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- Lara Mérida, Marie Mercurio, Boston Redevelopment Authority
- Sarah Barnat, Michelle Landers, Don Briggs, ULI Boston
Boston, Massachusetts
The Washington Street Area in Jamaica Plain
Mission:
To encourage and support excellence in land use decision making.

“We should all be open-minded and constantly learning.”

--Daniel Rose
Elected officials and staff from more than 19,000 US cities, towns and villages are members of NLC or its 49 state municipal leagues.
34,000 members worldwide:
- Developers
- Investors, Bankers and Financiers
- Architects, Designers and Consultants
- Public officials
- Academics

Mission:
Providing leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide
Rose Center Programming

- Policy & Practice Forums
- Education for Public Officials: webinars, workshops, and scholarships to attend ULI conferences
Daniel Rose Fellowship

• Four cities selected for yearlong program of professional development, leadership training, assistance with a local land use challenge

• Mayor selects 3 fellows and team coordinator

• Participating cities to date: Austin, Charlotte, Detroit, Hartford, Honolulu, Houston, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Louisville, Memphis, Minneapolis, Nashville, Oakland, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Portland, Providence, Sacramento, Tacoma and Tampa
2014-2015 Rose Fellowship Class
City Study Visits

• Assemble experts to study land use challenge
• Provides city’s fellowship team with framework and ideas to start addressing their challenge
• Part of yearlong engagement with each city
The Panel

- **Co-Chair**: Peter Cavaluzzi, Perkins Eastman, New York, NY
- **Co-Chair**: Calvin Gladney, Mosaic Urban Partners, Washington, DC
- Rick Dishnica, The Dishnica Company, San Francisco, CA (Rose Center Advisory Board)
- Presley Gillespie, Neighborhood Allies, Pittsburgh, PA (Daniel Rose Fellow)
- Christopher Kurz, Linden Associates, Baltimore, MD (Rose Center Advisory Board)
- Ashley O’Connor, AECOM, Arlington, VA
- Cassie Seagren, Mayor’s Office, City of Omaha, NE (Daniel Rose Fellow)
- Steven Shain, Department of Planning and Development, City of Seattle, WA (Daniel Rose Fellow)
- Bill Sirois, Regional Transportation District, Denver, CO
The Challenge

How can the city and stakeholders work together to implement a shared vision for the future of the Washington Street area in Jamaica Plain?
Presentation Outline

1. Observations
2. Link to City-Wide Vision
3. Neighborhood-Scale Planning
4. Implementation
5. Conclusion & Homework
Boston Context
Boston Context

- City experiencing tremendous job and population growth due to its attractive assets and lifestyle
- Housing market crunch--rising prices, concerns about displacement
- Policy goal of 53,000 units by 2030
- No comprehensive plan for city in 50 years! (1965)
- Growth is being decided on parcel level rather than neighborhood scale
- Development process is dysfunctional (for developers, community and city)
- Need for new inter-departmental, inter-jurisdictional approach to community planning
Neighborhood Assets
Neighborhood Assets

- Regional-quality open spaces
- Rail and bus transit access
- Sense of community, and character of built environment
- Varied neighborhood-serving retail and services
- Diversity of neighborhood
Neighborhood Challenges

- No shared vision for future of Washington Street neighborhoods
- Low-intensity, vacant, and auto-oriented uses break up street activity along Washington
- Current retail and service mix has gaps, leading to economic leakage to other neighborhoods (restaurants, grocery, banks)
- Lack of coherent visual neighborhood identity
- Lack of coherent wayfinding aids leads to an illegible street network
- Washington Street carries a lot of through-moving auto and truck traffic with few pedestrian crossings
Presentation Outline

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Citywide Context

- Parks and open space
- Transit
Citywide Issues

Housing Cost Burden, Owners, 2005-09

Median Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income, MetroBoston, Municipalities, 2005-09

- 31% - 34%
- 27% - 30%
- 25% - 26%
- 24%
- 19% - 23%

Households paying more than 30% of household income on housing are considered burdened.
Citywide Issues

- Affordable housing
- Mobility
- Economic opportunity

These need to be addressed in every neighborhood but each neighborhood can’t solve citywide issues on their own.
The Planning Process

• Identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats at neighborhood scale in the context of community goals
• Define and communicate the road map
• Create metrics, benchmarks and accountability for analysis, actions and results
Scales of Process

Create a supportive approval process with greater certainly

• Parcel discussions needs to happen neighborhood scale

• City-wide goals need to be translated to the neighborhood

• Neighborhood is the “glue” and the common thread
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Create a supportive approval process with greater certainly

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Recommended Planning Approach

• 2 pieces: TOD (station-based) and Washington street corridor

• Large-scale TOD offering new development for affordable housing, employment and retail: Forest Hills station area plan for half-mile radius north to Williams Street

• Small-scale TOD to enhance surrounding neighborhood: Green Street station

• Corridor neighborhoods: Egelston Square to Williams Street

• Commercial node: Egelston Square
Forest Hills Station Area

- Large-scale TOD: Forest Hills station area plan in half-mile radius with Williams Street as boundary
- Development opportunities at a meaningful scale with high densities including affordable housing, retail and employment
- Larger parcels between Williams and station
Forest Hills Station Area

