



Mattapan Economic Development Action Agenda

June 2006

Thomas M. Menino
Mayor of Boston



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**Community Advisory Group
Statement of Mission, Values and
Ownership of Mattapan Economic
Development Initiative (MEDI)
Scope and Work**

“It is important to the MEDI Community Advisory Group (“CAG”), as representative of the community, that Mattapan more fully achieve its potential as a neighborhood characterized by: economic vitality; commercial corridors with varied, high quality goods and services; collaborating stakeholders with the capacity and commitment to guide future growth; and strong institutions that support and enhance quality of life for all.

We see the ongoing MEDI effort—through sound planning and implementation—as a key factor in our moving forward, working together with residents, business owners, property owners, elected officials, community leaders and other stakeholders to ensure that Mattapan continue to thrive as an appealing place to live, work invest and play.”





City of Boston
Thomas M. Menino, Mayor

June 28, 2006

Dear Members of the Mattapan Community:

I am pleased to present to you the Mattapan Economic Development Initiative ("MEDI") Action Agenda.

This document reflects several months of visioning, hard work, analysis and goal setting by the people of this neighborhood. By working together with each other, with the Community Advisory Group, with members of this administration and with the able assistance of the consultant team led by Abt Associates, we have created a "road map" which not only informs us of what exists and is desired to improve this economic landscape; but also, and more importantly, provides direction for helping Mattapan live into its potential as a great place to live, work, invest and play.

Mattapan has fantastic potential. It is the "gateway" to Boston from the south. It boasts a rich and diverse cultural heritage. It also possesses many natural assets - a soon to be re-furbished Neponset River Park area; bustling transit roadways and three distinct commercial districts. The Economic Action Agenda will provide the tools for implementation that will enable us to take advantage of these assets, to build upon them and add to them.

Implementation is key to the ongoing success of the MEDI Project and it is one of the foundations upon which it is built. The other equally important foundation is YOU - the community which helped to shape it and will foster its growth. As we look to make the recommendations of the Economic Action Agenda a reality, I call on you to continue in the spirit of collaboration which has brought us to this moment and will enable us to create a vibrant and bright economic future for Mattapan.

Thank you for all of your great work!

Sincerely,

Thomas M. Menino,
Mayor of Boston

June 28, 2006



Dear Friends of Mattapan:

It gives me great pleasure to participate with Mayor Menino in presenting the Mattapan Economic Development Action Agenda, a report and strategic plan which is the result of contributions made by many - of insight, expertise, energy and commitment to enhancing the quality of life for all stakeholders of this neighborhood.

Over the past two years Mattapan residents, property owners, business operators and community activists worked with an interdisciplinary team of City Agency representatives, led by the Boston Redevelopment Authority, to craft a unique document that combines best practices for planning and economic development. The resulting report speaks to the wishes of members of the neighborhood while giving sound direction for completing short-, medium-, and long-term projects that will enhance commercial districts, create more job opportunities, and increase capital investment.

The work and activity that inform the Action Agenda are also the direct result of the diligence of an extremely talented Mayoral Community Advisory Group which was chaired with distinction by Russell Holmes. The formulation of the consumer survey, the creation of the business/services inventory, the commercial signage workshops and the comprehensive recommendations in each chapter are all products of the many hours of volunteer time which the Advisory Group devoted. Thanks to each of you for your dedication.

This is an extraordinary time to create and set in motion the Action Agenda for Mattapan because there are significant opportunities which can be leveraged to provide momentum for its implementation. With a focus on the three distinct commercial districts as outlined in the report, we see that each is surrounded by, or adjacent to, areas that will see growth in the near and foreseeable future. The upcoming relocation of the Mattapan Library, the redevelopment of the Mattapan Square MBTA Station and adjoining lot, the Olmsted Green Project on the former Boston State Hospital Grounds, and the development of the former Police Station at 872 Morton Street - to name but a few examples - point to projects that will support the economic growth of the neighborhood and provide a catalyst for the types of investment that are being recommended.

While the report gives us some good news about the neighborhood's assets, we also learn that there are some challenges. The consumer survey to which you have responded tells us that your shopping choices and spending patterns reflect a desire to see an even greater quality of goods and services than might currently exist. Roughly eighty percent (80%) of residents are willing to travel far outside the Mattapan area for the most basic needs like grocery shopping, a hardware store and a pharmacy. And fifty one percent (51%) of survey respondents tell us that it is now time to attract those establishments - "quality sit-down restaurants", coffee shops, and bookstores - which are indicative of a neighborhood like Mattapan which has the financial and economic wherewithal to support them.

The Action Agenda seeks to, and I am confident, succeeds in providing the framework for learning how best to meet the current challenges so that everyone in Mattapan can participate in and enjoy the benefits of greatly enhanced economic opportunities. I encourage each and every one of you to continue your engagement with the MEDI effort, because it does not stop here. We look forward to collaborating with you during the Implementation Phase which will commence in Fall 2006.

Another benefit of the report is that it will serve as a worthwhile educational tool for community economic development. I invite you to become familiar with the major sections of the Action Agenda - Business Development, Transportation, Housing, and Land Use/Urban Design/Zoning - as each provides great insight into these concepts. Our hope is that you will become even more proficient with these concepts and feel empowered to play a role in building a better Mattapan.

I wish to reiterate our thanks and appreciation for the ways in which each of you have participated in the MEDI process so far and I look forward to our continuing in this important work together.

Sincerely,

Mark Maloney
Director

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Mattapan Vision
Blue Hill Center – A Possible Design for Mixed-use Development

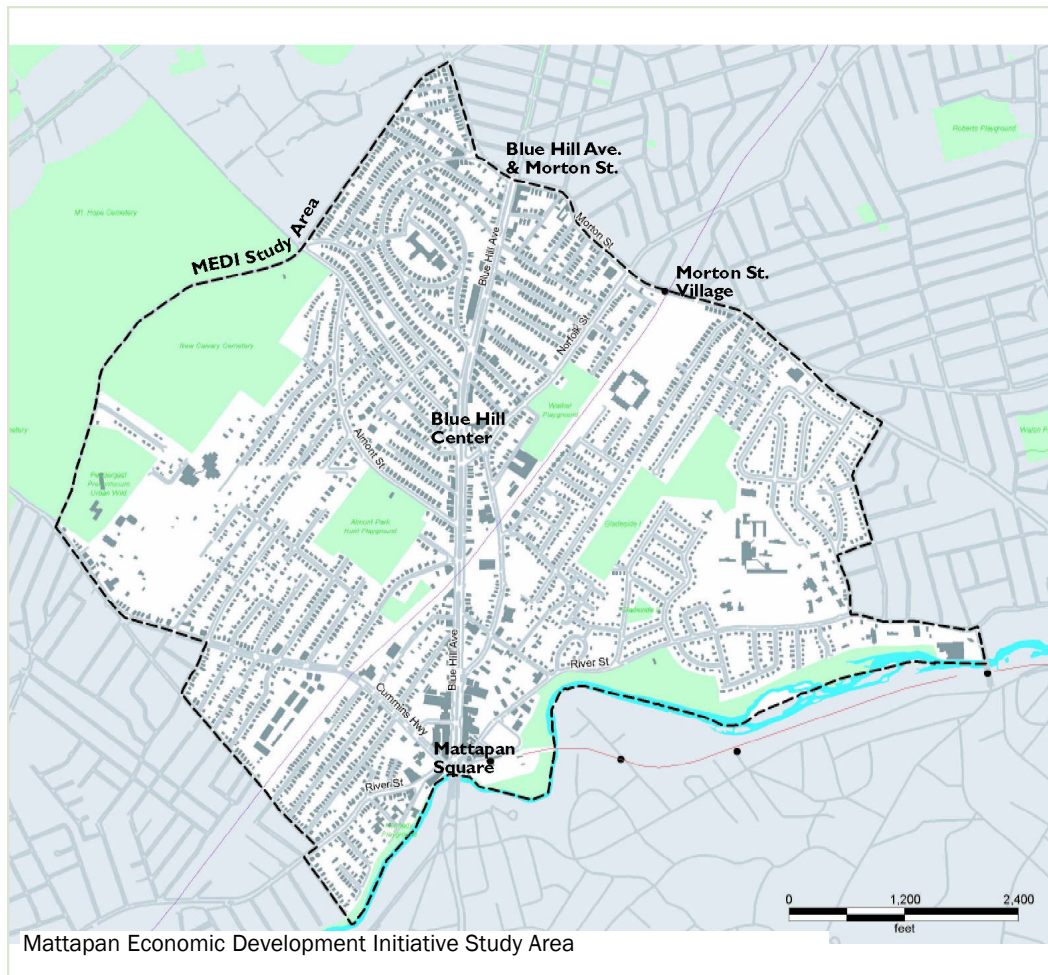
Executive Summary

Introduction

The Mattapan Economic Development Initiative (MEDI) is a strategic initiative designed to establish an overall vision, an “action agenda,” and an initial implementation plan for the revitalization of Mattapan's commercial districts and surrounding neighborhoods. The major emphasis of the MEDI strategic planning effort is on stimulating greater economic activity in a way that benefits Mattapan residents, property owners, and businesses. The planning effort that has occurred over the past 18 months has identified what are believed to be **the most promising approaches for increasing Mattapan's appeal as a place to live, work, invest, and play.** These approaches, and the reasoning underlying them, are described in detail in this MEDI Action Agenda report.

The MEDI study team that has worked together over the past year and a half to develop this report is comprised of the MEDI Community Advisory Group, staff from the Boston Redevelopment Authority and other City of Boston agencies, and a consultant team led by Abt Associates.¹ The MEDI Community Advisory Group (CAG) was selected by Mayor Thomas M. Menino, and consists of members of the public who live, work, run businesses, and/or own property in the MEDI study area.

The *Study Area* map (see next page) provides the boundaries for the MEDI study area, which corresponds roughly to the community's definition of Mattapan's neighborhood boundaries. The MEDI study area is bound on the north by Morton Street, to the east by Maryknoll Street, to the west by Harvard Street, and to the south by the Boston-Milton city line.



For the MEDI study, particular attention has been devoted to the primary commercial corridors within this area: Blue Hill Avenue, Morton Street, River Street, and Cummins Highway. Along these corridors, three areas were identified as being uniquely positioned for redevelopment due to their current identity as business centers, their access to public transportation and consumers, and planned public or private sector investment. These areas are: Mattapan Square; Morton Street Village (Morton Street between Norfolk and Selden Streets); and Blue Hill Center (Blue Hill Avenue between Hiawatha and Hazelton Streets).

In the next section of this MEDI Action Agenda report, we describe the evolution of Mattapan over time, and the recent conditions that led to the initiation of the MEDI study. This background information is followed by a summary of key MEDI study findings, and recommendations regarding strategies and action steps to foster greater economic vitality in the Mattapan commercial districts.

Background—The Evolution and Redevelopment of Mattapan²

Mattapan is a culturally rich community, owing both to its history and the cultural diversity of its population. Throughout its history, Mattapan has been a neighborhood to which various waves of immigrant groups have gravitated. During the early and mid-twentieth century, the Mattapan neighborhood was home to a large Jewish community. Since the 1960's, the neighborhood has transitioned into the home of various other groups, including the most recent immigrant groups to settle in the area—Haitians and others of Caribbean heritage. Together, African-Americans and individuals of Caribbean heritage are estimated to make up 90 percent of the current population of Mattapan.³ The U.S. Census



provides what may be the most accurate population figures, and indicates that the total population of the MEDI study area was 19,724 in 2000.⁴

Although Mattapan's residential community has continued to thrive, its commercial districts have been in economic and physical decline for several decades. The retail and office spaces tend to be small, the buildings have begun to show signs of wear, and the diversity of products being offered in the commercial centers has narrowed. For example, whereas Mattapan Square was once known for the high quality of the goods in its retail stores, small shops offering discount items now characterize the area.

In considering approaches to promote greater economic vibrancy and diversity, there are a number of significant assets that one can build upon in the Mattapan commercial districts. These include good transportation routes, the considerable “purchasing power” of the residential and commuter population, sizeable amounts of under-utilized land, a number of buildings with significant architecture character, and proximity to the Neponset River greenway.⁵ The existing assets also include recent infrastructure investments and complementary projects underway (including the new Mattapan public library and the redevelopment of the MBTA Mattapan Station).

Property developers and members of the business community recently have begun to acknowledge these assets and the

tremendous potential for economic success. Fifteen hundred (1500) new residential units have been planned or developed in or near the MEDI Study Area; commercial buildings in Mattapan Square are being remodeled; and new commercial development is being considered along Morton Street.

The recognition of Mattapan's assets and current development momentum have given rise to a sense of the greater potential in Mattapan's commercial districts. This sense of unmet potential is what precipitated the leadership of Mayor Thomas M. Menino and the Boston City Council, with guidance from Councilor Charles Yuncy to launch the Mattapan Economic Development Initiative (MEDI) at the end of 2004.



Over the past 18 months the MEDI consultant team has worked closely with the BRA and City of Boston staff, and with the Community Advisory Group, to identify the most promising approaches for improving the economic vitality of the Mattapan commercial districts. Below we highlight the MEDI study team's findings and our recommendations relative to business development, housing, transportation, and urban design/zoning.

Highlights of the MEDI Study Findings

The MEDI strategic and action step recommendations are grounded in in-depth analysis of existing data related to business development, transportation, housing, and land use in the Mattapan area. The study team also examined the experience of more than a dozen similar economic revitalization efforts around the country, to draw on proven strategies that might also work in Mattapan.

Additionally, two new sets of local data were collected for this study, a *Business Establishment Inventory* and a *Consumer Preference Survey*. The Business Inventory and Consumer Survey were designed and implemented in order to provide additional understanding of the health of Mattapan's commercial districts. Below is a summary of key highlights that emerged from these data collection activities.



Inventory of Mattapan Business Establishments

Data collected by the MEDI study team through a Business Establishment Inventory show that over 200 establishments, providing a variety of business products and services, currently serve the MEDI study area. Despite the large number of businesses in the MEDI area, some types of establishments appear to be overrepresented, whereas other categories of businesses have few if any examples in the current Mattapan inventory. The overall business activity generated in the MEDI commercial districts is limited by the under-representation of key desirable businesses (such as sit-down restaurants, bookstores, etc.), the size of stores, the quality of goods offered, business hours (few establishments are open much past 6 pm), and the overall appearance of the commercial corridors.

Consumer Patterns and Preferences

The MEDI study team administered a consumer survey aimed at both Mattapan residents and non-residents who passed through the commercial districts. Most respondents to the survey reported that they primarily use the MEDI commercial districts for convenience shopping, and do their more extensive shopping (including shopping for groceries) outside the MEDI study area. Many of the Mattapan residents responding to the survey indicated that they avoid doing any but the most minimal shopping in the MEDI study area because of the districts' appearance, the limited range of goods available, and/or parking difficulties. Conversely, the reasons given by the Mattapan residents for shopping at locations outside the MEDI study area emphasized the greater



range and/or quality of goods and services at these other locations, better parking, and better prices. The responses of the non-residents to the survey were similar.

Survey respondents were also asked to identify the types of new stores, or additional goods and services, which they would like to see available in the MEDI study area. The most frequently mentioned establishments were: a more centrally located pharmacy; a larger, higher quality supermarket; sit-down, “quality” restaurants; a department store offering a range of goods; higher quality women and/or men's apparel stores; and more bookstores. In general, the survey responses indicated a strong desire for higher quality retail and commercial goods and services.

Untapped Purchasing Power

The Mattapan commercial districts currently function largely as neighborhood and/or convenience shopping areas. The local businesses that offer products that go beyond convenience-related goods and services generally focus on lower-priced or discount items. Although these existing businesses are responding to a legitimate existing demand, there also appears to be a significant unmet demand for additional retail outlets and for higher quality goods and services.

Responding to this unmet demand will require existing businesses to be willing to upgrade the range of products that they offer, as well as having the districts find a way to attract some new and/or

higher-end establishments to locate in the area. Achieving the latter will require property owners to be more selective and persuasive in marketing to prospective tenants, as well as investing in physical improvements to current commercial space.

Existing stores and property owners will consider investing in such upgrades, and new or higher-end retailers and service providers will consider locating in the MEDI area, only if they are convinced that such actions represent good economic investments. Making the case for such investments will entail demonstrating that the local consumer base can support the new establishments and/or upgraded goods and services.

As one step in documenting the purchasing power of local residents, the MEDI study team conducted a preliminary analysis of the capacity of the local consumer base to support various types of new or expanded business establishments. The Abt consulting team used population and per capita income information for the MEDI study area, and applied industry-specific sales information and algorithms developed by the Center for Community Economic Development at the University of Wisconsin. From this analysis, it was determined that the current population within the MEDI study area has sufficient consumer purchasing power to support 26,624 square foot of retail pharmacy space. This is equivalent to more than double the space of the average-sized Rite Aid, CVS, or Walgreen's drug store.

The MEDI area's consumer purchasing power is also sufficient to support 75,458 square feet of grocery store retail space. This is equivalent to almost one “superstore” supermarkets, or more than 2 average-sized Whole Foods Markets.

These examples provide some insight relative to the untapped purchasing power that currently exists in the MEDI study area. The recommendations that follow describe other steps that can be taken, to complement and build on this purchasing power, in order to attract new retailers and expand existing businesses.

Summary of the MEDI Study Recommendations

Approach to Commercial Revitalization

The economic decline of the Mattapan commercial districts, and particularly Mattapan Square, has occurred over a period of decades. Similarly, revival of these areas will take considerable time, and individuals involved in the revitalization process need to be reasonably patient, while at the same time keeping the effort accountable for clear indicators of progress.

Accordingly, the MEDI economic revitalization effort should be viewed as a phased process, with multiple components focusing on business development, transportation, housing and land use/urban design. It appears that residents, business operators, and property owners currently are most comfortable with the idea of the MEDI commercial districts being neighborhood or community

shopping centers (and conversely, are skeptical of the capacity of the districts to draw large numbers of consumers from other communities). Consequently, the MEDI economic revitalization efforts should initially focus on strategies to enhance the range and quality of goods and services that the commercial districts offer for existing residents, new residents and existing commuters. As these goods and services are upgraded, over time there will be opportunities to reach out to a broader consumer base from other communities, such as might occur if the MEDI area can attract several restaurants that establish a regional reputation.

Additionally, more convenient transportation alternatives, increased availability of quality housing, and supportive land use policies can increase the appeal of Mattapan as a place to live and/or invest. This will promote expansion of the neighborhood consumer base and boost the economic vitality of the commercial districts. To this end, the MEDI study is recommending a range of strategies related to transportation, housing, urban design guidelines, and zoning; these are outlined in detail in each of the relevant chapters in this Action Agenda report. Some of the key strategies include supporting additional transportation improvements that will facilitate more direct access to the greater Boston area, integrating planned MBTA station improvements into surrounding commercial areas, improving parking accessibility and availability, increasing residential density in the community's commercial areas, and enhancing the existing Mattapan Neighborhood Zoning ordinance to provide incentives for higher density, transit-oriented development in desired locations. Additional highlights of key

strategies in each of the MEDI study's components are summarized below, along with information about proposed action steps for implementing these strategies.

Key Business Development Strategies

Business Expansion and New Business Recruitment

This component of the MEDI Action Agenda is envisioned as a set of complementary activities designed to upgrade the appearance of the MEDI commercial districts and the range and quality of merchandise available in them. It proposes to do this through



The planned Neponset River Greenway would enhance Mattapan Square's pedestrian accessibility and overall sense of place

pursuing a dual strategy—encouraging incremental improvements in goods and services offered by existing businesses, as well as attracting new retail tenants. It also seeks to promote a more integrated, attractive identity for the Mattapan commercial districts, and to connect them more intentionally to natural assets and complementary development projects that can bring additional consumers to the commercial corridors.

Possible action steps include:

- ❖ Creating a “Mattapan Retail Corridor” identity;
- ❖ Attracting additional core services and/or retail anchor stores;
- ❖ Increasing the operating hours of the Mattapan commercial districts;
- ❖ Improving the appearance of the MEDI commercial districts; and
- ❖ Creating a more visible “gateway” at the Mattapan-Milton line, and a stronger link to Neponset River greenway.

Improve Public Safety

Addressing concerns about public safety is essential for attracting new retail tenants and consumers to the MEDI commercial districts, and for encouraging existing property and business owners to make additional investments in upgrading. Recent incidents of violence and related news stories have raised concerns about public safety within Mattapan.

Possible action steps include:

- ❖ Work with the City of Boston to apply for funding that will allow a more comprehensive approach to dealing with issues around violence in the Mattapan neighborhood;
- ❖ Meet with MEDI-area business associations to identify and prioritize their public safety concerns; establish regular meetings with law enforcement officials to develop plans for addressing the business community's concerns; and
- ❖ Identify topics for newspaper articles that will create a more balanced view of public safety in the MEDI study area.

Key Housing Strategy

Increase Residential Density Along the Commercial Corridors Through Mixed-Use Development

Increasing residential density through mixed-use development along commercial corridors, particularly in close proximity to transit stations or along major public transit routes, is a proven way to bolster the local retail market. The MEDI study area (and more specifically the three “focus areas” of Mattapan Square, Morton Street Village, and Blue Hill Center) is strategically positioned to leverage existing transportation infrastructure to spur development and reinvigorate existing commercial areas. In particular, Mattapan Square and Morton Street Village are perfect candidates for transit-oriented development, given their location adjacent to transit stations and the existence of vacant or under-utilized parcels of land. Blue Hill Center is less feasible as a target for



Blue Hill Avenue at Babson Street—Possible Design for Mixed-use Development

transit-oriented development, but is a viable community retail center that could sustain additional development of residential units above ground-floor retail uses.

Possible action steps include:

- ❖ Change the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) standards and zoning in the commercial “focus areas” to allow for multi-story and mixed-use developments (see Proposed Zoning Map on page 13 for exact location of recommended “focus areas”); and

- ❖ Seek a targeted allocation of CDBG and/or HOME funds to provide financial assistance and incentives to property owners and developers to build higher-density, mixed-use projects along Blue Hill Avenue and Morton Street.

Key Transportation Strategies

Enhance Mattapan's Accessibility, and Build Upon Planned MBTA Transportation Improvements

MBTA transportation improvements currently underway (or being planned) could benefit existing residents, attract new residents to the area, and encourage commuters to take advantage of the stores and services available in the MEDI area. Among the key projects are the possible extension of the Silver Line bus rapid transit service to Mattapan and the creation of the “Fast Track” Rapid Rail along the Fairmont Commuter Rail line, both of which would create a one-seat ride to downtown.

Later in this Action Agenda report, we recommend the creation of a MEDI Community Implementation Team as a way for community members to actively advise the ongoing implementation of the revitalization effort. Members of the MEDI Implementation Team could use the MEDI Action Agenda in conversations with officials at the MBTA to focus attention on how the MBTA's planned transportation improvements will support the broader goals of the Mattapan community. In addition to using these MBTA projects to increase overall accessibility to and from Mattapan, for instance, it will also be important to leverage these projects in a more intentional way to spur complementary economic development in



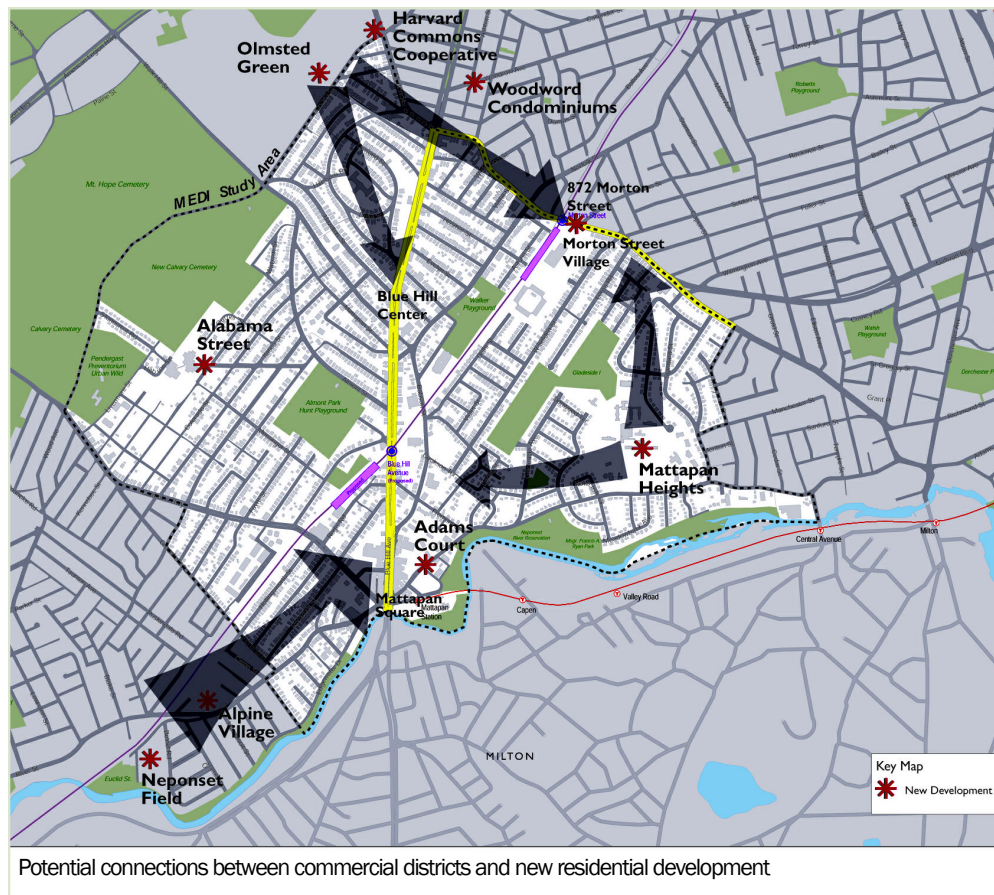
the adjacent commercial districts. Current transportation projects underway that can have a direct impact on commercial district viability are the MBTA's redevelopment of the Mattapan Station site (including the construction of a new MBTA station and the reconfiguration of the adjacent surface parking lot into a mix of retail/commercial/residential space) and the modernization of the Morton Street Station on the Fairmont Commuter Rail line.

Increase the Visual Appeal and Ease of Access for Pedestrians in the MEDI Commercial Districts

A large proportion of trips within Mattapan occur on foot, which suggests the need to enhance the pedestrian environment from Mattapan's neighborhoods to its commercial centers, as well as the pedestrian amenities within these centers. It is important to

create a pedestrian-friendly environment that encourages consumers to linger, walk about the area, and to window shop. Targeted improvements should first be made in the three

commercial “focus areas” (see discussion in Key Housing Strategy section, above), with a consistent look and feel to create a “brand” identity for the MEDI commercial corridors.



Possible action steps also include:

- ❖ Study the main transportation intersections to determine the best ways to balance pedestrian and vehicular access. Potential pedestrian solutions include relocating and adjusting the timing of traffic signals to ensure that pedestrians—particularly senior citizens—can cross safely;
- ❖ Improve maintenance of existing pedestrian infrastructure (signs, walk-signals), and enforce pedestrian right-of-way laws; and
- ❖ Work with the City of Boston, Mattapan business associations, and community and civic organizations to encourage improvements in storefronts, in the cleanliness of sidewalks, and in the maintenance of plantings and shade trees.

Improve the Accessibility of the MEDI Commercial Districts to Those Traveling by Car

Whether motorists are local residents or commuters passing through, increasing the number that stop at stores and businesses along the commercial arteries will stimulate economic activity in the commercial

districts. To do this, eased traffic flow and more accessible parking are critical.

Possible action steps include:

- ❖ Study the main transportation intersections to determine the best ways to balance pedestrian and vehicular access. Potential vehicular access solutions include upgrading the alleyway between Blue Hill Avenue northbound and River Street to provide a more direct connection between Mattapan Square businesses and the River Street and MBTA parking lots;
- ❖ Improve parking signage visibility, and lighting and security at parking lots; and
- ❖ Advocate for better enforcement of parking laws along Blue Hill Avenue to free-up parking spaces more quickly, and to eliminate the traffic congestion problems caused by double-parking.

Key Land Use, Urban Design, and Zoning Strategies

Develop Incentives for the Redevelopment of Properties in Mattapan's Commercial Areas

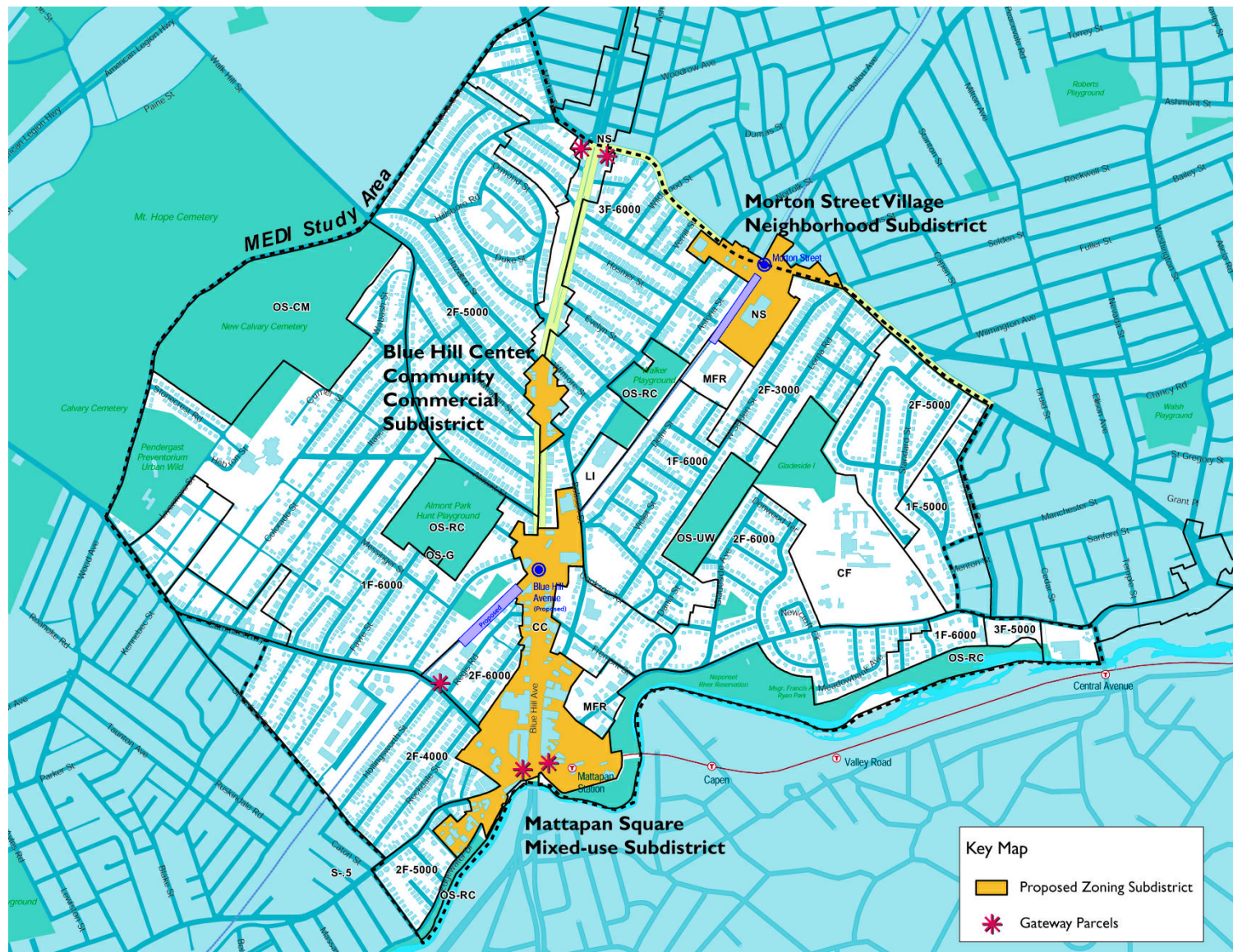
Existing zoning guidelines in Mattapan are appropriate, and should be maintained in their current form for all but the key commercial “focus areas” of the neighborhood.⁶ In these commercial “focus areas,” new zoning subdistricts should be created that include incentives for new development, as well as clearly specifying both allowed and prohibited uses and design standards. These proposed subdistricts, identified on the map on page 13, will be

fully contained within the boundaries of existing commercial zones. The proposed subdistrict boundaries were determined by studying the locations of current business concentrations, transit stations, underutilized property, and currently planned private or public investment.

The commercial “focus areas” proposed as subdistricts within the *Greater Mattapan Neighborhood Zoning District* are:

1. Mattapan Square;
2. Morton Street Village (Morton Street between Norfolk and Selden Streets); and
3. Blue Hill Center (Blue Hill Avenue between Hiawatha and Hazelton Streets).⁷

The zoning code for these targeted areas should include built-in incentives to encourage development that supports the community's broader goals. For example, zoning incentives can be granted for the inclusion of residential units in commercial developments, for the inclusion of a limited number of affordable housing units in commercial developments, and for parking bonuses for developments that allocate spaces for carpool vehicles, dedicated shared-use vehicles, and alternative fuel vehicles. All of these options should be considered in the establishment of zoning guidelines for the proposed subdistricts. The zoning guidelines for each subdistrict should also be designed to reflect the existing strengths of the commercial area and its full development potential.



Proposed zoning for MEDI area

Revise and Enforce Urban Design Guidelines to Foster High-Quality Development

The recommended MEDI Study Area Urban Design Guidelines have been written to foster high-quality development that creates more enjoyable experiences for residents shopping, living in the area, and gathering together as a community. That is, the proposed urban design guidelines seek to improve the overall quality of life in Mattapan. The intention is for buildings to be tall enough and large enough to create the critical mass of retail, office and residential space needed to foster a vibrant urban energy and diverse consumer choices, while not being so big or tall that residents feel that the sense of their neighborhood is lost. Parking located behind the buildings and wide sidewalks are recommended in order to create interesting street lines. Ultimately, the goal is for cafes and businesses to spill out on to the sidewalks in ways that enhance the pedestrian experience, encouraging residents and visitors to walk, linger, and relax in Mattapan's public community spaces.

Keys to the MEDI Implementation Strategy: Community Participation and Capacity Building

Implementation of the MEDI Action Agenda will require a dedicated effort by community members, property and business owners, community organizations, and the City of Boston staff. A key step



in the implementation process will be the establishment of an ongoing community advisory group—a Community Implementation Team—that will oversee the implementation process and champion the needs of the Mattapan commercial districts, and of the residents and consumers who shop there. Additionally, as implementation decisions are made, efforts to increase community equity should be prioritized and aggressively pursued. By “increasing community equity,” we mean creating more opportunities in which community residents, property owners, nonprofit organizations, and local businesses directly participate in and benefit (financially and otherwise) from the various revitalization projects. Particular attention also should be devoted to taking advantage of the existing resources and capacities offered by local nonprofit organizations, and to enhancing those capacities. Below, we describe strategies to address each of these elements of the implementation process.

Recommended MEDI Implementation Strategies

Creation of an Ongoing MEDI Community Implementation Team

To foster an efficient and systematic approach to the MEDI revitalization effort, it is important that there be a single community entity, or a collaborative set of entities, that represents the Mattapan community and assumes responsibility for ongoing coordination and oversight of implementation activities. This entity or collaborative will need to receive formal City of Boston recognition as the designated community oversight group for implementation of the MEDI Action Agenda. Given the nature of the implementation activities to be conducted, the designated entity also will need to possess (or be able to access) expertise in community outreach, retail marketing, and development financing. Land assembly and zoning expertise will also be desirable.

The community oversight process must not only respond to legitimate resident and abutter concerns, but also recognize the need for developers to have an efficient, expedited permitting and plan approval process. To do this, the governance board of the community oversight group should reflect a balance of business/property owner representatives and resident/consumer representatives and other stakeholders, with half the seats in the oversight group being filled by property owner or business representatives.

Support for Local Nonprofits

Local nonprofits are critical resources for the MEDI area, by providing a range of services that make the area an appealing place to live, and by serving as an employment source for a number of area residents. As such, the MEDI implementation effort should give due consideration to opportunities to take advantage of the expertise and resources that these nonprofits possess. The MEDI effort also should explore ways to support and strengthen the network of local nonprofits. Possible action steps relative to the latter include assisting local nonprofits in identifying potential funding sources for strategic planning or capacity-building activities and in identifying unmet space requirements. The MEDI implementation effort should also remain alert to opportunities to address the space needs of nonprofit organizations in conjunction with the redevelopment of any publicly owned parcels or publicly financed projects in the MEDI area.

Build Community Equity

It is vital to ensure that as many individuals and entities as possible—residents, business operators, property owners, and local nonprofits and civic groups—benefit from the economic revitalization that the MEDI effort seeks to foster. This can be done through a range of approaches, including pursuing joint ventures, fostering nonprofit participation in projects, promoting increased homeownership opportunities, and/or increasing business start-ups or expansion by local owners, to name a few.

In this Executive Summary we have described a wide range of strategies that focus on various aspects of the MEDl commercial districts, but are intended to complement each other. Together, the strategies that have been recommended for MEDl implementation provide a blueprint for a phased, coordinated revitalization effort that can build on Mattapan's existing assets, and help the community to achieve its full potential as a place to live, work, invest, and play.

Endnotes

¹The organizations in the consultant team include Abt Associates, ICON Architecture, Inc., Planners Collaborative, Inc., and Guzman Architects, Inc.

²For additional information, see Boston Redevelopment Authority, *Mattapan Economic Development Initiative: Request for Proposals*, July 2004, p. 6.

³Urban Land Institute, District Council of Boston, *Technical Assistance Panel: Revitalizing Mattapan Square*, 2004, p. 1.

⁴The MEDI study area includes census tracts 1010.01, 1010.02, 1011.01, and 1011.02. This is essentially equivalent to the central portion of the 02126 zip code area.

⁵See Urban Land Institute, District Council of Boston, op. cit., p. 3.

⁶For all areas currently zoned for residential use, no changes are being recommended. Specifically, existing patterns of residential development, which favor single-family housing in the interior of the community and slightly higher density multi-family housing near the commercial corridors, should continue.

⁷The intersection of Blue Hill Avenue and Morton Street is also a key commercial area within the MEDI study area. It was not included as a focus area for re-zoning because the existing zoning supports the current and feasible development patterns for the area.



Mattapan Vision
Morton Street Village – Example of a Possible Design for Mixed-use Development along Commercial Corridor



Implementation of the MEDI Action Agenda

Introduction

The economic stagnation of the Mattapan commercial districts, and particularly Mattapan Square, has occurred over a period of decades. Revival of these areas will also take considerable time, and individuals involved in the process need to be reasonably patient, while at the same time keeping the effort accountable for clear indicators of progress.

Accordingly, the MEDI revitalization effort should be viewed as a phased process. It appears that residents, business operators, and property owners currently are most comfortable with the idea of the MEDI commercial districts being neighborhood or community shopping centers (and conversely are skeptical of the capacity of the districts to draw large numbers of consumers from

other communities). Consequently, economic revitalization efforts in the Mattapan commercial districts should initially focus on strategies, such as a targeted marketing plan to attract new businesses, to enhance the range and quality of goods and services that the commercial districts offer for residents and existing commuters. As these goods and services are upgraded, over time there will be opportunities to reach out to a broader consumer base from other communities, such as might occur if the MEDI area can attract several restaurants that establish a regional reputation and clientele.

The first phase of the MEDI revitalization effort might last anywhere from one to five years, depending on the community's ability to leverage planned development projects, such as the mixed-use development at 872

Morton Street, or the MBTA Mattapan Station redevelopment, into catalysts for larger-scale redevelopment.

Key to successful MEDI Action Agenda implementation will be an implementation structure that integrates the strengths and opinions of local stakeholders, including business and property owners, residents, and non-profit organizations, with the resources available from the private sector, the City of Boston, and the state of Massachusetts.

This Action Agenda calls for the creation of a MEDI Community Implementation Team (CIT) that will serve as the foundation of the implementation process. Additionally, the Action Agenda provides the CIT with a short-term workplan and longer-term strategies for revitalization that can serve as a blueprint for the CIT's activities. The initial short-term workplan, found in Appendix B, outlines the step-by-step process for implementing the most critical, "start-up" projects recommended in the Action Agenda. Appendix A supplements this initial workplan, by providing a longer-term timeline for implementing the additional projects recommended in this report.

Implementation Challenges

Given the incremental nature of the MEDI revitalization effort, particularly in its initial phases, there will likely be challenges in convincing individual property owners and businesses to upgrade

their properties or inventory. These individuals will need to be convinced that they are not alone, but part of a larger trend that is building momentum. If the MEDI effort can be successful in encouraging a number of business or property owners to start making visible improvements, other businesses and owners may be inspired to follow suit, and a multiplier effect can be achieved.

Another challenge in the implementation process is that many area residents may look to the City of Boston to take the lead in allocating funds and initiating projects to jump-start the economic stimulation process. Although the City has historically invested infrastructure-building capital resources in the MEDI area, looking forward the City will seek a partnership with private property owners to ensure that the successful future of Mattapan's commercial districts occurs through both private sector and public sector investments. That is, a commitment by all stakeholders will be necessary to successfully redevelop the Mattapan commercial corridors.

It is also important to acknowledge that the City of Boston can be supportive of the MEDI economic revitalization effort in a variety of ways that goes beyond allocating additional capital funding. For example, the City controls certain property parcels whose redevelopment could provide an important stimulus for broader MEDI area revitalization, if expedited and focused on re-uses compatible with the selected MEDI action strategies. In addition, the City can take steps to ensure that its various plan review, permitting, and zoning processes are facilitated for key MEDI redevelopment projects, while also ensuring that adequate

opportunities for community input are afforded. And the City can revisit its allocation and scheduling of public works and/or policing services to support key MEDI implementation strategies.

Strategies to Foster Effective Implementation of the MEDI Action Agenda

In light of the above challenges, and the community assets that the MEDI effort can draw upon, we are recommending the following as key strategies to facilitate and guide the implementation process.



Working meeting of the MEDI Community Advisory Group

Create an On-going MEDI Community Implementation Team (CIT)

The identification of an on-going mechanism for providing coordination and community oversight is perhaps the most critical step to ensure the successful implementation of the MEDI Action Agenda. To foster an efficient and systematic approach to the revitalization effort in the MEDI area, it is important that there be a single entity, or a collaborative set of entities, to assume responsibility for this coordination and advisory role. To be effective, this entity or collaborative will need to receive formal City recognition as the designated community group for implementation of the MEDI Action Agenda.

Functions, Roles & Responsibilities

The range of functions that this designated entity (or collaborative set of entities) would be expected to assume could include:

- ❖ Fostering more intentional marketing of commercial space to attract particular types of new tenants, commercial and retail establishments;
- ❖ Encouraging cooperative efforts among existing property owners and/or store operators (for example, to increase marketing to potential customers through district-wide sales, to maintain sidewalk cleanliness, etc.);
- ❖ Assisting strategic (re)development projects in obtaining financing, City of Boston approvals, and/or complementary efforts from public agencies and/or other property owners;

- ❖ Mobilizing support across the Mattapan community for the on-going MEDI revitalization effort, and keeping community members informed about progress of the overall initiative;
- ❖ Facilitating community input into design and zoning guidelines and monitoring developer agreements and commitments to the community; and
- ❖ Providing technical assistance to existing businesses, and encouraging them to invest in improvements in storefronts and internal lighting.

Given the nature of the activities to be conducted, the designated entity or entities will need to possess (or be able to access) expertise in community outreach, retail marketing, and development financing. Land assembly and zoning expertise will also be desirable.

Because the types of required expertise are varied, and each of the multiple responsibilities is likely to be time-consuming, the most practical approach may be to designate several entities or organizations with distinct sets of duties, operating under (and coordinated by) a common governance board. An alternative, but probably less desirable approach is to have a single designated entity, with a more narrowly defined set of responsibilities.⁸

Governance of the Community Implementation Team

To promote an attractive environment for private investment in the MEDI area, it will be essential to establish a community process

that not only responds to legitimate resident and abutter concerns, but also recognizes the need for developers to have an efficient, and ideally expedited, permitting and plan approval process. To do this, the governance board for the entity or collaborative designated to serve as the Community Implementation Team should reflect a balance of business/property owner representatives and resident/consumer representatives and other stakeholders. That is, half the seats on the implementation team should go to property owner or business representatives, and half to residents and representatives of local civic and community organizations.

Ideally, the entity or entities that will assume the on-going coordination and implementation responsibilities will be identified (if only on a provisional basis) by Fall 2006. Potential candidates for the designated entity(ies) include existing nonprofit(s) and community groups, as well as new community-based nonprofits that may be created to assume some of the MEDI Action Agenda implementation responsibilities. Options for the latter include one or more Main Street programs that could be established in the various commercial districts in the MEDI area.

One of the advantages of the Main Street program having a role in MEDI implementation is that this program can bring some funding to help finance the operations of the community oversight effort. Given the requirements of the Main Street program, it will also ensure that the implementation process remains responsive to the concerns of the local business community.

It may also be possible to raise funds for the implementation activities (at least for the initial phases) through grants from philanthropies (that is, local or national foundations that support community revitalization initiatives).⁹ Additionally, it may be feasible to staff some of the implementation oversight activities and technical functions through in-kind contributions of staff time from community organizations, or through volunteers from Boston-area corporations (recruited through the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce) or faculty from local universities, particularly their business management, urban planning, and architecture departments.

Support for Local Nonprofits

Local nonprofits are, and have historically been, critical resources for the MEDI area. By providing a range of services that make the area an appealing place to live, and by serving as a source of employment for a significant number of area residents, nonprofits have a vital role to play in the successful implementation of the community's revitalization goals. As such, the MEDI effort should give due consideration to ways to take advantage of the expertise, insights, and resources that these nonprofits possess. As we have noted above, local nonprofits could play an important role in the establishment of the Community Implementation Team.

In addition, it is equally important for the MEDI implementation process to explore ways to support and strengthen the network of local nonprofits. In particular, attention should be paid to helping nonprofits to enhance their facilities and administrative

infrastructure, and to strengthen their strategic planning capabilities. It is also important to remain alert to opportunities to support the nonprofits' on-going efforts to strengthen their boards and to expand their staff capacities.

Possible Projects:

- ❖ Assist local nonprofits in identifying potential funding sources or grant programs, including those of local and national philanthropies, to support the nonprofits' strategic planning and capacity-building activities;
- ❖ Encourage closer collaboration among area nonprofits, including finding ways to increase their efficiencies and achieve economies through joint efforts to deliver services, the use of intermediaries, and/or mergers; assist in identifying opportunities for "new" consortiums among local nonprofits with demonstrated capacities and competencies, to promote work on commonly agreed-upon initiatives;
- ❖ Assist local nonprofits in exploring partnerships with organizations or entities that are located on the "fringes" or outside of the Mattapan neighborhood, which may have an interest, service, or product that can complement the work of Mattapan-based organizations and benefit the quality of life for area residents; for example, expanded partnerships with local universities or corporations may allow local nonprofits to access "pro bono" technical assistance from these entities relative to marketing, strategic planning, etc.;

- ❖ Identify the unmet space requirements of local nonprofits, and examine opportunities to address those space needs in conjunction with the redevelopment of any publicly owned parcels or any publicly financed projects in the MEDI area; and
- ❖ Help to identify individuals in City government or in the Boston philanthropic or university communities, or who are executives in Boston-area corporations, who have an interest in Mattapan and might be willing to serve as a board or advisory member for one of the local nonprofit organizations.

Build Community Equity

It is vital to ensure that as many individuals and entities as possible—residents, business operators, property owners, and local nonprofits and civic groups—benefit from the economic revitalization that the MEDI effort seeks to foster. This is what building “community equity” is all about—improving access, participation, ownership, and the equitable distribution of benefits from the revitalization efforts among community stakeholders.

