

MAYOR WALSH RELEASES REPORT EXPLORING THE CREATION OF ADDITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD INNOVATION DISTRICTS

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Mayor Martin J. Walsh today released a report that explores the possibility of building on the successes and lessons learned from the Seaport Innovation District and creating more Neighborhood Innovation Districts in Boston to empower the city's entrepreneurial talent. The report was created by the Neighborhood Innovation District Committee, a group of community members, entrepreneurs, thought-leaders and public servants who were appointed by the Mayor to hold public meetings and discuss the benefits and challenges found in the creation of more Neighborhood Innovation Districts.

"As we work to create sustainable opportunities throughout the City of Boston, we have identified the creation of additional Neighborhood Innovation Districts as a promising strategy to empower and encourage the entrepreneurial talent that already exists in our neighborhoods," said Mayor Walsh. "I thank the Committee for their hard work in assembling this set of recommendations and I look forward to turning their thoughtful plans into action so we can continue to spread the entrepreneurial spirit throughout the city."

Neighborhood Innovation Districts will be designed to provide widespread employment opportunities, encourage neighborhood residents to create innovations that support existing business and start-ups, as well as provide information, connections and physical locations for innovators and entrepreneurs. Initiated as the direct result of community input during Mayor Walsh's Transition process, the Committee was formed over the summer of 2014 and was co-chaired by John Barros, Chief of Economic Development for the City of Boston and Edward Glaeser, a Professor of Economics at Harvard University and former director of the Rappaport Institute of Greater Boston.

"Boston's growth needs to be fueled by the continued growth of all of our neighborhoods," said Chief Barros. "Creating more ways for our local businesses and entrepreneurs to use the innovation economy and new technology in order to add more jobs and opportunities is exciting. Our new neighborhood innovation strategy expands access to all Bostonians and builds on the promise of the people who live and invest in our neighborhoods everyday."

"Mayor Walsh has always said that innovation belongs in every neighborhood, and we are so excited about having innovation districts coming to our Main Streets districts," said Sheila A Dillon, Chief of Housing and Director of the Department of Neighborhood Development. "It's initiatives like this that are making Boston a premier city for entrepreneurs and small businesses owners. The Neighborhood Innovation District will help create new jobs, support existing business owners and well-established businesses, and encourage new investment in our neighborhoods."

Through the work of its four subcommittees, the Committee assembled a comprehensive list of recommendations for designing a neighborhood innovation district. The lead recommendations include:

Focus on investing in people. The report recommends new forms of vocational training and calls for experimenting with entrepreneurship training to enhance the core skill areas needed for entrepreneurs and innovators. Potential forms of training include through mentoring, entrepreneurship boot camp and targeted vocational training.

Rethink and streamline the public role in entrepreneurship. In order to help facilitate conversations between the innovation district and local government, the role of innovation district organizer should be established.

The development process for the district must be inclusive. The District should recognize that entrepreneurship and innovation come in many forms, and that under-resourced neighborhoods are already hubs of creativity, whether or not that creativity has been fully transformed into economic wealth.

Match the physical infrastructure with the human needs of the neighborhood. The District should provide affordable space for entrepreneurs, allow ready access to robust transit and provide world-class high-speed internet connections.

With the goal in mind of replicating successful efforts throughout the City of Boston, the report is split into two primary sections. The first addresses recommendations that can be applied to all neighborhoods and the second discusses recommendations specific for the Dudley Square-Upham's Corner Corridor, which would serve as a pilot to test the viability of a series of Neighborhood Innovation Districts. This area was identified due to its economic vitality and the opportunity to use the infrastructure already established to create a hub of innovation and entrepreneurship.

"The Dudley Square-Upham's Corner District is particularly attractive because it is a great public transportation hub," said Professor Glaeser. "It has strong educational institutions nearby and a population that is filled with energy and imagination. The District is one of the Boston's many great neighborhoods and we believe that it can be even greater with the neighborhood innovation district." To read the full report, please click [here](#).