- Need for inter-jurisdictional collaboration:
  - Mayor and Governor need to prioritize and create a public-public partnership to plan and implement TOD
  - MBTA sites/ Arborway Yards
  - Integrating development, pedestrian access and enhancing placemaking with Casey Arborway & Forest Hills station
High priority in the near term should be available development sites

Higher density near station

Pursue infill opportunities along Green to Washington

Land is being assembled, so expand on strength of what is already occurring
Strengthening Washington Street Corridor & Neighborhoods

- Spine is a mixed-use/commercial district along Washington
- Need to strengthen & support small business, job creation opportunities
- Housing may not be primary focus; allow commercial or mixed-use
- Talk about appropriate uses for future (e.g., not necessarily car lots)
Strengthening Washington Street Corridor & Neighborhoods

- Support for existing businesses to succeed and grow
- Address parking issues along corridor including infill lots
- Can YMCA enhance street presence and expand facilities?
- Look for infill opportunities in neighborhood within existing context
- Opportunities to hear and address other neighborhood concerns
Egleston Square Commercial Node

- Improve traffic movement
- Strengthen commercial presence
- Address aesthetic issues
- Address business viability and opportunities
- Evaluate placemaking opportunities
Supporting Local Business
(in Egleston & Corridor-wide)

- Explore opportunities to support local businesses
- Links to banking/financing
- Attract new neighborhood-serving businesses
- Education/outreach to business owners and landlords
- Code enforcement
Improving Quality of Life (Neighborhood-wide)
Improving Quality of Life (Neighborhood-wide)

- Addressing security and safety
- Façade improvements
- Design standards
- Lighting/ fencing
- Landscape/ tree boxes
- Pocket parks/ programmed open space
- Sidewalk/ code enforcement
- New pedestrian-activated crossings
- Billboard regulations
Making Connections

• Green/Glen, Boylston/School dogleg, Williams are key corridors through the neighborhood
• Connecting transit to Franklin Park (e.g., bike connections from Southwest Corridor to Franklin Park)
• Wayfinding/signage for local amenities – park, trail, rail stations, bus stops, schools, Brewery small business complex
• Cultural events to attract investment to neighborhood
Presentation Outline
1. Observations
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4. **Implementation**
5. Conclusion & Homework
Expand Baseline Information Gathering

- Inventory of housing in study area
  - Quantify existing affordable housing (e.g., deed-restricted units, senior housing, AMI levels) to understand vulnerability
- Housing stock by type and ownership
- Multi-generational types
- Set benchmarks and goals to bring existing housing into compliance with codes
- Inventory of existing businesses/industry clusters
- Market Scan
Neighborhood SWOT Analysis

- SWOT to understand ability to meet goals
- Housing, Mobility, Economic Development
- Developer Capacity
- Refine goals & objectives based on analysis
Civic Engagement

Welcome to the Rosa Parks Transit Center!

Your hosts today are DAN, PONSELLA, THERESA, BLAKE, DALTON.

We would like to talk to you about the Detroit Works Project: Long Term Planning.

Thank you!
Civic Engagement

• Civic Engagement + Respectful Action = Sound Planning
• Broaden input with different approaches
  • Address language barriers
  • Specific stakeholder-based meetings
  • Roaming table/ community conversations
  • Street teams (door-to-door)
• Social media to facilitate additional debate
• Share and incorporate feedback
• Develop community leadership capacity so neighborhood champions can keep the plan on the right path toward implementation
Planning Process: “Matter-of-Right Light”

- Plan for neighborhood rather than development sites
- Resolve certain issues (e.g., density and affordable housing) in planning process rather than in development approval process
- Team Lead – One Agency
- Interdepartmental/ Inter-Jurisdictional and Cross-Functional Team
- Good government (e.g., Office of Neighborhood Services) is not civic engagement
Development Approval Process

• Create certainty of process (for both developers and the community)
• If key issues are resolved in the neighborhood planning process, fewer remain during development approval
• Increase threshold for advisory group review under Article 80 (to achieve citywide housing goals)
• Architectural review for big projects should occur much earlier in the approval process
• City should play stronger facilitator role in developer-community discussions
Presentation Outline

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Citywide Conclusions

- **Planning:** This is an opportunity for the city to make the neighborhood planning process a key to achieving citywide and neighborhood goals.

- **Implementation:** To achieve your goals, the development process in Boston needs to offer a defined road map and take less time to complete.
Study Area Conclusions

- Washington Street is not homogenous and needs different plans with distinct boundaries (e.g., Forest Hills station area, corridor north of Williams) which will lead to different strategies and solutions.
- Leverage different strategies to achieve housing goals (highest density at Forest Hills station, medium density at Green Street station, infill that respects existing context along and adjacent to Washington Street and Egleston Square).
- Ensure Latino community is actively engaged.
- The pedestrian needs to be treated with the same importance as the motorist throughout the study areas.
- The Mayor and Governor need to prioritize joint planning and implementation of TOD at Forest Hills station area.
Homework

1. Draft two separate scopes of work for the planning process at the Forest Hills station area and the rest of the Washington Street study area

2. Create a flow chart and guide for the development approval process in the city today

3. Conduct analyses of the housing stock and businesses for the entire study area (similar to Egleston Square business survey)

Next check-in:
Rose Fellowship Retreat
Houston, May 12
Thank you to the following people; their assistance was essential to the panel’s work: