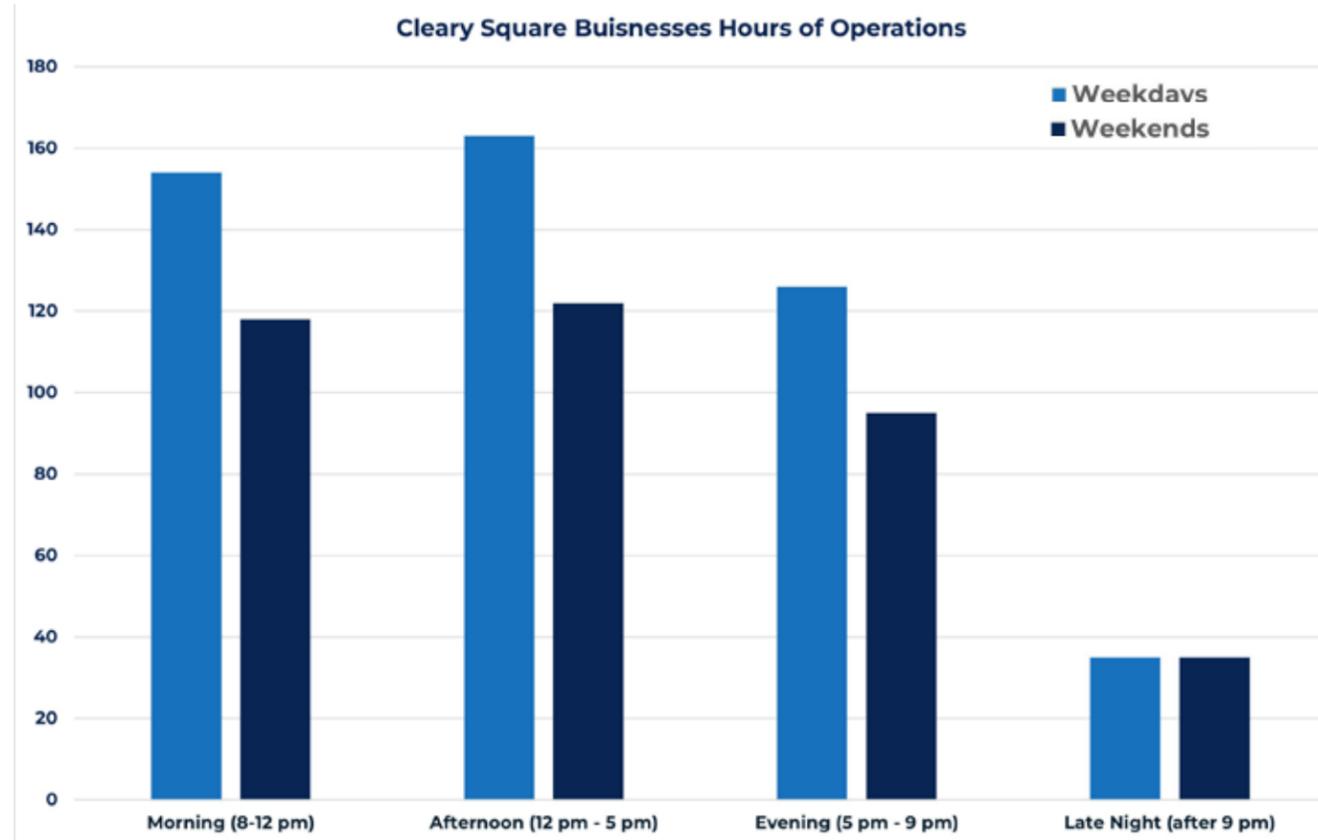
Source: OntheMap 2021 payroll jobs, December 2023 City of Boston Planning Department Research Division business database (Data Axle, Yelp, Bing, YellowPages, Boston Licensing Board), modified based on February 2024 Planning Department staff canvassing.

The map below includes all of the businesses in the Cleary Square study area, in addition to a few businesses that extend just outside of it. This map is the result of Planning staff canvassing of the study area in February 2024, which yielded several new businesses that were not reflected in the original data list, as well as several vacancies. According to CoStar, the retail vacancy rate in Cleary Square is very low (0.3% in Q3 2023) indicating a possible demand for additional retail space.



Source: December 2023 City of Boston Planning Department Research Division business database (Data Axle, Yelp, Bing, YellowPages, Boston Licensing Board), modified based on February 2024 Planning Department staff canvassing.

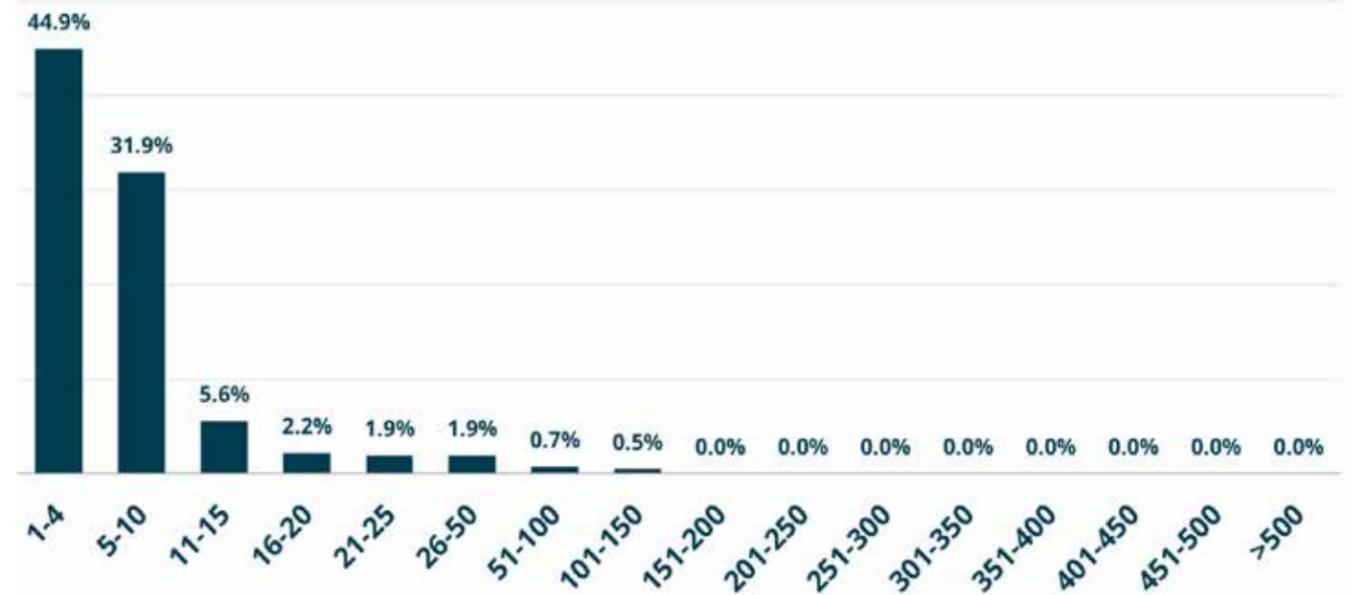
The chart below identifies the operating hours for the businesses establishments in the Square. Approximately 75% of businesses are open during weekday mornings and afternoons. Far fewer businesses are open late nights (after 9 pm) for both weeknights and weekends, and far fewer businesses are open on the weekends in general.



Notes on this chart: This data reflects the hours of operation of existing businesses sourced from their websites, Google Maps, and displayed storefront window hours. 135 of the 423 existing businesses do not have hours listed or are not open yet, so those business' operating hours are not included in the chart.

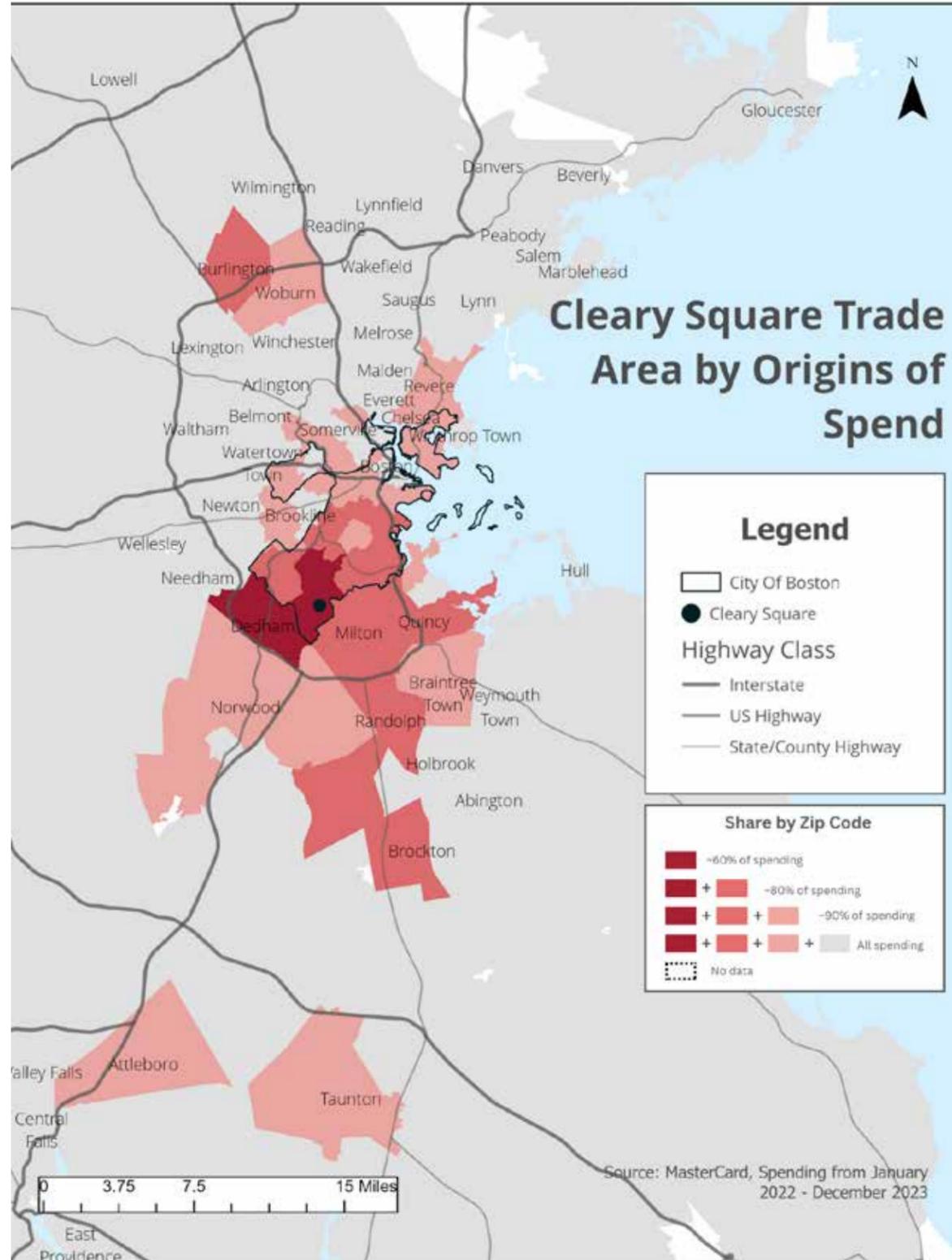
Most businesses in Cleary Square employ fewer than 10 people, according to the chart below. Approximately 45% of businesses in the study area employ fewer than 5 people, and approximately 32% employ between 5 - 10 people. This condition is likely influenced by the fact that the most common business types in Cleary Square do not typically require high levels of staffing, and that many businesses are owned and operated in small ground level commercial spaces.

Businesses by Number of Employees in Cleary Square



Source: January 2024 BPDA Research Division business database (Data Axle, Yelp, Bing, Yellow Pages, Boston Licensing Board); BPDA Research Division Analysis

WHO SPENDS MONEY IN CLEARY SQUARE?



People who spend time in Cleary Square mostly travel from Roslindale, Hyde Park, Mattapan, Jamaica Plain, Dorchester, and Roxbury. These people include employees, business owners, customers, residents, and others who spend time there. Cleary Square is a locally-focused neighborhood, and that is reflected in its visitors and residents. The majority (87%) of people spending time in Cleary Square live within 3 miles of the square, and over half (52%) of those people live within 1 mile of the square.¹ Furthermore about a third (34%) live within half a mile (potential walking distance). Those who come from further away tend to come from areas that are demographically similar to the immediate Cleary Square area. People who spend time in Cleary Square are fairly evenly split between children, young adults, working age population, and older adults.

The places of origin of those who spend money in Cleary Square (also known as the trade area) closely match the places of origin for people spending time in Cleary Square. The map below shows the top zipcodes of customers making up 60%, 80%, and 90% of spending in Cleary Square. Based on the places where 60% of customers come from, it is evident that the goods and services attracting people to the Square are for more local errands, likely close to where people live and/or work.

Spending in Cleary Square increased during the Covid-19 pandemic, as seen in the chart below, which is adjusted for annual inflation. The overall retail spending category includes in-person services such as salons, barber shops, laundromats, etc. This data indicates a strong customer base that relies on the Square for obtaining day-to-day goods and services. Convenience businesses - characterized as goods that customers frequently purchase and seek out the most convenient location to purchase these goods - comprise 33% of all in-person businesses in Cleary Square. This category represents a key business sector, including pharmacies, grocery stores, and personal care services that draws local foot traffic to activate the commercial center of the Square.

¹Cuebiq mobility data. Cuebiq collects first-party data from anonymized users who have opted-in to provide access to their location data anonymously through a GDPR-compliant framework. Planning Department Research Division Analysis

RATIO OF CONSUMER SPENDING IN CLEARY SQUARE TO 2019 LEVELS				
	2020	2021	2022	2023
Overall Retail Spending	122%	130%	131%	127%
Eating Places	99%	123%	130%	145%
Grocery and Food Stores	123%	156%	146%	158%

*For January through September 2023 compared to January through September 2019, inclusive to accommodate data availability at time of analysis Source: MasterCard Geographic Insights, Planning Department Research Division Analysis

The full breakdown of business types below compares the mix of in-person retail by three categories: convenience, comparison, and speciality. These numbers categorize Cleary Square as a Neighborhood Convenience District, primarily serving the needs of local residents.

BUSINESS CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES	CLEARY SQUARE	BOSTON
Convenience	Consumers purchase immediately and frequently with little ongoing comparison of alternatives at the most accessible outlet (likely close to home or close to work)	Grocery stores, bodegas or convenience stores, pharmacies, take-out restaurants, and personal care services	33%	24%
Comparison	Consumers expend time and effort comparing and purchasing and may be willing to travel longer distances to access preferred goods and services	Home improvement stores, full-service restaurants, and specialty food stores	24%	28%

Specialty	Consumers buy infrequently and expend considerable time and effort to access	Furniture stores, car dealerships, accommodation services, and arts/entertainment	8%	10%
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Source: December 2023 City of Boston Planning Department Research Division business database (Data Axle, Yelp, Bing, YellowPages, Boston Licensing Board), Cleary Square statistics modified based on February 2024 Planning Department staff canvassing

Generally, the Cleary Square study area is demographically similar to the trade area. The similarity is likely due to a primarily local customer base with 60 percent of customer spending coming from customers living within approximately one mile of the square due to the high proportion of convenience businesses.

There are a few key differences across income, language/race, and age that distinguish the trade area from the Cleary Square study area.



Income: The share of very low-income households (earning less than \$25,000) in the trade area is less than 2 percentage points higher than the share in the study area.



Language/Race: The Spanish-speaking, Latinx community is more represented in the Cleary Square study area than in the trade area customer base. Similarly, there is a slightly higher share of Black/African American population in Cleary Square versus the trade area.



Age: The Cleary Square trade area almost directly reflects the age composition of the study area.

	INCOME				
	< \$25,000	\$25,000 - \$49,999	\$50,000 - \$74,999	\$75,000 - \$99,999	> \$100,000
Cleary Square study area	16.7%	13.3%	11.4%	12.3%	46.3%
Trade Area	14.9%	12.1%	10.5%	11.1%	51.3%
	LANGUAGES				
	English only	Spanish	French or Haitian Creole	Other	
Cleary Square study area	64.7%	13.9%	9.9%	3.4%	
Trade Area	70.1%	10.1%	6.7%	4.9%	
	AGE				
	0-17	18-34	35-59	60+	
Cleary Square study area	21.1%	24.1%	32.6%	22.4%	
Trade Area	20.6%	24.6%	32.7%	22.2%	
	RACE				
	White, non-Hispanic	Black/African American, non-Hispanic	Hispanic or Latino	Asian Pacific Islander	Other
Cleary Square study area	40.8%	31.5%	18.1%	4.8%	4.9%
Trade Area	52.7%	21.6%	13.1%	7.6%	4.9%

CONCLUSION

The intent of this memo is to inform a targeted application of existing and future City policies and programs to promote small business centers like Cleary Square. During the Cleary Square: Squares + Streets engagement process, the community indicated a need for more City support to stabilize existing small businesses and promote their goods and services to a wider audience.

This memo provides greater context on the types of businesses and customer base that supports the commercial sector of Cleary Square, and informs potential needs and opportunities to support existing businesses through new, complementary businesses desired by the community, such as sit-down restaurants, cafes and places for youth, more healthy food options, and casual daytime eateries, and targeted marketing strategies to expand the existing customer base.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey and MasterCard Geographic Insights, Planning Department Research Division Analysis



Cleary Square
BUSINESS LIST

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES	
Forever Young Adult Day Center	

FOOD, ENTERTAINMENT, ARTS, RECREATION, AND ACCOMMODATION SERVICES	
Antonio's Bacari	Hyde Park Youth Percussion
Asian Thai	Inspire Arts & Music
Boston Crusaders	J the DJ Studios
Boston Fusion Chef Club	Karm-Syndia Dance Studio
Boston Restaurant Bar & Grills, LLC	Krispy Krunchy Chicken
Burger King	Laly's Mini Market
Burritos Pizzeria	Las Delicias Colombianas
Canvas Studio	Las Vegas Seafood Restaurant
Cappy's	Little Haiti International Cuisine LLC
Domino's	Master McGraths
Dunkin Donuts	McDonald's
Fan Fan Bakery	New Vision Academy of Jiu Jitsu
Fish Market	New York Fried Chicken
Fleetwood Sounds	Only One Jamaican Restaurant III
Gege's	Papa Gino's
Gourmet Fish	Park 54 Restaurant
Great East Music Store	Red Moon Chinese Resturant
Hyde Park Art Association// MAC	Rincon Caribeno Restaurant

Riverside Theatre Works Inc	The Switch Co-op
Ron's Ice Cream and Bowling	Twentieth Century Bowling Lanes
Subway	Zaz Restaurant
Talk & Wok Cafe	

HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE (INCLUDING CHILD CARE)	
Ace Dental Boston	Chadda Dental Associates
American Legion	Charles J. Dow Cardiologist
Arbit Chiropractic	Child and Family Wellness Center
Arch Orthodontics	Christ Church
Armin Dental Associates	Cleary Square Eyecare
Bethesda Haitian Baptist Church	Comeback Physical Therapy
Bethesda Haitian Seventh-Day Adventist Church	Commonwealth Counseling Associates
Bidway-USA Inc	Diaz Family Childcare
Boston Acupuncture Project Inc	DRS Bankhead & Groipen, DDS, PC
Brigham & Women's at Hyde Park	Fairmount Ave Physical Therapy & Rehabilitation
Bright Beginners Daycare	Fitt Pitt
Bryce's Journey Inc	Fogg-Roberts Post (American Legion)
Carnegie Psychiatry LLC	General Council Christian Church of North America
Cayes II Cab Inc	Greenberg Kenneth DDS

Gregory Talalayevsky, MD PC	Mount Olive Evangelical Church
Gurvits Katrina DC PC	Mt Olives Community Center Inc
Harvardst Health Center Wic	New Beginnings Academy//God Is Here
Hyde Park Choice Chiropractore	Onwards and Upwards
Hyde Park Dental Associates	Pentecostal Church of the Last Hour
Hyde Park Dental Lab	Riley House
Hyde Park Pediatrics PC	South Side Headstart
Iglesia Ven A Jesucristo Inc (Inglesia Cristiana)	Standhard Physical Therapy LLC
Jireh Ministries Inc	Summit Counseling & Home Care Solutions
Lifewatch Home Care Inc	The Child & Family Wellness Center
Lowney Medical Associates	U-Smile P C
Most Precious Blood Rectory	YMCA

INFORMATION, FINANCE, AND PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS SERVICES	
A Spanish Translations	Charles Advisory Group
Adaptab Management Consulting LLC	Commonwealth Co-op Bank (ATM)
Advanced Property Management	Commonwealth Co-Operative Bank
Aspen Consulting	Cordon Blue
Bank of America	Divinty Realty
Bay Cove	Dreamstate Contemporary Solutions

Frank D. Colagiovanni Attorney	Richard C Hyman
Hyde Park Co-op Charitable	Roberson Law Group PC
Insight Realty	Rockland Trust
Johnathon & Associates	Sunshine Realty
Liberty Tax	Tax Pro America
Lore Insurance Group	The Boston Constant LLC
Lowney Law LLC	Thomas F Gallagher Insurance
Minuteman Success Group Inc	Trust Realty Group
Myer Dana Myer & Sons	Unlimited Realty Solutions Boston Real Estate School
RCM Tax Service Inc	Western Union Agent Location

OTHER SERVICES (EXCLUDING PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION)	
3 B's Auto Body & Truck Repair	Baystate Reference Laboratories
54th Mass Volunteers Infantry Co	Biosanitech Cleaning Service
A & S Enterprises	Boston Office Movers
Akiki Oil	Bostonlimousine.com
American Driving Institute	Boutique 2000
Astound Broadband Powered By RCN	Britney Cab Inc
Automotive Specialties	Bryce's Journey
Baton Moise Cab Inc	Carroll-Thomas Funeral Home
Bay State Taxi	Central Automotive

Christian Tabernacle Church of Jesus-Christ Inc	Intruiging Hair Extensions
City Globe	J & C Auto Body II
Complex Hair Design and Multi Services	J T Motoring
Dalbabebe Salon	Jackman Professional Accounting
Dedham Wholesale Tire Co Warehouse	Jireh Beauty Salon
Dhenia's Salon	Jlor Creative Design & Print
Dream Kid Spa	Juniors Automotive
Dynamic Motor Sports of Boston	Kenney CLNRS
Eagle Shipping	Kirker Bassoon Repair
Events by Emily	Klein Post Card Service
First Church of God of Healing of Boston Inc	KZEE African Hair Braiding
Frank's Glass & Auto Services Inc	La Paix Barber Shop
G Garcia Inc	La Table Spirituelle Inc
Glamour Hair Braiding	Laundry Queen
Greater Faith Worship Center	Logan Square Barbershop
Hair By Changes	Los Magicos Barbershop
Hyde Park Cleaners	Lovely Nail Salon
Hyde Park Seventh-Day	Luu & Nails
Impact Wed Locs Salon	M & M Redemption Center
International Association	Mai Hair Braiding

Maison D'accueil Malika Inc	RSVP Event Space
Maria's Hair Salon	Sante Fanm AK Lafanmi
Mauri & Shey's Transportation	Sharps Barber Shop
Mauricio Auto Repair	Skinluxe
MBTA Subway Station-Hyde Park	South Shore Trusted Auto Care
Memories by Gera and Events by Emily	Southwest Boston Community Development Corporation
Mitchell's Auto Repair	That Child Got Talent Entertainment
Mr. G's Laundromat	The Blind Side
Nigerian-American Multi-Service Association Namsa Inc	The Perfect Threading
Park & Ride-Hyde Park	Truman Highway Automobile Service
Parkway Cleaning Center Inc	U-Haul Moving & Storage of Hyde Park-Milton
Passion Beauty Supply & Salon LLC	Ulysse Trans Holding Corp
Penna Nicholas Coiffeurs	United States Postal Service
Pennacchio Funeral Service	V V Transportation Inc
Peoples Club-Nigeria Boston Branch	Waggey Land
Private Office Barbershop	We Clean Well
Qadosh Hair Studio	Weft & Bond
R & Sons Auto Repair	Western Union Agent Location
Rachel Leslie Hair Lounge	Willy Wireless, Phone store
River St. Auto Center	Wy Hair Salon & Barbershop

PRODUCTION, WHOLESALE TRADE, CONSTRUCTION, UTILITIES, AND LOGISTICS	
Boston Blacksmith	Mega Building Service
Delta Glass Service	New England Project Contracting
Enliven Body Massage	Pereyra Construction
Gangemi Woodworking Inc	Prestige Construction LLC
JJF Construction	S & S Paint Landscaping & Construction
Lentine JC Electric Service Inc	Seth Ravitz Associates Inc
Macedonia Siding & Windows	Union Construction Inc
McMahon Plumbing & Heating	Upper Echelon LLC

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	
Boston Fire Department-Station 48	Hyde Park Public Library
Boston Police Department	Imagine That @ Grew
Boston Police Relief Association	Park & Ride-Fairmount
Henry Grew School	Representative Ayanna Pressley
Hyde Park Main Streets	

RETAIL TRADE	
7-Eleven	Blue River Food Mart
Akiki Fine Wines, LLC	Boost Mobile By PWC Wireless
AutoZone	Brennan's of Cleary Sq

Central Paint & True Value	Metro by T-Mobile Authorized Retailer
Dollar General	Odb Liquors
Dress With Confidence	Perfume Corner
Essence of Thyme Catering & Gift Shop	Pure Joy Flowers
Fairmont Food Mart	Royal Caribbean Supermarket
Hyde Park Convenience Store	S. K. Market
Jamie Dollar Discount	Star Food Mart
Jerusalem Perfume (Jersulum Trading?)	Super Discount Store
Jessies Tire Sales	The Tee Shop
JM Variety	W Y Services & Retail Inc
Kashed Out	WED Multi Service
Le Trap Couture LLC	Jonathan & Associates Inc
Mannysaqueenafashion	



III.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS REPORT

OVERVIEW

Within the Cleary Square Planning Area there are two commuter rail stations, over 20 bus stops served by four bus routes, two bikeshare stations with nearly 30 public bikes, public parking lots containing almost 300 spaces including four carshare spaces, and many public streets and sidewalks. All together, bus and commuter rail options in the Planning Area provide an exceptional amount of transportation capacity: Buses and trains through the study area can carry over 100,000 daily passengers, including over 7,500 daily passengers during the morning and evening peak commute times (8-9AM and 5-6PM).

With the exception of painted bike lanes on Truman Parkway, there are no bike lanes or paths within the Planning Area. Though the Neponset River Greenway is nearby and provides a continuous path for transportation and recreation from Truman Highway in Hyde Park to Tenean Beach in Dorchester, walking and biking access to the river and greenway is limited from Cleary Square.

SERVICES	MAJOR CONNECTIONS	FREQUENCY AS OF 2023	
MBTA COMMUTER RAIL	Fairmount Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Station 	45 mins (weekdays) 90 mins (weekends)
	Hyde Park Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Station • Ruggles • Back Bay • Forest Hills • Providence, RI 	60 mins (weekdays) 120 mins (weekends)
MBTA BUS	24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ashmont 	30-60 mins (weekdays) 40-65 mins (weekends)
	32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest Hills 	5-15 mins (weekdays) 12 mins (weekends)
	33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest Hills 	30-60 mins (weekdays) 60 mins (weekends)
	50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest Hills 	25-60 mins (weekdays) 60 mins (weekends)
BIKE SHARE	2 stations (27 bikes)	400+ stations across the region	On Demand
CAR SHARE	3 locations (4 cars)	Unlimited	On Demand

There are several significant transportation projects in the Cleary Square Planning Area planned or currently underway including:

- River Street Bridge Replacement (MassDOT):** The River Street Bridge was built in 1883 and crosses the MBTA and Amtrak rail lines. The River Street Bridge has been repaired, reopened for vehicle use, and on a more frequent inspection schedule to ensure it remains safe for use. MassDOT remains committed to its replacement with a modern structure with a 75-year design lifespan. The start of construction for the replacement bridge is being coordinated with Amtrak and the MBTA along with the Canterbury Street bridge closure. As the design progresses, the ability to close the River St bridge and detour traffic while the Canterbury Street Bridge is under construction will be evaluated.
- Hyde Park Ave Multimodal Corridor (Boston Transportation Department):** Over 200 buses travel on Hyde Park every day and the Route 32 bus is among the highest ridership routes in the entire MBTA system. The City is beginning work to identify ways to improve bus reliability and improve safety along all 4.5 miles of Hyde Park Ave.
- Fairmount Line Frequency Increases (MBTA):** Since May 2024, the Fairmount Line now operates every 30 minutes on weekdays and weekends for the majority of the day. Ridership on the Fairmount Line has grown to over 130% of pre-pandemic ridership. In addition, the MBTA and state lawmakers are working on plans to both electrify and increase service on the Fairmount Line to provide service every 20 minutes on weekdays and every 30 minutes on weekends.
- Electric Vehicle Fast-Charging Stations:** The City is installing fast-charging stations for electric vehicles in the Municipal Parking Lot at Winthrop Street.

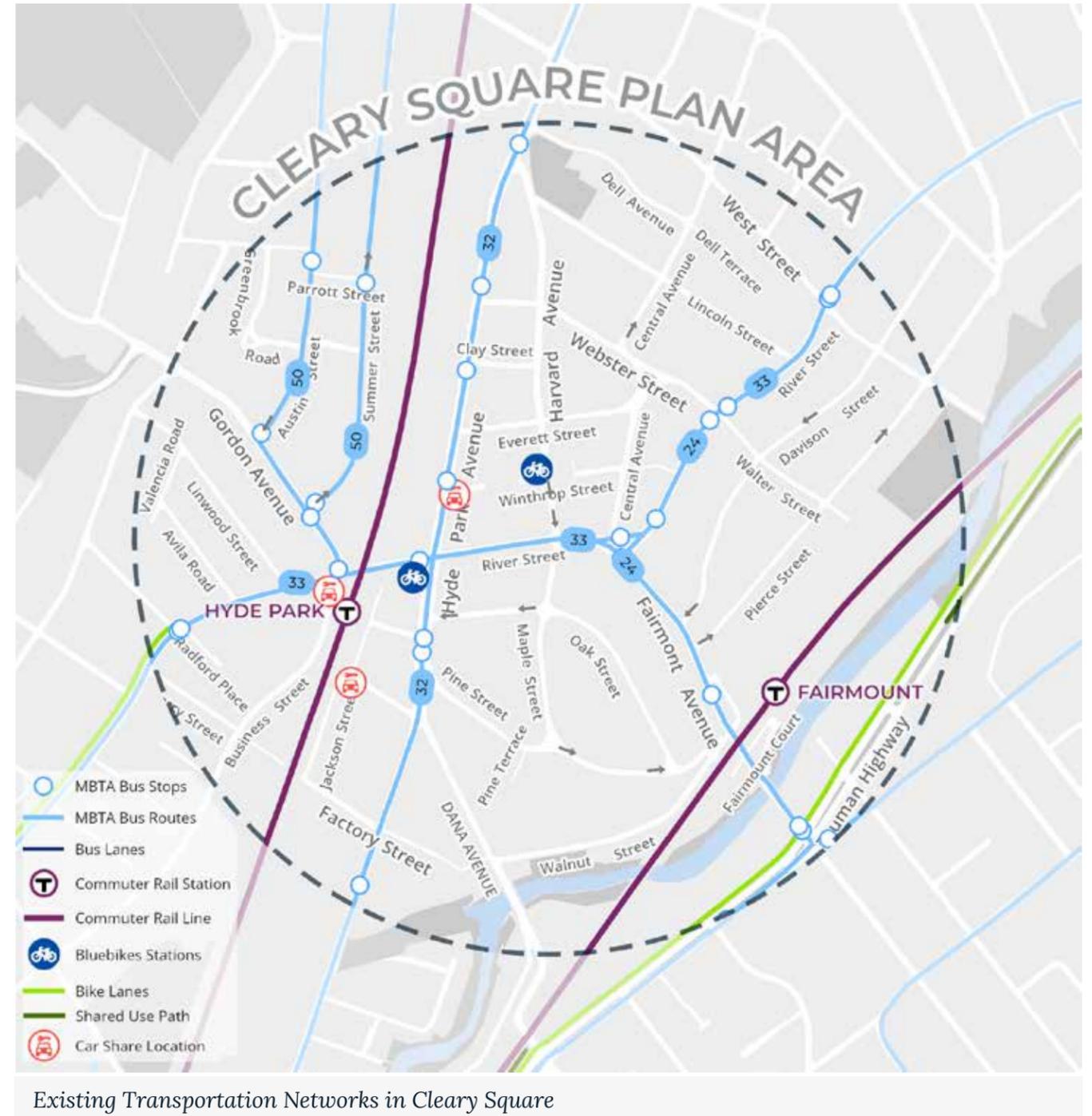
In addition to these major projects, the City has street repaving planned in the area along Dana Ave and Winthrop St in the coming years. Several nearby approved development projects will also make transportation investments in Cleary Square, including expanded sidewalks and accessible ramp construction on portions of River Street, Fairmount Avenue, Dana Avenue, Business Street, and Oak Street.



EXISTING TRANSPORTATION CONDITIONS

Since it was published in early 2017, Boston’s Citywide Transportation Action Plan, Go Boston 2030, has guided the City’s transportation policies and investments. The plan outlines important goals and targets:

1. **Eliminate severe and fatal traffic injuries**
2. **Provide access to transit, bikeshare, and carshare within 10 mins of every home**
3. **Reduce average commute times by 10%**
4. **Reduce car trips to work by 50%, increase transit trips to work by 33%**
5. **Achieve carbon neutrality by 2050**
6. **Reduce transportation costs**



How does Cleary Square stack up today against these targets?

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

From 2021 to 2023 there were 118 traffic crashes requiring an emergency response in the Cleary Square Planning Area. Data show that pedestrians are especially vulnerable to crashes within the Planning Area.

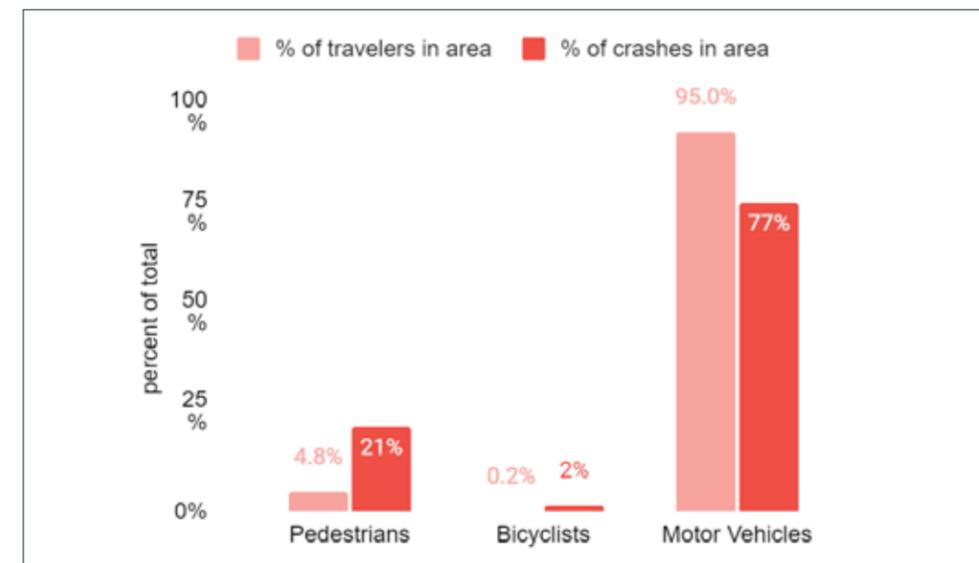
- Crashes were concentrated on major streets in the Planning Area. Of the 118 crashes that occurred from 2021-2023, 86% of all crashes occurred on just five streets: Hyde Park Avenue, River Street, Fairmount Avenue, Dana Avenue, and Gordon Street.
- Whether walking, biking, or driving, several intersections stand out as crash hot spots within the Planning Area:
 - ◊ Hyde Park Ave/Irene Lowney Lane
 - ◊ Hyde Park Ave/Dana St
 - ◊ Hyde Park Ave/Oak St/Pingree St
 - ◊ Truman Parkway/Fairmount Ave
- The majority of crashes that occurred within the Planning Area (77%) involved cars only. However, when compared to how people travel through the Planning Area it is clear that people walking and biking are disproportionately impacted by crashes. While recent traffic counts show that pedestrians make up roughly five percent of travelers in the Planning Area, pedestrians were involved in over 20% of all crashes.

What are people saying about transportation safety in Cleary Square?

“ Fairmount Avenue does not feel very safe since cars pass by people rushing from the train.
– Walkshop Attendee ”

“ [I’d like a] median separated bike lane, no painted [bike lanes]– I don’t want to die!
– Kickoff event attendee ”

“ People crossing Hyde Park Ave mid-street have to dart between cars, and there are frequent accidents at the Hyde Park Ave/Dana Ave intersection
– Walkshop Attendee ”

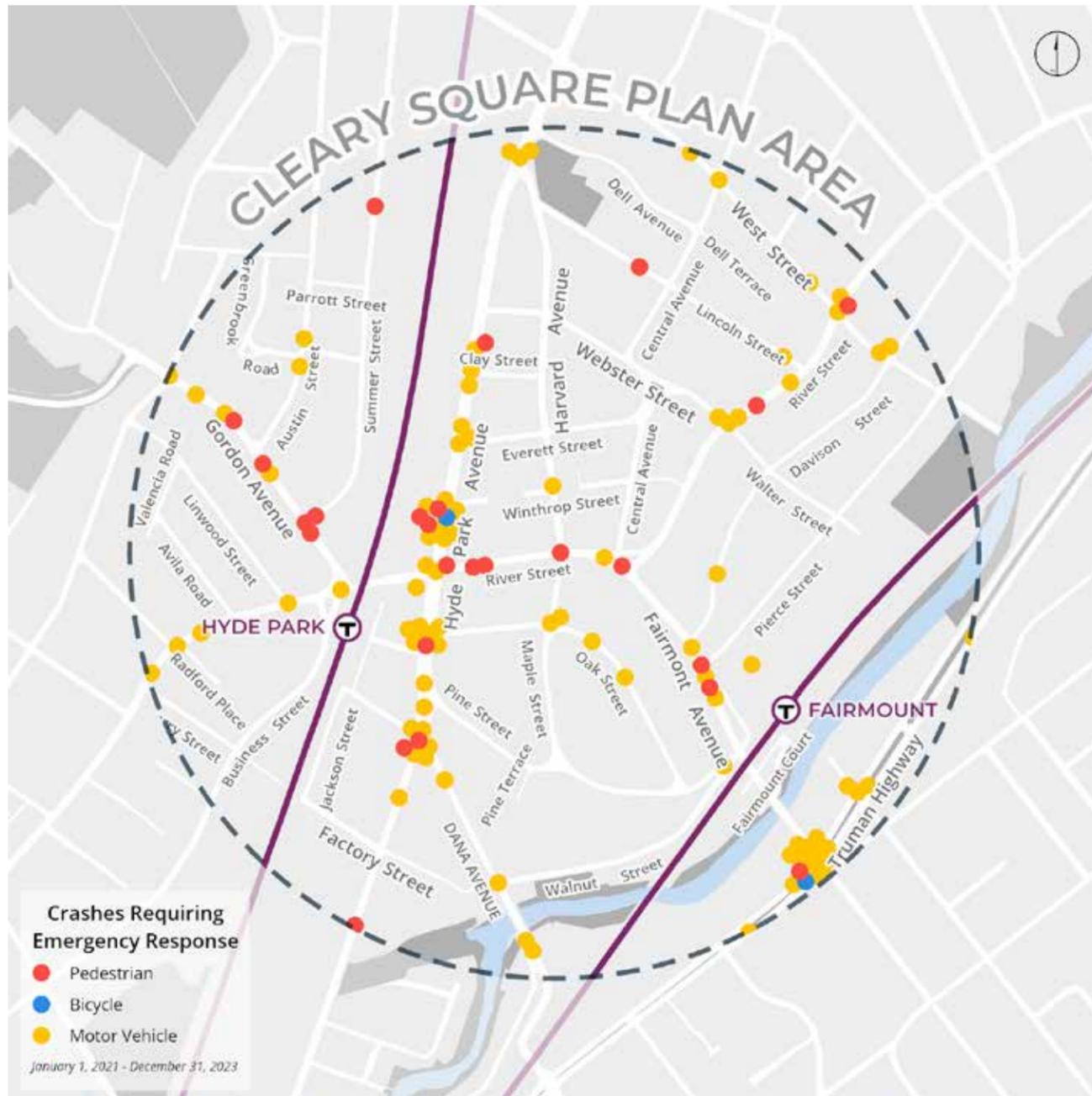


Comparison of Crashes and Volumes of Travelers By Mode¹

¹User volumes presented in the chart represent an average of two sets of count data collected in 2022 and 2024 within the Planning Area

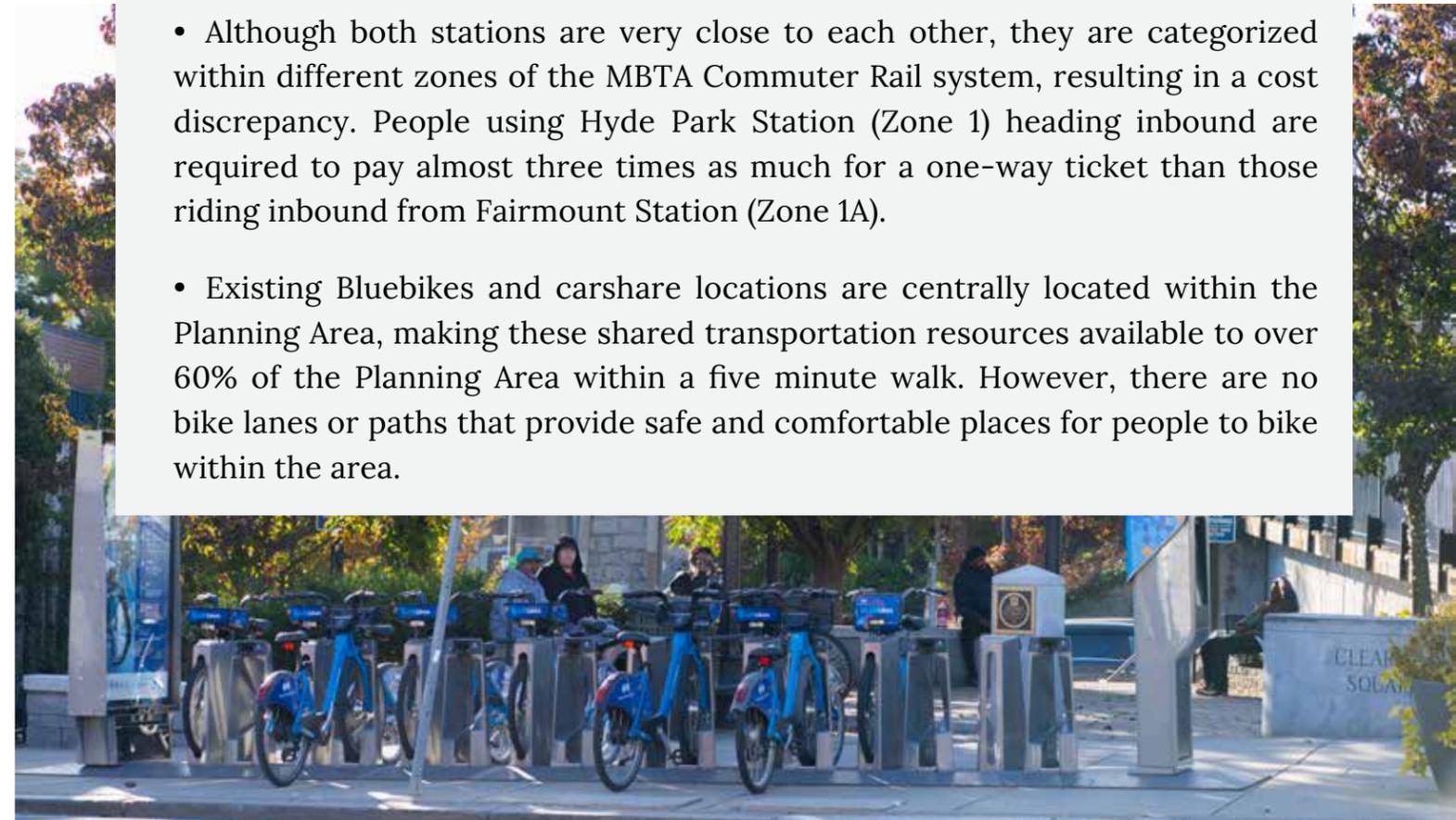
ACCESS TO TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

Today, the vast majority of the Cleary Square Planning Area is within a 5-minute (quarter-mile) walk of multiple transit, carshare, and bikeshare options.



Crashes Requiring an Emergency Response, January 1, 2021 - December 31, 2023

- Bus stops along the high-frequency Route 32 bus on Hyde Park Ave are accessible within a five minute walk for 72% of the Planning Area.
- The Cleary Square Planning Area is unique among Boston’s squares because it is served by two commuter rail stations and multiple train routes. Across both Hyde Park Station and Fairmount Station, 68% of the Cleary Square Planning Area can walk to a commuter rail station within a five-minute walk.
- Both commuter rail stations provide a one-seat ride to South Station with intermediate stops across Boston’s southern neighborhoods (Roslindale, Jamaica Plain, Dorchester, Roxbury) along each route. Although the commuter rail stations offer a quick ride into the heart of Boston, the train is not very frequent and pedestrian conditions on nearby streets and within the station itself can make it difficult to reach the station platforms.
- Although both stations are very close to each other, they are categorized within different zones of the MBTA Commuter Rail system, resulting in a cost discrepancy. People using Hyde Park Station (Zone 1) heading inbound are required to pay almost three times as much for a one-way ticket than those riding inbound from Fairmount Station (Zone 1A).
- Existing Bluebikes and carshare locations are centrally located within the Planning Area, making these shared transportation resources available to over 60% of the Planning Area within a five minute walk. However, there are no bike lanes or paths that provide safe and comfortable places for people to bike within the area.



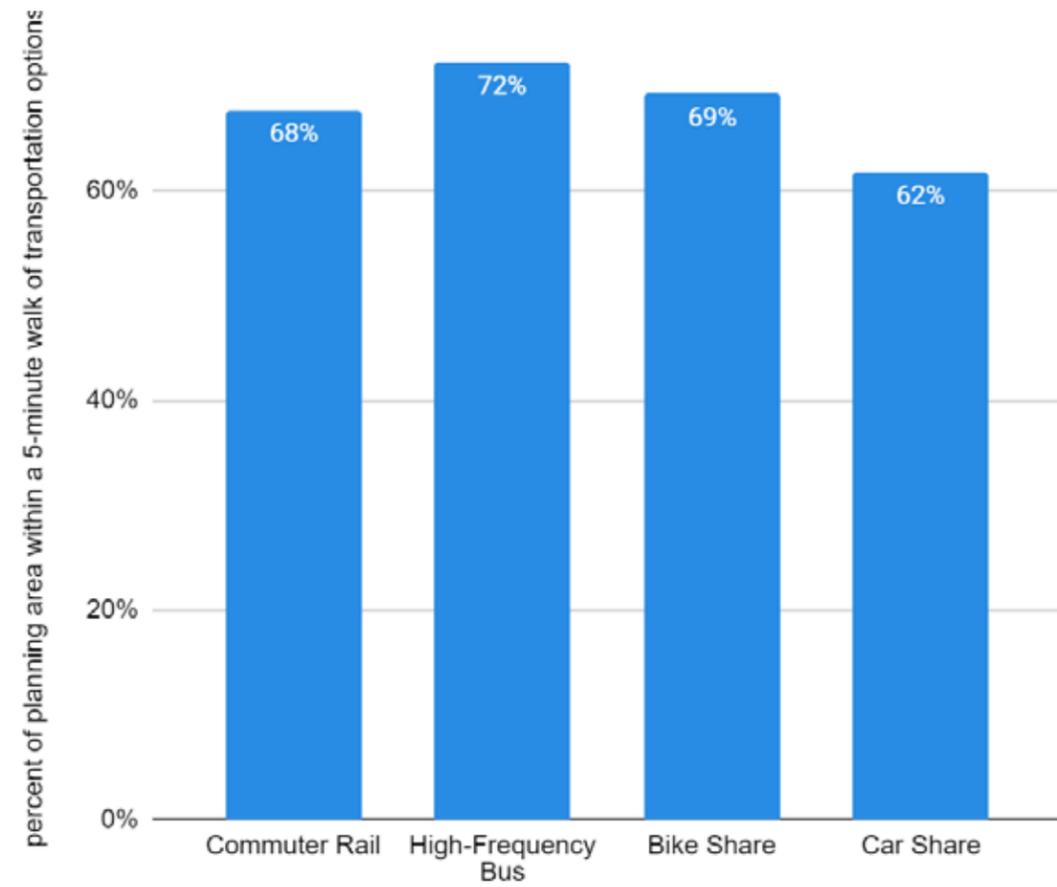
What are people saying about *access to transportation* options in Cleary Square?

“ As a person who grew up in H.P. since 1968 ... I'm very happy to walk to the square and be able to have great transportation into downtown Boston. ”

“ The Fairmount Line is very reliable and the line is well-used. ”
-Walkshop attendee

“ [I'd like a] bike lane on HP ave to Forest Hills and Southwest Corridor! ”
-Kickoff Event attendee

“ H.P. station should be zone 1A. When there are service disruptions, trains skip Back Bay, Ruggles, and Hyde park stations...There is also less area services to HP than other stations. ”
-Kickoff Event attendee



Percent of the Planning Area Within a 5-minute Walk of Transportation Options

PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT

The density of streets and destinations in the heart of Cleary Square makes it a very walkable place. However, some major streets are missing crosswalks and sidewalks in key places.

- At the start of the Cleary Square planning process, there were no marked crosswalks for over a quarter-mile on Hyde Park Avenue between Harvard Avenue and Winthrop Street. As a result of this plan, a new crosswalk has been added at Winthrop Street.
- Streets near commuter rail stations including Business Street, Maple Street, and parts of River Street have narrow sidewalks and long gaps between marked crosswalks. In addition to making it difficult to travel using a wheelchair or side-by-side with friends and family, narrow sidewalks also limit the space available for street trees, light poles, benches, bus shelters, and other amenities that help make streets comfortable and inviting for pedestrians. The vast majority of sidewalks in the Planning Area are not shaded by trees.
- Walnut Street, which is a key connection to Fairmount Station, is missing sidewalks entirely.
- The train tracks on each side of the Planning Area can also exacerbate walking distances to otherwise closeby destinations, especially from the residential areas to the west and east of the Planning Area.



What are people saying about walking conditions in Cleary Square?

“ The sidewalks on and around the River St Bridge are not safe for pedestrians. ”
–Walkshop attendee

“ Crosswalks can be difficult with a stroller or child, especially by the library. ”
–Walkshop attendee

“ There are not enough safe walkways to cross the street. I would love to see more raised, or at least repainted, crosswalks. ”
–Walkshop attendee

TRANSIT CONDITIONS

The bus is a primary service for people coming and going from Cleary Square. In 2023, almost 4,000 riders got on and off the bus each day in the Planning Area.



Overview of Pedestrian Conditions

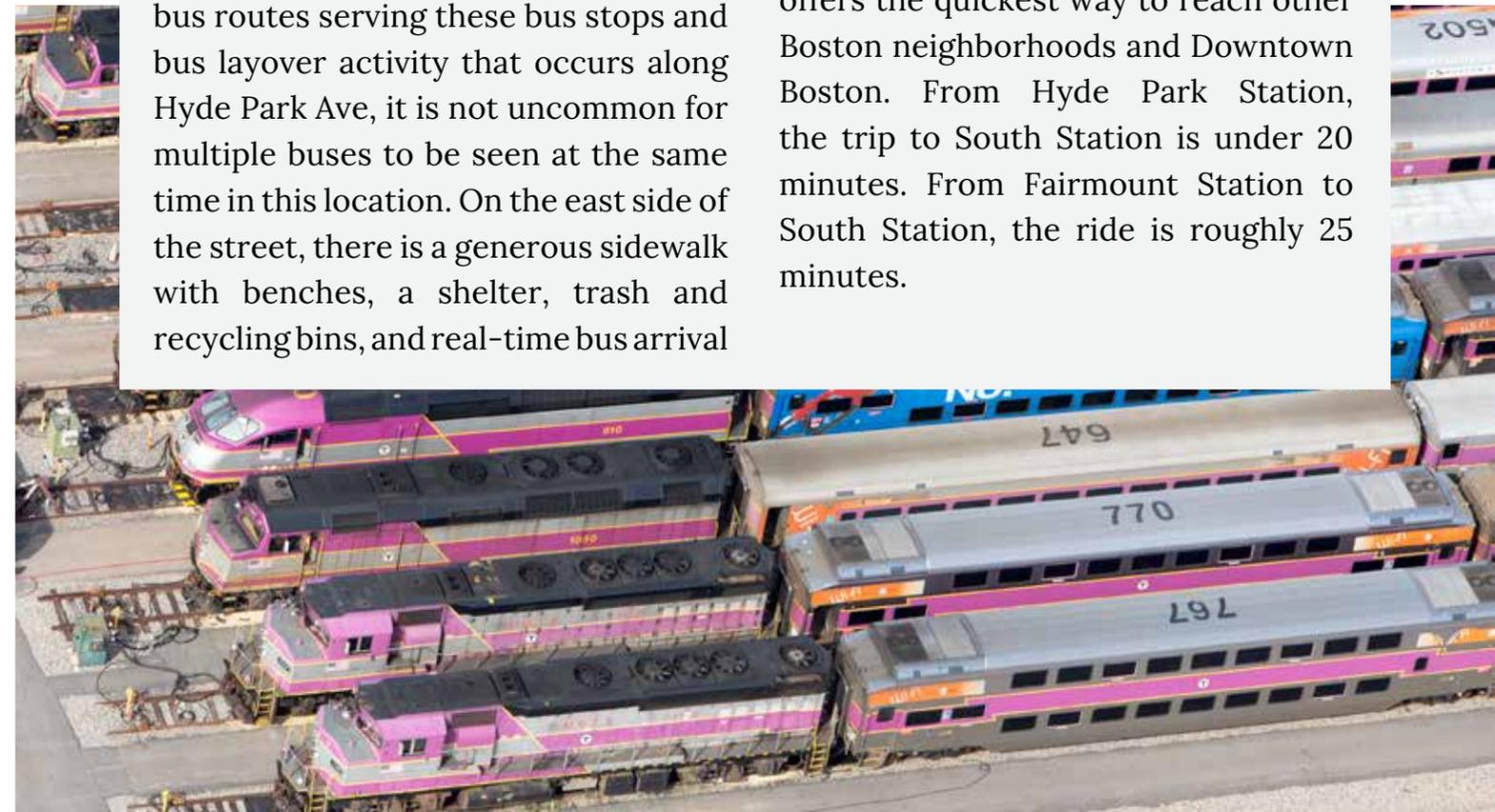
- Route 32 is one of the highest ridership bus routes in the entire MBTA system. Each weekday, nearly 7,000 people ride the bus on Hyde Park Avenue between Hyde Park and Forest Hills. However, these thousands of riders on Hyde Park Ave are frequently delayed by traffic, and Cleary Square is one of the largest areas of delay for Route 32 riders.

- The bus hub at Hyde Park Ave/ Pingree St/Oak St serves almost 1,600 passengers each day. With multiple bus routes serving these bus stops and bus layover activity that occurs along Hyde Park Ave, it is not uncommon for multiple buses to be seen at the same time in this location. On the east side of the street, there is a generous sidewalk with benches, a shelter, trash and recycling bins, and real-time bus arrival

information. On the outbound side of the street, a shelter, trash receptacle, and bench are provided in a more constrained sidewalk environment.

- Even though many bus stops in the Planning Area serve hundreds of bus passengers each day, only three bus stops have bus amenities like a shelter and benches.

- Although the commuter rail is less frequent than bus options in the Planning Area, the commuter rail offers the quickest way to reach other Boston neighborhoods and Downtown Boston. From Hyde Park Station, the trip to South Station is under 20 minutes. From Fairmount Station to South Station, the ride is roughly 25 minutes.



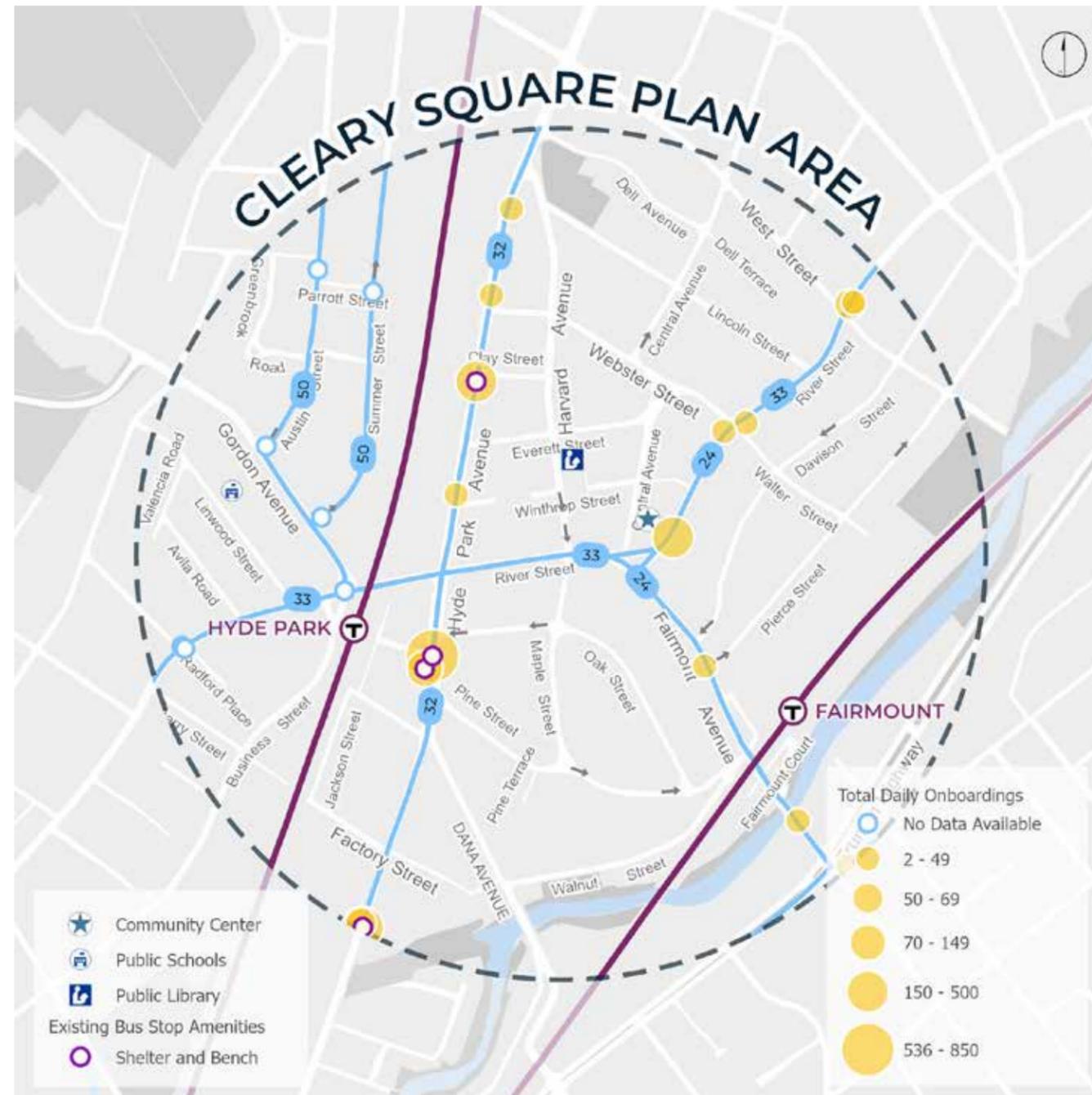
What are people saying about taking the bus and train in Cleary Square?

“ More frequent bus! A bus lane would be great.”
 -Kick off event attendee ”

“ The commuter rail at the Hyde Park station is too infrequent, and the station doesn't feel like a safe place to wait for trains. ”
 -Walkshop attendee

“ We come to the Menino Library almost every Saturday but we drive because the bus (50) doesn't come often enough to be a real option. ”
 -Deforest Street resident

“ [I'd like an] affordable transportation grid with workable reliable schedules. ”
 -Kick off event attendee



Bus Ridership and Bus Stop Amenities

VEHICLE PARKING

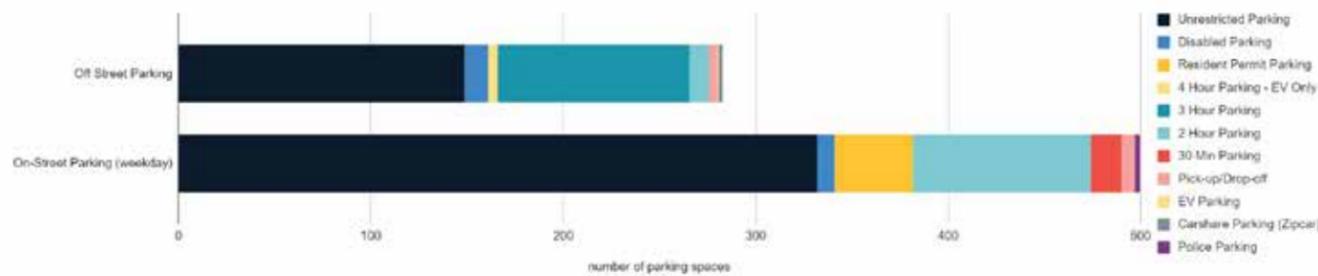
There are over 800 public parking spaces within the heart of Cleary Square. During parking counts completed in March 2024, parking utilization within the area ranged from a minimum of 39% utilized on Saturday morning to a maximum of 69% utilized midday during the week.



Weekday Utilization of Parking



Weekend Utilization of Parking



Inventory of Parking by Regulation Type

- An inventory of a subset of streets within the commercial core of the Planning Area showed that there are 297 parking spaces in existing public off-street parking lots and 519 on-street parking spaces.

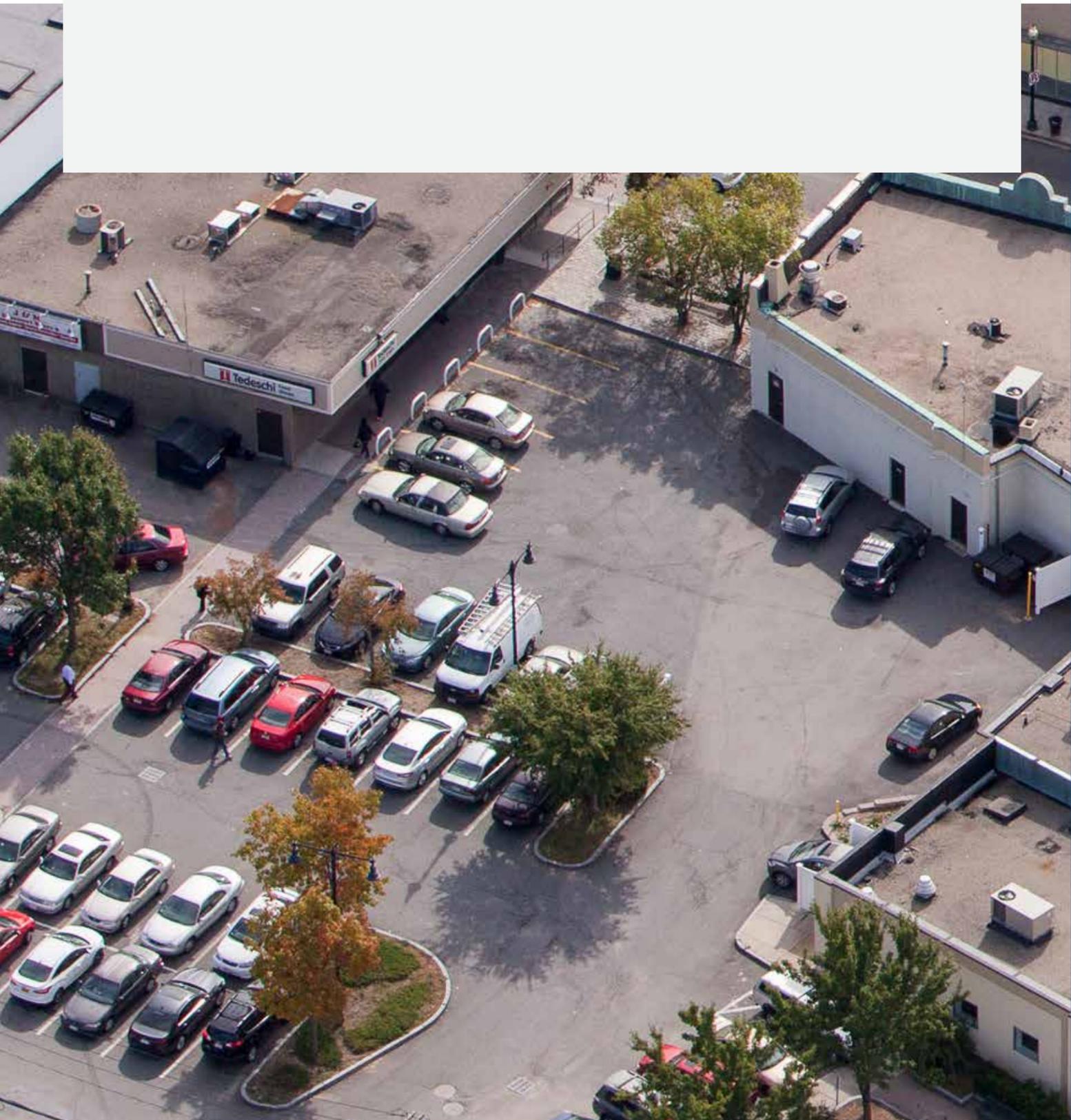
- The inventoried parking spaces include both regulated and unregulated parking. Some regulations change depending on the day of the week and time of day. The vast majority of on-street parking spaces (between 66% and 85% depending on the day and time) are unregulated, meaning anyone can park there for any amount of time. The second most common regulation type is 2-hour parking, which is predominately located on Fairmount Ave, portions of Hyde Park Ave, and portions of River Street. Two-hour parking makes up between 9% and 18% of the inventoried parking spaces depending on the day and time. None of the on-street parking is metered within the study area and instances of vehicles parked longer than allowed were common throughout the study area during a parking study completed in March 2024. In a survey completed by 24 business representatives in Cleary Square, 63% shared that their customers typically spend less than a half hour at their business, with 17% of those spending less than 15 minutes in the business.

- Off-street parking within the four public parking lots includes a mix of medium-term and long-term parking. The two municipal parking lots (one on Winthrop Street and one near Hyde Park Station) both include free, medium-term parking (between 2 and 4 hours). The two MBTA parking lots (one at Hyde Park Station and one at Fairmount Station) provide long-term parking for a fee (\$4 per day Monday-Friday and \$2 per day on weekends). Currently, none of the public parking lots in the area allow overnight parking.

- A parking utilization study was conducted in March 2024. The study counted all cars within the parking study area every hour between 8AM and 6PM on a weekday (Wednesday) and Saturday. Results from the utilization study showed that while some street parking and parking lots are fully utilized during some hours of the day, the maximum utilization of parking within the parking study area as a whole is low at 69%.

- The parking study showed that demand for parking differs depending on location and time of day. For example, while Fairmount Ave consistently had open parking spaces during the week, the street was fully parked for multiple hours midday on

Saturday. Other major streets with high utilization (over 90% full) included River St midday during the middle of the day on Saturday, Harvard Ave during portions of both the weekday and Saturday, and Everett St during several hours on the weekday.



What are people saying about parking in Cleary Square?

“ It is not realistic to drive into the Square, too much traffic and already limited parking ”
-Peggy

“ The (public) parking lot is easy to miss. Can we have better signage? Can the one behind the post office be utilized after hours for patrons of the square? ”
-Kickoff event attendee

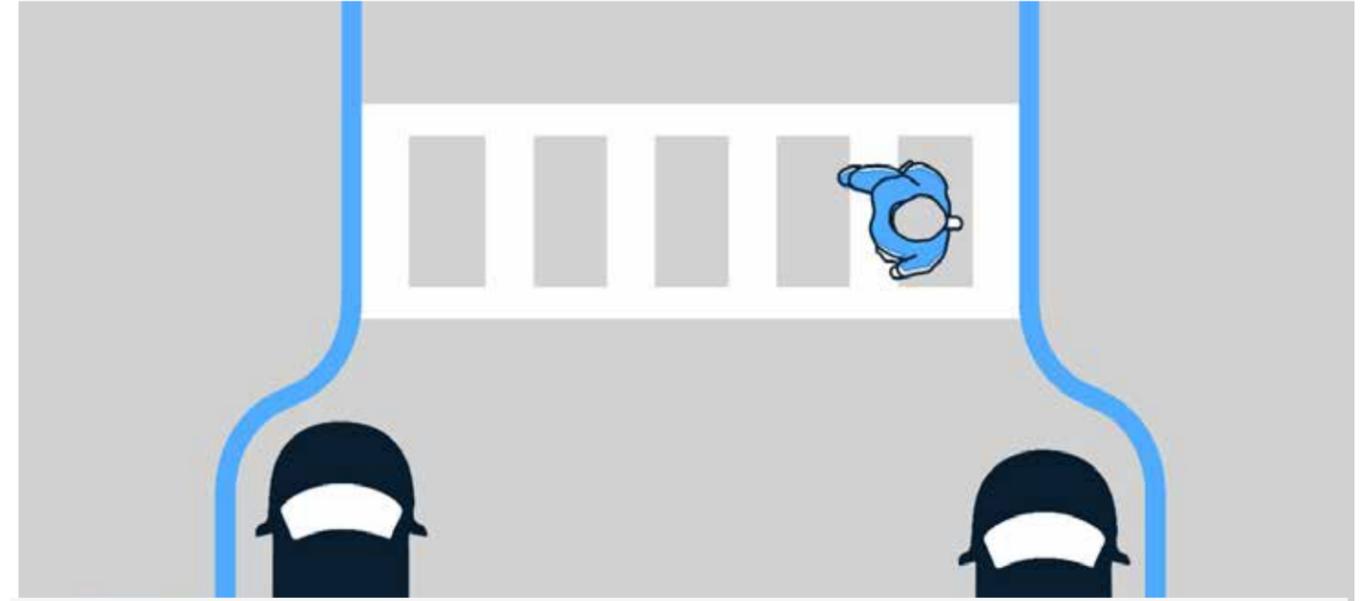
“ Parking should be pick-up drop-off, 30-minute, etc. ”
-Andrew

“ ... I do feel like parking issues are a big reason I have issues retaining clients from outside the immediate neighborhood (at the Boston Acupuncture Project). I wish some of those under used lots nearby were built up or at least available for public parking ”
-Boston Acupuncture Project

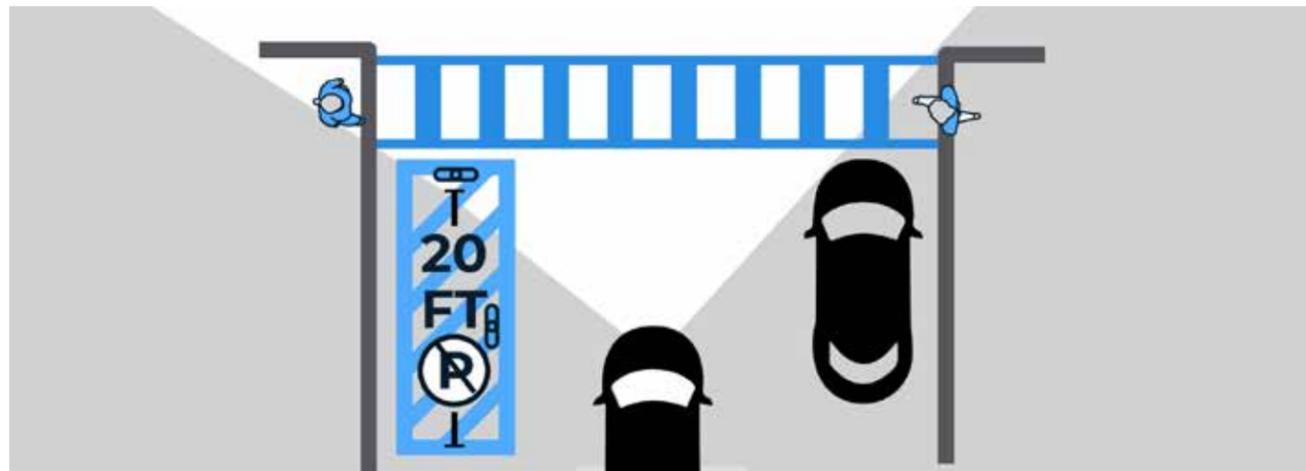
TRANSPORTATION TOOLKIT



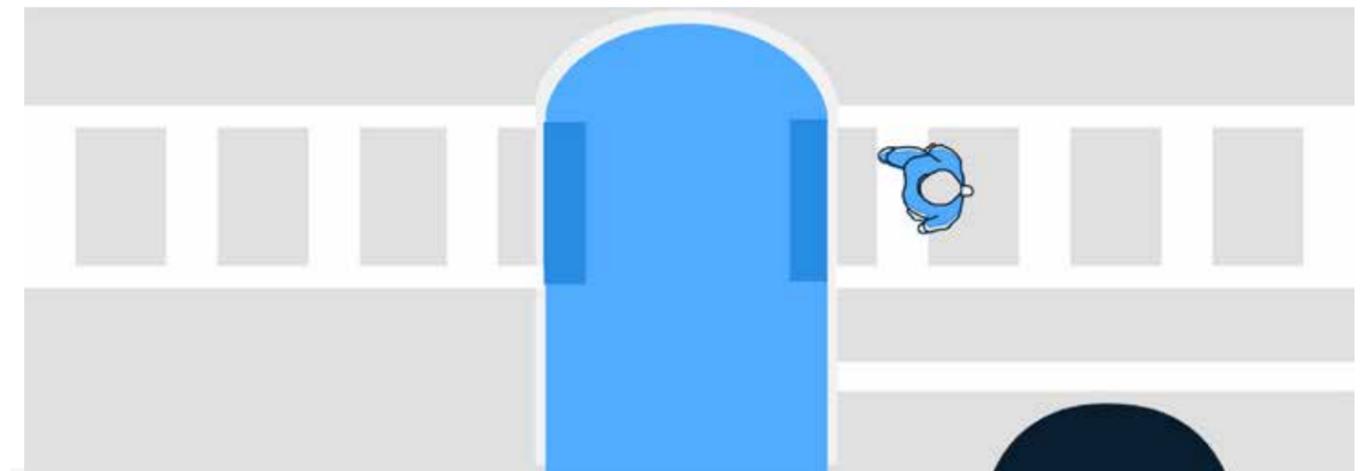
Curb Extension for Improved Bus Stop



Curb Extension



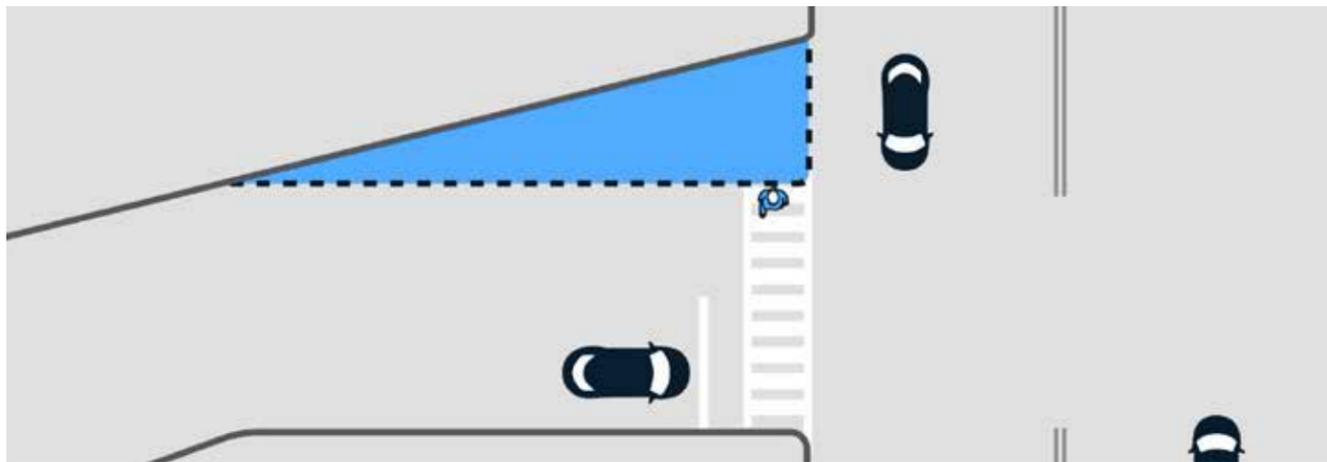
Clear Corners



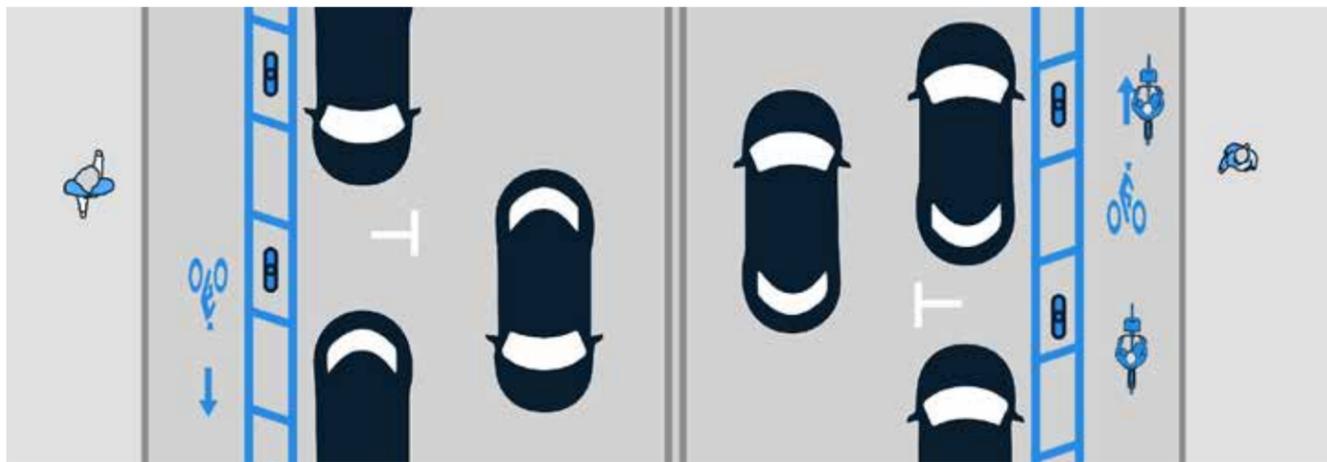
Crossing Island



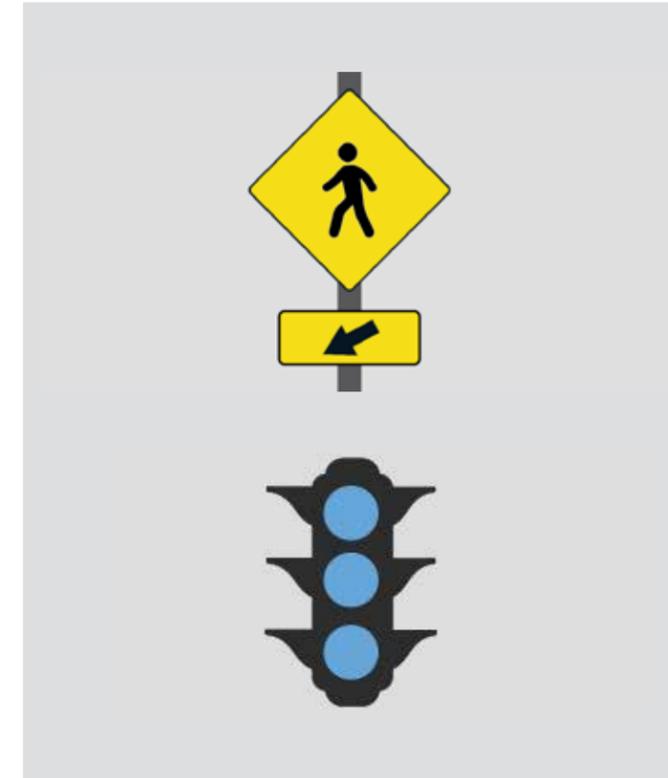
Raised Crosswalk



"T" Intersections



Protected Bike Lane



Improved Signage & Signal Operations



Network Circulation Changes

GoHubs! City of Boston's Mobility Hubs Guidebook

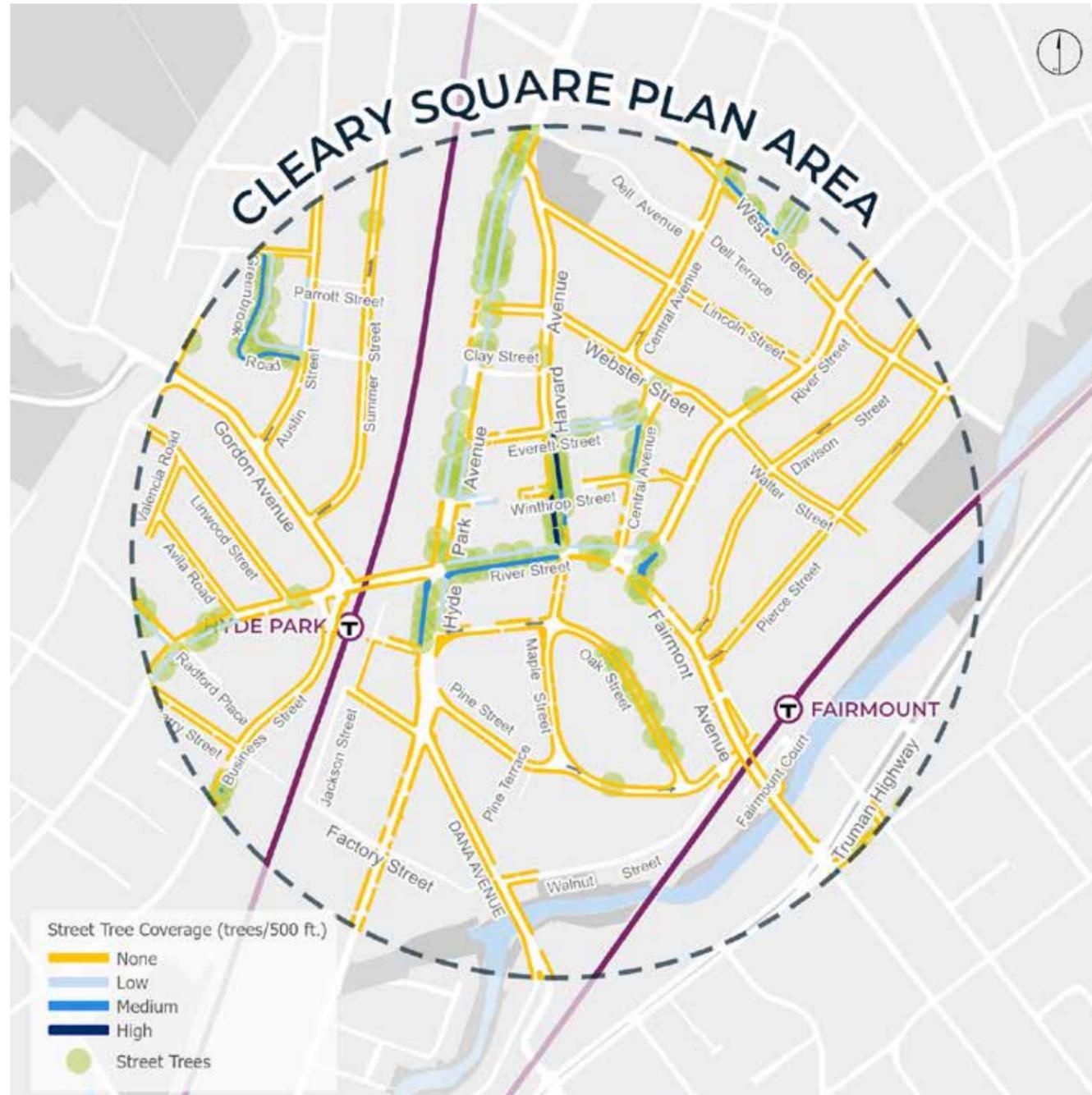
NEIGHBORHOOD GOHUBS!

Boston Transportation Department

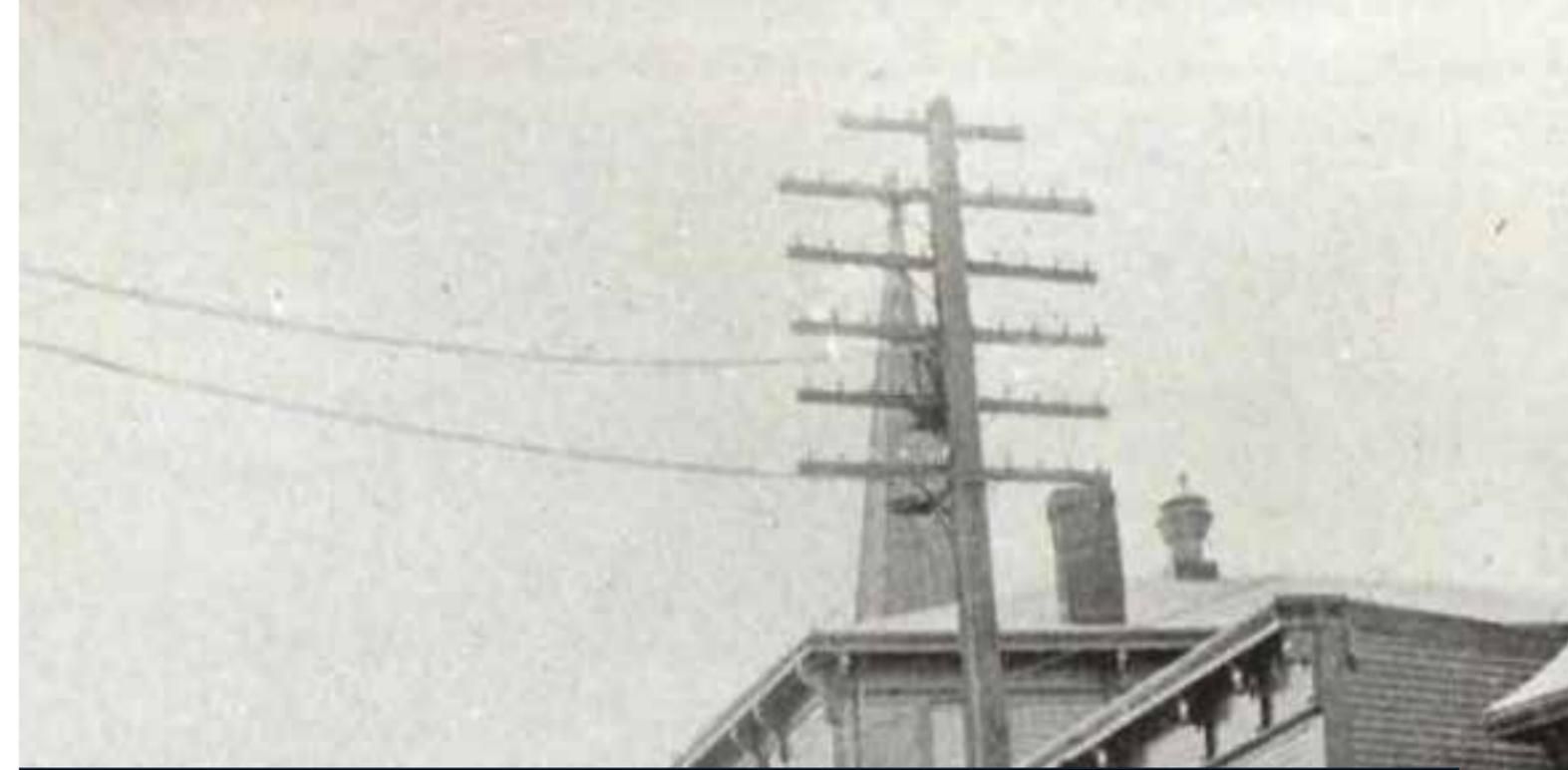
Throughout Boston, GoHubs! offer more options to get around, meet up, and find your way. Whether walking, riding a bike, riding the bus or train, sharing a ride, or even charging your electric car, these mobility hubs will help you connect to your destination.

Neighborhood GoHubs

ADDITIONAL ANALYSES NOT INCLUDED IN BOOKLET



Pedestrian Environment - Tree Coverage



IV. HISTORIC CONTEXT STUDY



INTRODUCTION

The City of Boston Planning Department is undertaking a planning and zoning initiative focused on neighborhood centers throughout the city, known as Squares + Streets. Key to this process is the development of Small Area Plans for each study area, producing recommendations for housing, public space, small businesses, arts and culture, and transportation. This historic context study is intended to assist the Planning Department in understanding the historic events and patterns of development that have influenced today’s built environment in Cleary Square. While the Cleary Square Squares + Streets study area covers a roughly 1/3-mile radius around this commercial core, this commercial context necessarily takes a broader approach in recognition of the fact that development and the evolution of the built environment is influenced by social patterns and events that can occur on a neighborhood, city, and/or regional scale.

This study makes extensive use of the Massachusetts Historical Commission’s Inventory of Historical and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth (MHC Inventory). The Inventory is the result of more than four decades of documentation, and is always growing. There are more than 1,200 Inventory entries for the City of Boston, largely due to the efforts of the Boston Landmarks Commission (BLC) and Office of Historic Preservation (OHP). This Inventory is available to the public online through the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS) at <https://maps.mhc-macris.net/> (map interface) and <https://mhc-macris.net/> (database only). Notations in this study such as “BOS.#” refer to a property’s identification code in the Inventory.¹

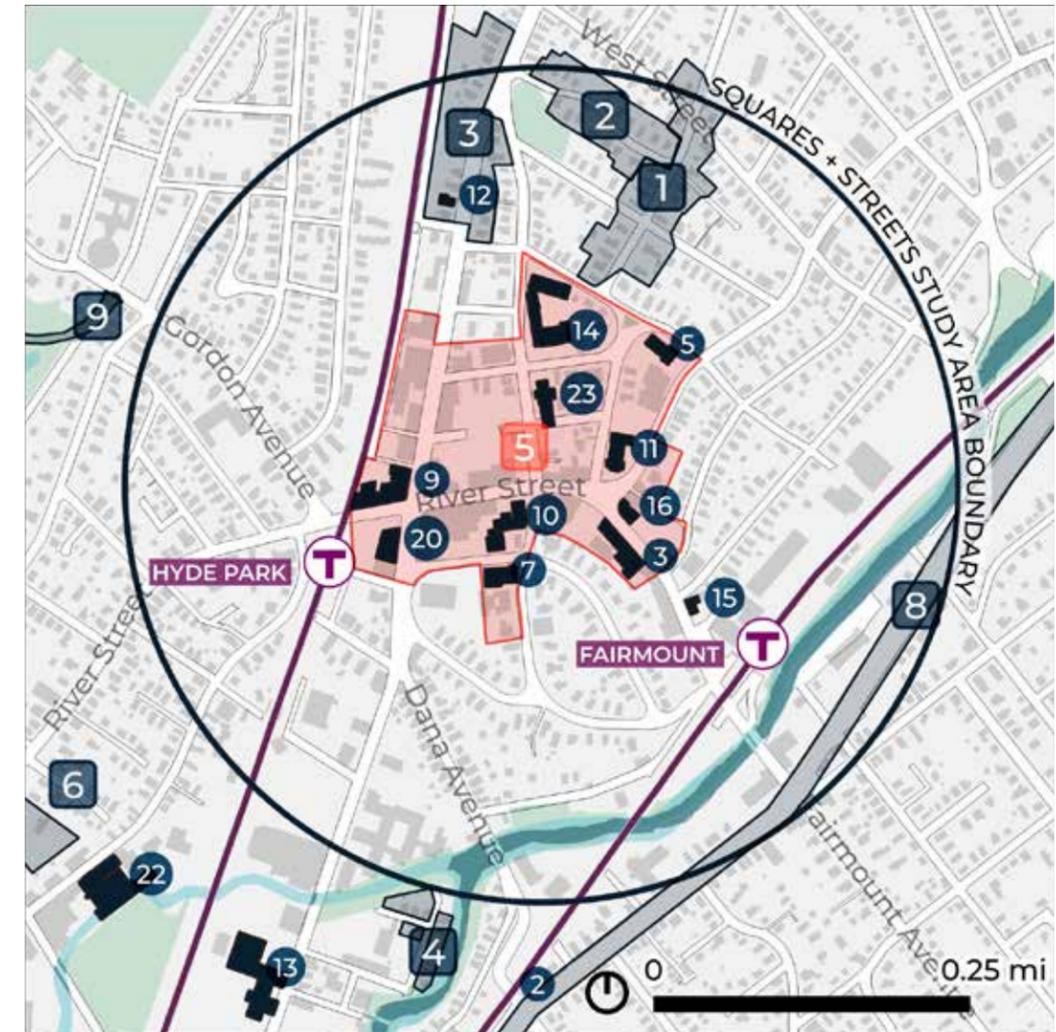
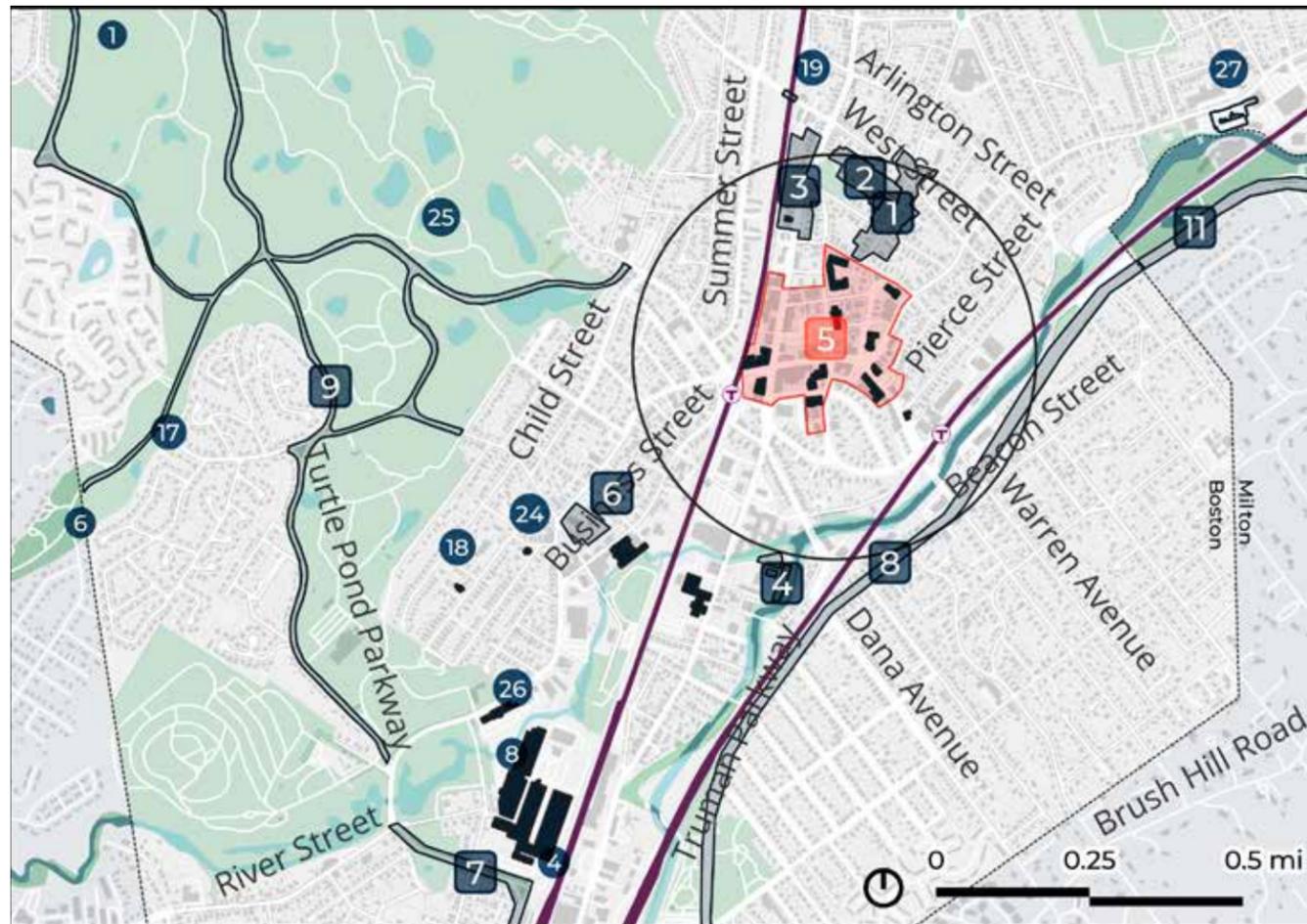


Figure 1. MHC Inventory Mentioned in Historic Context, Data Source: MCH Historic Inventory, MassGIS Data (accessed October 2024), analyzed and visualized by Utile.

STRUCTURES

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1 BOS.9583 Stony Brook Reservation - West Boundary Road | 7 BOS.11002 Most Precious Blood Roman Catholic Church | 14 BOS.18574 Hyde Park High School |
| 2 BOS.9400 Dana Avenue Bridge over Penn Central Railroad | 8 BOS.12893 Sturtevant, B. F. Blower Works - Building F | 15 BOS.16462 Bonney - Keith Block |
| 3 BOS.10928 French, L. J. Commercial Block and Opera House | 9 BOS.11071 Fallon, Thomas F. Block | 16 BOS.10927 Way Building |
| 4 BOS.10903 Sturtevant, Benjamin Franklin Blower Fan Factory | 10 BOS.11070 Christ Church | 17 BOS.9584 Stony Brook Reservation - Dedham Parkway |
| 5 BOS.11111 First Congregational Church of Hyde Park | 11 BOS.11069 Hyde Park Municipal Building | 18 BOS.11094 Bleakie, Robert House |
| 6 DED.933 Stony Brook Reservation - Dedham Parkway | 12 BOS.10978 Haley, Charles House | 19 BOS.9395 West Street Bridge over Conrail (DEMOLISHED) |
| | 13 BOS.10981 American Tool and Machine Company | 20 BOS.10980 Kennedy, Frederick J. Block |
| | | 21 BOS.910 Saratoga Street Bridge over Belle Island Inlet |



DISTRICTS		
22	BOS.12888	Becker-Brainard Milling Machine Company
23	BOS.10957	Public Library of Hyde Park
24	BOS.11081	Allen, Charles F. House
25	BOS.9590	Stony Brook Reservation - Enneking Parkway (II)
26	BOS.11076	Dedham Manufacturing Company Cotton Mill
27	BOS.11059	Tileston and Hollingsworth Paper Mill (DEMOLISHED)
1	BOS.OI	Central Avenue, 49-101
2	BOS.OO	Dell Avenue, 3-35
3	BOS.OU	Hyde Park Avenue, 1123-1172
4	BOS.OY	Margin Street, 13-40 and Fulton Street, 21-34
5	BOS.ACF	Cleary Square - Logan Square
6	BOS.WC	Saint Adalbert Roman Catholic Church Complex
7	BOS.YA	Neponset Valley Parkway
8	BOS.YC	Truman Parkway
9	BOS.YI	Stony Brook Reservation Parkways
10	MLT.AA	Neponset Valley Parkway
11	MLT.AK	Truman Parkway

SETTING



Figure 2. Existing Conditions Map highlighting topography and tree coverage in the commercial core and surrounding residential areas; this can be indicative of increased hardscape and decreased mature tree growth. Data Source: 2021 USGS LIDAR (accessed October 2024), analyzed and visualized by Utile.

Cleary Square, named for John Augustus Cleary who died in the Spanish-American War (1898), is centered at the crossroads formed by River Street and Hyde Park Avenue in the Boston neighborhood of Hyde Park, approximately seven miles south of downtown Boston. The Cleary Square Squares + Streets study area also includes Logan Square (previously called Everett Square) at River Street and Fairmount Avenue. Together, these intersections and the corridor along River Street historically formed the center of Hyde Park, which was an independent town between 1868 and 1912. The study area also extends to include industrial corridors and residential areas beyond this commercial core, roughly bounded by West Street to the north, the Neponset River to the east and south, and Child Street to the west (Figure 1).

Topography along the commercial core of the Cleary Square study area is flat to gently rolling, with hillier regions along the outlying residential streets. Streets in these areas, towards the outer edge of the study area, are generally narrow with mature tree plantings and are laid out in a modified grid configuration (Figure 2). The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Hyde Park commuter rail station serving the Franklin/Foxboro and Providence/Stoughton lines is located just west of the intersection of Hyde Park Avenue and River Street and the associated railway track runs north-south to form the west boundary of the commercial core. The MBTA's Fairmount commuter rail station serving the Franklin/Foxboro, Providence/Stoughton, and Fairmount lines is east of the commercial core between two residential areas, with the affiliated track running along the Neponset River through a buffer of mature vegetation.

Commercial and municipal buildings within the Cleary Square study area are predominantly one or two stories and constructed of masonry, namely brick and concrete, reflecting several architectural revival styles often characterized by Greek and Roman-inspired architectural features. Most of the shorter buildings were constructed during the mid-to-late 20th century, while many earlier buildings have been modified with modern features and materials. Building blocks are interrupted by occasional parking areas and walkways. Residential areas outside the commercial core include houses that are mainly one to two-and-a-half stories and were predominantly constructed during the late-19th and early-20th centuries, as well as later post-war dwellings.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CLEARY SQUARE AREA

Cleary Square and Logan Square, along with the portion of River Street that connects the two intersections, has been the commercial and institutional center of Hyde Park since its incorporation as an independent town in 1868; previously, portions of the area belonged to three other existing towns. Therefore, the history of Cleary Square is related to the histories of these municipalities whose boundaries generally followed waterways. North of the Neponset River was part of Dorchester, to the southeast was part of Milton, and to the southwest was part of Dedham.

The development of Hyde Park and specifically that of Cleary Square was largely influenced by industry and transportation corridors, which allowed the area to transition into a Boston suburb with the introduction of commuter trains, street cars, and automobiles. Buildings and roads were constructed around the railroad and a rapid period of expansion occurred shortly after railway lines were established through the commercial area in 1834 and 1846. During this time, large regions of agricultural land were purchased and subdivided with resulting residential neighborhoods laid out surrounding the growing business district around Cleary Square. In 1867, community leaders petitioned the state legislature to incorporate Hyde Park as a new town, likely after the famous park of the same name in London, England (est. 1536). The three existing towns to be affected responded with varying reactions: Dorchester did not oppose; negotiations occurred with Dedham and Milton. The result was approximately 1,300 acres taken from Dorchester, 800 from Dedham, and 700 from Milton. The Town of Hyde Park officially organized in 1868. After operating as an autonomous municipality from 1868 to 1912, Hyde Park was then annexed by the City of Boston, becoming its southernmost neighborhood.

ANCIENT NATIVE AND EARLY EUROPEAN COLONIAL SETTLEMENT, CA. 1630 – CA. 1830

Indigenous Habitation of Roxbury and the Boston Area

Prior to the arrival of European colonial settlers, the area encompassing what is today Hyde Park and Cleary Square was inhabited by the Massachusett Tribe. Local histories indicate the Old Dedham Post Road, now Centre Street, was originally a trail created by the Massachusett.²

There are several known Native sites along the length of the area's inland waterways, ranging in use from campsites to lithic workshops and fishweirs, and ranging in time from the Middle Archaic (8,000-6,000 BP, or Before Present) through the arrival of European settlers. This is indicative of the continuous exploitation of riverine resources over thousands of years by Native people in the area. Archaeological investigations conducted at the Arnold Arboretum have revealed that Indigenous peoples likely utilized the surrounding area as hunting ground as well as seasonal camps dating back to the Archaic and Woodlands periods (7,500 – 400 BP).^{3,4} Evidence indicates that these peoples likely hunted “deer and other mammals during the cooler months, and waterfowl and other aquatic life” in areas such as the North Meadow of the Arboretum as well as Jamaica Pond during seasonal migrations.⁵ During the later Woodland periods, Indigenous peoples' seasonal habitation primarily moved towards establishing semi-sedentary settlements at the coastal areas of the Charles and Neponset rivers.⁶

Contact between Europeans and Indigenous peoples occurred as early as the 15th century between Basque and French fishermen who established seasonal fisheries in what is today the Newfoundland and Labrador Province of Canada. By 1700, these fisheries began trading with Indigenous peoples along the Eastern Seaboard south to Massachusetts Bay. From here, however, the story becomes one of colonial eradication of much of the Indigenous population, and the loss of early landscape features due to intense development in many areas that gave shape to modern-day Boston.

Increased trade also introduced diseases to which the Indigenous peoples had no natural immunity. Between 1616 and 1619, a devastating plague swept through the Indigenous population of the region, hitting the Massachusett People in what is today the area of Boston particularly hard. Evidence suggests as much as 90% of the Indigenous population in the area were wiped out, “depopulating large areas of coastal New England in what would become the Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay colonies.”⁷ A second epidemic of smallpox in 1633 killed more Massachusett people.⁸

In 1650, English missionary John Eliot (1605-1690), a prominent colonial settler who moved to Roxbury in 1632 and founded the congregation of what is today the First Church of Roxbury and the Roxbury Latin School, also established the first “Praying Town.” These were English-style towns, where Indigenous peoples were sent to be converted to Christianity and, according to European settlers, to be “civilized.” Praying Towns are emblematic of the types of ways that the Indigenous peoples increasingly saw their lands encroached upon and their freedoms curtailed as European settlement spread throughout the colony.

Quiet Beginnings from Three Towns

As noted above, today's Hyde Park was initially part of three separate towns, all established in the first decades of the Massachusetts Bay Colony (1628-1691). Despite being distinct towns at an early stage, their histories and growth follow a familiar pattern. Mills and transportation routes, largely determined by the location of natural features such as hills and rivers, determined the location of growth and when it occurred. Dorchester was established as a town after passengers from England aboard the ship *Mary and John* occupied the area in 1630. The settlement originally included land that is presently South Boston, Hyde Park, Milton, Wrentham, Stoughton, Dedham, Sharon, Foxboro, and Canton. Milling began along the Neponset River in 1634 and shipbuilding occurred as early as 1640. River Street was an early principal route known as “the old highway between Dorchester and Dedham.” It was laid out by William Sumner and William Robinson in 1662. The majority of the surrounding land was uninhabited or used for farming. “The River Road” was initiated by selectmen of Dorchester for connecting Dedham with Neponset Mill (presently known as Milton Lower Mills).

Industry accelerated through the 1800s and included a variety of operations. The town largely remained a rural farming community until it was annexed to Boston in 1870, which brought a substantial population increase.

Milton was originally settled in 1640 as a village within the town of Dorchester. In 1662, the inhabitants of the village were granted permission to separate and form an independent town. Milton largely remained an agricultural area that also revolved around substantial industrial activity along the Neponset River at Milton Village, located at the intersection of present-day Adams Street and Eliot Street. The variety of early milling operations included a grist mill, a gunpowder mill, a paper mill, and a chocolate mill.

Due to the high demand for land along the Massachusetts coast, conflict arose between European colonists and existing Indigenous populations, which in turn inspired the settlement of two inland towns: Concord in 1635 and Dedham in 1636. Dedham originally consisted of approximately 200 square miles of wilderness and was part of Massachusetts and, briefly, Wampanoag territory before being transferred through a period of negotiation. In 1639, selectmen were elected to govern the town and in 1642, land was set aside for a church and a school. A variety of milling operations were established along Mother Brook, beginning in 1637 with a corn mill. The Norfolk and Bristol Turnpike was built in 1803 to provide a route between Boston and Providence and the following year, the Hartford and Dedham Turnpike was built as a main road to Connecticut.

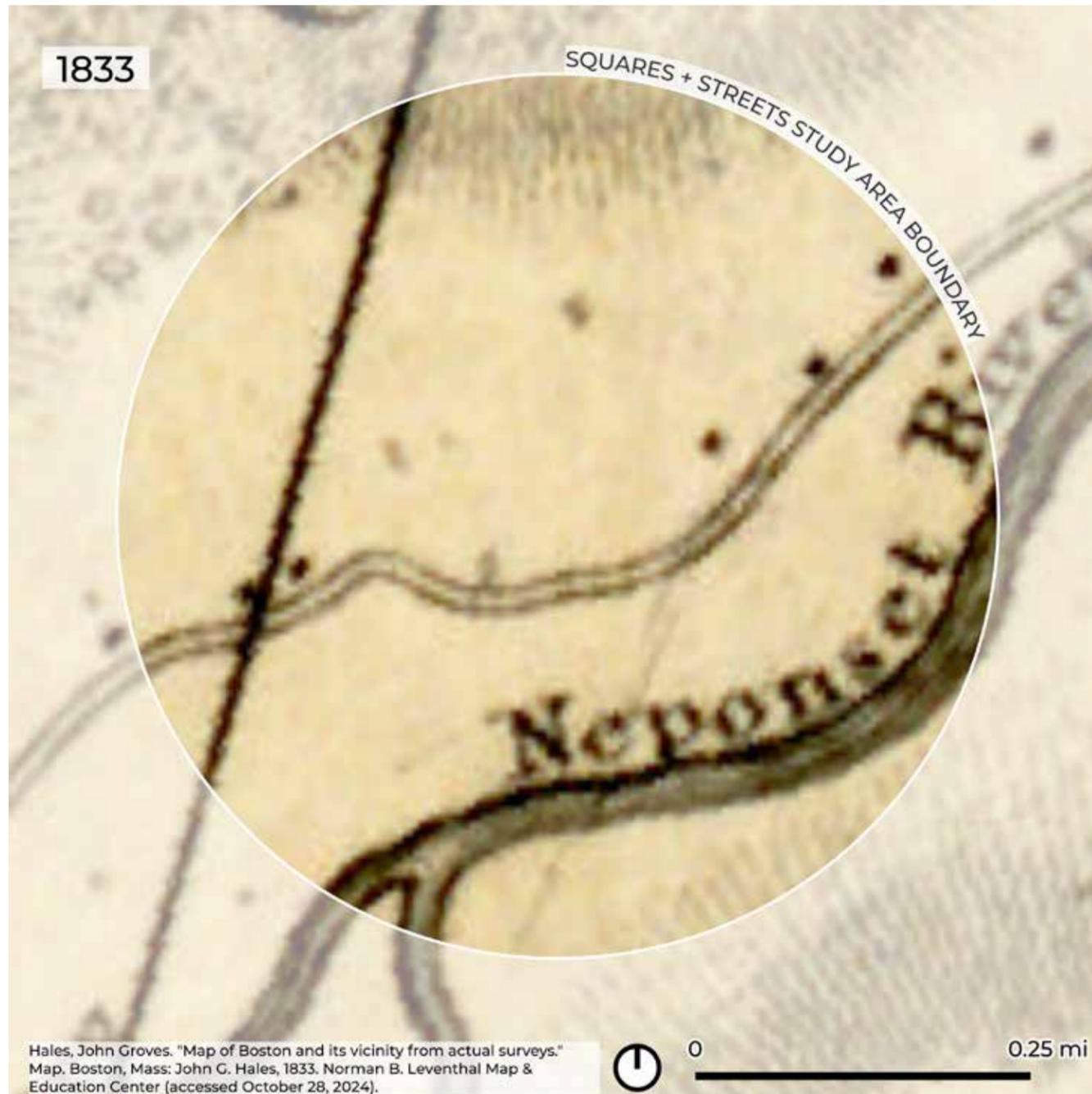
In the early 19th century, present-day Cleary Square and its immediately surrounding neighborhoods were “substantially undeveloped,” defined by “farm land and forested hillsides”. Settlement during this period was concentrated in present-day Mattapan Square and further east in the present-day Dorchester and Milton neighborhood of Lower Mills (BOS.TD). Hyde Park’s population and industrial activity was centered in Readville south of Cleary Square as well as areas to the north and west along River Street. In Readville, residences and limited businesses were concentrated around complexes such as the Dedham Manufacturing Company Cotton Mill (BOS.11076) (1814; rebuilt 1866) on River Street along Mother Brook. Limited manufacturing facilities developed along River Street to the west and north of present-day Cleary Square, such as the Sumner Paper Mills to the west, and the Tileston and Hollingsworth Paper

Company complex (BOS.11059) (1837; rebuilt ca. 1890) facilities to the north. These early manufacturing complexes were primarily located along the Neponset River and Mother Brook to utilize the power provided by the waterways.⁹

Cleary Square and the Railroads

The concentration of settlement south and east of present-day Cleary Square was primarily due to two turnpikes that ran from Quincy and Dedham north to Boston. The Blue Hill Turnpike, constructed in 1805 from Lower Mills south to Quincy, and the Brush Hill Turnpike, constructed in 1809 from Davenport Corner in Milton to the four-mile marker (BOS.910) near the corner of Cheney Street and Blue Hill Avenue north of Franklin Park, were the primary transportation and settlement corridors for the area during the early 19th century.¹⁰ Some of these complexes are still in use for residential, commercial, and/or institutional purposes, especially south of the junction where Mother Brook meets the Neponset River along River Street and Hyde Park Avenue.

The establishment of railroad lines in the mid-19th century enabled greater access to the area for industrial and residential development. The first of these was the Boston and Providence (B&P) Railroad which began service in 1834 between its namesake cities. B&P’s main line route ran north-south through present-day Cleary Square. While B&P opened up Cleary Square for speculative real estate development, the area remained largely undeveloped. Initially, stops along the rail line north and south of Cleary Square, with a formal stop not introduced until 1845.¹¹



Hales, John Groves. "Map of Boston and its vicinity from actual surveys." Map. Boston, Mass: John G. Hales, 1833. Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center (accessed October 28, 2024).

Figure 3. Map of Cleary Square with study area overlay. 1833 by John Groves Hales. Leventhal Map & Education Center.

COMMUNITY GROWTH, CA. 1830 – CA. 1880

Regional rail lines and associated branch lines laid out in the mid-19th century fueled local industry and speculative real estate development within and around present-day Cleary Square. Beginning in the 1850s, companies such as Twenty Associates, the Hyde Park Company, and the Real Estate and Building Company began purchasing large former estates, and subdividing them for residential development. The establishment of manufacturing complexes immediately north and south of Cleary Square followed this early development and helped fuel further growth in the second half of the century.¹²

Railroads, Real Estate, and the Establishment of Hyde Park

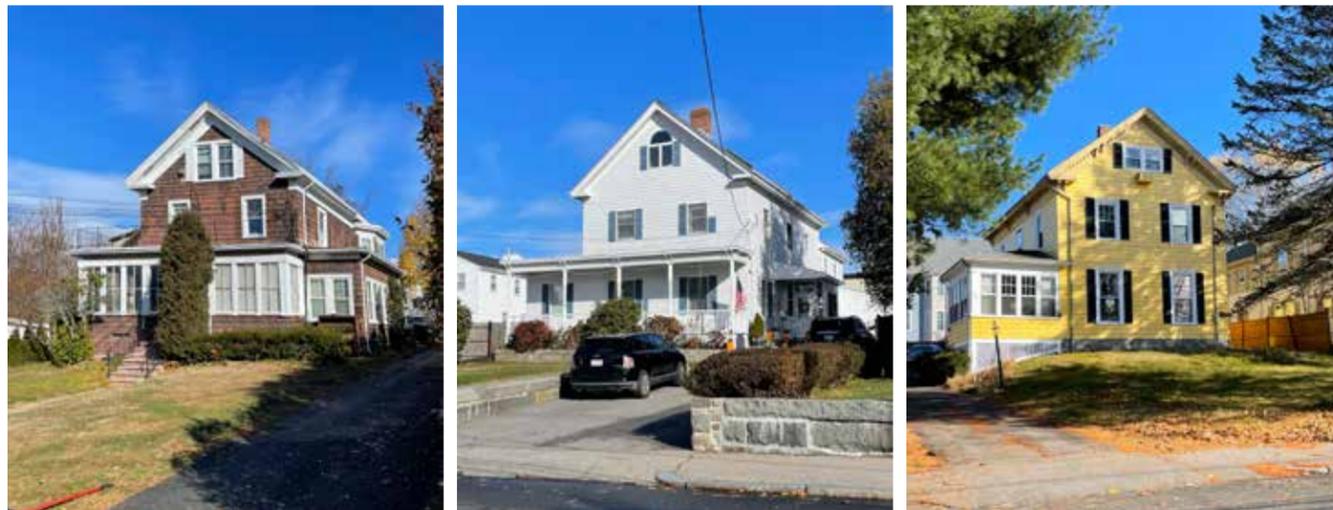
In 1845, B&P introduced a formal stop along its main line near River Street, originally known as “Kenny’s Bridge”. In 1852, a formal depot building was constructed at the site of the present-day MBTA commuter rail stop, and the stop was renamed Hyde Park (its current name). Three years later, the Midland Branch of the Norfolk County Railroad began service with a stop near Fairmount Avenue.¹³ The introduction of rail service with formal stops in Cleary Square helped shape the surrounding area, spurring real estate development and commercial growth between and around the two lines as well as industrial growth along River Street just south of Cleary Square. In 1854, Henry Lyman, William P. Barnard, and Gordon H. Nott successfully petitioned the Massachusetts legislature to incorporate the Hyde Park Company, allowing the men to capitalize on some 200 acres of previously purchased farmland between present-day Gordon Avenue and West Street to operate quarries as well as own and develop real estate. That same year, a group of twenty young men known as the Twenty Associates formed the Fairmount Land Company. The group, led by developer Alpheus P. Blake (1832-1916), purchased 100 acres on the western side of Brush Hill from the Tucker family in the present-day section of Fairmount and divided the land among the associates into 35,000 square foot allotments. Located along Fairmount Avenue at the southeast edge of the study area, 12 residences built as part of the Twenty Associates/Fairmount

Land Company development are known to remain on this short stretch of road. The extant houses are representative of how buildings change and develop over time. Initially constructed as identical dwellings, they have grown and evolved with additions, changes to the fenestration, porch alterations, and replacement cladding and window sash; however, the each one's original building massing and form can still be detected.¹⁴

An 1868 notice published by the Fairmount Land Company promoted the area as a convenient and idyllic place to live, describing Hyde Park as follows:

“Hillside and plain, forest and intervale vary the surface; native trees have survived the woodman’s axe, to bless with their grateful (sic) shade. The Neponset flows through the town, delighting the eye and furnishing facilities for pleasure, irrigation and the mechanic arts...Every person in quest of a suburban residence in the vicinity of Boston should devote at least one day to a ramble over Hyde Park.”¹⁵

Formed in 1857 and incorporated in 1861, the largest land owner during this period was the Real Estate and Building Company (REBC). REBC owned land between the B&P and Norfolk County rail lines comprising present-day Cleary Square as well as along River Street (Figures 4.1-4.3).¹⁶



Examples of extant homes developed by Twenty Associates. Boston Planning Department.
 Figure 4.1 (left) 182 Fairmount Avenue. November 2024.
 Figure 4.2 (center) 260 Fairmount Avenue. November 2024.
 Figure 4.3 (right) 268 Fairmount Avenue. November 2024.

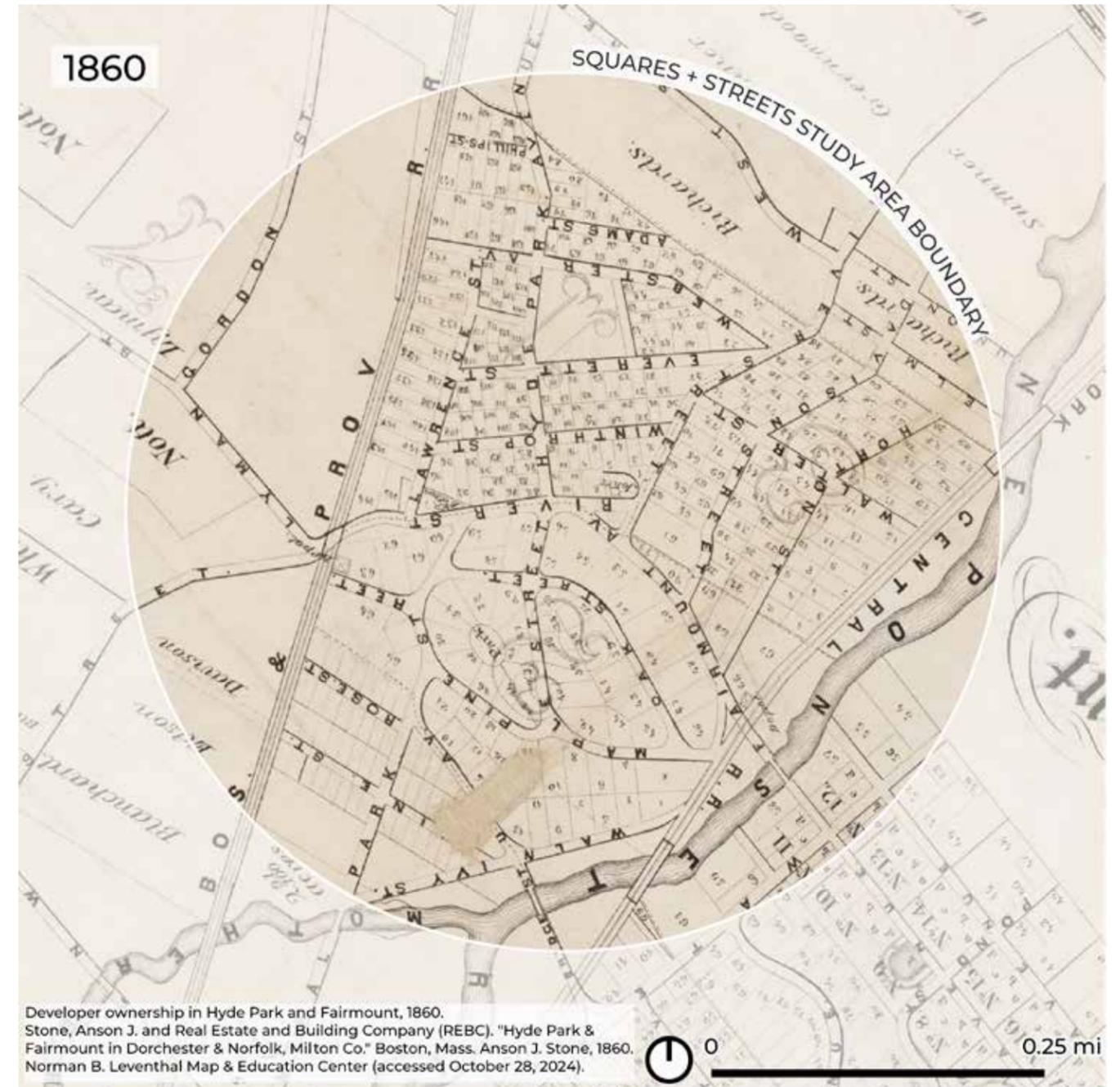


Figure 5. Subdivision plan of Cleary Square with study area overlay. 1860 by Anson J. Stone of the Real Estate and Building Company (REBC). Parcels for development are individually numbered, with faint number underlays indicating developer ownership; "1" and "2" indicate REBC ownership, and "8" indicates land owned by Gordon H. Nott.

In 1858, REBC laid out Maple, Pine, and Oak streets following the contours of the hill south of Fairmount Avenue. Development of the Mount Neponset neighborhood began in earnest in the 1860s, initially along the northern slope between Fairmount Avenue and Oak Street (Figure 5). By 1872, Mount Neponset was substantially developed as a fashionable neighborhood with Italianate and Second Empire-style residences sited on large lots, particularly near the hill's summit on Oak and Maple streets (Figures 6.1-6.2).¹⁷ While many of these residences have since been altered with additions and new cladding, their original styles are still evident through the presence of mansard roofs, bay windows, full-height bay windows, dormers, and decorative porch and cornice details. REBC also platted several streets on either side of Hyde Park Avenue between River and West streets for residential development. The majority of REBC's holdings along Fairmount and River streets developed into the commercial and institutional core of Cleary Square (discussed below) while holdings north developed later in the 1870s and 1880s.¹⁸

Development of the Hyde Park Company's holdings along River Street on the west side of the Study Area began sporadically in the 1850s. Later known as Sunnyside, the area "was built up by 1870 as a mixed-use district," with an industrial area closest to the B&P's rail line and Neponset River and residences to the west along present-day Business Street. The housing pattern in Sunnyside provides a visual marker of the different socioeconomic groups that moved to Cleary Square during this period. Further west along the hillsides of the present-day Stony Brook Reservation, more fashionable houses were constructed for mill owners and managers while more simple dwellings were constructed closer to the mill complexes. The large, Italianate-style house at 57 Sunnyside Street (BOS.11094) owned by mill owner Robert S. Bleakie (1833-1917) (Figure 8.1) and the QueenAnne-style



Oak Street Residences. Boston Planning Department.
 Figure 6.1 (above) 53 Oak Street. November 2024.
 Figure 6.2 (below) 55 Oak Street. November 2024.



Figure 7. Hyde Park Station. 1867 by E.P. Dutton. Digital Commonwealth, Boston Map Store. (accessed October 2024).

residence of Robert Bleakie Company treasurer Charles F. Allenhyde at 18 Roxana Street (BOS.11081) (Figure 8.2) stand in contrast to the three-decker and pattern book-designed homes along Business Street as well as worker housing built for local mills such as those on Margin and Fulton Street (BOS.OY) just south of the Study Area (Figures 9.1-9.2).¹⁹

By the end of the Civil War (1861-1865), some 200 residences were spread across Hyde Park and the area’s population stood at approximately 2,000. The pace of development, which dipped slightly during the war, roared back and in 1867 alone “not less than 106

dwelling houses were erected”. The rapid expansion led community leaders to petition the state legislature to formally establish the area as a new town. In 1868, the Town of Hyde Park was established, with approximately 1,300 acres taken from Dorchester, 800 from Dedham, and 700 from Milton. At the time of Hyde Park’s incorporation as a town, its population was over 3,500, with approximately 460 dwellings valued at close to \$3,000,000.²⁰

Industrial Growth around Cleary Square

B&P and Norfolk County’s rail lines and the resultant real estate development as well as war-time contracts during the Civil War (1861-1865) spurred expanded industrial development along the Neponset River north of Logan Square and south of Cleary Square. By the 1870s, Hyde Park was well-known for its machine-tool industry, largely thanks to the establishment of the Brainard Milling Machine Company in 1871 by Amos Brainard (1824-1905). Inventor of the bench vise, Brainard set up operations at a complex on Business Street along Mother Brook. In 1899, the operation merged with Fitchburg-based Becker Manufacturing Company, and the Becker-Brainard Milling Machine Company rebuilt the Business Street plant as the present-day brick complex (BOS.12888). Becker-Brainard’s presence in Hyde Park enticed several other machine and tooling companies to establish plants around Cleary Square including the American Tool and Machine Company in 1872 on Hyde Park Avenue (BOS.10981) (Figures 10.1-10.2) and the B.F. Sturtevant Blower Works complex (BOS.10903 and BOS.12893) off Damon Place south of the Study Area; several of these buildings are extant (Figures 11.1-11.2).

Industrial development at Cleary Square was never as robust as locations along the Neponset River and Mother Brook to the north and south. A major manufacturing complex within the Study Area was the Robert S. Bleakie Company’s woolen mills along Hyde Park Avenue and Mother Brook (today the Blake Estates, which contains 62 income-restricted apartments for seniors and people with disabilities). Incorporated in 1863 as the Hyde Park Woolen Company, the enterprise was taken over by Bleakie that same year. The mill’s production benefited from war-time contracts such that by 1865 it was the area’s largest employer. While most were established outside Cleary



Figure 8.1 (left) 57 Sunnyside Street, Boston. Google Streetview (image capture: August 2019).
 Figure 8.2 (right) 18 Roxana Street, Boston. Google Streetview (image capture: August 2019).



Figure 9.1 (left) 34 Fulton Street, Boston. Google Streetview (image capture: August 2019).
 Figure 9.2 (right) 94 Business Street, Boston. November 2024. Boston Planning Department.

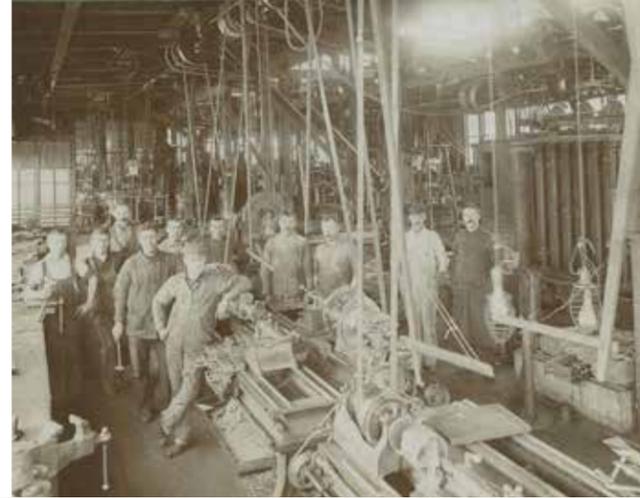


Figure 10.1 (left). Hyde Park Avenue, American Tool and Machine Company. From the [City of Boston Archives, Boston Landmarks Commission image collection, Image 5210.004, January 1981](#).

Courtesy of Flickr.

Figure 10.2 (right). Interior of the American Tool and Machine Company. From the [University Archives and Special Collections Department, Massachusetts Catholic Order of Foresters collection, Item ID: UASC-SC-0216-0005-0009-0004](#). Joseph P. Healey Library, University of Massachusetts Boston.



Figure 11.1 and 11.2 (left and right) 1419 Hyde Park Avenue. November 2024. Boston Planning Department.

Square-proper, these and other manufacturing complexes brought further residential development to the area. By 1873, Hyde Park's population stood at nearly 6,200.²¹

Immigration played a large part in the development of Hyde Park, and in turn, the economy and the community. While Cleary Square did not have much industrial development, its proximity to Hyde Park's mills made it attractive to workers moving to the neighborhood, especially at the south end of the study area near Readville. Like nearby Dorchester, Irish immigrants began arriving in the mid-19th century to escape the Irish Potato Famine, also known as the Great Hunger (1845-1852). Over the next several decades, waves of Italian, Polish, and Jewish immigrants further diversified the area.

A strong Polish community developed at the west end of the study area and beyond, in Sunnyside along River Street. Polish priests served the Catholic community for some time, and the mother church of Polish parishes in the Archdiocese of Boston was established a few miles north in 1893, Our Lady of Czestochowa in South Boston. In 1913, the Polish Catholic parish of St. Adalbert was established in Hyde Park. Unlike most Catholic parishes, St. Adalbert did not serve parishioners in a defined geographic area; it was intended to serve the Polish community nationwide. In 1929, construction on the main portion of a purpose-built church began (construction of the foundation began in 1914), and the Church of St. Adalbert was dedicated in September 1931 (BOS. WC).²² Although the church closed in the early 21st century, other institutions like the Polish American Club on River Street still speak to strong community foundations in Hyde Park.

Establishment of Hyde Park's Commercial Core

A center of commercial and civic activity developed between the two railroad stops by the end of the 19th century, with churches, theaters, hotels, municipal buildings, banks, and a variety of businesses that formed along the River Street and Fairmount Avenue corridor that would ultimately become the "downtown" area. Many of these original building blocks consisted of two- and three-story wood frame structures embodying the Italianate and Second Empire styles.²³

Little remains of commercial development from this period in the commercial core, but a remarkable exception is the Bonnie-Keith Block at 74-84 Fairmount Avenue (BOS.16462, also known as the Vertullo Building). An amalgamation of three buildings constructed and joined between 1867 and 1888, this wood-frame structure retains Italianate and Second Empire style features such as the mansard roof, paired cornice brackets, and a wide cornice frieze. Its legacy continued into the 20th century when storefronts were added in 1905, and again in 2012 when the building was restored by Historic Boston, Inc. It is now home to several businesses, including Intriguing Hair (the owners purchased the property in 2022), Boston Acupuncture Project, the Private Office Barbershop, Dress with Confidence, and Pure Joy Flowers.

The years following the Civil War were a busy period of commercial and infrastructure development for Hyde Park. The Dedham Gas Company extended pipes to Hyde Park in 1868, a new town hall was moved into town on wagons from Boston in 1870, the Norfolk County Gazette newspaper organized in 1870, the Hyde Park Savings Bank was established in 1871 (Figure 12), and the Hyde Park Water Company was organized in 1884. Three schools were constructed by 1873: The Henry Grew (1808-1892), The Fairmount, and The Elihu Greenwood.



Figure 12. Hyde Park Savings Bank (November 2024); Boston Planning Department.

As more people moved into the area, the need for places to gather also arose. The first church of Hyde Park, Christ Church, was constructed in 1861 near the intersection of Maple and River streets. The original building was a simple wood frame Gothic Revival structure with a tower, which was subsequently moved to the rear of the lot when a larger Neo-Gothic stone church was completed in 1893.²⁴ A portion of the building was incorporated in a remodeled Parish House when the new church was built. The new church was designed by the prestigious Boston-based architecture firm of Cram, Wentworth, and Goodhue and housed an Episcopal parish. Other parishes began forming as well. Congregationalists began holding their first services in 1862 and an Ecclesiastical Council was called to formally organize a local Congregational church. Land was donated in 1865 at the corner of Fairmount Avenue and Everett Square (presently Logan Square). The Gothic Revival-style First Congregational Church of Hyde Park (no longer extant) opened in 1868.

Financial Panic of 1873 and Hyde Park's Downturn

The Financial Panic of 1873 (1873-1879), described as the country's first "Great Depression," severely affected Hyde Park's economy. The closure of businesses and industrial plants forced families to relocate for other employment opportunities, resulting in declining real estate transactions and substantial mortgage foreclosures exacerbating local economic conditions. The Board of Selectmen was blunt in their assessment of the situation, writing in their 1875 report "It is unnecessary to remind our citizens that the year past has been of the unusually severe depression in business affairs." By 1878, the town's real estate valuation shrunk by half from \$6,400,000 at the start of the crisis to below \$3,000,000. It was not until the 1880s that Hyde Park's economic conditions began to improve, and the pace of development returned to pre-Panic levels.²⁵

SEPARATION AND REINTEGRATION, CA. 1880 – CA. 1920

In the next several decades, Cleary Square continued to grow into many of the streetscapes we see today. Development moved out from the commercial core, filling in the narrow corridor defined by the Neponset River to the east, Stony Brook Reservation to the west, and Readville to the south. While the next financial panic in 1893 affected Hyde Park's industrial businesses, development continued apace in the Cleary Square area. One of the biggest proponents for annexation to the City of Boston was reportedly Robert Bleakie, owner of the Bleakie and Co. woolen mill, highlighting the advantages of being part of a growing city.²⁶ This relatively new town with a growing population needed civic, religious, and municipal buildings, and a defined municipal and civic center rose around Logan Square (then Everett Square). This collection of high style buildings, largely still extant, create a grand landscape surrounding the square's center island, which featured a bandstand in the early 20th century (not extant). Meanwhile, residential subdivisions around the commercial center attracted people who wanted to live near the railroad stops, recreational opportunities, and now, the street railway and automobile.

Post-Panic Real Estate Development

By the 1880s, Hyde Park's financial situation began to recover, driven in part by more wealthy individuals moving into the area and by 1890 the town's population grew to 9,000 residents, and real estate valuation returned to its 1873 level. In the final two decades of the century, land held by REBC and Hyde Park Company partner Gordon H. Nott between Webster and West streets was developed into large single-family dwellings on large, landscaped lots. Along Hyde Park Avenue, contractor-builder Charles Haley (1834-1923) constructed a line of Queen Anne-style residences (BOS.OU) with multiple-gabled roofs, multi-story bay windows, and decorative wrap-around porches. Haley himself lived in one of these residences at 1161 Hyde Park Avenue (BOS.10978). Similarly designed neighborhoods developed along Central Avenue (BOS.OI) and Dell Avenue (BOS.OO) in the late 1880s and 1890s.

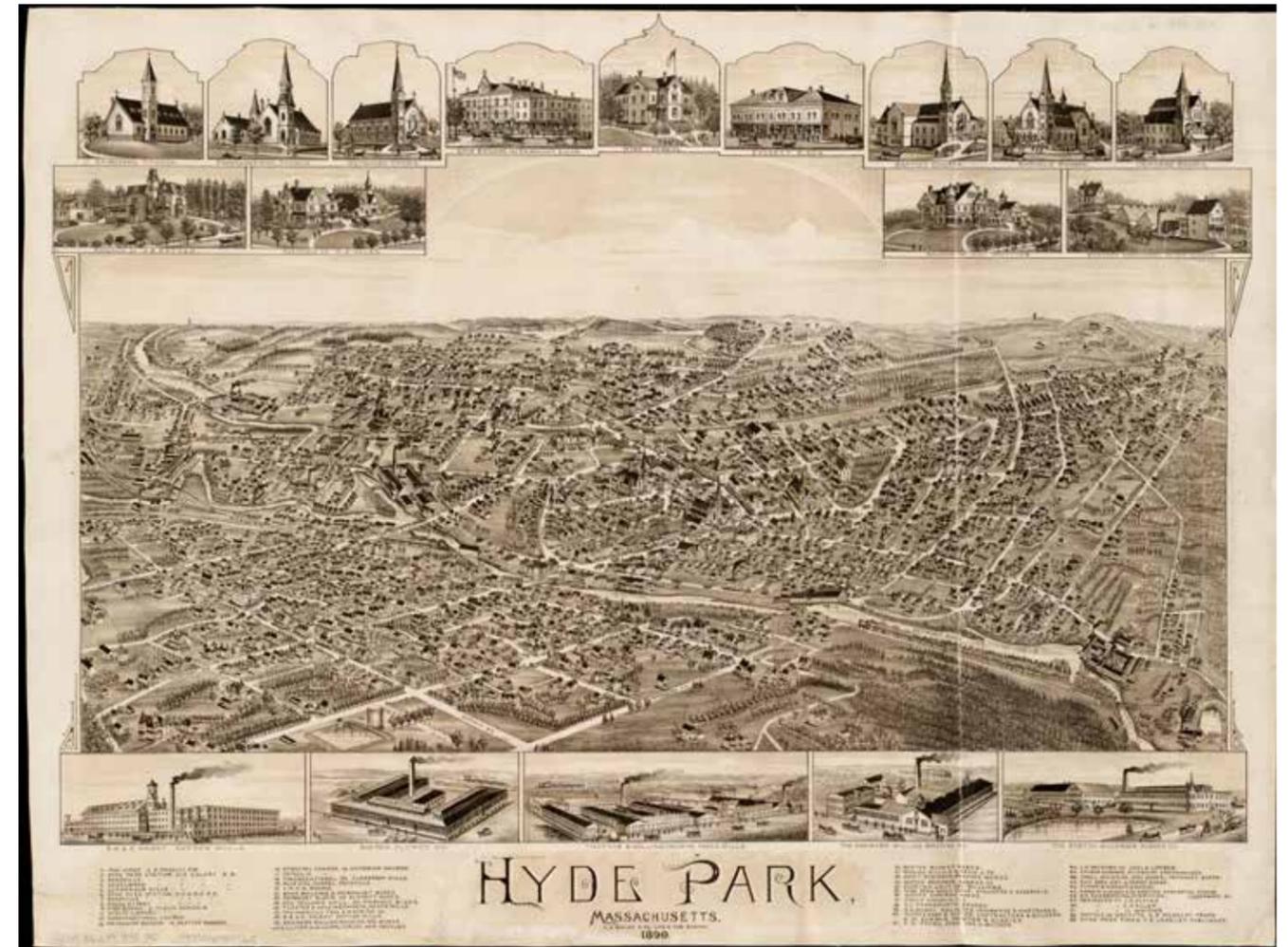


Figure 13. O.H. Bailey & Co., "Hyde Park, Massachusetts," 1890. Note: Harvard Avenue is mislabeled as Hyde Park Avenue; the latter is actually the next street over towards the railroad. Cleary Square consisted of dense development, including buildings up to four stories. From the [Norman B. Leventhal Map and Education Center, Call #G3764.B6:2H9A3 1890.O43](#). Accessed September 2024.

These residences remain today, and largely retain their original features. In the Sunnyside neighborhood, larger lots along the eastern edge of Stony Brook Reservation as well as the former estate of Boston businessman and early Hyde Park resident Henry Grew (1808-1892) were sold off and subdivided for further development outside the Study Area. New neighborhoods outside the Study Area also developed during this period, including Rugby/Oakwood Park and Holmfield near Mattapan, Glenwood Heights in Fairmount, and Hamilton Park and Pinehurst in Readville. Continued residential growth in these areas pushed Hyde Park's population to nearly 15,000 by the time it was annexed by the City of Boston in 1912, a growth of nearly ten-fold in 25 years.²⁷

Boosterism and the development of nearby green spaces helped spur real estate development during this period. Similar to early efforts by local real estate developers, railroad companies promoted Hyde Park as an attractive suburb of Boston. An 1889 pamphlet produced by the Old Colony Railroad Company (OCR) promoted Hyde Park and nearby villages of Clarendon Hills, Hazelwood, and Readville, noting the “beautiful outlooks from surrounding hills,” “fine drives,” and local attractions such as the Blue Hills.²⁸ The establishment of the 475-acre Stony Brook Reservation west of Cleary Square by the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) in 1894 further emphasized the concept of country living near the city. Stony Brook served the dual aim of preserving the Stony Brook Valley and providing a future route for a parkway connecting the Blue Hills Reservation to Boston-proper. In 1898, Turtle Pond Road (later known as the Enneking Parkway and Turtle Pond Parkway) (BOS.YI) was developed through the reservation from Washington Street east to present-day Reservation Road in Hyde Park. Other sites such as the Readville Trotting Park (no longer extant), which opened in 1896 at the southern terminus of Hyde Park Avenue, provided further attractions around Cleary Square.²⁹ In the early and mid-20th century, a small Jewish community grew up near Stony Brook, moving outward towards the suburbs from Mattapan and Roxbury.³⁰

Street Railways, Railroad Improvements, and the Introduction of the Automobile

The establishment of street railways through Cleary Square as well as infrastructure improvements along the Square’s rail lines also encouraged further growth within and around Cleary Square. In 1894, the Norfolk Suburban Street Railway Company opened two lines through Cleary and Logan squares, one running north-south along Hyde Park Avenue and the other east-west along River Street. The street railways facilitated greater connection with nearby neighborhoods such as Mattapan Square, Readville, Dedham Center, and Forest Hills. In 1883, a bridge was constructed by Boston Bridge Works over the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad’s (NYNH&H) Providence Division line to eliminate the River Street at-grade crossing. In 1907-08, the Fairmount Avenue at-grade crossing on the NYNH&H Midland Division line was similarly eliminated.³¹ Other at-grade eliminations during this period included ones at West Street north of Cleary Square (BOS.9395) (1886; replaced 1983) and on Dana Avenue



Figure 14. View of the intersection of River Street and Hyde Park Avenue ca. 1900, taken just west of the intersection and looking east along River Street. While several of the buildings are not extant, the yellow building on the far left side is the Fallon Building (BOS.11071), is currently the location of approximately a dozen businesses, including the Talk and Wok Café anchoring the corner of the building. From the [Hyde Park Historical Society, The Hyde Park Neighborhood History Collaborative collection, Item #0171](#). Accessed September 2024.

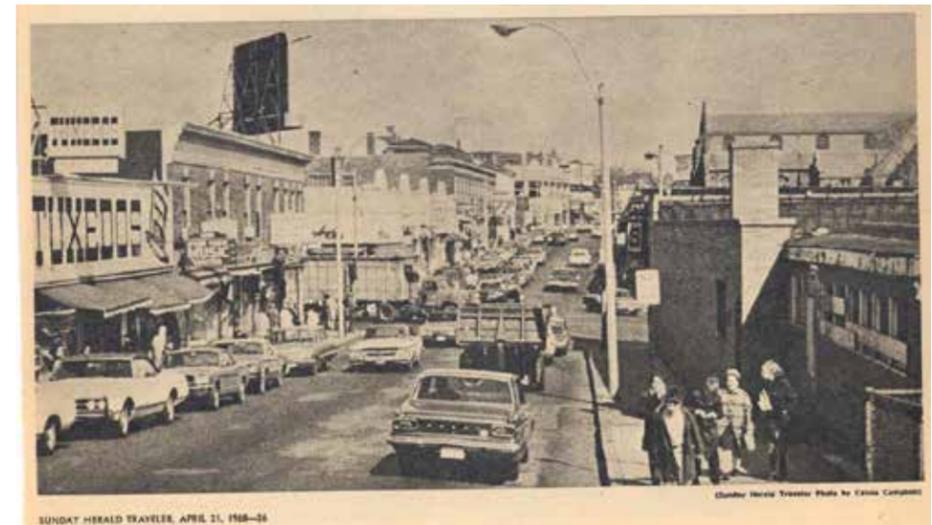


Figure 15. View from nearly the same vantage point as Figure 14 from an April 21, 1968, issue of the Sunday Herald Traveler showing the density of buildings and businesses along River Street at that time. The Fallon Building is visible center left, with a billboard on the roof, and the top clerestory windows of Christ Church (BOS.11070) can be seen at the top right. From the [Hyde Park Historical Society, The Hyde Park Neighborhood History Collaborative collection, Item #0501](#). Accessed September 2024.

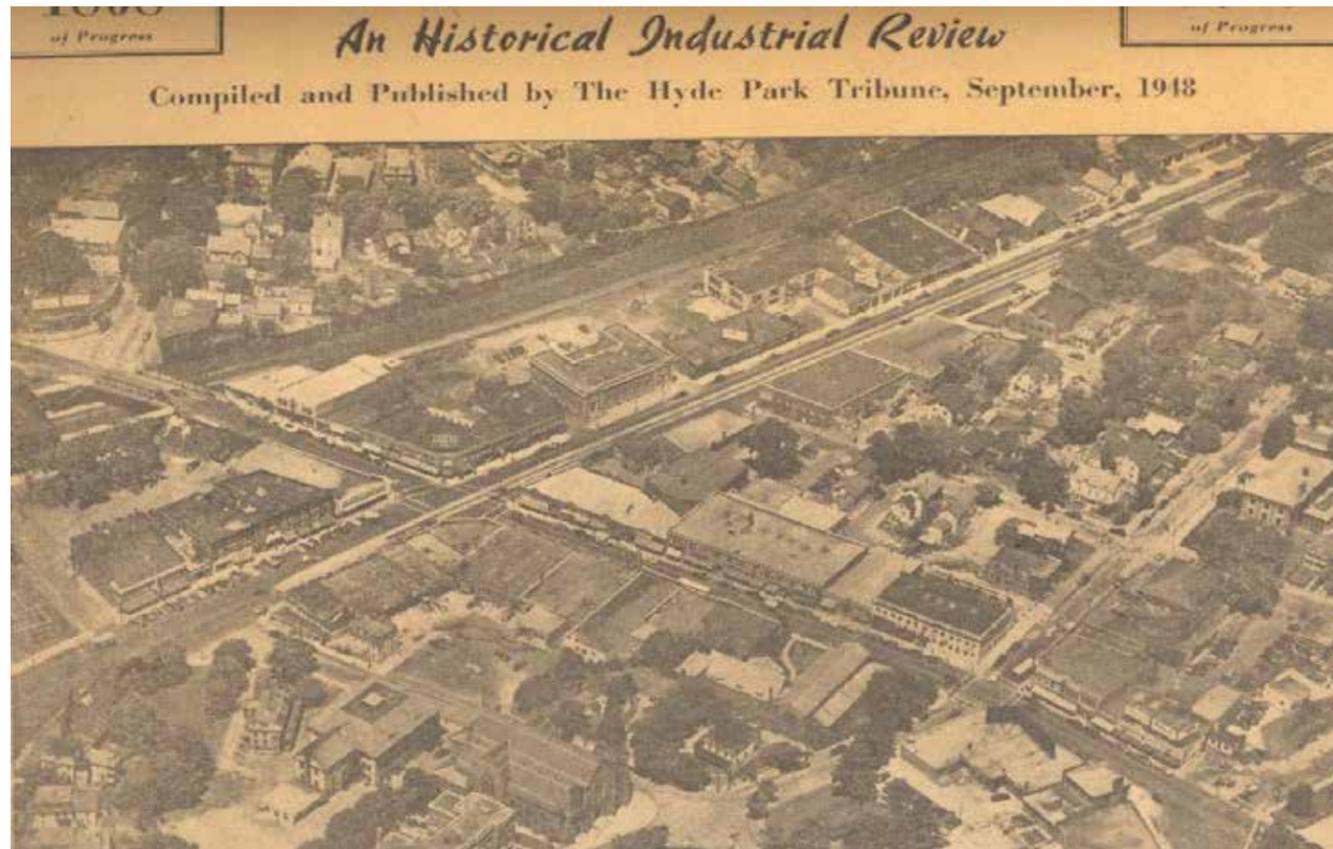


Figure 16. Aerial view of Cleary Square from a special publication of The Hyde Park Tribune, September 1948, facing northwest from above Maple Street. The intersection of River Street and Hyde Park Avenue is just left of center, while the Church of the Most Precious Blood (BOS.11002) can be seen in the bottom center of the photograph. From the [Hyde Park Historical Society, The Hyde Park Neighborhood History Collaborative collection, Item #0511](#). Accessed September 2024.

(BOS.9400) (1908; replaced 1993).³² By 1917, the Hyde Park Station was rebuilt, replacing an 1872 Second Empire-style station house with a large station over the railroad tracks adjacent to River Street.³³ These infrastructure improvements improved transportation through Cleary Square, and provided safer pedestrian crossing and passenger amenities for commuters, visitors, and residents.

In the early 20th century municipal officials set about improving streets throughout the City of Boston, widening them to accommodate the automobile, which was quickly gaining popularity. Between 1919 and 1921, Hyde Park Avenue was improved from Metropolitan Avenue south to River Street with a double track for the streetcar line, at this point operated by the Eastern Massachusetts Street Railway Company. Streetcar service extended to the mid-20th century, replaced by buses in the 1950s.³⁴

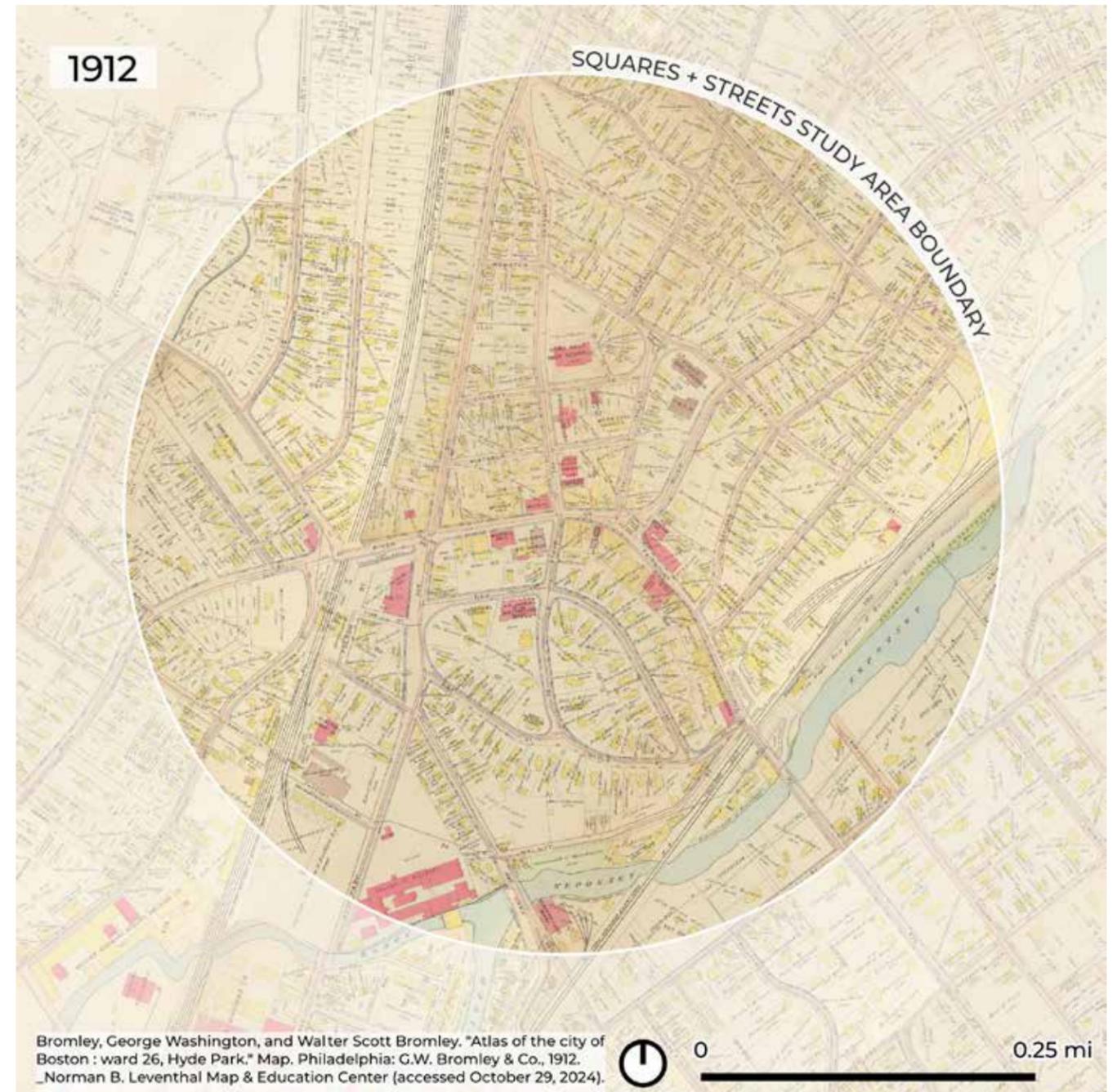


Figure 17. Atlas of the City of Boston, Hyde Park. 1912 by George Washington Bromley and Walter Scott Bromley. Leventhal Map & Education Center.

Commercial Growth

Commercial and municipal buildings from this time period have one notable feature in common – they are constructed of masonry (i.e. brick or stone), and often replaced earlier wood frame buildings. While Hyde Park never suffered the sort of widespread catastrophe of the Great Boston Fire of 1872, it had its fair share of notable commercial and mill building losses, including the Bleakie and Co. woolen mill, the Town Hall building located on River Street at Gordon Avenue, and Everett Hall in present-day Logan Square.³⁵ By the early 20th century, the use of masonry for buildings in the town center was required by building code.³⁶



Figure 18. Kennedy Block (November 2024). Boston Planning Department.



Figure 19. Former Kennedy's Block at the southwest corner of Hyde Park Avenue and River Street, in a 1921 panoramic photograph. From the [Hyde Park Historical Society. The Hyde Park Neighborhood History Collaborative collection, Item #0216](#). Accessed September 2024.

The 1981 Inventory form for the building notes that the second and third floors were empty; these floors were subsequently removed, and the remaining story is currently the USPS post office. This is an example of how earlier, taller buildings were downsized in the late 20th century in Cleary Square.

Several of the commercial buildings from this time period demonstrate how buildings evolve over time. The Frederick J. Kennedy Block (BOS.10980; 1269-1281 Hyde Park Avenue, now the U.S. Post Office) (Figures 18-19), fronting Hyde Park Avenue just south of River Street, was constructed in 1901 for the growing Kennedy's department store, known as "Hyde Park's Greatest Mercantile Establishment" and Kennedy's Clothing and Shoes (in the mid-20th century). Over time it also housed a number of businesses, including a grocery store called "The Mammoth," a paint store, Taylor's Bowling Alleys, and was an early location of Burnes Brothers Furniture, which eventually moved into a building next door.³⁷ Originally a grand, three-story brick building constructed in the Georgian Revival style, it featured a highly formal, symmetrical façade anchored by a full-height projecting entrance and corner blocks. In the 1980s the top two stories were removed, but the large storefront windows are a clue to its former use. Another example of a heavily altered building is at 1285 Hyde Park Avenue, a two-story building constructed ca. 1890, which was the location of Burnes Brothers Furniture (Figure 20). While much of the original Classical Revival detailing has been covered or removed, the wide cornice at the top and the corner pilasters provide a sense of the initial design.³⁸ Today, the building houses a Baptist congregation.

Two of the examples of masonry buildings that replaced earlier wood buildings following the establishment of the new building code are sited in highly visible locations and retain well-preserved exteriors. The Way Building, constructed ca. 1905 for realtor C. Granville Way, occupies a prominent spot overlooking present-day Logan Square with a curved facade (BOS.10927; 2-20 Fairmount Avenue) (Figures 21, 23, and 24). Like other commercial buildings constructed in this time period, the three-story brick building has



Figure 20. Former Burnes Brothers Furniture store at 1281 Hyde Park Avenue in 1948, today used by a Baptist congregation. From the [Hyde Park Historical Society. The Hyde Park Neighborhood History Collaborative collection, Item #0513](#). Accessed September 2024.

Georgian Revival stylistic features, including rusticated arched entrances, a regular rhythm of fenestration, and a dentilled cornice. Current businesses include the D'Albabebe Salon, MAI African Hair Braiding, and the Rincon Restaurant among other storefronts. The Fallon Building (Figure 22), a two-story brick building constructed ca. 1919 at Hyde Park Avenue and River Street, has similar Georgian Revival style features (BOS.11071; 1277-1283 Hyde Park Avenue). Among its former occupants were a Sears and Roebuck, restaurants, and an indoor golf course;³⁹ today it houses numerous retail storefronts, anchored by the Talk and Wok Café at the corner.



Figure 21. The Way Building (BOS. 10927; 2-20 Fairmount Avenue). 2024. Boston Planning Department.



Figure 22. The Fallon Building (BOS.11071; 1277-1283 Hyde Park Avenue). 2024. Boston Planning Department.



Figure 23. View of Everett Square, facing the east corner of River Street and Fairmount Avenue, ca. 1910. The curved façade of the extant Way Building (BOS.10927) can be seen hugging the corner, and the Bank Block in its original form as an 1870s post office is to the left (north) of the corner building. From the [Hyde Park Historical Society, The Hyde Park Neighborhood History Collaborative collection, Item #0173](#). Accessed September 2024.

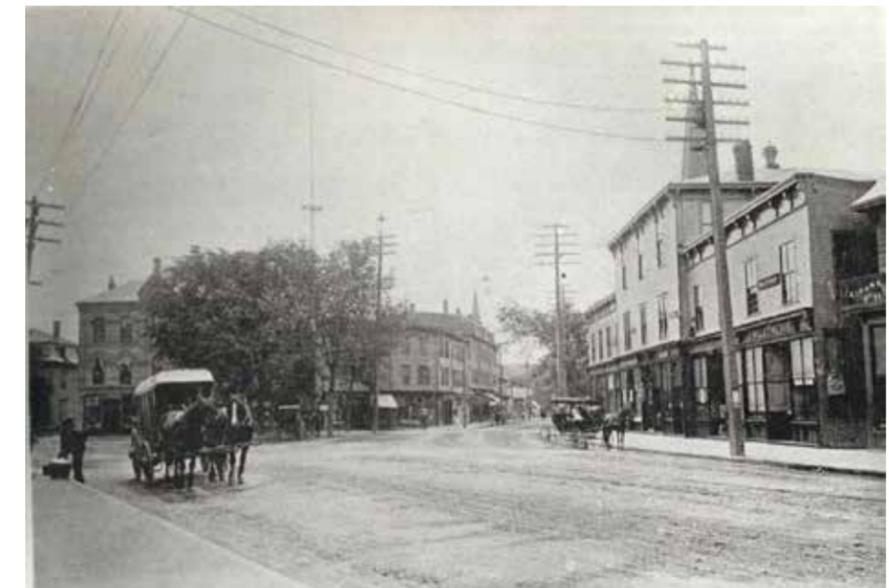


Figure 24. View from nearly the same vantage point as Figure 23, but further west, looking east along Fairmount Avenue, ca. 1900. This photograph shows the original wood clad Way Building from before the ca. 1905 fire. The former Neponset Block, location of the Everett Pharmacy, is on the right side of the street (not extant). From the [Hyde Park Historical Society, The Hyde Park Neighborhood History Collaborative collection, Item #0366](#). Accessed September 2024.

The commercial corridor boasts a small theater district that originally developed during this period. The Everett Square Theatre (1-21 Fairmount Avenue) (Figure 25) was a movie palace constructed in 1915 fronted by an office block with several storefronts. This two-story building uses beige brick, with rusticated piers and prominent dentilled cornice. Its entry features a restored marquee and mosaic floor tiles. It showed films into the 1980s. Among the several businesses at this location are Antonio's Bacaro, Cleary Square Eyecare, Insight Realty, and the Switch Co-op. One building away is French's Opera House at 41 Fairmount Avenue (BOS.10928, also known as Hyde Park Masonic Temple or Odd Fellows Hall) (Figures 26-28), constructed in 1899. Named for the grocer that initially occupied the first story, this building features Queen Anne panel brickwork and original storefronts, and a half-moon parapet above the central bays. A plaque on the third story commemorates the 1915 renovation into a Masonic Hall. Riverside Theatre Works now occupies the space, along with Luu & Nails and Fairmount Avenue Physical Therapy.⁴⁰



Figure 25. Everett Square Theatre. November 2024. Boston Planning Department.



Figure 26. French's Opera House on Fairmount Avenue (now Riverside Theatre Works), 1897. From the [Hyde Park Historical Society, The Hyde Park Neighborhood History Collaborative collection, Item #0095](#). Accessed September 2024.

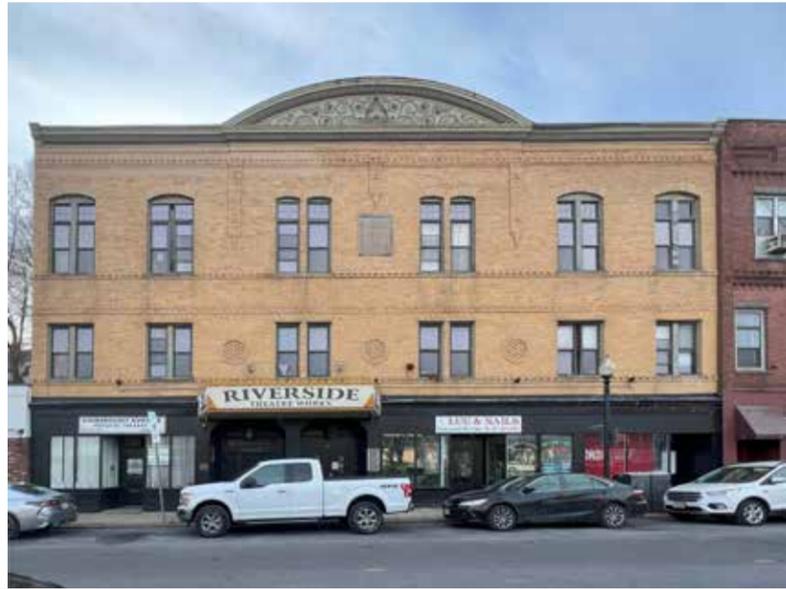


Figure 27. 41 Fairmount Avenue, French's Opera House (BOS. 10928, aka Hyde Park Masonic Temple or Odd Fellows Hall) now Riverside Theatre Works. 2024. Boston Planning Department.



Figure 28. Drawing of French's Opera House following a fire and major renovation in 1899, ca. 1900. From the [Hyde Park Historical Society, The Hyde Park Neighborhood History Collaborative collection, Item #0114](#). Accessed September 2024.

Establishment of a Municipal and Institutional Center

A concentration of municipal and institutional buildings developed at Everett Square, Webster Square, and west along Everett Street, signifying the incorporation of Hyde Park as its own entity, and the early years of its annexation into Boston. Many of Cleary Square's most recognizable buildings are from this time period.

The Hyde Park Branch Library, now a branch of the Boston Public Library, was constructed in 1899 (BOS.10957; 35 Harvard Avenue), with a historically sensitive new addition in 2000 (Figure 29).⁴¹ The library was established in 1874 and resided in neighborhood commercial blocks until moving into this purpose-built Classical Revival style building constructed of beige brick. Its importance is highlighted by its location on a slight rise above the street, with a wide set of stairs spilling down from the monumental entrance to the street. A large portico marks the entrance, with large Ionic columns supporting an equally impressive pediment roof and entablature. Among its several decorative features are engravings below the pediment and above the door with the library name and year of construction, and plaques with bas relief open books. This community resource continues to grow and evolve, and in 2006 it was a recipient of a Best Accessible Design Award from the Boston Society of Architects and the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board. The Hyde Park High School (later the William Barton Rogers School) at 15 Everett Street (Figure 30) is another example of a historic building that has been renovated, this time for an entirely new use as income-restricted and market rate senior LGBTQIA+ housing known as The Pryde (BOS.18574). Constructed in 1902, this four-story brick building received large additions in 1920 and 1933 so the complex wraps around to Harvard Avenue and Webster Street. As noted in a Boston Landmark Commission eligibility opinion, the building is significant as the first purpose-built high school for the Town of Hyde Park. After the City of Boston built a new high school in 1929, it served as an intermediate school until 2015. As with other municipal buildings, it is architecturally significant as well, as a fine example of a Classical Revival school of the early 20th century. The original building has a symmetrical, orderly façade with visual interest in the central bays, which project from the building face and feature two-story arched windows.⁴² Designed to serve both residents and the neighborhood, The Pryde includes a public wing with meeting and event spaces, an art studio, library, and education center.

Integral to the community and the mission of the development, LGBTQIA+ artists' works will be featured in an art gallery and exhibition space.

Perhaps the most monumental building constructed is the Hyde Park Municipal Building at the north side of what is now Logan Square (BOS.11069, now known as the Hyde Park Community Center). It was constructed in 1921 as a recreational building for the recently annexed neighborhood, with an auditorium, gymnasium, game rooms, and meeting rooms and still serves as the Hyde Park Community Center. The façade is dominated by the large, two-story Beaux Arts temple front portico, constructed of cast stone that stands out against the red brick of the building. Six massive columns support a wide pediment, with a bas relief City of Boston seal in the center. The entablature below features the engraved name of the building accompanied by decorative urns and swags. The oversized decorative treatment extends around the sides where round windows are framed by more swags and a foliate design.

Across from the Municipal Building is another Classical Revival-style building at 1178 River Street, resulting from a dramatic alteration a century ago. Constructed in the 1870s as a building for the local post office branch, the building initially had Gothic Revival arched windows, polychrome stone trim, and a steeply-pitched roof. The building's present Classical Revival style appearance dates to a major renovation in the 1920s. Referred to as the Bank Block, the building has one less story and a flat roof, with a façade featuring cast stone trim including lintels and keystones (above rectangular window openings).



Figure 29. 35 Harvard Avenue, Hyde Park Branch Library (BOS.10957). 2024. Boston Planning Department.



Figure 30. 15 Everett Street, former Hyde Park High School. 2024. Utile.



Figure 31. View of intersection of River Street and Harvard Avenue ca. 1900, taken just east of the intersection in present day Logan Square and looking west along River Street. Very little of the scene in this photograph still exists. From the [Hyde Park Historical Society, The Hyde Park Neighborhood History Collaborative collection, Item #0172](#). Accessed September 2024.

Religious Growth

As Hyde Park continued to grow significantly, additional Unitarian, Catholic, Baptist, and Methodist congregations were organized, many of which constructed new churches for their increasing numbers. Cleary Square has some of the most notable extant examples of Gothic Revival ecclesiastical buildings in Hyde Park. The Church of the Most Precious Blood was completed for the Hyde Park Catholic Parish in 1885 (BOS.11002; 25 Maple Street). The parish was established in 1870 due to the influx of Catholics arriving in Hyde Park to work at the mills. Designed by Boston architect Charles Bateman, it features Gothic Revival elements such as pointed arches with stained glass and stylized buttresses. The spire was removed from the corner tower in the 1950s but other details are well-preserved.⁴³

Christ Church (BOS.11070; 1220 River Street) (Figure 32) was completed in 1894 for the Episcopal Parish of Christ Church, the oldest congregation in Hyde Park, which had outgrown its 1861 building. This was the second church designed by Ralph Adams Cram in his portfolio (1863–1942) and embodies the Late Gothic Revival style for which he became well known. He and his firm Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson designed dozens of ecclesiastical, municipal, and college buildings in Massachusetts, as well as notable commissions such as the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. This influential church was listed in the National Register in 1986. One such church influenced by this Late Gothic Revival style is the National Register-listed First Congregational Church of Hyde Park (BOS.11111; 6 Webster Street). First established in 1863, the congregation outgrew its first building and purchased this property overlooking Webster Square for a new place of worship. The Church currently serves a Seventh Day Adventist congregation.⁴⁴



Figure 32. Christ Church (BOS.11070). 2024. Utile.

INTER-WAR PERIOD AND POST-WORLD WAR II TRANSITIONS, CA. 1920 – CA. 1970

During the period between World War I (1914-1918) and World War II (1939-1945), also referred to as the Inter-War Period, commercial development trends began to shift away from Cleary Square, south towards Dedham, Quincy, and Braintree. When Hyde Park was annexed to Boston, Cleary Square went from a true city center to an urban village center, and the three- and four-story commercial buildings of the earlier boom period were altered or replaced with smaller one- and two-story buildings, creating far less dense streetscapes than were historically present. Hyde Park's industrial sector, long the backbone of the neighborhood's economic fortune, began declining, and firms either closed or relocated. By 1979, unemployment in the neighborhood was up from 3.5% to 6.8%. While the Square's population levels were not greatly affected by these trends, and in fact increased between 1960 and 1970, court-ordered desegregation of Boston public schools, increasing property taxes, and the proposed Southwest Expressway loomed over Hyde Park residents, exacerbating the perception of a neighborhood in decline. Beginning in the mid-1970s, Cleary Square began experiencing reinvestment, which continues today.

Hyde Park's Transition to a Suburban Community

In the 1950s and early 1960s, Hyde Park experienced a single-family residential development boom. While Cleary Square's residential stock was mostly built out by World War II, Post-War Minimal Traditional and Ranch style single-family residences—defined by low-slung, single-story construction with low-pitched roofs, carports, and picture windows—were constructed in the northwest of the Study Area, primarily in infill subdivisions. These developments included Greenbrook (1960), Valencia, Avila roads (early 1950s). Other areas of single-family infill construction included the northern stretches of Braeburn, Austin, and Summer streets and the southern portion of Sunnyside. The development of larger housing tracts such as Stonybrook Village within the Stony Brook Reservation and the build out of Fairmount Avenue south of Dana Avenue also occurred during this period.⁴⁵

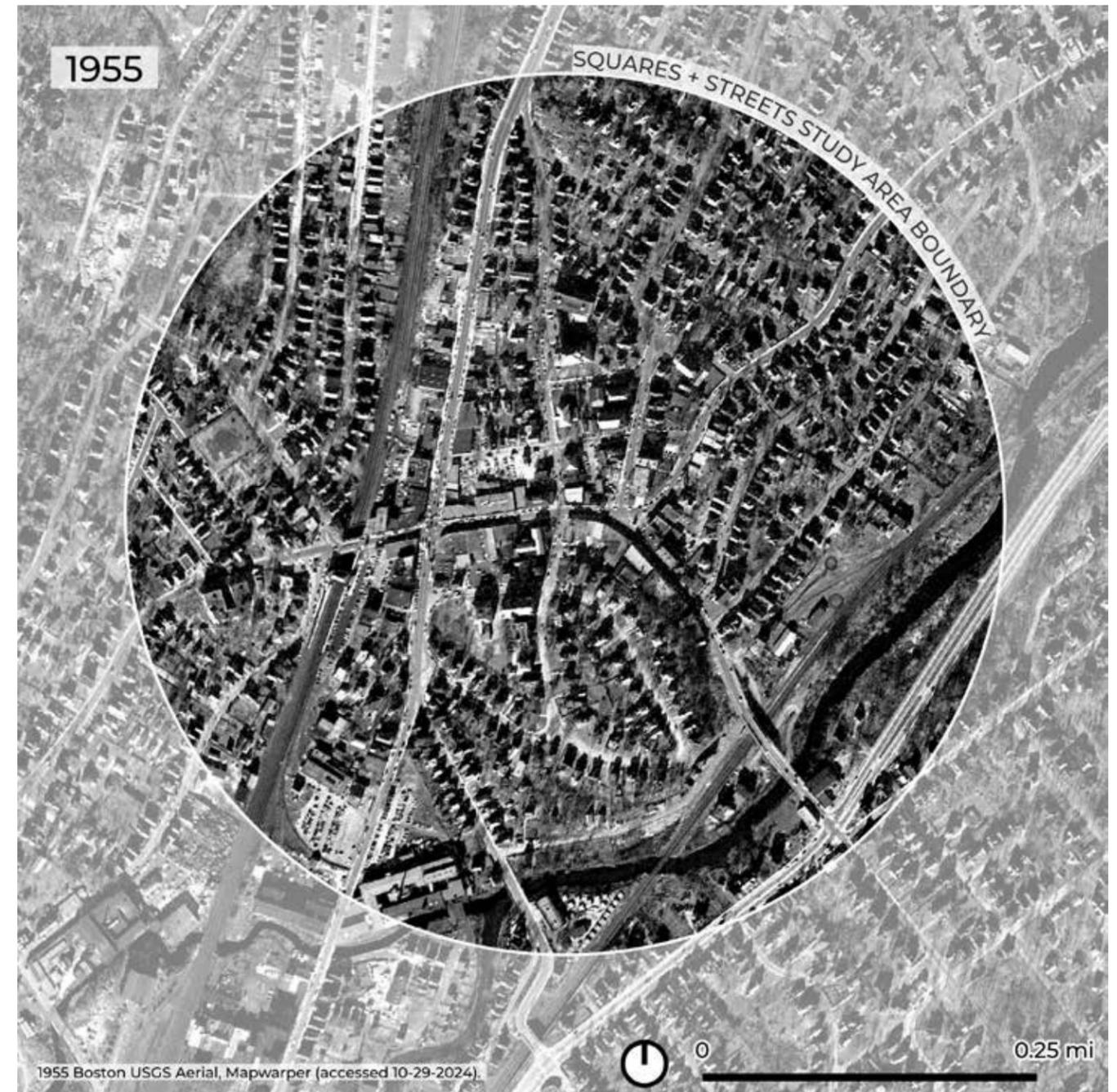


Figure 33. Hyde Park's Transition to a Suburban Community. Data Source: Boston USGS Aerial, 1955. Data (October 2024), Mapwarper.

The shift in development trends noted above was driven in part by the construction of several parkways within the Stony Brook Reservation (BOS.YI) as well as the Truman Parkway (BOS.YC/MLT.AK/MTL.AC) and the Neponset Valley Parkway (BOS.YA/MLT.AA) south and east of Cleary Square in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Between 1928 and 1932, the MDC laid out the West Boundary Road (BOS.9583) between Washington Street in Roslindale to the Dedham Parkway (BOS.9584/DED.933) and extended Enneking Parkway (BOS.9590) from the intersection of Dedham Parkway and Turtle Pond Parkways north to Gordon Avenue. In 1931, the Massachusetts Department of Public Works (MassDPW) built Truman Parkway as “a municipal link” between the MDC-owned Brush Hill Road and Neponset Valley Parkway. Designed to be consistent with MDC parkways, the Truman Parkway provided a transportation corridor from Mattapan Square south to the Neponset Valley Parkway. During the early 20th century, state agencies such as MassDPW and the MDC developed parkways in an effort to provide easy access to recreational spaces. For residents of Cleary Square, the parkways within Stony Brook provided easy access to MDC-operated recreational amenities such as the Alexander S. Bajko Rink (ca. 1958), Kelley Field (ca. 1958), and the Martin L. Olsen Memorial Pool and Bathhouse (ca. 1961). These parkways also provided the growing number of automobile drivers with more “pleasurable uninterrupted driving” experiences, and opened up rural and vacant land in the area to development.⁴⁶

Infill developments, increased recreational amenities, and the development of new transportation corridors providing easier access to area shopping centers led Cleary Square’s population to increase following World War II, bucking the declining population trends experienced by neighborhoods in and near downtown Boston. Despite waning industrial activity (discussed below) Cleary Square’s socioeconomic and housing stock conditions maintained healthy levels relative to Hyde Park and the City writ-large. Between 1960 and 1970, Cleary Square’s population increased 31% from approximately 5,700 to 8,153. Hyde Park itself experienced a similar increase of 28% during the same decade, growing to 36,150 by 1970. Growth in the neighborhood during these decades has been attributed to a boom in the construction of single-family homes; City analyses from the period indicate a continued socioeconomic mix of residents in Cleary Square. In 1970, city officials deemed approximately 12.6% of Cleary Square’s housing stock in need of “repairs in excess of \$1,000”.



Figure 34. Hyde Park Crusaders marching in a parade passing through the intersection of River Street and Harvard Avenue, 1970. [University Archives and Special Collections Department, Memories Road Show: Hyde Park, Mass. collection, Item ID: UASC-0140-0068-0072-0002](#). Joseph P. Healey Library, University of Massachusetts Boston. Accessed through Digital Commonwealth, September 2024.

Between 1977 and 1979, over 1,700 homeowners across Hyde Park took advantage of nearly \$600,000 in rebates offered by the city’s Housing Improvement Program to complete these repairs. Coupled with private investment, over \$4,000,000 was spent improving Hyde Park’s housing during the 1970s.⁴⁷

The Southwest Expressway Threatens Hyde Park

Following World War II, cities and metropolitan areas across the country embarked on urban renewal and highway building schemes in an effort to make their central business districts more accessible to the growing number of suburban residents commuting by car. The state's Metropolitan Highway Plan, released in 1948, envisioned a ring around Boston's downtown (dubbed the "Inner Belt") with more than half a dozen new or expanded expressways radiating out of the ring to the north, south, and west. By 1960, state officials began planning for the Southwest Expressway, one of those proposed radials, as an extension of Interstate 95 through Milton, Hyde Park, Jamaica Plain, Roxbury, and the South End. In Hyde Park, the Expressway would have cut Cleary Square in two along the NYNH&H corridor, cutting into the residences along the eastern side of Summer Street, the western side of Hyde Park Avenue, and sections of Business and River streets (Figure 35). In the early 1960s, approximately 500 homes and businesses were cleared between Jamaica Plain and the South End in anticipation of the highway. Available records indicate that while approximately six acres of land along Summer Street was acquired, no clearance in Cleary Square took place.⁴⁸

A robust, grassroots anti-highway movement throughout the 1960s, which included a "Beat the Belt" rally in 1966 and a "People Before Highways" rally in 1969, protested the proposed Inner Belt and Southwest Expressway (Figures 36-37). The environmental consequences as well as the "thousands of homes and businesses would continue to be demolished for the sake of the highway" became rallying cries for residents along the highways' routes and beyond. In 1962, residents of Hyde Park went so far as to petition the state legislature to secede from Boston. While unsuccessful, the attempt reveals the various forms and degree of resistance city and state officials met in response to the proposed highways. In 1972, Governor Francis Sargent officially stopped the proposed projects, and redirected the federal funds towards the Southwest Corridor, consisting of a realigned Orange Line subway and urban linear park opened in 1987. In Cleary Square, the acreage previously acquired for the Southwest Expressway sat vacant until the late 1970s when city officials began efforts to reutilize the land. The Hyde Park senior housing complex on Summer Street, built in ca. 1980, is one result of these efforts.⁴⁹

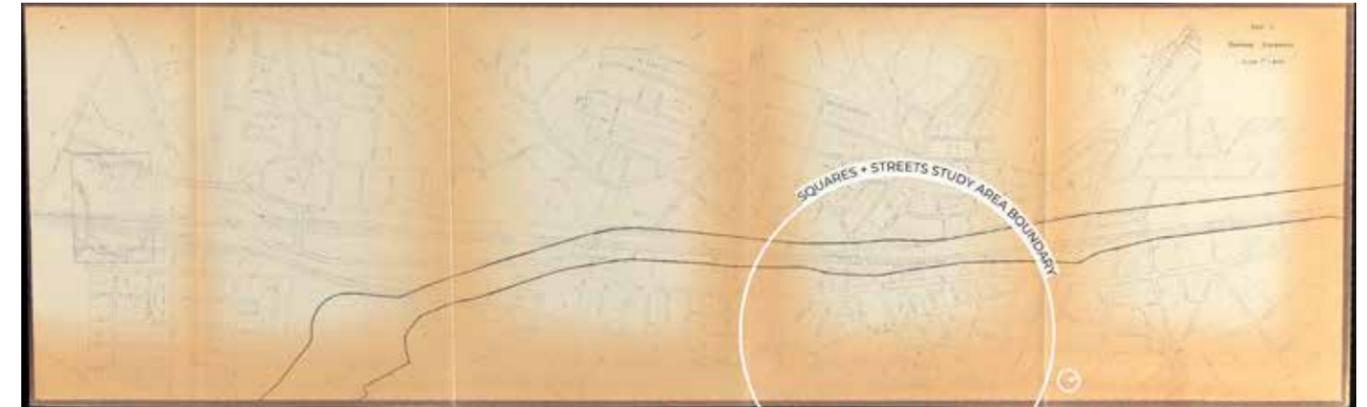


Figure 35. 1967 Schematic Plan of Southeast Expressway through Cleary Square. From the [Boston Public Library, Boston Redevelopment Authority, Family Relocation Department collection, Item ID: 06_01_017193A](#). Accessed from Digital Commonwealth, September 2024.

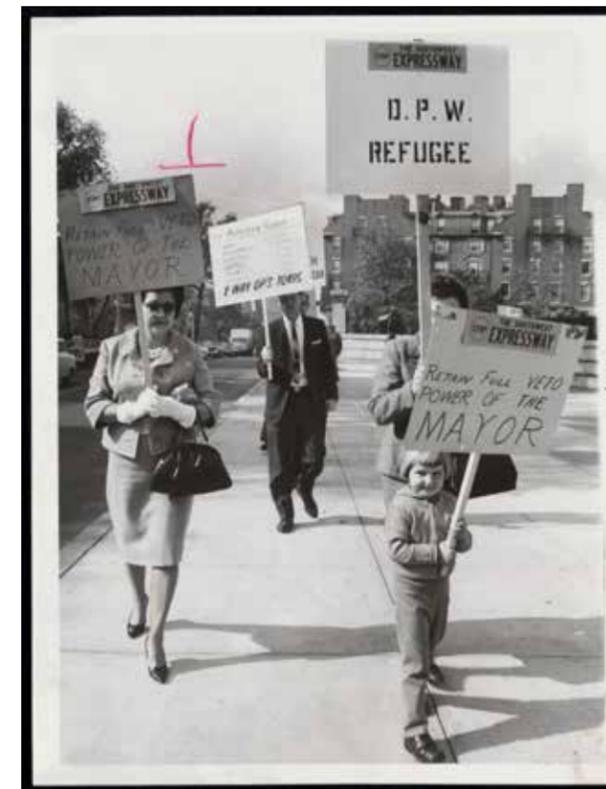


Figure 36.1 (left). "Marching Moppet Youthful Picket Judith O'Brien, 4, of Hyde Park, leads 25 marchers at State House protesting plans for southwest Expressway. They also want cities and towns to retain veto power over highways." October 1, 1963. From the [Boston Public Library, Boston Herald - Traveler Photo Morgue collection, Item ID: 22_10_001077_0027](#). Accessed through Digital Commonwealth, October 2024.

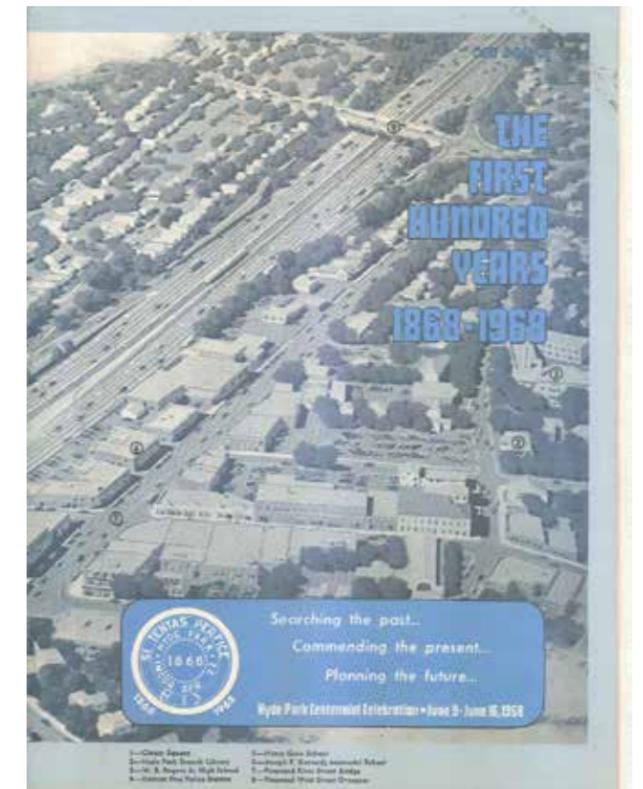


Figure 36.2 (right). 1968 Centennial Pamphlet "The First Hundred Years: 1868-1968" cover showing the proposed Inner Belt highway as it would have appeared through Cleary Square. From the [Hyde Park Historical Society, Hyde Park - The First Hundred Years - 1868 to 1968 collection](#). Accessed October 2024.

Industrial Decline, Suburban Commercial Competition, and the Beginnings of Revitalization

In 1968, Hyde Park was home to some 40 manufacturing plants, spread along the Neponset River and along the NYNH&H railroad. While some outfits closed following World War II, such as the Becker-Brainard Milling Machine Company on Business Street in 1957, new tenants often moved into the complexes, continuing their active use. By 1979, however, over 900 jobs were lost as a result of factories and mills throughout Hyde Park relocating or closing outright. This trend of industrial disinvestment was experienced across New England as manufacturing companies consolidated, closed, or relocated to the southeastern United States or abroad. These closures resulted in over 43 acres of vacant industrial properties across the neighborhood, concentrated in Readville. In Cleary Square, closures were concentrated along Hyde Park Avenue, leaving the vacant complexes in “deteriorating conditions,” detracting “from the surrounding residential area.” Indeed, in its 1979 assessment, the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) noted that much of the Square’s 13% of deteriorated housing stock was concentrated along Hyde Park Avenue south of Cleary Square, which had traditionally been worker housing for the adjacent factories.⁵⁰

Commercial activity within Cleary Square was also affected during this period, as businesses relocated to suburban shopping centers or closed as a result of the competition posed by such destinations. Complexes such as the South Shore Plaza off Interstate 93 (I-93) in Braintree (opened 1961) and the Dedham Mall (opened 1968), and others along I-93 in Braintree and Quincy offered prospective shoppers a greater selection of stores in a single, modern, car-friendly shopping center, diverting business investment away from Cleary Square. While limited, the development of new shopping plazas around Cleary Square in the late 1960s, such as the present-day America’s Food Basket plaza at 942 Hyde Park Avenue and present-day Stop & Shop shopping center at 1055 Truman Parkway further drew foot traffic away from the Square’s traditional commercial core. Along Hyde Park Avenue and River Street as well as along the former NYNH&H rail corridor, vacant storefronts remained empty due to a “lack of convenient off-street parking, poor traffic circulation, and crime.”⁵¹ Beginning in 1968, the city sought to improve commercial conditions within Cleary Square through its Neighborhood Improvement Program.

That year, the site of a former supermarket on Winthrop Street was cleared and the street was discontinued to construct the present 200-space municipal parking lot. Vacant land acquired next to the Hyde Park commuter rail station was similarly redeveloped as a 100-space surface parking lot. Improvements throughout Cleary Square included the reconstruction and/or resurfacing of streets, installation of new sewer and water lines, and improvements to public safety with increased foot patrols and new street lights.⁵²

Although the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment, one of the first Black regiments to serve in the U. S. Civil War, trained at Camp Meigs in Readville, there was a relatively small Black population in Hyde Park until the late 20th century. In the 1970s, Hyde Park High School (BOS.18574) became the site of racial assaults in the wake of mandatory desegregation of the city’s schools, an early sign that the transition of Hyde Park into a majority-minority community was not always well received. As the Cleary Square Plan Primer notes, Cleary Square’s racial diversity did not begin to expand until the late 20th century. Beginning in the 1960s and 1970s, immigrants from Haiti and the Dominican Republic began settling in and around Boston, fleeing violent political regimes such as those under Haitian President Francois Duvalier and his son Jean-Claude Duvalier and Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo. Into the 1980s, immigrants from Jamaica and Nigeria moved into Hyde Park, Mattapan, and other nearby neighborhoods as well, searching for economic opportunities. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of foreign-born residents in Hyde Park grew by 62%. Many of these new residents found employment in a variety of industries vital to supporting the day-to-day operations of Boston and the metropolitan area including food service, transportation, childcare, construction, and healthcare. Since 2000, residents from these communities have continued to set down roots and support the economic and cultural vitality of Hyde Park through community organizations such as Hyde Park Main Streets and restaurants such as ZaZ (opened in 2011) and Las Delicias Colombianas (opened in 2017).⁵³

CLEARY SQUARE INTO THE PRESENT DAY, CA. 1970 – PRESENT

In recent decades, the Cleary Square community and the Hyde Park neighborhood at large have undertaken several preservation-related and neighborhood improvement initiatives. In 2009, the City commissioned a Retail Market Study and Action Plan for Cleary and Logan Squares. Among the potential improvements recommended in the report was the potential reuse of the Everett Square Theater to enhance Cleary Square as a Hyde Park arts hub. Community participants noted the urban village feel of this commercial center, with a diversity of historic building stock. The 2011 Hyde Park Neighborhood Strategic Plan recognized the need to survey historic resources as an important planning tool and building reuse as a key sustainability strategy. One of the successful goals resulting from the plan was the establishment of the Hyde Park Main Streets Neighborhood Design Overlay District (NDOD) in 2012 to help preserve the character of the commercial areas (Section 69-23 of the Boston Zoning Code).⁵⁴

Cleary Square was chosen by the City of Boston to be included in the Boston Main Streets Program in the 1990s, initiated by Mayor Thomas M. Menino. Under the program, the City of Boston provides each Main Street district with technical assistance and intensive training together with the National Main Street Center (now called “Main Street America”) administered by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. One of the neighborhood initiatives that encouraged the creation of the Hyde Park Main Streets was the restoration of the Everett Square Theater, in the wake of previous unsuccessful plans.

In 2023, the City of Boston started recognizing legacy businesses as an important part of the neighborhood’s commercial streetscapes and community fabric. So far, four Hyde Park businesses have won a Legacy Business Award, including popular Cleary Square favorite Ron’s Gourmet Ice Cream and Bowling, which has been operating for nearly 50 years, as well as Akiki Auto Repair, Au Beurre Chaud, and Richy’s.⁵⁵

Cleary Square has several excellent examples of how buildings can adapt and modernize for expanded or new uses. In 2000, an addition doubled the size of the Hyde Park Branch Library (BOS.10957). Named the Menino Wing (Figure 38.1), it retains the original historic exterior wall inside the fully-glazed addition. Integrated into the landscape are architectural remnants of the former St. Catherine’s School and one of the iterations of Hyde Park Station (both demolished in the 1960s). The Way Building (BOS.10927) was rehabilitated in 2008 after being severely damaged in a fire, and Historic Boston Inc. funded a new historically accurate marquee at the Everett Square Theater (Figure 38.2). The former Hyde Park High School/William Barton Rogers School (BOS.18574) was recently rehabilitated into The Pryde (Figure 38.3), market rate and affordable LGBTQIA+ senior housing, with the help of historic tax incentives.⁵⁶

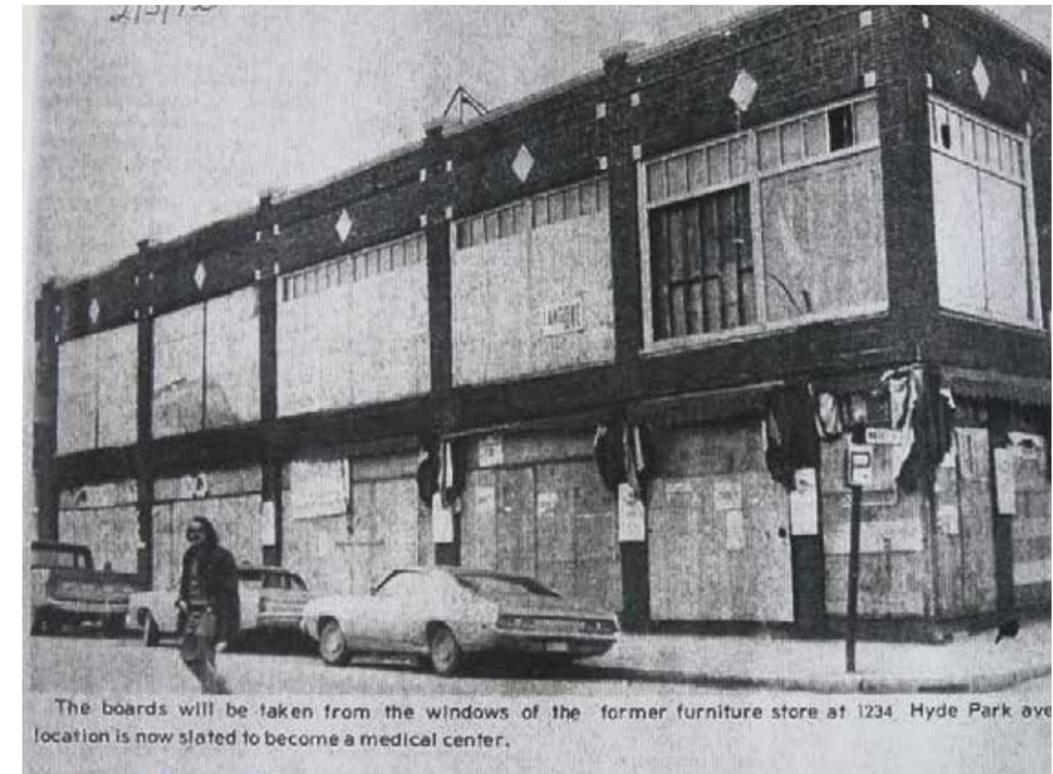


Figure 37. 1234 Hyde Park Avenue, currently the Lowney Building, as it appeared in a 1972 article following a fire. From the [University Archives and Special Collections Department, Memories Road Show: Hyde Park, Mass. collection, Item ID: UASC-0140-0068-0070-0002. Joseph P. Healey Library, University of Massachusetts Boston](#). Accessed through Digital Commonwealth, September 2024.



Figure 38.1 (left) Hyde Park Branch Library Menino Wing. November 2024. Utile.

Figure 38.2 (center) Everett Square Theater Restored Marquee. 2024. Boston Planning Department.

Figure 38.3 (right) The Pryde Interior Courtyard. November 2024. Utile.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As highlighted in many of the responses provided to the Squares + Streets survey, the Cleary Square study area contains a number of buildings and streetscapes that retain their historic character. This is echoed in the 2012 establishment of the NDOD, which recognizes some of the significant buildings in the Cleary Square commercial and municipal center.

Among the several tools available to encourage the preservation and reuse of historic buildings are designation through listing in the National Register of Historic Places, and designation as a Boston Landmark. Citywide, there is significant overlap between these classifications, with individual resources and collective districts being designated as both National Register-listed and Boston Landmarks. However, this is not automatic and many properties have one recognition but not the other.

The National Register is defined as “the official list of the Nation’s historic places worthy of preservation” by the National Park Service, which administers the program in coordination with each State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). While the National Register is more widely-known than its local counterpart, it is important to note that listing provides limited protection from adverse effects resulting from a small subset of construction and improvements projects; namely, those involving federal funding and approvals. A primarily honorific and planning tool, listing in the National Register does not, in itself, necessarily limit future improvements to a property or even

prevent its demolition. However, National Register listing is beneficial because it opens up potential opportunities for funding and technical assistance, including historic tax credit incentives that helped rehabilitate Hyde Park High School as The Pryde.

In contrast, designation as a Boston Landmark is a more hands-on preservation strategy, with proposed changes reviewed by the BLC or one of the City’s several Landmark District Commissions. Through the review process, the Commissions and BLC staff work with property owners to develop design solutions that allow evolution and improvements to their buildings in a historically sensitive manner. Owners of landmarked properties can benefit from the input provided during the design review process, as the appointed Commissioners not only represent their respective communities, but also a diverse range of professional expertise and personal experience. The benefits of designation of Boston Landmarks are tangible community-wide and are integral to maintaining the unique feel of our buildings, streetscapes, and village squares while the city grows.

VHB offers the following recommendations for further study and evaluation for potential designation, taking into account current existing conditions and the evolution of philosophies and practice used by the National Register. While this is not an exhaustive list of potential historic properties, it can be considered an updated starting block for evaluating priority commercial and institutional historic resources.⁵⁷ The next step for the Boston Landmarks Commission is to complete an Area Form update—including an updated inventory of potentially historic resources and structures—for the Cleary Square area to file with the Massachusetts Historic Commission (MHC).

As early as the 1980s, **Cleary Square (BOS.ACF)** was recognized as a prime candidate for designation as a historic district. In the 1990s, the BLC considered this commercial and institutional center a significant example of the late-19th century growth of Boston suburbs. Several of its well-designed, well-detailed, and well-preserved buildings pre-date Hyde Park’s annexation to Boston in 1912. Despite the alteration to a less-dense environment following annexation, the late 19th and early 20th century core remains cohesive, with architecturally significant municipal buildings, institutions, commercial blocks, and even two early 20th century theaters.

Designation of the district could serve as an economic catalyst, as contributing buildings would be eligible for rehabilitation tax credits with less burden of proof that the properties are historically significant. Further study would be required to determine the boundaries of the district, and whether the designation of smaller sub-areas is beneficial for this somewhat large historic village center.

Several buildings in the study area may be eligible for individual designation as well as contributing to a historic district. The **Fallon Building (1277-1283 Hyde Park Avenue, BOS.11071)**, situated at the west end of the commercial district, retains several architectural details and is an impressive gateway into the village center. Despite alterations such as replacement windows and storefronts, it retains integrity and is one of the best-preserved commercial blocks in Cleary Square.⁵⁸ The **Hyde Park Municipal Building (now Hyde Park Community Center, 1179 River Street, BOS.11069)** is a particularly impressive and well-preserved example of an early 20th century Beaux Arts building, with a monumental and highly detailed temple front portico. The dynamic swags around the round windows continue the dramatic flourishes around to the side elevations, which both front on public ways. Few alterations are discernible on the exterior. The **Hyde Park Branch Library (35 Harvard Avenue, BOS.10957)** is a strong example of Classical Revival architecture, again marked by a monumental entrance as well as playful details such as the sculptural plaques on the façade featuring open books. While a recent addition greatly expanded the library, it was sensitively designed to preserve the historic building's footprint and exterior, using a glazed exterior to ensure the historic building maintains its visual prominence on the street. The **Everett Square Theater and French's Opera House/Masonic Temple/Odd Fellows Hall (now Riverside Theatre Works, BOS.10928)**, both on Fairmount Avenue, are rare examples of early 20th century movie palaces, and while further evaluation would be needed to confirm whether the building interiors retain enough integrity to warrant individual eligibility, together they may be considered as a nearly-contiguous historic district.⁵⁹

FOOTNOTES

¹ MACRIS and its accompanying map interface is one of the most important sources of information regarding historic properties in Massachusetts. The Inventory can be searched and filtered through criteria such as address, neighborhood, architect/designer, designation category, etc., and the results downloaded as Excel or .csv files.

² Kunze, David C. and Judy P. Kunze, "Superb Suburb," Roslindale Historical Society, November 2020, <https://www.roslindalehistoricalsociety.org/superb-suburb>, accessed August 2024.

³ Rather than use the common, Christian-based "BC" (Before Christ) and "AD" (anno Domini) or the secular "BCE" (Before Common Era) and "CE" (Common Era) to divide periods of time, archaeologists use radiocarbon dating analysis, setting the "present" at 1950, the year radiocarbon dating was invented. National Park Service, "How Do Archaeologists Talk About Time?" National Park Service, Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site, July 22, 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/archaeological-time.htm>, accessed August 2024.

⁴ Pearson, Lisa, "Early Indigenous Land Use," Arnold Arboretum, November 22, 2021, rboretum.harvard.edu/stories/early-indigenous-land-use/, accessed August 2024.

^{5,6,7} Pearson, 2021.

⁸ Pearson, 2021; Native Northeast Research Collaborative, "Chickataubut, - 1633," Native Northeast Portal, <https://nativeneortheastportal.com/bio/bibliography/obtakiest-1633>, accessed August 2024.

⁹ One of the earliest man-made industrial canals in the country, Mother Brook (DED.AB) extends from the Charles River in Dedham to the Neponset River in Hyde Park. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, the five privileges along the Brook's route became nodes of industrial development.

¹⁰ Davenport Corner is approximately located at the present-day intersection of Brush Hill Road, Blue Hill Avenue, Canton Avenue, and Green Street. In 1848 the Blue Hill Turnpike was turned over to Norfolk County as a public road, and is today Randolph Avenue or State Route 28. By 1857 the Brush Hill Turnpike was similarly redesignated. Briefly known as Grove Hall Avenue, the Brush Hill Turnpike is today known as Blue Hill Avenue or State Route 138. Wood, Frederic J., *The Turnpikes of New England*, (Boston, MA: Marshall Jones Company, 1919).

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¹⁷ The Mount Neponset Neighborhood is almost entirely inventoried as part of the Pine Street, 14-25 (BOS.PB), Maple Street, 47-87 and Pine Street, 4-6 (BOS.OX), and Oak Street, 22-70 (BOS.PA) areas.

¹⁸ Pollan and Koch, Hyde Park Preservation Study; Stone, "Hyde Park and Fairmount".

¹⁹ Pollan and Koch, Hyde Park Preservation Study; FindaGrave, "Robert Bleakie (1833-1917)," memorial ID: 158677988, FindaGrave, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/158677988/robert-bleakie>, accessed September 2024; No author, "Charles F. Allen House (BOS.11081) Form B, <https://mhc-macris.net/details?mhcid=bos.11081>, accessed September 2024; No author, "Robert Bleakie House (BOS.11094) Form B, <https://mhc-macris.net/details?mhcid=bos.11094>, accessed September 2024.

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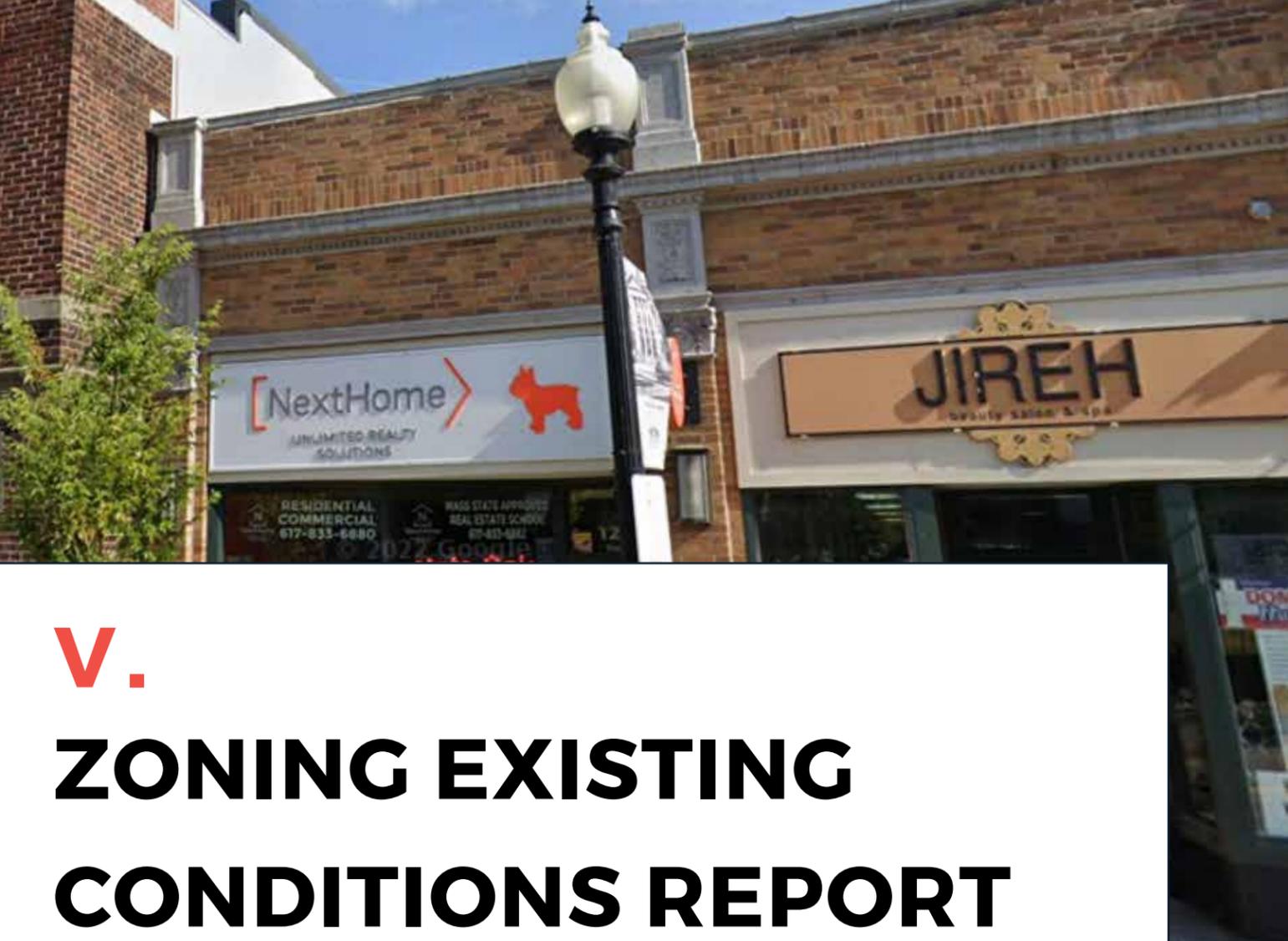
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V. ZONING EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT

INTRODUCTION

This report covers an analysis of existing land use and zoning conditions as well as small- and large-scale development patterns within the Cleary Square area. The goal is to understand how existing conditions and zoning enable or obstruct opportunities for community development that supports local needs.

Through this analysis, two key themes emerge which underline a need to rezone Cleary Square: **current zoning does not reflect what exists in Cleary Square and many existing and desired activities and uses are not allowed by zoning.**

This makes it **difficult for new businesses (especially small businesses) to open, or for existing businesses to transition to new activities.** For example, if an existing restaurant owner would like to add a take-out component, they will likely need zoning relief because take-out is not an ‘allowed use.’ In addition, existing rules about the size and shape of buildings make many of the existing buildings in Cleary Square physically illegal. **This makes it hard for business owners and homeowners to make additions or changes to their properties. It also discourages new development that would make adaptive use of existing buildings or that would be similar to the current built environment.**

As a result, projects often require zoning relief, such as a variance or a conditional use permit, from the Zoning Board of Appeal (ZBA). This makes the development process significantly more **unpredictable for residents, as well as inequitable, costly and timely for property owners.** Property owners with the least resources and technical support are the least able to navigate the ZBA process to complete projects, worsening equity issues.

Updating the zoning rules in Cleary Square can begin to **remove barriers to the development of a variety of housing, cultural, commercial and community**

spaces. This report details what the impact of those existing barriers are and **where the zoning regulations do not align with previous visions, planning goals and trends in proposed projects in the community.**

The Cleary Square community can set a vision for the possible futures of development in the area to better predict what development will look like. That vision can be supported by updates to zoning rules that reflect what we see built now and want to see in the future, and that starts with understanding the status quo of zoning and development today.

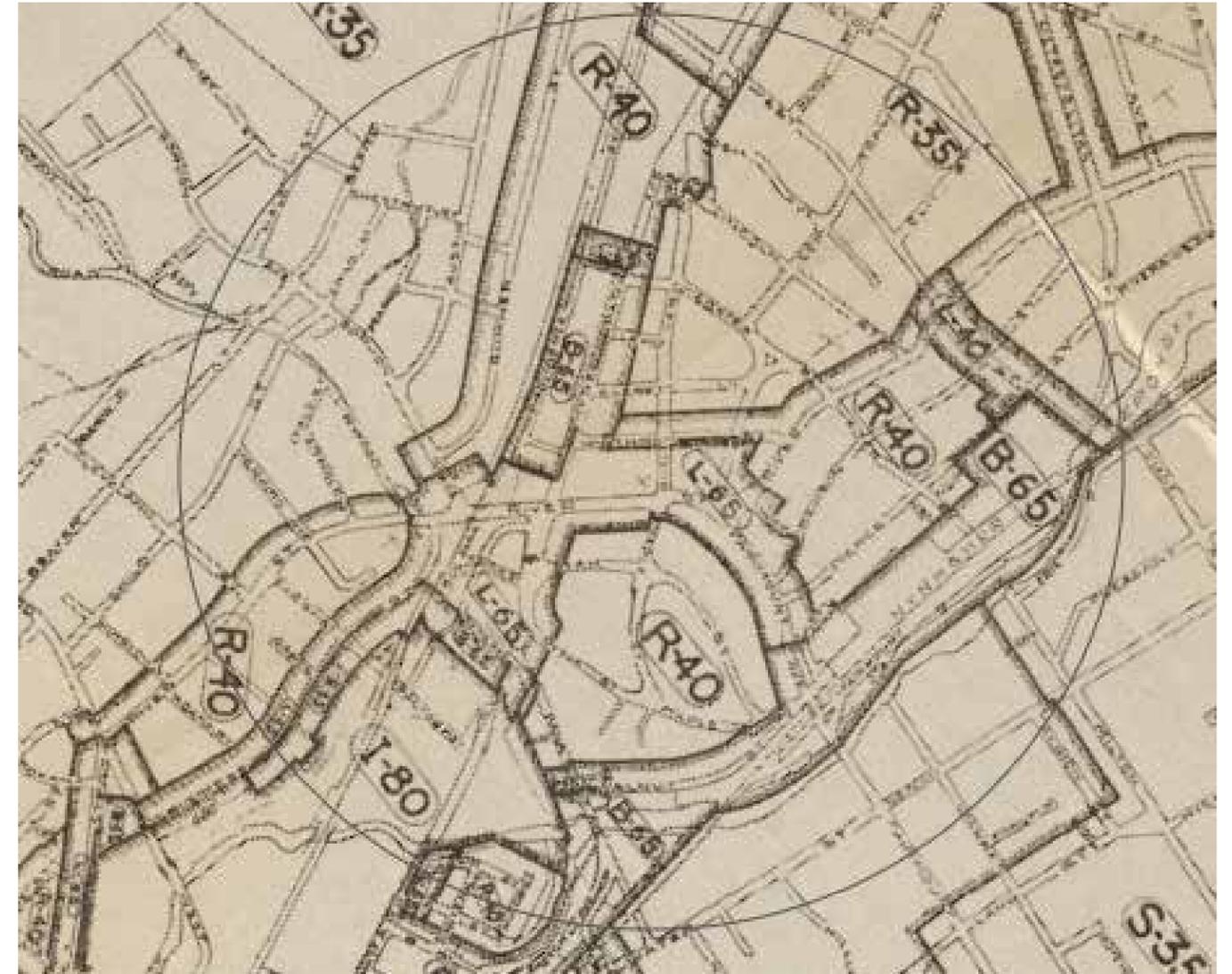
HISTORY

Cleary Square's first zoning was adopted in 1924 as part of the 1924 Zoning Law of the City of Boston, the City's first zoning regulations. Prior to the 1924 Zoning Law, buildings and development in Boston were only regulated by building code which included height regulations but didn't regulate the activities in buildings. The 1924 zoning for Cleary Square featured business districts along Hyde Park Avenue and River Street with residential-only districts in the surrounding area, much like today.

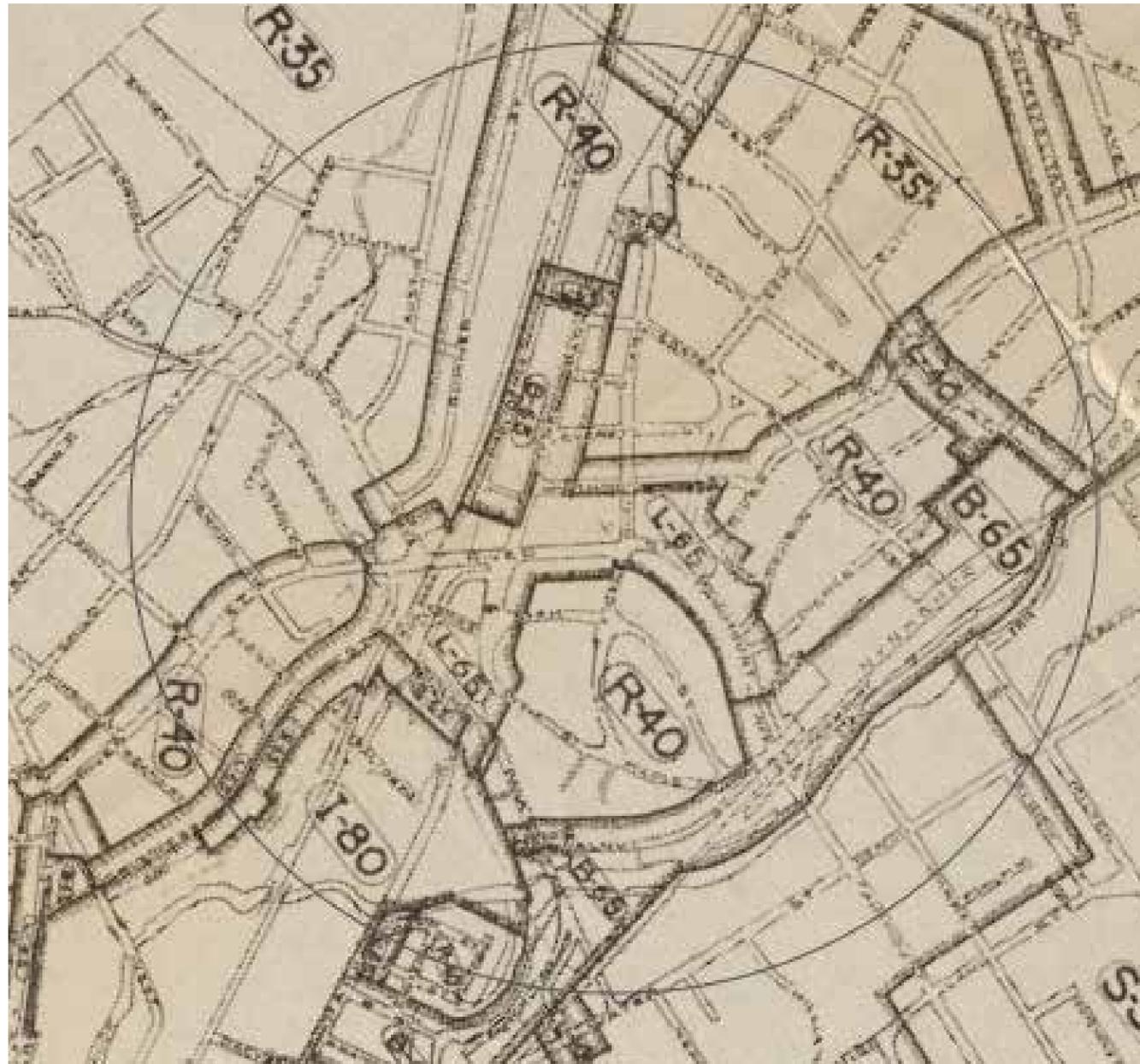
In the 1924 zoning, buildings were allowed to be 65 feet tall in the business districts and 40 feet tall in the residential districts (taller than today's 35-40 foot maximum in the business district and 35 foot maximum in the residential districts). This means that buildings were allowed to be larger than they are allowed to be today, which reflects some of how the vision and priorities of Boston's zoning has changed over the decades.

The second version of Cleary Square's zoning was adopted in 1962 as part of the 1962 update of the Boston Zoning Code and Enabling Act. It included residential and business districts, as well as a small light manufacturing district (M-1) along the west of Hyde Park Avenue by Everett Street and Clay Street. Today, the area of the former manufacturing district contains one industrial use (the Verizon computer equipment building), but is primarily residential.

The 1962 zoning regulations set lower maximum heights at 40 feet in the B-1 district and 35 feet elsewhere. This Zoning Code also introduced floor area ratio (FAR) regulations. **The 1962 shift in the zoning was part of a trend within the greater region to downzone, reducing the scale of new buildings and thus reducing the opportunity for multifamily housing like apartments and mixed-use development.** In practice, this led to the exclusion of potential residents who could not afford or access a one-, two-, or three-family residence due to the lack of new multifamily housing supply that could offer opportunity for more affordable units.



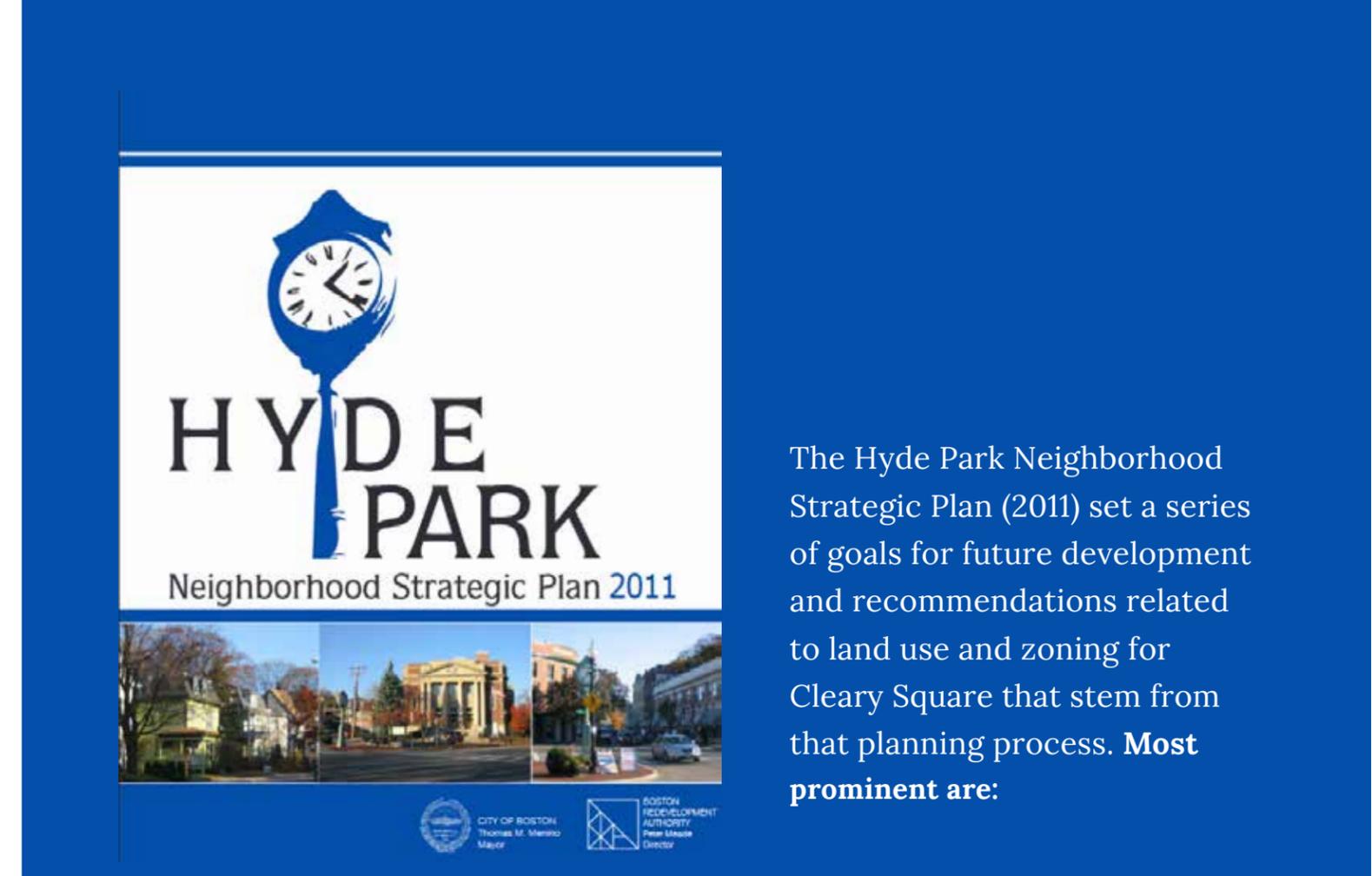
Map 1: 1924 Zoning Map of Cleary Square



Map 2: 1962 Zoning Map of Cleary Square

The 1962 zoning regulations for Cleary Square were replaced in 2012 with the adoption of the Boston Zoning Code’s Article 69 (Hyde Park Neighborhood District), which is the zoning applicable in the area today. This zoning was adopted after the Planning Department (then the BRA) worked with an Advisory Group of thirteen Hyde Park community leaders and the broader Hyde Park community, to draft the Hyde Park Neighborhood Strategic Plan, which was adopted in 2011.

Article 69 was written as part of the neighborhood-based rezoning that Boston undertook starting in the late 1980s, rewriting much of the existing 1962 zoning. Hyde Park was the last neighborhood to be rezoned in this process.



The Hyde Park Neighborhood Strategic Plan (2011) set a series of goals for future development and recommendations related to land use and zoning for Cleary Square that stem from that planning process. **Most prominent are:**

Hyde Park Neighborhood Strategic Plan (2011)

- “maintain the small, local store character, while continuing to allow opportunities for some development of residential uses on upper floors, to create a more lively district” (p. iii)
- “provide a diversified commercial environment serving larger region” (p. ix)
- “encourages the preservation and sensitive rehabilitation of historic buildings” (p. x)
- “increased activities in Cleary and Logan Squares both day and night” (p. 12)
- “continue to allow mixed-use development (residential above /commercial below) within Cleary and Logan Squares (as well as where appropriate in other commercial districts)” (p. 12)
- “encourage moderate density Transit Oriented Development near commuter rail stations” (p. 12)
- “encourage the development of a more pedestrian-friendly environment” (p. 32)
- “prohibit drive-thrus (fast food restaurants, banks, dry cleaners), and auto-oriented uses (gas stations, auto-body services) in Cleary and Logan Squares” (p. 59)

The building dimensions allowed in the current zoning (which will be detailed more in the following section) do not conform with many of the existing historic structures in Cleary Square. Buildings such as the Hyde Park Branch of the Boston Public Library (1885), the Hyde Park Municipal Building (now a Hyde Park BCYF location) (1899), and the YMCA (1902) were built before any zoning regulations existed and would not be allowed under current zoning rules.

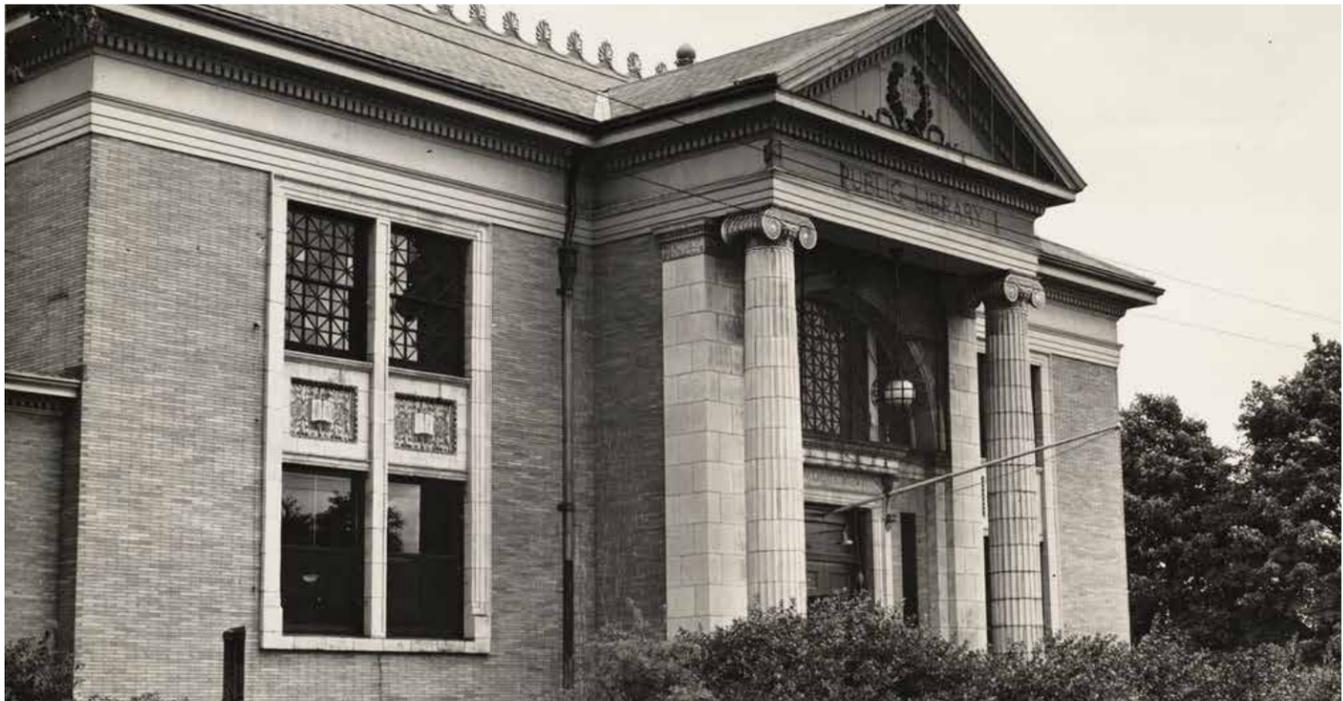
The following report outlines common constraints of the existing zoning in supporting stated community goals. It also provides a general overview of small- and large-scale development that has occurred in the area for reference. This information is meant to provide an understanding of why updated zoning within the Cleary Square area is necessary to better align regulations with community needs and produce more predictability for how buildings develop or change over time.

SOURCES FOR THIS CHAPTER:

- [Hyde Park Planning and Rezoning](#)
- [Historic Maps](#)



Cleary Square and River St (1900)



Boston Public Library (built in 1885)



YMCA (built in 1902)



River St at Hyde Park Ave (1970s)

EXISTING ZONING SUBDISTRICTS AND OVERLAYS

ZONING SUBDISTRICTS

Zoning districts or subdistricts dictate which zoning rules apply in which locations.

Clery Square is within the **Hyde Park Neighborhood Zoning District**, which is regulated by Article 69 of the Zoning Code. This district is further split into **11 different zoning subdistricts**:

- **Three (3) neighborhood business subdistricts:** Neighborhood Shopping-1 (NS-1), Neighborhood Shopping-2 (NS-2), Local Convenience (LC)
- **Four (4) residential subdistricts and one (1) conservation protection subdistricts:** One-Family (1F-6000), Two-Family (2F-5000), Three-Family (3F-4000), Multifamily Residential (MFR), Conservation Protection (CPS)
- **Two (3) open space subdistricts:** Parkland Open Space (OS-P), Urban Wild Open Space (OS-UW), Urban Plaza Open Space (OS-UP)



Map 3: Existing Zoning Subdistricts in Clery Square

As shown on the map above (map 3), **the majority of the Square is in an NS-2 subdistrict.** In this subdistrict, most retail, restaurant, and office uses are allowed, while other commercial uses such as hotels or entertainment spaces are conditional. Most vehicular uses (such as parking lots and gas stations) are forbidden, and parking garages are allowed only if they're underground and the ground floor is occupied by retail, hotel, service or office uses.

In the **NS-1 subdistrict** (which exists in two areas on the perimeter of the NS-2), the use regulations are the same as the NS-2, but the dimensional regulations are more restrictive. In the NS-1, the max FAR is 1.0 (2.0 in the NS-2), the max height is 35 feet (40 feet in the NS-2), and the front yard is 10 feet (none in the NS-2).

In the **LC subdistrict** (which exists in a few places further out in the square), some commercial uses are allowed, but fewer than what is allowed in the NS subdistricts. Buildings are also required to be smaller in scale and have larger yards.

In the **residential subdistricts** which surround the commercial subdistricts, most non-residential uses are forbidden, including all retail, restaurant, service, and vehicular uses. These districts vary in their dimensional regulations and number of allowed units.

The **open spaces subdistricts** are reserved for open spaces like parks, plazas, and urban wilds. These subdistricts are regulated by Article 33 of the Zoning Code, which regulates all the open space subdistricts in Boston.

The regulations for each of these subdistricts can be found in different

sections and tables of Article 69*. See the **How to Find and Read Existing Zoning Regulations (Page 56)** for more information on how to view these subdistricts in detail.

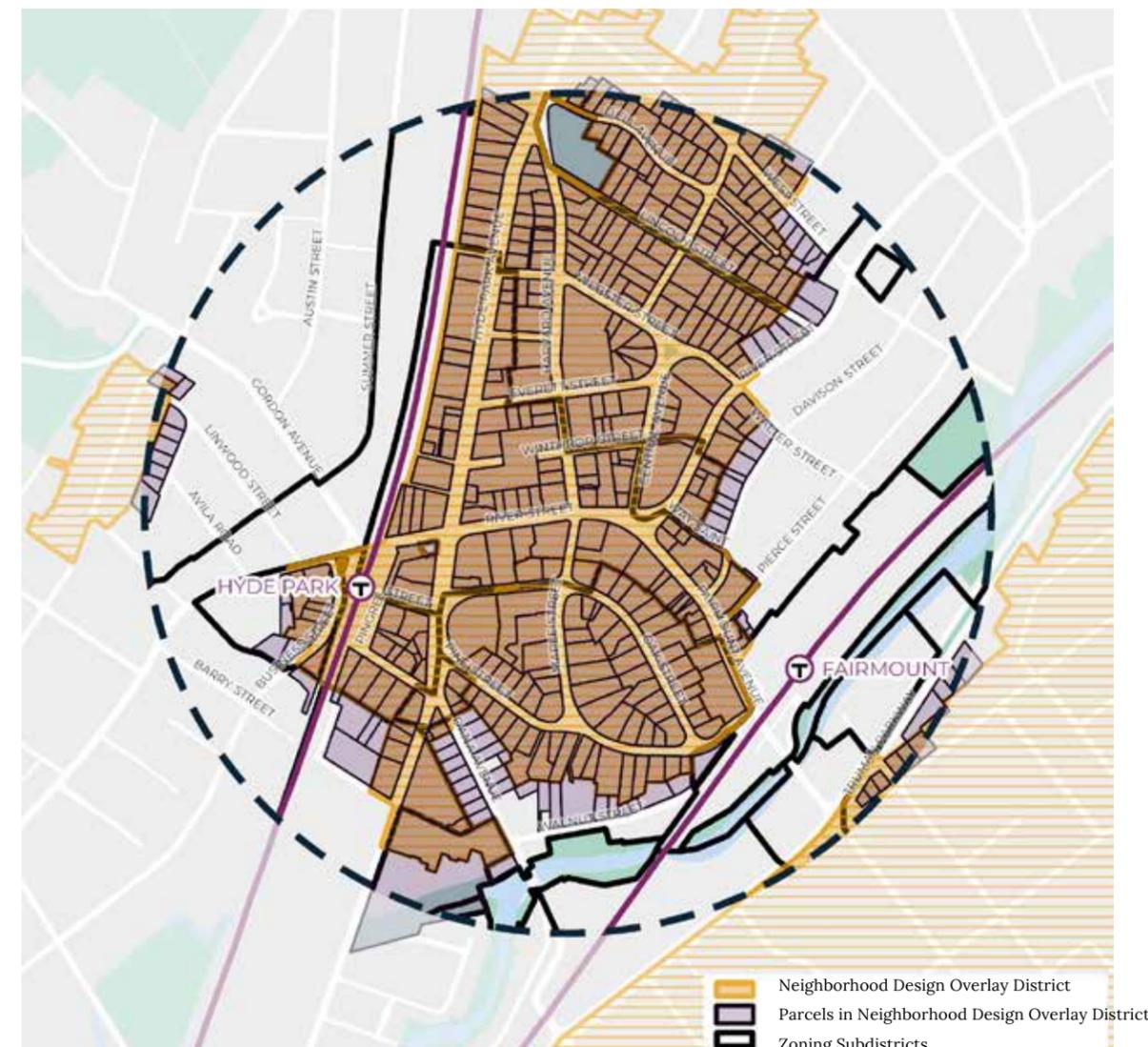
The existing zoning regulations are often not aligned with community desires as expressed through previous planning goals and as indicated by the more popular existing buildings in Cleary Square. For example, many residents expressed wanting more restaurants and coffee shops that attract pedestrian consumer activity that serve the broader region. However, “take-out restaurant” is a conditional use in all of the commercial districts, which makes it more difficult for these uses to open, and thus more difficult for an array of businesses with frequent walk-in activity to enter the Square. Ways in which the existing zoning does not match existing conditions (and community desires) is explored more deeply in the **Land Parcel and Assessing and Zoning Board of Appeal** sections of this report.

* Except for the Open Space subdistricts, which are regulated by Article 33.

ZONING OVERLAY DISTRICTS

An overlay district is a zoning district that lies on top of existing (or “underlying”) zoning districts and creates additional zoning requirements. Parcels within the boundaries of overlay districts (including parcels that are only partially within the overlay boundaries) must follow the rules of both their underlying district and subdistrict and any overlay districts.

The Cleary Square study area contains **four zoning overlay districts**. Three of these zoning overlays work by requiring **additional design review** for certain projects within the overlay.



Map 4: Neighborhood Design Overlay District in Cleary Square

Neighborhood Design Overlay Districts (NDODs) establish procedures for design review of all projects within a specific area of a neighborhood. Within an NDOD, projects must be reviewed and approved by Urban Design staff in the Planning Department, a process known as Planning Department Design Review (previously BPDA Design Review), if they are visible from a public street or public open space and propose either 1. a change altering a roof shape or building height or 2. an alteration or new construction which is over 300 sq ft. The requirements for NDODs are found in Section 80E-2.1.iii of the Zoning Code.

Within Article 69 (Section 69-25: Design Review and Design Guidelines), there is also a requirement that any project within the Hyde Park Neighborhood District must receive design review if it is visible from a public street or public open space and proposes any addition or new construction which is more than 750 sq ft. These projects are also subject to a 14 day public comment period.

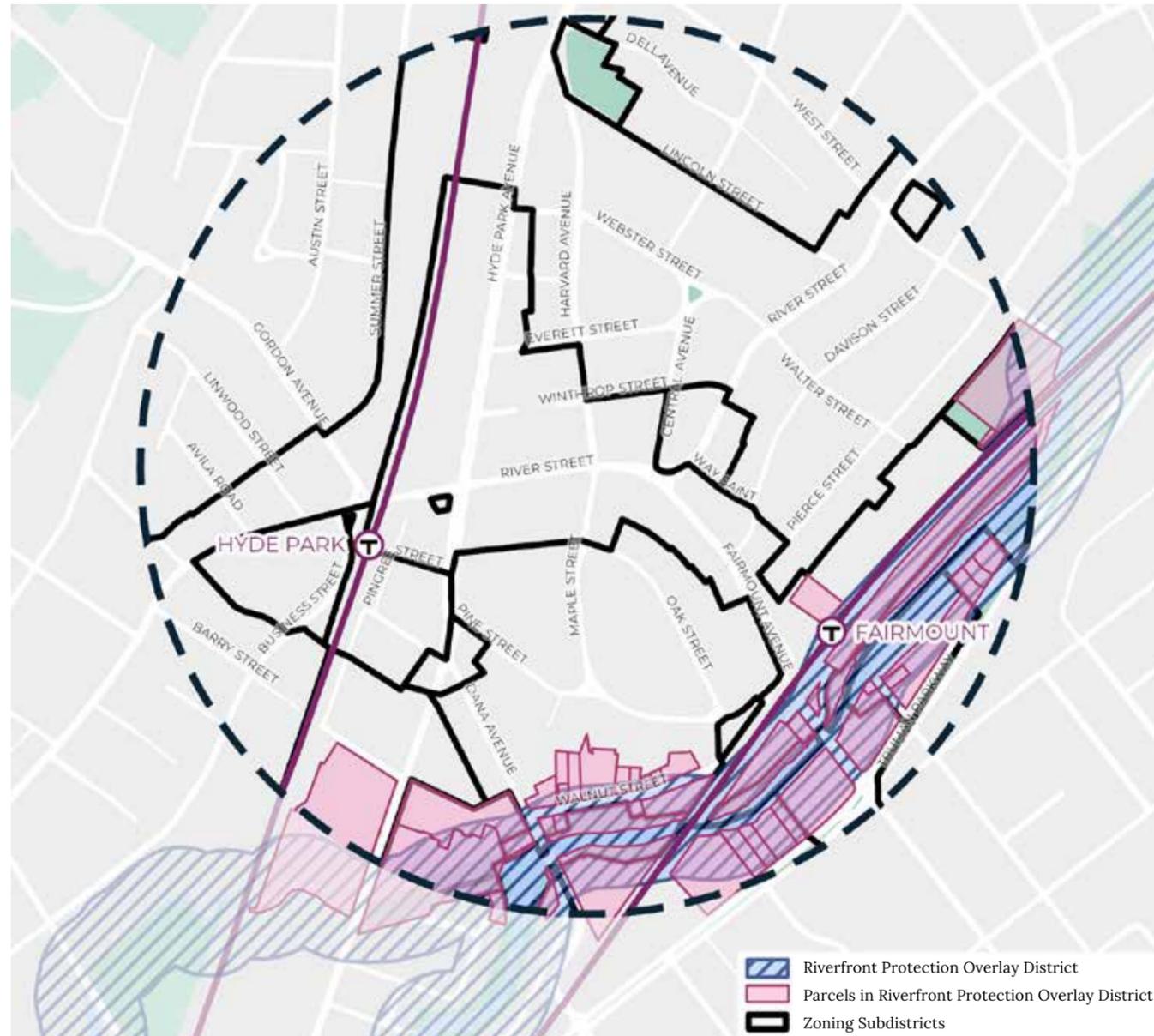
Since 2020, there have been zero projects which have triggered design review through the NDOD or the neighborhood-wide design requirement processes. This is because all the projects that these provisions applied to also required zoning relief, and so they instead triggered design review through the Zoning Board of Appeal process. This is indicative that while the NDOD is important in its intent to promote community design characteristics, it is not useful in the case where projects need zoning relief, which is common when many projects and existing buildings do not conform with the zoning requirements.



Map 5: Greenbelt Protection Overlay District in Cleary Square

Greenbelt Protection Overlay Districts (GPODs) are established to provide design review along the City's Greenbelt Roadways to protect adjacent vegetation and open space. In Hyde Park, there is a GPOD area along Truman Parkway.

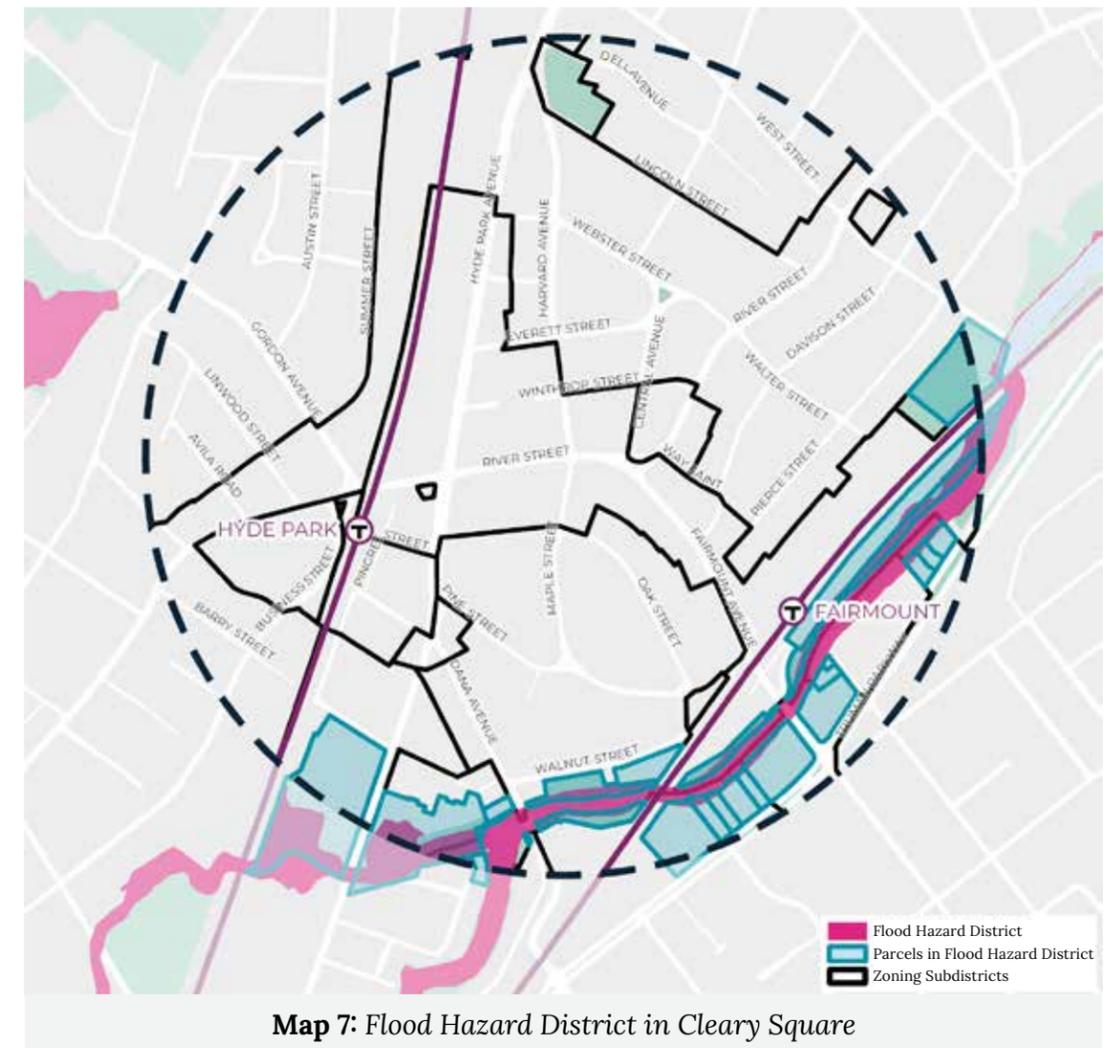
Within the GPOD, projects which are at least 5,000 sq ft, or which increase the impervious surface of a site by more than 2,000 sq ft, must receive a conditional use permit from the Zoning Board of Appeal (ZBA) and be reviewed and approved by the Boston Parks Commission (see the glossary of this document for more information on conditional use permits). The requirements for GPODs are found in Article 29 of the Zoning Code.



Map 6: Riverfront Protection Overlay District in Cleary Square

Riverfront Protection Overlay Districts (RPODs) are established to provide design review to protect the vegetation and open space along the City's waterways. In Hyde Park, there is an RPOD area around the Neponset River.

Within an RPOD, projects proposing new non-residential buildings or existing structures adding 2,000 or more sq ft of gross floor area must be reviewed and approved by urban design staff in the Planning Department, following specific design requirements outlined in the zoning. The requirements for RPODs are found in Section 69-22 and Section 80E-2 of the Zoning Code.



Map 7: Flood Hazard District in Cleary Square

Flood Hazard Districts (also called special hazard flood areas) are lands in a floodplain that are subject to a one percent probability of flooding in any given year. In Hyde Park, there is a Flood Hazard District along the Neponset River.

Article 25 of the Zoning Code sets regulations for parcels within Flood Hazard Districts to promote the health and safety of occupants from the hazards of flooding, to preserve and protect streams and other water courses, to protect the community against detrimental use and development, and to minimize flood losses. This includes restricting or prohibiting uses and structures which are dangerous to health, safety or property because of water hazards or which cause damaging increases in flood heights or flood velocities and considering floodplain management in neighboring areas. Flood Hazard districts derive from federal and state law, and are very strict; they are a set of rules that must be followed, not a design review process.

SOURCES FOR THIS CHAPTER: [Boston Zoning Code](#)

LAND PARCEL AND ASSESSING DATA ANALYSIS

While it is difficult to determine exact zoning conformity for an entire area due to the complexity of existing zoning regulations, we can use available data to estimate zoning conformity based on three existing zoning requirements that are easy to measure based on available data: occupancy and land use, height, and floor area ratio (FAR). This analysis shows that the current zoning regulations do not align with the majority of existing buildings and uses in Cleary Square.

Notes: The calculations for this analysis are limited by the amount of property-level data that is available to the City of Boston Assessing Department. The following analytics are approximations based on that data and may not capture the occupancy and compliance of each unique parcel in the study area. In addition to assessing data, existing building height was also estimated using Lidar data.

Government-owned parcels were treated the same as private parcels in this analysis, even though most government entities are not required to comply with zoning regulations. This is to help the reader understand how existing zoning aligns with the current built form throughout the study area.

Land area that was assessed as ‘unusable’ was omitted from this analysis.



Map 8: Floor Area Ratio Conformity

An estimated **56% of parcels in the study area exceed the regulations for maximum floor area ratio** (see the glossary of this document for more information on floor area ratio). This means that the current zoning does not align with the built conditions for the majority of parcels, even when taking only a single zoning regulation into account.



Map 9: Height Conformity

An estimated **3% of parcels exceed the zoning regulations for maximum height**. This is unsurprising given the prevalence of single story buildings in the area. However, it is important to note that other regulations, primarily floor area ratio, will often prevent land owners from building up to the allowed zoning height, because even though a taller building is allowed, a larger building (in terms of floor area ratio), may not be. For example, the repair garage at 86 Walnut Street is conforming with the allowed height of 35 feet, but exceeds the allowed floor area ratio of 0.5. This is also a forbidden use (repair garage in a 2F district).



85 Walnut St



Map 10: Use Conformity

Using Land Use accessing data to approximate zoning uses, we can determine that approximately **27% of the parcels in the Cleary Square study area contain uses which are forbidden in their current zoning.** The most common forbidden uses are two- and three-family dwellings, which are forbidden (but currently exist) in the single-family and two-family zoning subdistricts. In the business districts, the most common forbidden uses are ground floor residential, followed by vehicular uses such as parking lots and repair garages.

There are also existing uses in the area that are conditionally allowed. This means the owners either received a conditional use permit from the Zoning Board of Appeal, or the use existed before current zoning was adopted. These uses include take-out restaurants, ancillary parking, and bars. For the purpose of this analysis, conditional uses were considered conforming, but it's important to note that these are different from allowed uses in that it would require approval from the Zoning Board of Appeal for any new conditional use to open.

Many parcels which contain non-conforming uses do conform with the height and FAR requirements. For example, 17% of parcels with two- and three-family houses which are forbidden due to their number of units conform with the floor area ratio and height requirements (while the other 83% are not conforming with one or both of these dimensional requirements). Zoning regulations layer on top of one another in complex ways like this. **Any parcel can be conforming with some aspects of zoning, while not conforming with another.**

SOURCES FOR THIS CHAPTER:

[Property Assessment FY2024](#)

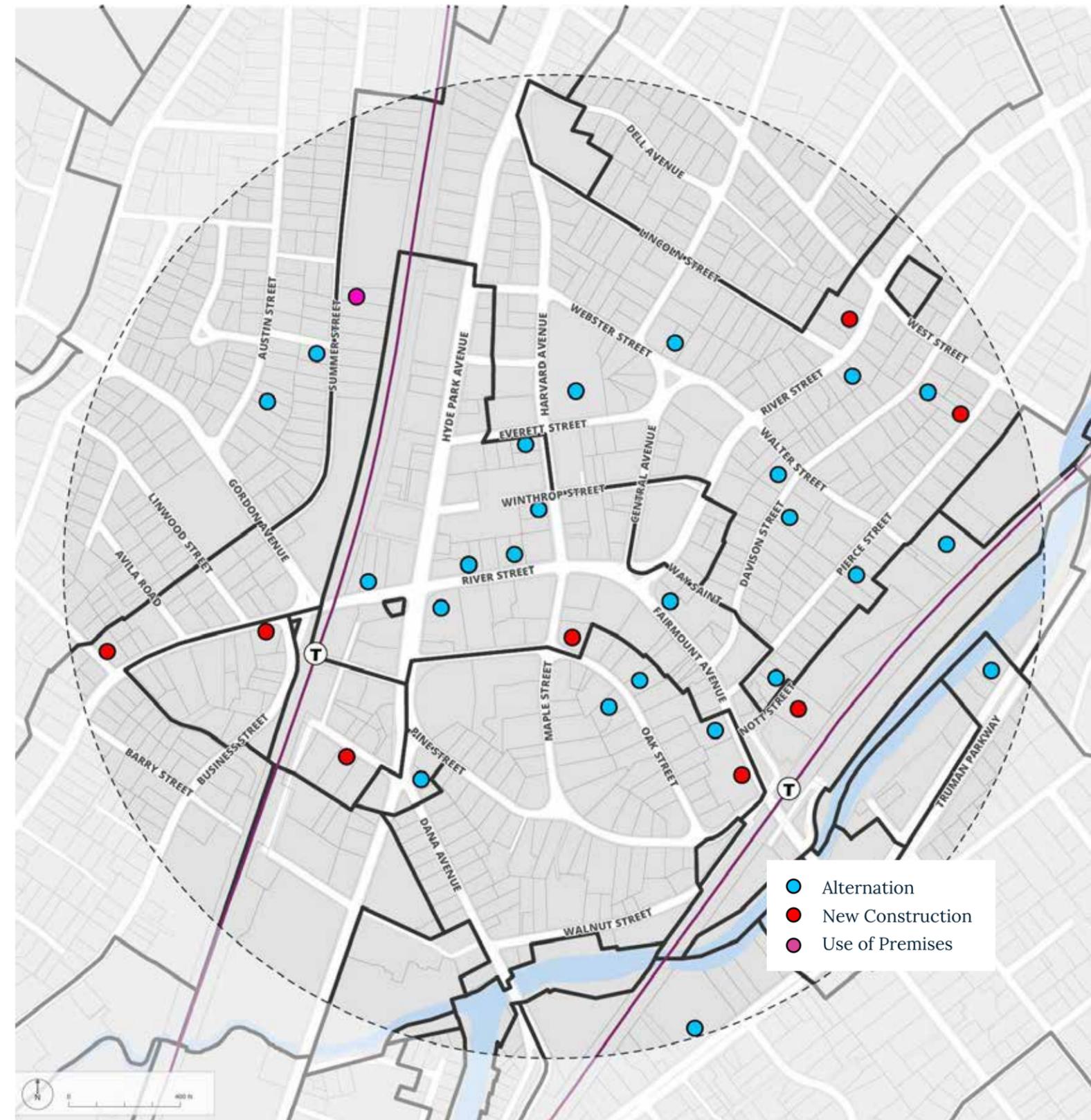
ZONING BOARD OF APPEAL

Between January 2013 and December 2022, **166 projects in the Cleary Square study area received zoning approval without the need for zoning relief.** This means that these projects proposed alterations or developments that adhere to the existing zoning regulations.

The vast majority of these projects were ‘alterations’ (95.6%). These alteration projects include interior renovations, the installation of commercial signage, changing a zoning use with no renovation, and small building additions.

There were **only nine new construction projects approved without zoning relief** in the study area over the ten-year period. Another **five new construction projects were approved or approved with provisos through the ZBA process.**

Notes: This analysis is based on both Zoning Board of Appeal data and building permit tracker data, which does not have accurate data for every single parcel or project proposed within this time period. Therefore, this analysis is an approximation based on available data. Additionally, Zoning is just one part of the approval process – this does not reflect what was ultimately approved or built and the end of the development review processes.



Map 11: Zoning Board of Appeal (ZBA) Projects in Cleary Square from 2013 to 2022

Between January 2013 and December 2022, 45 projects went through the ZBA process within the Cleary Square study area.

Notes: The following summarizes the 45 cases which occurred in Cleary Sq over the available time frame. Because this is a small geographic area, the sample size is small, and therefore generalizations based on this data should be limited.

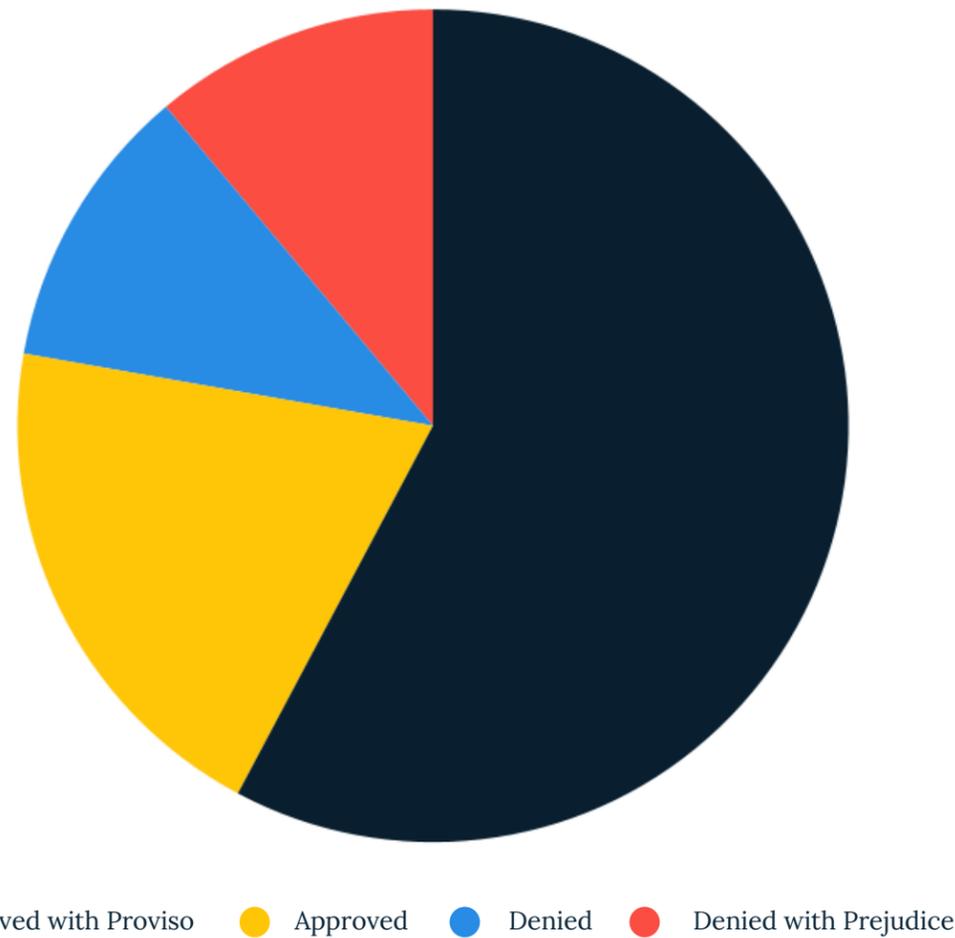


Figure 1: ZBA decisions for Zoning Board of Appeal (ZBA) Projects in Cleary Square from 2013 to 2022

Of the 45 cases that went through the ZBA process, **most were approved with proviso/s** (Figure 1). This means that most projects that go to the ZBA are deemed to be appropriate with some level of additional review or condition on approval.

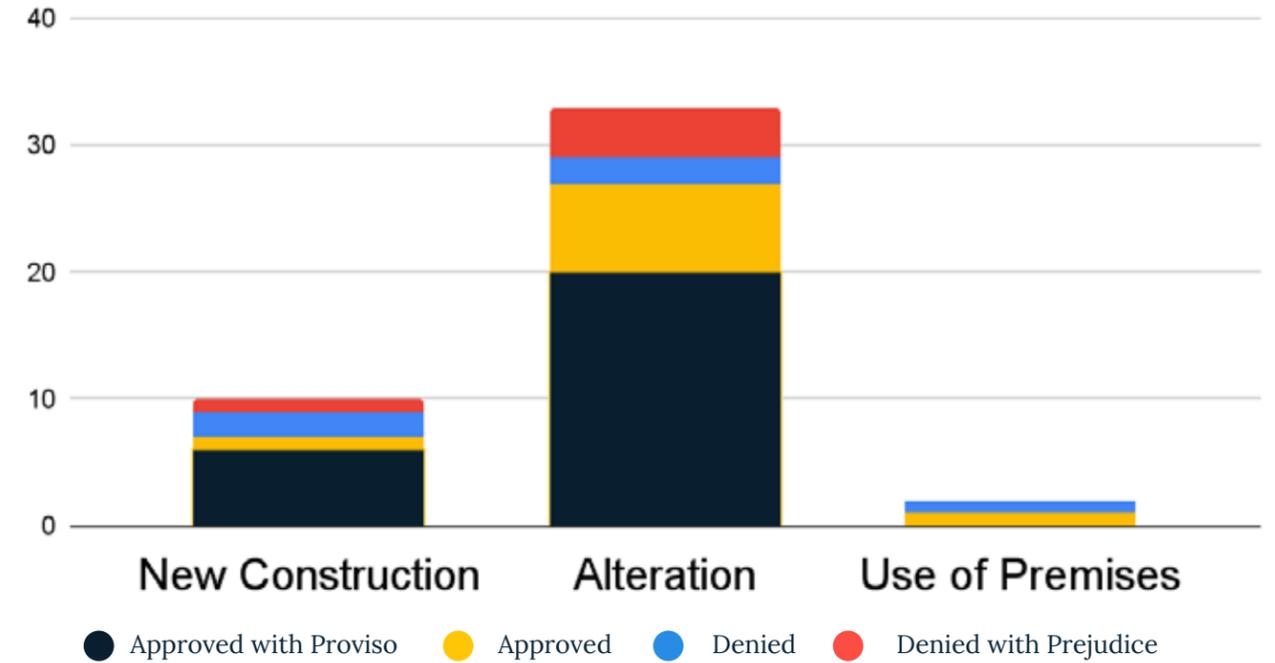
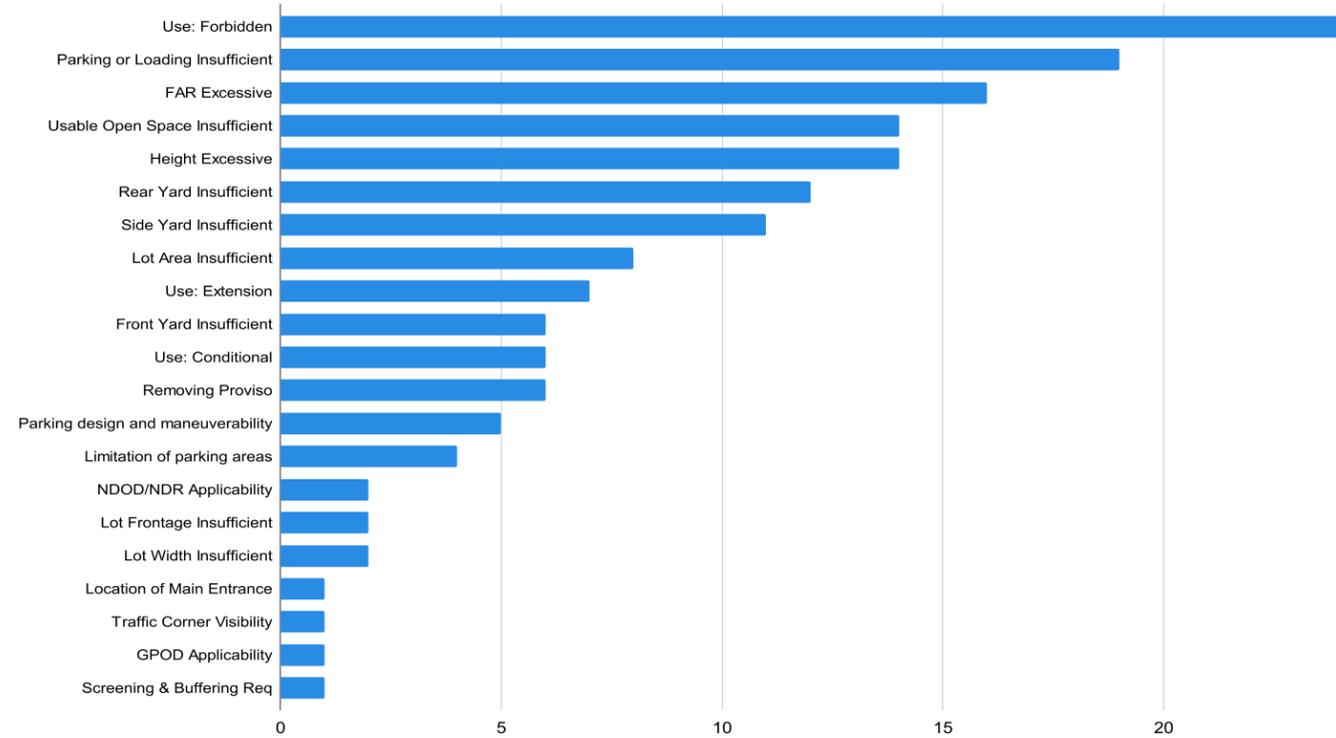


Figure 2: ZBA decisions for Zoning Board of Appeal (ZBA) Projects in Cleary Square from 2013 to 2022

In neighborhood business districts alone and across all zoning districts, **most projects that sought zoning relief were for alteration** (Figure 2). Alterations were also more likely to be approved and new construction was more likely to be denied.

This demonstrates that relatively **few new buildings were approved for construction through the ZBA process**, while **many building owners have to go through the ZBA process for more simple renovations**.



The most common violations overall were **forbidden use, insufficient parking or loading, and excessive FAR** (Figure 3).

When looking only at the projects within the neighborhood business subdistricts, the most common violations were **insufficient parking or loading, followed by forbidden and conditional uses, and removing provisos** (Figure 4).

Learn More

REMOVING PROVISOS: Take-out restaurants are currently a conditional use in all of Cleary Square’s business subdistricts. This means that a restaurant that wants to offer takeout has to go to the ZBA for a conditional use permit in order to operate. In the past, the ZBA placed a proviso on take-out restaurants which says that the conditional use permit only applies to the current applicant. This meant that if a take-out restaurant closes and a new one tries to open in the same location, the new restaurant would have to return to the ZBA to have this proviso removed, which can take several months.

Figure 3: Zoning Violations across all ZBA Projects in Cleary Square from 2013 to 2022

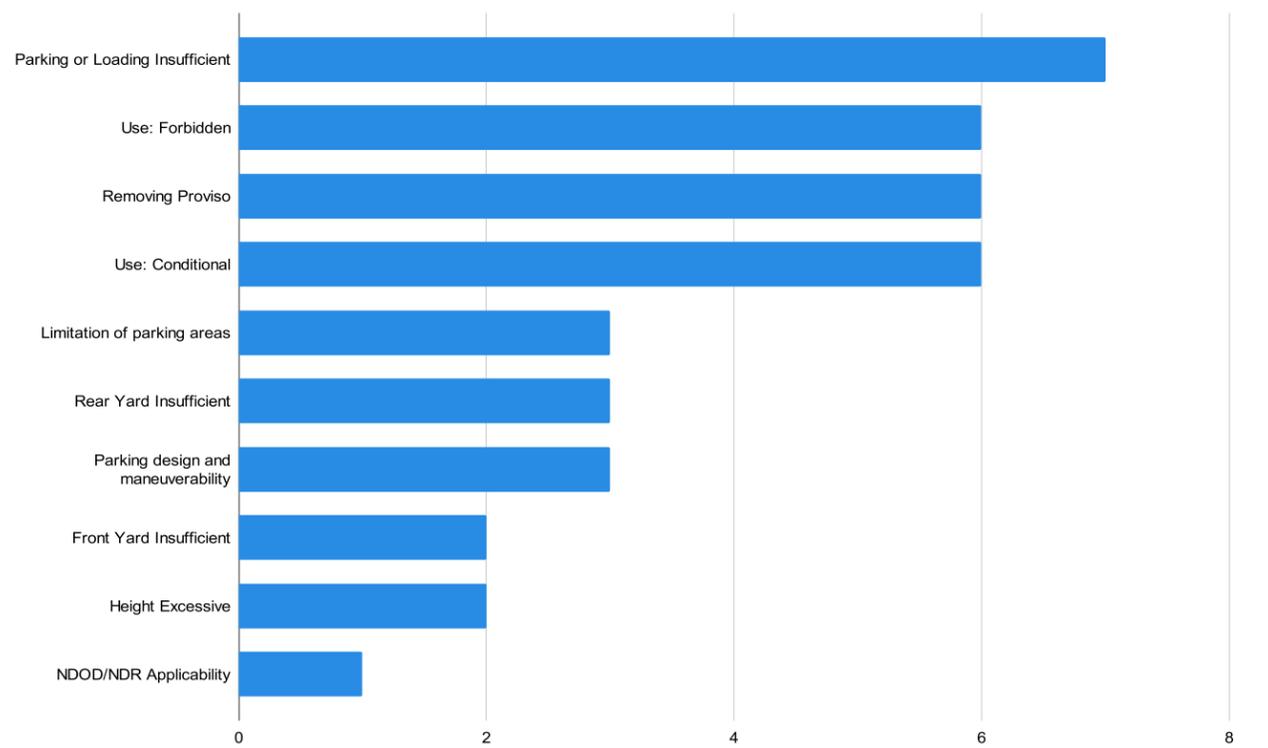


Figure 4: Zoning Violations across ZBA Projects from 2013 to 2022 in only Cleary Square Neighborhood Business Zoning Subdistricts

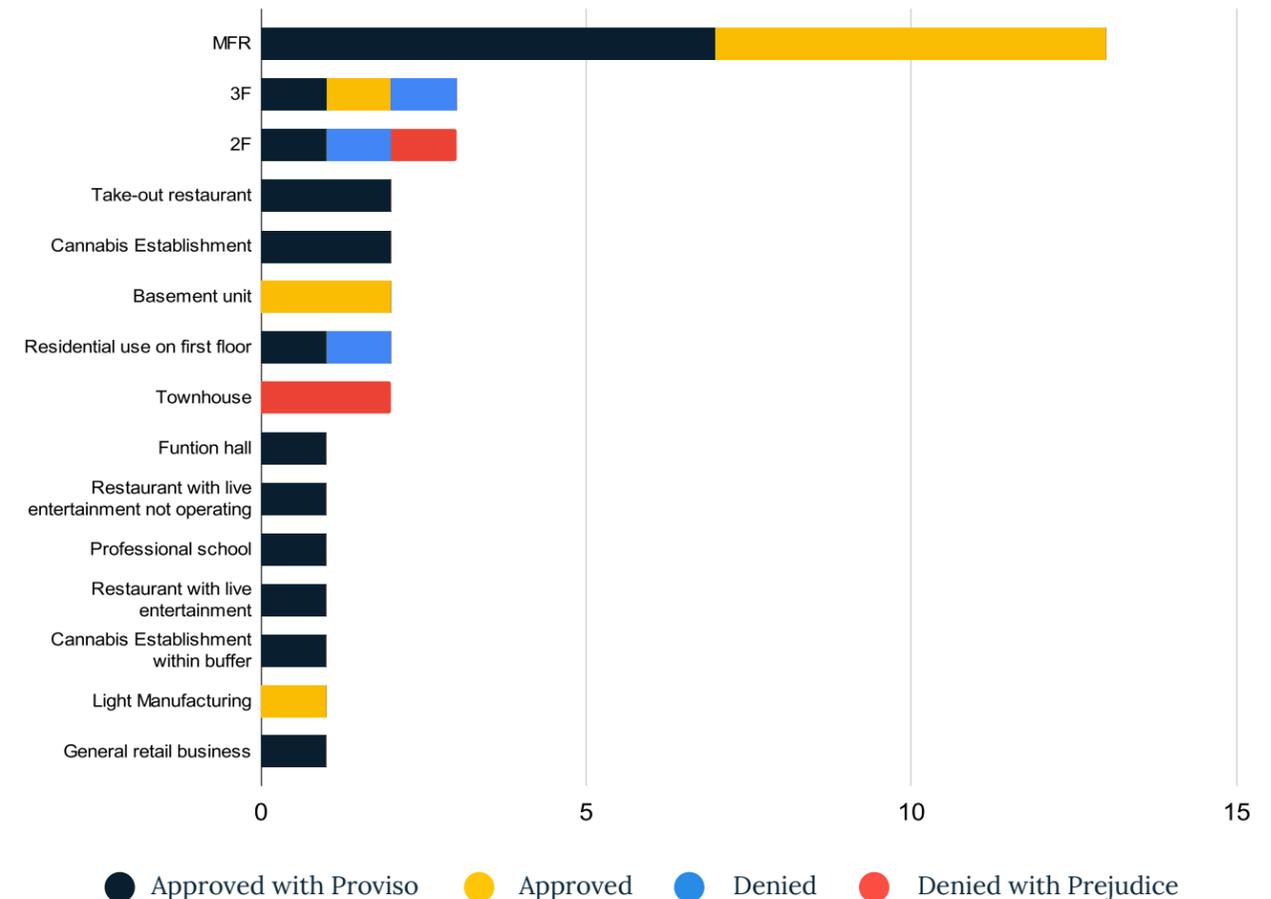


Figure 5: Use Violations for all ZBA Projects in Cleary Square from 2013 to 2022

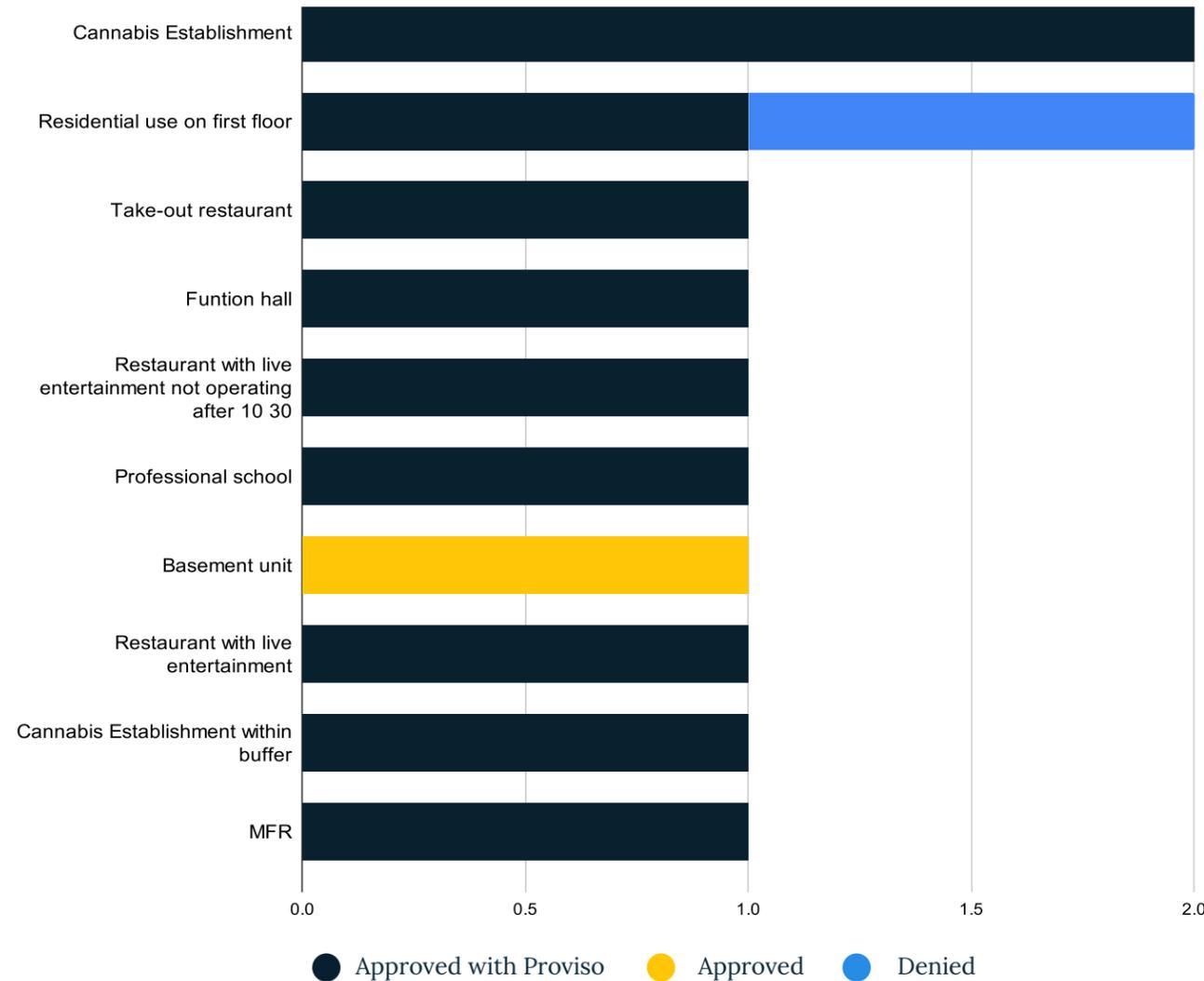


Figure 6: Use Violations for ZBA Projects from 2013 to 2022 in only Cleary Square Neighborhood Business Zoning Subdistricts

Within the entire study area, projects which were flagged by ISD as conditional or non-conforming uses were **most likely to be multifamily residential projects (31% of use violations)** (Figure 5). 100% of these projects were approved or approved with a proviso.

Looking at only the business districts, the most common uses to be flagged as conditional or non-conforming were **Cannabis Establishments (conditional), Take-out Restaurants (conditional), residential dwellings on the first story (forbidden), and basement dwelling units (forbidden)** (Figure 6).

CASE STUDY – CHANGING TO A CONDITIONAL USE



NextHome Unlimited Realty Solutions

In 2017, NextHome Unlimited Realty Solutions, a **real estate agency and real estate school**, opened in the vacant storefront at 10 Fairmount Avenue. The Inspectional Services Department (ISD) classified the business as a “Professional School,” which is **a conditional use in the NS-2 Subdistrict** where the property is located. Therefore, the business required a conditional use permit.

The ZBA **approved the project with a proviso** that the school be limited to 12 students. This case serves as an example of a project that went through the ZBA process with **no proposed exterior changes to the building (only a change in use)**.

CASE STUDY - EXISTING NON-CONFORMING USE



Home with Woodworking Workshop in Cleary Square

In 2019, a homeowner in Cleary Square went through the ZBA process in order to legalize a **woodworking workshop which had been in their home** for many years. ISD determined the workshop to be a “Light Manufacturing” use. Because **this use is forbidden in Cleary Square**, the homeowner needed a **variance** in order to legalize their **existing** workshop.

This case serves as an example of a project which had **an existing non-conformity** and was not proposing any change, as well as the difficulty of fitting certain uses (such as some home occupations) into the existing land use definitions.

SOURCES FOR THIS CHAPTER:

- [Zoning Board of Appeal \(ZBA\) Tracker](#)
- Infor Public Sector (internal permitting database)

ARTICLE 80

[Article 80 Development Review](#) is the City of Boston’s process for reviewing development projects that **build more than 20,000 sq ft or 15 dwelling units**. The guidelines for this review process are outlined within [Article 80 \(Development Review and Approval\) of the Boston Zoning Code](#) and the review process is coordinated by the [Planning Department’s Development Review Division](#).

As this section illustrates, the existing zoning in the area does not have regulations suitable for the scale of multifamily housing and mixed-use development projects.

The following section summarizes the analysis of **Article 80 projects in Cleary Square** that have gone through the Article 80 Development Review process between January 2014 and December 2023 (a 10-year period). **This analysis highlights the status, zoning conditions, land use proposals, and amenities proposed by these projects to identify unique and common traits about Article 80 projects within Cleary Square.**

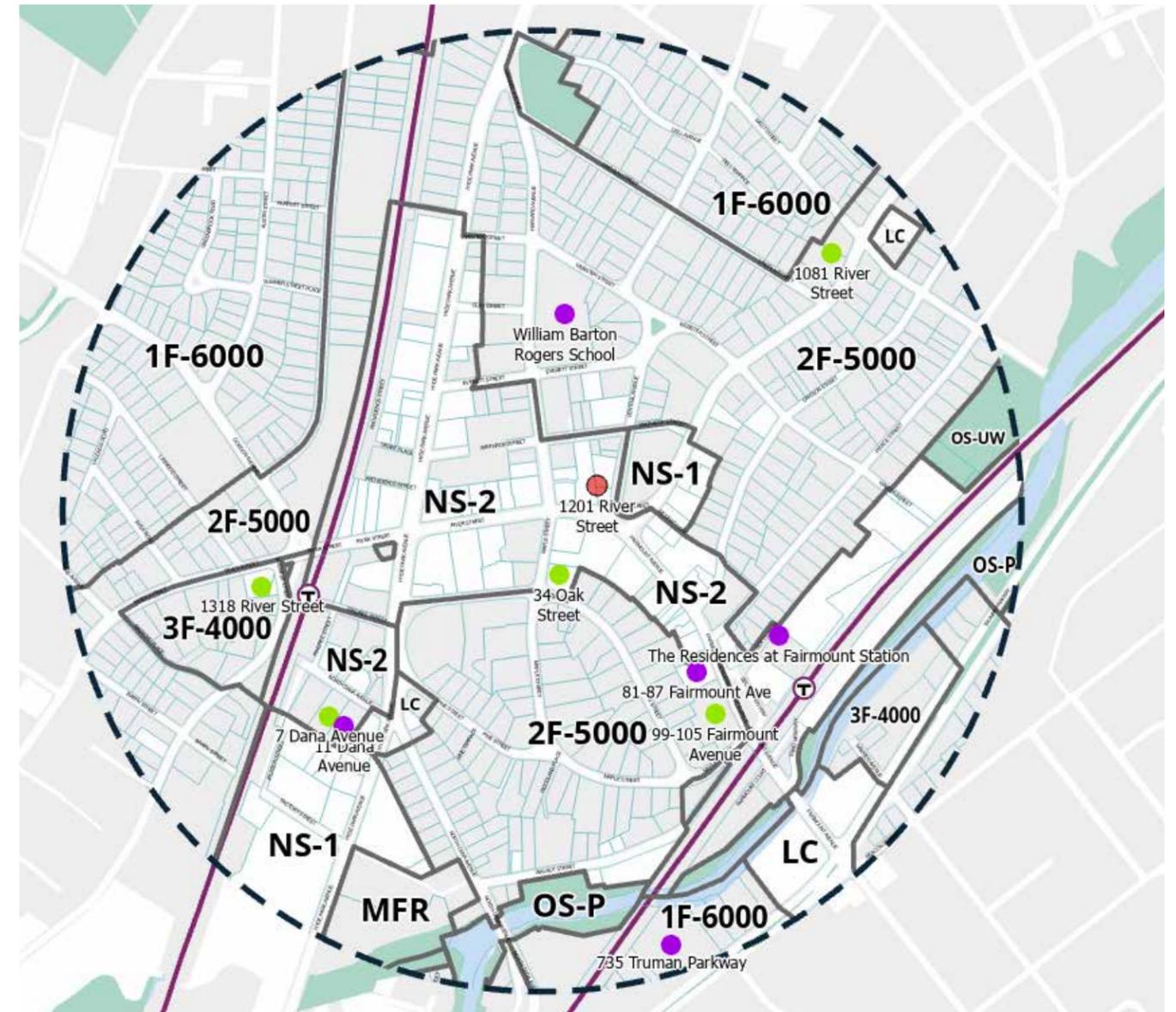
The analysis focuses on projects with the following project statuses:

- 1 BOARD APPROVED**
 Following extensive public review, Planning Department Development Review staff will recommend a project to the BPDA Board for approval. Board approval is required before a developer can secure building permits and break ground for construction.
- 2 UNDER CONSTRUCTION**
 The developer has begun development on their project and has acquired permits to build.
- 3 CONSTRUCTION COMPLETE**
 The project is officially developed and considered “complete.”

Notes: This analysis focuses on projects *after* they have received board approval to showcase existing and confirmed development projects that represent finalized projects that have gone through review processes with communities as well as design, zoning compliance, and environmental review processes.

Since the sample size is small for this analysis, generalizations based on this data should be limited and summaries are based solely on what information is available for this set of projects.

PROJECT LOCATIONS + ZONING CONTEXTS



● Board Approved ● Construction Complete ● Permitted / Under Construction

Map 11: Article 80 Project Locations and Project Status for projects from 2014 to 2023 in Cleary Square

There were ten Article 80 projects approved by the BPDA Board and/or built within Cleary Square between January 2014 and December 2023. **All ten projects include multifamily housing.** They vary in terms of their building scale as well as their uses.

PROJECT PROFILES

These projects are in order of when they were approved for development by the BPDA Board from oldest to most recent.

THE RESIDENCES AT FAIRMOUNT STATION

Status: Construction Complete – BPDA Board-approved in September 2014



Address	15 2nd New Way, Hyde Park, MA 02136		
Project Length (from application to COMPLETED CONSTRUCTION)	Five (5) Years – Nov 2013 to Nov 2018		
Zoning Subdistrict:	NS-2	Project Gross Floor Area:	33,388 sq ft
Parcel Size:	19,925 sq ft (combined parcels)		
Number of Residential Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27 • Three studios, three one-bedroom units, 16 two-bedroom units, and five three bedroom units • Including 21 income-restricted units affordable to households with incomes at or below 60% AMI and three income-restricted units at or below 30% AMI through the Inclusionary Development Policy 		
Number of Parking Spaces	27		
Notable Features:	Child play space and open green space		
Previous Land Use(s):	Storage, Repair Garage, General Office		
Proposed/Built Land Use(s):	Multifamily Dwelling		
Zoning Relief Needed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use: Forbidden – Multifamily Dwelling Use on First Floor • Off-Street Parking Design and Maneuverability 		

735 TRUMAN APARTMENTS

Status: Construction Complete – BPDA Board-approved in May 2017



Address	735 Truman Pkwy, Hyde Park, MA 02136		
Project Length (from application to COMPLETED CONSTRUCTION)	2.5 Years – April 2017 to Oct 2019		
Zoning Subdistrict:	1F-6000	Project Gross Floor Area:	49,805 sq ft
Parcel Size:	55,329 sq ft		
Number of Residential Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 46 • Eight studios, 26 one-bedroom units, and 12 two-bedroom units • Including six income-restricted units affordable to households with incomes at or below 70% AMI through the Inclusionary Development Policy 		
Number of Parking Spaces	62, including two shared parking spaces		
Notable Features:	Adaptive reuse of an existing building		
Previous Land Use(s):	Nursing Home		
Proposed/Built Land Use(s):	Multifamily Dwelling		
Zoning Relief Needed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floor Area Ratio (FAR) Excessive • Greenbelt Protection Overlay District (GPOD) – this project required review by the Boston Parks Commission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ GPODs are explained in the “Existing Zoning Subdistricts and Overlays” section of this report. • Off-Street Parking Insufficient • Usable Open Space Insufficient • Use: Forbidden – Multifamily Residential (MFR) 		

Learn More:

SHARED PARKING: This project includes **shared parking spaces**, which are parking spaces for the occupants, employees, customers, students, and visitors of one or more lawful uses on other lots which would be lawful accessory parking if it were for only the main use of the lot. This type of parking increases parking supply and flexibility within an area by making spaces available to a wider set of users than typical private parking.

11 DANA AVENUE

Status: Construction Complete – BPDA Board-approved in March 2019



Address	11 Dana Ave, Hyde Park, MA 02136		
Project Length (from application to COMPLETED CONSTRUCTION)	Two Years and Seven Months – Jan 2019 to Aug 2022		
Zoning Subdistrict:	NS-2	Project Gross Floor Area:	28,643 sq ft
Parcel Size:	14,322 sq ft		
Number of Residential Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24 • All two-bedroom units 		
Number of Parking Spaces	24, plus 39 bike parking spaces		
Previous Land Use(s):	Multifamily Dwelling (Four-unit building)		
Proposed/Built Land Use(s):	Multifamily Dwelling, General Office		
NO Zoning Relief Needed			

Notes: 11 Dana Avenue is the only Article 80 project in Cleary Square that was not required to provide income-restricted residential units because the **Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP)** did not apply to it. This is because that version of IDP (dated December 2015) only applied to developments that required zoning relief (a variance or conditional use permit). This project was built without the need for zoning relief and was therefore not required to provide income-restricted units.

Learn More

INCLUSIONARY ZONING: The [new Article 79 \(Inclusionary Zoning\)](#) that was adopted into the Boston Zoning Code on November 8, 2023 has now incorporated the City’s Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP) within zoning and updated the policy to apply to all projects with seven or more units, including projects that do not require zoning relief.

Article 79 took effect on October 1, 2024. Now all newly proposed projects with 7 or more dwelling units have to follow the regulations of Inclusionary Zoning and provide income-restricted units or contribute to the Inclusionary Development Fund.

THE LOGAN AT FAIRMOUNT

Status: Board Approved – approved in November 2019



Address	99-105 Fairmount Ave, Hyde Park, MA 02136		
Project Length (from application to BOARD APPROVAL):	Two Months – Sept 2019 to Nov 2019		
Zoning Subdistrict:	2F-5000	Project Gross Floor Area:	49,950 sq ft
Parcel Size:	29,326 sq ft		
Number of Residential Units:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 47 • One studio, 29 one-bedroom units, and 17 two-bedroom units • Including six income-restricted units affordable to households with incomes at or below 70% AMI through the Inclusionary Development Policy 		
Number of Parking Spaces:	33, plus 47 bike parking spaces		
Notable Features:	Two ground-floor commercial retail spaces		
Previous Land Use(s):	Four Two-Family Dwellings		
Proposed/Built Land Use(s):	Multifamily Dwelling, Retail		
Zoning Relief Needed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floor Area Ratio (FAR) Excessive • Height Excessive (stories) • Height Excessive (feet) • Off-Street Parking Insufficient • Side Yard Insufficient • Usable Open Space Insufficient • Use: Forbidden – Multifamily Residential (MFR) • Use: Forbidden – General Retail Business 		

THE PRYDE (FORMER WILLIAM BARTON ROGERS SCHOOL)

Status: Construction Complete – BPDA Board-approved in August 2020



Address	15 Everett St, Hyde Park, MA 02136 / 55-59 Harvard Ave, Boston, MA 02136		
Project Length (from application to BUILDING PERMITS GRANTED)	One Year and Two Months – Nov 2019 to April 2022		
Zoning Subdistrict:	2F-5000	Project Gross Floor Area:	93,156 sq ft
Parcel Size:	73,586 sq ft		
Number of Residential Units:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 74 • 27 studios, 3 one-bedroom units, and nine two-bedroom units • All age-restricted housing and income-restricted units designed to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ seniors: 11 income-restricted units affordable to households with incomes at or below 30% AMI, seven units for incomes at or below 50% AMI, 32 units for incomes at or below 60% AMI, eight (8) units for incomes at or below 80% AMI, and 16 units for incomes at or below 100% AMI 		
Number of Parking Spaces:	Five		
Notable Features:	Adaptive reuse of an existing building; indoor public community spaces and publicly accessible courtyard		
Previous Land Use(s):	School		
Proposed/Built Land Use(s):	Multifamily Dwelling, Community Uses		
Zoning Relief Needed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floor Area Ratio (FAR) Excessive • Off-Street Parking Insufficient • Usable Open Space Insufficient • Use: Forbidden – Multifamily Residential (MFR) 		

Notes: The Pryde is the only Article 80 Large Project within Cleary Square from this sample of projects and was required to comply with Article 80 Large Project Review because the existing school building had a gross floor area above 50,000 sq ft.

1318 RIVER STREET (FORMER JUNIOR'S AUTOMOTIVE)

Status: Board Approved – approved in December 2021



Address	1318 River St, Hyde Park, MA 02136		
Project Length (from application to BOARD APPROVAL)	One Year and Three Months – Sept 2020 to Dec 2021		
Zoning Subdistrict:	3F-4000	Project Gross Floor Area:	29,892 sq ft
Parcel Size:	10,732 sq ft (combined parcels)		
Number of Residential Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 • Nine studios, 12 one-bedroom units, and nine two-bedroom units • Including four income-restricted units affordable to households with incomes at or below 70% AMI through the Inclusionary Development Policy 		
Number of Parking Spaces	30 including stacked parking spaces, plus 38 bike parking spaces		
Notable Features:	Ground-floor commercial retail space		
Previous Land Use(s):	Repair Garage		
Proposed/Built Land Use(s):	Multifamily Dwelling, Retail		
Zoning Relief Needed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floor Area Ratio (FAR) Excessive • Height Excessive (stories) • Height Excessive (feet) • Off-Street Parking Design and Maneuverability – Stacked Parking • Off-Street Parking Insufficient • Off-Street Loading Insufficient • Conformity with Existing Building Alignment • Rear Yard Insufficient • Side Yard Insufficient • Traffic Corner Visibility • Usable Open Space Insufficient • Use: Forbidden – Multifamily Residential (MFR) • Use: Forbidden – Take-out Restaurant (Small) 		

Learn More:

STACKED PARKING: This project includes stacked parking spaces, which are parking spaces on mechanical lift systems that allow for vehicles to be parked on platforms and arranged on top of each other, thus changing how much surface space all the cars in those spaces take up.

B'NAI B'RITH SENIOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Status: Permitted / Under Construction – BPDA Board-approved in January 2022



Address	1201 River St, Hyde Park, MA 02136		
Project Length (from application to BUILDING PERMITS GRANTED):	Two Years and Two Months – Nov 2021 to Jan 2024		
Zoning Subdistrict:	NS-2	Project Gross Floor Area:	49,900 sq ft
Parcel Size:	27,427 sq ft (combined parcels)		
Number of Residential Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 63 • All one-bedroom units • All age-restricted housing and income-restricted units for seniors: 16 income-restricted units affordable to households with incomes at or below 30% AMI, four units for incomes at or below 50% AMI, and 43 units for incomes at or below 60% AMI 		
Number of Parking Spaces	40, plus 32 bike parking spaces		
Notable Features:	Ground-floor commercial retail space; all-electric, Passive House Certified building		
Previous or Current Land Use(s):	Two Retail buildings and a Repair Garage		
Proposed/Built Land Use(s):	Multifamily Dwelling		
NO Zoning Relief Needed			

34 OAK STREET (FORMER LAUGHLIN NICHOLS PENNACCHIO FUNERAL HOME)

Status: Board Approved – approved in January 2022; denied by ZBA



Notes: Although this project was approved by the BPDA Board, it was denied by the ZBA in August 2022 and the proponent did not move forward with proposing the same project. The proponent did propose a new project that is currently being constructed: a fourteen (14) unit multifamily residential development. That new project did not meet the threshold to require Article 80 Development Review.

Address	34 Oak St, Hyde Park, MA 02136		
Project Length (from application to BOARD APPROVAL):	Six Months – July 2021 to Jan 2022		
Zoning Subdistrict:	NS-2	Project Gross Floor Area:	12,721 sq ft
Parcel Size:	9,747 sq ft		
Number of Residential Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 • Including three income-restricted units affordable to households with incomes at or below 70% AMI and one income-restricted unit at or below 100% AMI through the Inclusionary Development Policy 		
Number of Parking Spaces	10, plus 24 bike parking spaces		
Previous or Current Land Use(s):	Funeral Home		
Proposed/Built Land Use(s):	Multifamily Dwelling		
Zoning Relief Needed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conformity with Existing Building Alignment • Off-Street Parking Insufficient • Off-Street Loading Insufficient • Use: Forbidden – Multifamily Dwelling Use on First Floor 		

7 DANA AVENUE

Status: Board Approved – approved in June 2022



Address	7 Dana Ave, Hyde Park, MA 02136		
Project Length (from application to BOARD APPROVAL)	Eight Months – Oct 2021 to June 2022		
Zoning Subdistrict:	NS-2	Project Gross Floor Area:	22,166 sq ft
Parcel Size:	13,633 sq ft		
Number of Residential Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27 • 18 one-bedroom units and nine two-bedroom units • Including five income-restricted units affordable to households with incomes at or below 70% AMI through the Inclusionary Development Policy 		
Number of Parking Spaces	27 stacked parking spaces, plus 34 bike parking spaces		
Previous or Current Land Use(s):	Multifamily Dwelling (Four-unit building)		
Proposed/Built Land Use(s):	Multifamily Dwelling		
Zoning Relief Needed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off-Street Parking Design and Maneuverability – Stacked Parking 		

1081 RIVER STREET

Status: Board Approved – approved in August 2023



Address	1081 River St, Hyde Park, MA 02136		
Project Length (from application to BOARD APPROVAL)	Five Months – March 2023 to August 2023		
Zoning Subdistrict:	2F-5000	Project Gross Floor Area:	27,854 sq ft
Parcel Size:	15,043 sq ft		
Number of Residential Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28 • Nine studios, three one-bedroom units, 13 two-bedroom units, and three three-bedroom units • Including six income-restricted units affordable to households with incomes between 70% and 100% AMI through the Inclusionary Development Policy 		
Number of Parking Spaces	Fifteen (15)		
Notable Features:	Ground-level community patio		
Previous or Current Land Use(s):	Two-Family Dwelling		
Proposed/Built Land Use(s):	Multifamily Dwelling		
Zoning Relief Needed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floor Area Ratio (FAR) Excessive • Front Yard Insufficient • Height Excessive (stories) • Height Excessive (feet) • Off-Street Parking Insufficient • Rear Yard Insufficient • Side Yard Insufficient • Usable Open Space Insufficient • Use: Forbidden – Multifamily Residential (MFR) • Use: Forbidden – Maximum Number of Allowed Dwelling Units on a Lot 		

PROJECTS SUMMARY

ZONING CONDITIONS AND ZONING RELIEF

Half (five) of these projects were proposed in a neighborhood business zoning district, specifically the NS-2 (Neighborhood Shopping) Subdistrict, while the other half (five) were spread across the 1F-6000, 2F-6000 and 3F-4000 residential subdistricts. The projects were also spread geographically throughout the study area.

Article 80 projects are **still required to appeal for a variance or conditional use permit from the Zoning Board of Appeal (ZBA)** if the development project proposal includes a zoning violation or a use that requires a conditional use permit in the given zoning district. Of the ten Article 80 projects, **eight were required to go through the ZBA process to appeal for zoning relief**. One project was approved by the ZBA, six projects were approved with provisos, and one was denied.

The two projects that did not require zoning relief from the ZBA (**11 Dana Avenue** and **B'nai B'rith Senior Housing Development**), were in the NS-2 subdistrict, which, in general, has the least restrictive zoning regulations.

ARTICLE 80 ZBA PROJECT TYPES

Of the eight projects that required zoning relief, **six were new construction projects** and the remaining two projects – **The Pryde (William Barton Rogers School)** and **735 Truman Apartments** – were alterations.

Both The Pryde and 735 Truman Apartments are also examples of **adaptive reuse projects** that convert existing buildings into residential units while maintaining some of the space or amenities of that site, like the building's exterior or large spaces for community use. The Pryde was a school building originally built in 1899 (prior to the 1924 Zoning Law) while 735 Truman Apartments was a nursing home built in 1968 (after the 1962 Zoning Code update). These adaptive reuse projects align with priorities set in the Hyde Park Strategic Plan related to the sensitive rehabilitation of historic and existing buildings.

COMMON LAND USE VIOLATIONS

As noted above, all ten projects included multifamily housing. **For half of the projects, multifamily housing was a forbidden use in the given subdistrict and required zoning relief**. These were all for projects in the existing 1F-6000, 2F-6000 and 3F-4000 residential subdistricts.

Other forbidden use violations that were triggered throughout these projects include **“General Retail Business,” “Take-out Restaurant,” and Multifamily Dwelling use specifically on the first floor**. The General Retail Business and Take-out Restaurant restrictions do not align with the priorities set in the Hyde Park Strategic Plan (as mentioned above) because they restrict opportunities for commercial development that would meet local needs and bring visitors to Cleary Square. Cleary Square has many ground-floor retail and restaurant spaces, so these uses are more contextually appropriate than the zoning currently allows.

Two projects were proposed in the NS-2 subdistrict that included a **forbidden multifamily dwelling use on the first floor** (34 Oak Street and The Residences at Fairmount Station). This presents a question on where it seems appropriate in different parts of the Square for ground-floor housing to be allowed, conditional, or forbidden moving forward, especially if it impacts the previously mentioned goal of promoting an active, commercial area.

COMMON DIMENSIONAL REGULATION VIOLATIONS

The most common dimensional regulation violations across these projects were **excessive FAR, insufficient parking spaces per unit or square foot, and insufficient usable open space per dwelling unit**.

All of these violations showed up in six projects; five of those projects were in residential subdistricts and only one was in a neighborhood business (NS-2) subdistrict. This indicates that **the residential subdistricts have dimensional barriers to the development of housing that can physically accommodate multifamily residential uses at this scale**.

OFF-STREET PARKING VIOLATIONS

All ten projects proposed off-street parking spaces and six of those projects proposed bike parking spaces. These include compact, stacked, shared, and short-term visitor parking spaces. In many instances, the Planning Department asked the proponents of these projects to reduce the number of parking spaces being proposed.

The Planning Department and Boston Transportation Department's requests for reduction of parking during the review period are aligned with citywide priorities: climate goals to reduce dependency on private vehicles and related emissions, standards set by the Boston Transportation Department around maximum parking ratios based on an area's strength of mobility options, and site analysis by the Planning Department's transportation planners with attention to proximity to an MBTA station.

For projects in the NS-2 neighborhood business subdistrict, **three projects required zoning relief for an off-street parking violation**, either for the parking design, maneuverability, and/or an insufficient number of parking and loading spaces. In particular, the off-street parking space requirements within the NS-2 district seem to conflict with the priorities mentioned in the Hyde Park Strategic Plan to encourage development of a more pedestrian-friendly environment and encourage moderate density near the commuter rail station.

The board memos for these projects highlight that they advance the City's **transit-oriented development goals to bring housing near transit**; this goal is also repeated in the Hyde Park Strategic Plan. Most of the memos emphasized the proximity of projects within walking distance of existing train and bus routes. These include the Hyde Park MBTA Commuter Rail Station, the Fairmount MBTA Commuter Rail Station, and several bus lines (24, 32, 33, 39, 40, and 50).

PROJECT PROGRAM AND AMENITY TRENDS

All ten projects are multifamily residential projects with 20 or more residential units; together they total 386 units in the area.

Nine projects include income-restricted units affordable to households between 30% and 100% AMI, including units required through the Inclusionary Development

Policy (IDP). These projects proposed **192 units in total of income-restricted housing, almost 50% of the total number of proposed units.**

Two of the projects, **The Pryde** (15 Everett St, Hyde Park, MA 02136) and the **B'nai B'rith Housing Development** (1201 River St, Hyde Park, MA 02136), have proposed **100% affordable housing for seniors** which supports opportunities for seniors to age in their community within Cleary Square.

These projects align with the **goals of the Hyde Park Strategic Plan** in encouraging **moderate density and transit-oriented development** as well as **encouraging mixed-use development** within the Square, though **both use and dimensional regulations served as regulatory barriers** in their proposal processes.

Three projects include ground-floor commercial space, one proposed in the neighborhood business NS-2 subdistrict and two proposed in the 2F-5000 and 3F-4000 residential zoning districts. The low number of ground-floor commercial spaces proposed in these projects does indicate **a potential trend towards developers not proposing those uses in their buildings**, which is not supportive of the goals in strengthening this commercial activity of this district.

As seen in the **various project length periods**, it is difficult to establish a trend for project length with this sample because each project varies in their zoning, permitting and construction needs that can result in faster or slower approvals and overall development.

SOURCES FOR THIS CHAPTER:

- [BPDA Development Projects and Plans Database](#)
- [BPDA Board Memos](#)
- [Article 80 Records Library](#)
- [Zoning Board of Appeal \(ZBA\) Tracker](#)

STAY INVOLVED

How to Think about Zoning in Your Area!

As stated, this report is meant to help **start** conversations around zoning in your area and how updates to zoning can work well with other policies and programs to meet your community's needs! Thinking about zoning when you're going through your day doesn't require all of this data though, and we encourage you to take some of these steps to think about and talk about zoning and development in your area:

Look at the WHOLE building!

If there's a building that you think is interesting, take some time to think about all parts of it. How much of the lot does it cover and how does it compare to other nearby buildings? How big does the lot that it's on look and is there space to gather on the lot? What kind of activities are happening in the building and how active is it with people going in and out?

When you can look at a building for more than just one dimension like height or front yard space, you can think more about the type of building forms and uses that you would want to see in your area – this ultimately relates back to what zoning regulations like land uses and dimensional regulations can impact.



Take a second look at where you go the most in the area and WHY!

Do you spend a lot of time at nearby stores or near your house? Are there spaces for you to meet up with people during different seasons? Who do you see often in the area in some of the local businesses and who do you not see? What about the look, feel and resources around you makes that area one that you visit often?

All of these questions and ones like them can get you and your neighbors thinking about what you want to uplift in the neighborhood and what feels missing for you or other members of your community.





Think BACK and think AHEAD!

Whether you are a newer resident or have been in the area for years, think about places you have lived and visited in the past and try to name what it seemed like some priorities were for the way those areas were built and felt for those residents at the time. Did you have a role in helping set those priorities?

Think about where you live now and imagine a generation ahead of you. What priorities would you set today for what the neighborhood includes and how it feels? When you can imagine past and future priorities, then you can think about zoning as a living document that adjusts to the needs and vision of people in the present while setting up building blocks for visions of the future.

HOW TO FIND AND READ EXISTING ZONING REGULATIONS

This section is meant to be a high-level reference guide to see the zoning regulations in the neighborhood business zoning subdistricts **at a glance**. This **does not** serve as a replacement for the Boston Zoning Code, so please make sure to refer to the official Boston Zoning Code for detailed regulations as well as specific standards and details that are not outlined in this quick reference guide.

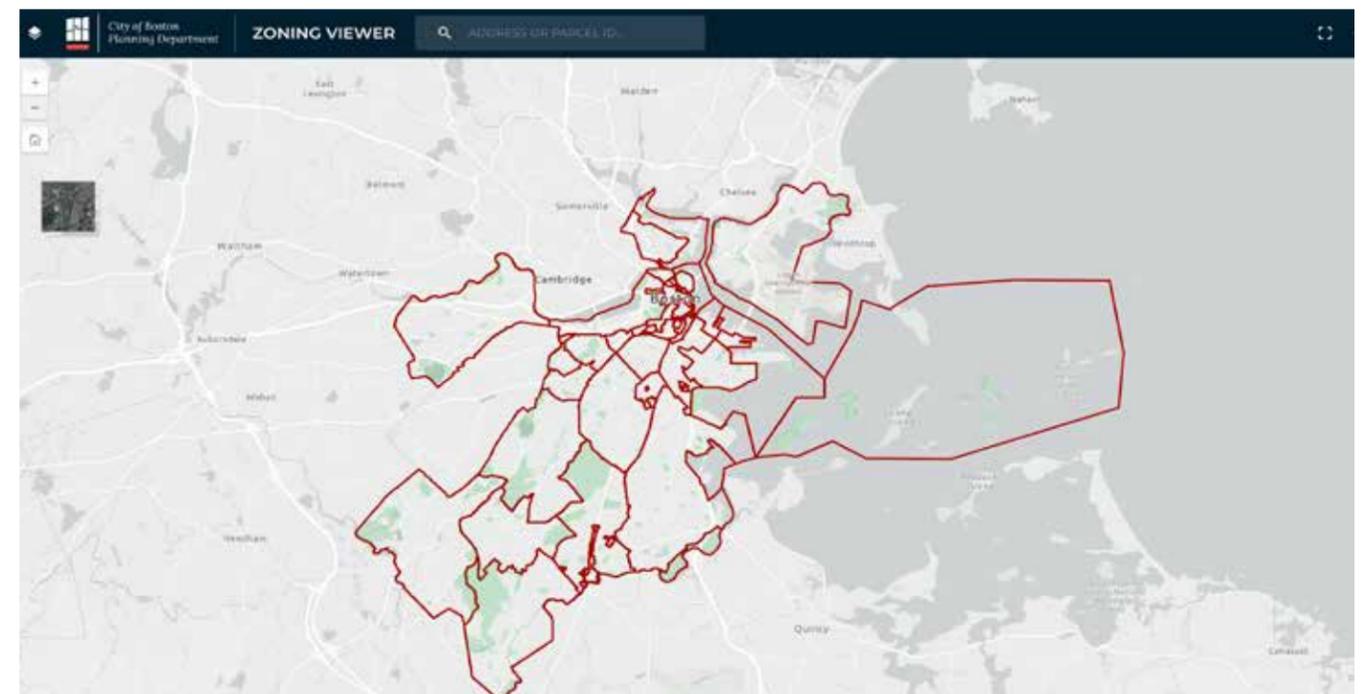
When looking for where specific zoning district regulations and where they are mapped within your area, you can use the following tools:

ZONING VIEWER:

An interactive online map where you can search for specific addresses and view zoning information about individual properties and larger areas.

WEBSITE:

maps.bostonplans.org/zoningviewer/



BOSTON ZONING CODE ON MUNICODE:

The legal and regulatory text document that holds Boston’s zoning rules.

WEBSITE:

library.municode.com/ma/boston/codes/redevelopment_authority

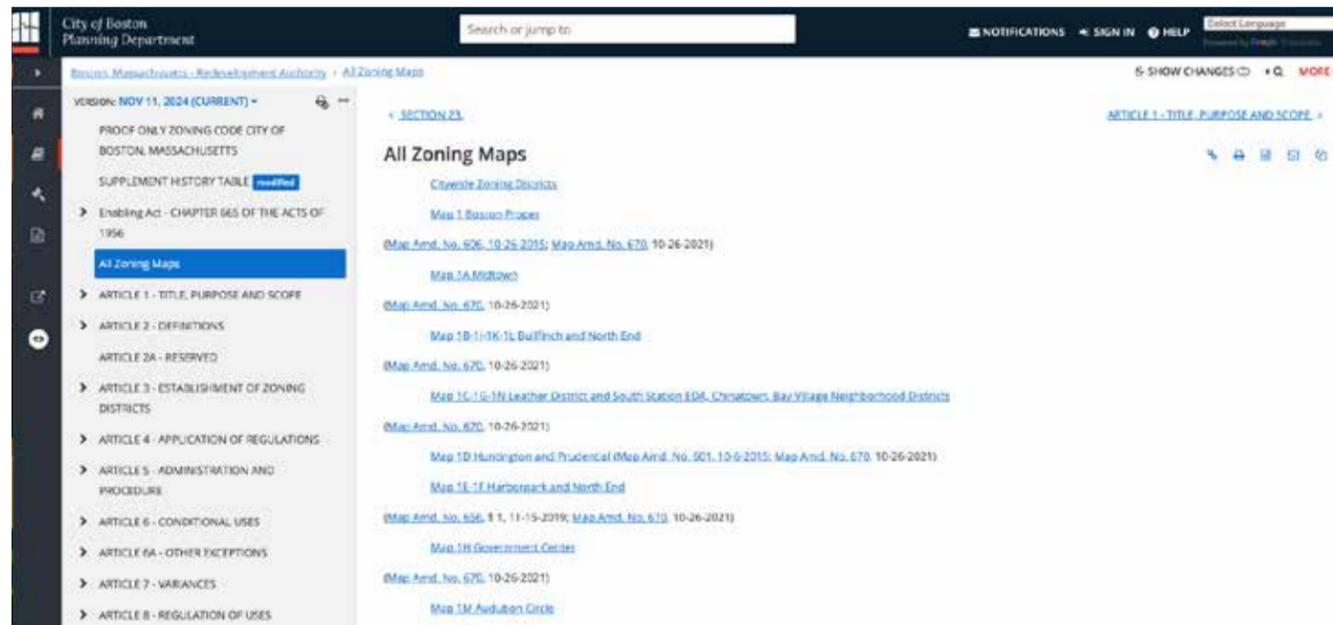
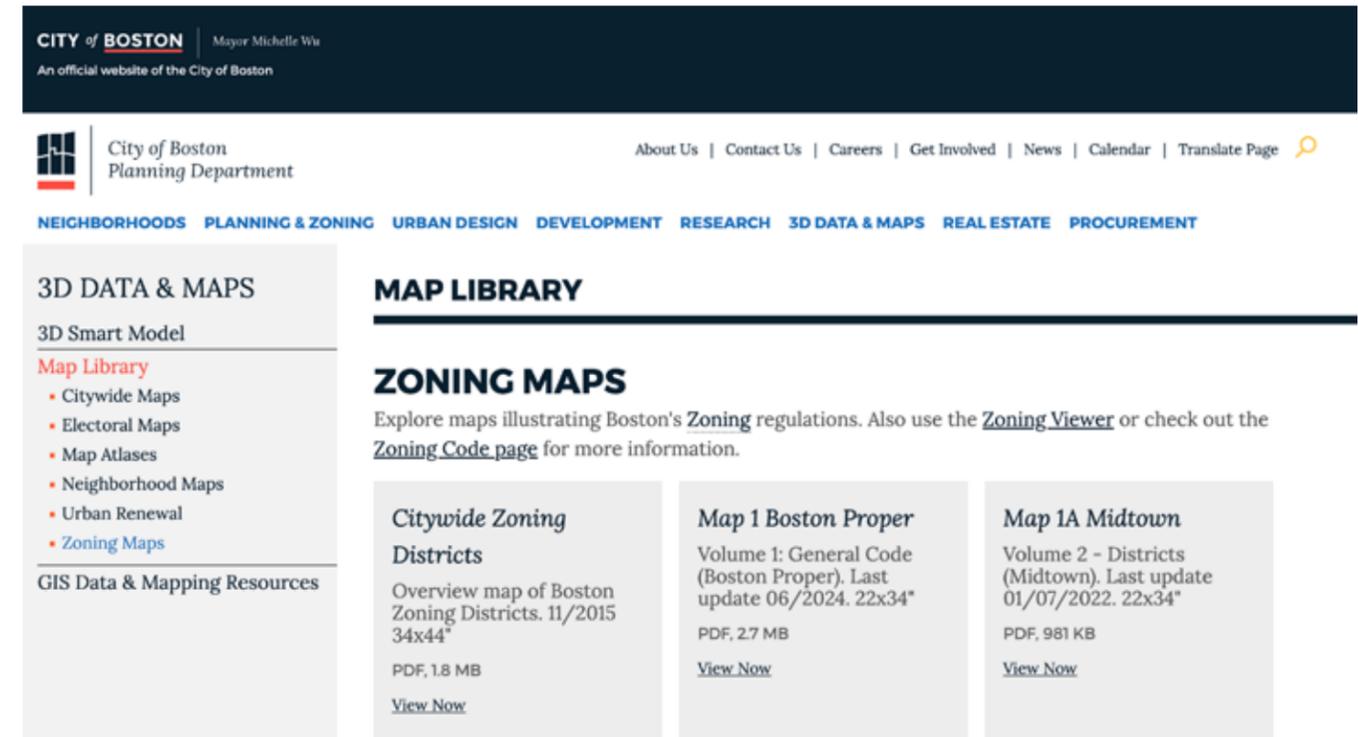
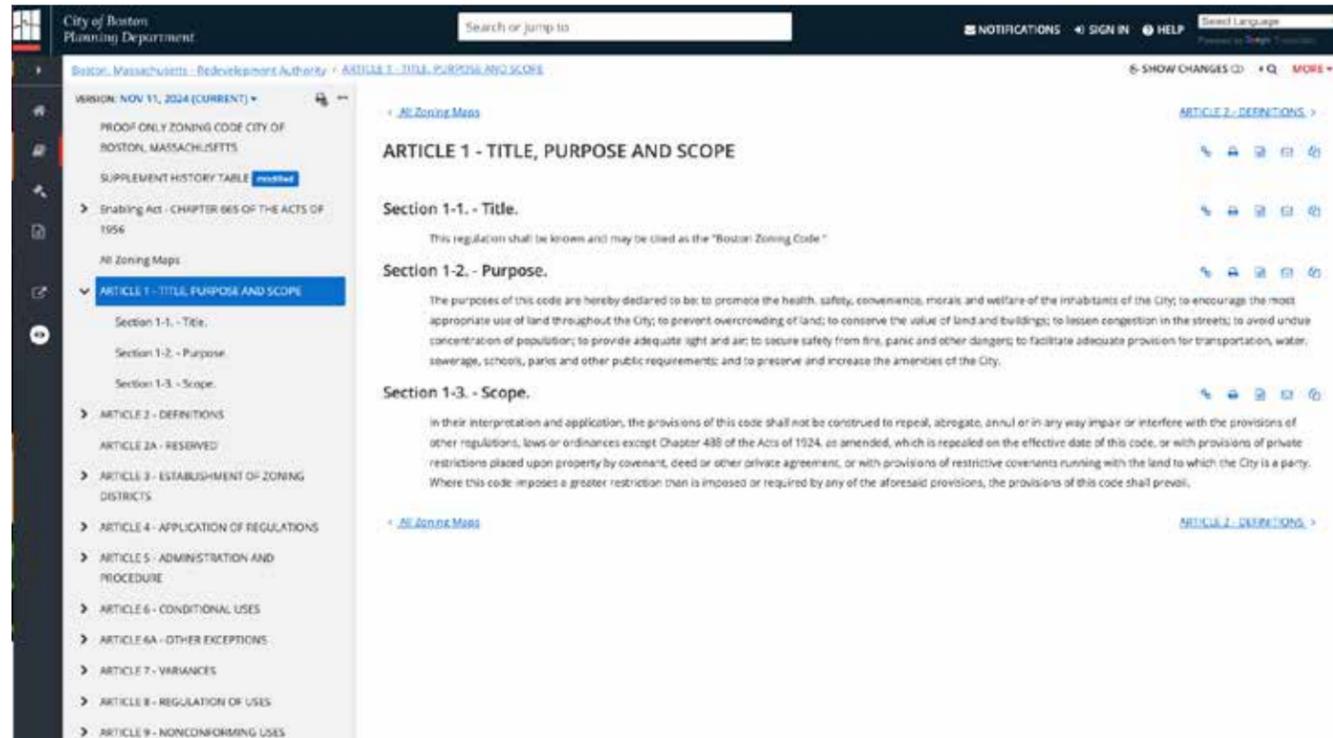


BOSTON ZONING MAPS:

Visual formal maps (PDFs) of zoning districts as they currently are mapped across the City.

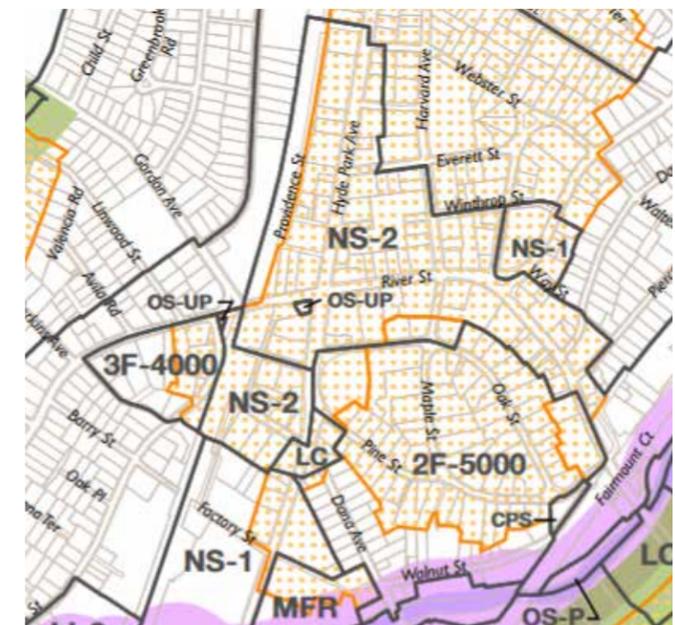
WEBSITE:

bostonplans.org/3d-data-maps/map-library/zoning-maps



WEBSITE:

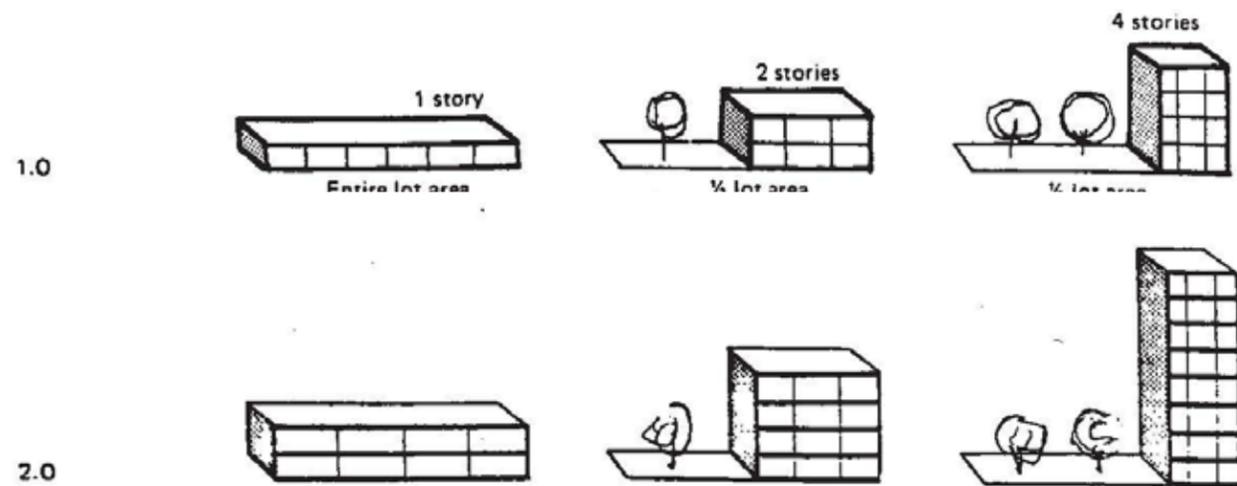
bostonplans.org/3d-data-maps/map-library/zoning-maps



GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Many of these terms will come up throughout this report. You can always refer back to this section for a reminder. There are some concepts specific to certain development projects or administrative processes that are also explained in “**Learn More**” pop-up boxes throughout the document.

- **AMI OR AREA MEDIAN INCOME (AMI):** the midpoint of a specific area's income distribution. The AMI applicable to Boston is calculated on an annual basis by the Boston Redevelopment Authority using data from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). AMI, or a percentage thereof, is used to determine the maximum income that a given household size may receive before becoming ineligible for an Inclusionary Development Unit.
- **ARTICLE 80 DEVELOPMENT REVIEW:** the City of Boston’s process for reviewing larger-scale development projects. The guidelines for this review process are outlined within [Article 80 \(Development Review and Approval\) of the Boston Zoning Code](#) and the review process is coordinated by the [Planning Department’s Development Review Division](#).
- **FAR OR FLOOR AREA RATIO:** the ratio between a building’s **gross floor area** and the size of the lot it sits on. For example, a building with a gross floor area of 4,000 sq ft which sits on a lot of 2,000 sq ft has a FAR of 2 (4,000/2,000). The diagram below shows examples of buildings with FARs of 0.5, 1, and 2.



- **GROSS FLOOR AREA:** the floor area of a building excluding some non-occupiable areas, such as at-grade parking garages or areas used for mechanical equipment and storage.
- **USE OF PREMISES:** A use of premises permit is required in order to add certain outdoor features to land, such as new parking areas.
- **ZBA OR ZONING BOARD OF APPEAL:** is a quasi-judicial body of seven members who are appointed by the Mayor. The ZBA hears requests for conditional use permits, variances, and similar zoning relief.
- **ZONING RELIEF:** Any zoning variance, exception, conditional use permit, interim planning permit, zoning map or text change, PDA Development Plan or PDA Master Plan approval, Institutional Master Plan approval, or any other relief granted by the Zoning Commission or the Zoning Board of Appeal. The most common type of Zoning Relief are conditional use permits and variances, which are granted by the Zoning Board of Appeal.
 - **A conditional use permit** is required for uses that are considered by the Zoning Code to need some extra review. The conditions for receiving a conditional use permit can be found in Article 6 (Conditional Uses) of the Zoning Code, and include that it is placed in an appropriate location and does not cause any nuisance.
 - **A variance** is required for projects that do not comply with some zoning regulation, such as dimensional requirements (including height or minimum yards), minimum parking spaces, or because the proposed use is forbidden. The conditions for receiving variance can be found in Article 7 (Variances) of the Zoning Code, and include that the variance is necessary for the landowner to make reasonable use of the land or structure.

Although conditional use permits and variances have different requirements, they are both granted by the ZBA and usually take similar amounts of time to receive.

- **ZBA DECISIONS:**

Denied vs Denied without prejudice : When the ZBA denies a project, the applicant does not receive zoning relief and they cannot file an application for the same project for one year. When the ZBA denies a project without prejudice, it still means that the applicant does not receive the zoning relief, but the applicant does not have to wait a year to be able to file another application for the same project.

- **Approved with proviso:** A “proviso” is a condition placed on a legal agreement. When a project is “approved with proviso” by the ZBA, it means that the project can be built IF it meets some condition placed by the ZBA. The most common proviso used by the ZBA is “Planning Department Design Review,” which means that the project’s design must be reviewed and approved by Urban Design staff in the Planning Department before it can be built.

SQUARES + STREETS