In all of the MEDI implementation activities it will be crucial to explore opportunities to increase community equity. This can be done through a range of approaches, including pursuing joint ventures, fostering nonprofit participation in projects, promoting increased homeownership opportunities, supporting business start-ups or expansion by local owners, and/or increasing training and employment opportunities, to name a few.

Possible Projects:

- ❖ Encourage the City of Boston, in disposing of any MEDI-area publicly owned parcels for redevelopment, to create incentives for developers to undertake the redevelopment projects as joint ventures with local community development corporations or other nonprofit organizations;
- ❖ In marketing to attract new retail tenants, emphasize outreach to businesses that offer the greatest potential to create jobs for local residents;
- ❖ Work with City agencies and other funding sources to identify homeownership programs that could be accessed to increase the range of homeownership opportunities for current MEDI-area residents (also see Housing chapter for additional recommendations relative to increased housing resources); and
- ❖ Improve connections to the City’s Small Business Resource Center, and/or establish a Mattapan Main Street Program, in order to increase the technical assistance and support available to local small businesses; as part of this effort, ensure that the technical assistance available to businesses is accessible to as diverse a range of store owners/operators as possible.

Seek Strategic Partners

The MEDI Action Agenda can only be implemented if it can generate the support of both the private and public sectors, and mobilize the resources that exist both within and outside of Mattapan. Accordingly, as one aspect of MEDI implementation, it

will be important to look at ways to establish on-going partnerships with universities, corporations, financial institutions, and other private and public entities that can bring additional resources, expertise, and influence to the revitalization effort.

Possible Projects:

- ❖ Partner with the commercial art or design departments of local universities in order to have the students or faculty provide free technical assistance to local businesses in redesigning their window displays, storefront signs, or advertising materials;
- ❖ Partner with local business management schools to have their students or faculty volunteer to assist local entrepreneurs to develop business plans for start-ups, and to assist existing business or property owners to develop expansion plans;
- ❖ Recruit corporate executives, particularly those from regional or national retailers and from commercial real estate consultants, to provide technical advice on how best to frame the marketing of the “Mattapan economic corridor” to prospective retail and commercial tenants; and
- ❖ Meet with representatives of the Massachusetts Economic Development Authority, the City of Boston Department of Neighborhood Development, LISC/Boston, local Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs), local banks, and other financial institutions to explore the possibility of creating earmarked loan pools and/or financing incentives for priority economic development projects in the MEDI study area.

Endnotes

⁸Although this alternative approach reduces any coordination issues, it also is likely that the single designated entity will have less technical capacity than that which could be achieved by several organizations working together.

⁹Locally, The Boston Foundation may be a source to approach. Specific national foundations could also be targeted, depending on the specific nature of the activities to be assisted. For example, the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation assists efforts to increase entrepreneurial activity, and The Kresge Foundation provides support for strengthening nonprofit networks.



The Neponset River – Mattapan's oldest transportation resource

Background

The Evolution of Mattapan¹⁰

The name Mattapan originally derived from the Mattahunt Indian Tribe, which inhabited large areas of Milton, Dedham, Dorchester, Roslindale, and the Mattapan area. The earliest colonial settlement in the area occurred near Mattapan Square, along Babson Street. The Mattapan neighborhood was originally chartered as a part of the town of Dorchester, but in 1870 was annexed to the City of Boston.

Mattapan sits at the crossroads of some of Boston's most historically significant transportation routes and facilities. Mattapan's oldest transportation resource—the Neponset River—gave birth centuries ago to several villages, including Mattapan Square, that remain important residential and commercial centers to this day. Blue Hill Avenue, one of colonial Boston's old post roads, bisects the neighborhood as it makes its

way south from the city. Railroad passenger service for the neighborhood first occurred along the Midlands branch in 1855, and trolley service along Blue Hill Avenue was added in the 1890s. These transportation developments precipitated the residential construction boom in the area at the turn of the century, spurred in part by the influx of immigrants into the city and the neighborhood. Mattapan is also home to the last of the



Trolley service has been in operation in Mattapan off and on since the 1890s

MBTA's "Presidential Conference Car" (PCC) trolley cars, first introduced in the 1940s, which still depart Mattapan Station for Ashmont every five to ten minutes.

As the railroads and streetcars improved travel between downtown Boston and Mattapan, the neighborhood grew both residentially and commercially. The Wellington Hill area, predominantly characterized by two-and three-family homes, developed as a significant residential community within the larger Mattapan neighborhood. Between 1930 and 1950 the southernmost portion of Mattapan gradually developed, as witnessed by the construction of single-family homes on large residential lots. During the 1950s and 1960s, a new housing style emerged, the so-called "garden style" apartments, further diversifying the housing stock in the area.

Although mostly residential, Mattapan has several commercial districts. Mattapan Square, where Blue Hill Avenue, River Street, and Cummins Highway meet, has traditionally been the commercial heart of the Mattapan community, with banks, small stores, food outlets, and retail shops. The intersection of Morton Street and Blue Hill Avenue and the portion of Blue Hill Avenue from Morton Street down to Mattapan Square represent additional commercial districts, albeit less developed and with a more limited range of goods and services available.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the population of the MEDI study area is 19,724.¹¹ Throughout its history Mattapan has been

a neighborhood to which various waves of immigrant groups have gravitated. And while the total population count for Mattapan remained remarkably steady over the decade from 1990 to 2000, the make-up of the neighborhood population has shifted with the continued in-migration of various groups. The most recent immigrant groups to settle in the area are Haitians and others of Caribbean heritage. Together, African-Americans and individuals of Caribbean heritage are estimated to make up 90 percent of the current population of Mattapan.¹²

Although Mattapan's residential community has continued to thrive, its commercial districts have been in economic and physical decline for several decades. The buildings have begun to show signs of wear, and the diversity of products being offered in the commercial centers has narrowed. For example, whereas Mattapan Square was once known for the high quality of the goods in its retail stores, small shops offering discount items now characterize the area.

In considering approaches to promote greater economic vibrancy in the Mattapan commercial districts, there are a number of significant assets that one can build upon. These include its cultural diversity, the considerable "purchasing power" of the residential and commuter population, good transportation routes, sizeable amounts of under-utilized land, a number of buildings with significant architecture character, and proximity to the Neponset River greenway.¹³ The existing assets also include recent infrastructure investments and complementary projects underway

(including the new Mattapan public library and the redevelopment of the MBTA Mattapan Station).

Property developers and members of the business community recently have begun to acknowledge these assets and the tremendous potential for economic success. Fifteen hundred (1500) new residential units have been developed or are currently being planned in the vicinity, commercial buildings in Mattapan Square are being remodeled, and new commercial development is being considered along Morton Street.

The recognition of Mattapan's assets and current development momentum have given rise to a sense of the greater potential in Mattapan's commercial districts. This sense of unmet potential is what precipitated Mayor Menino and the Boston City Council, with guidance from Councilor Charles Yancey, to launch the Mattapan Economic Development Initiative (MEDI) at the end of 2004.

This MEDI Action Agenda report represents the culmination of 18 months of data gathering, analysis, and conversations with community stakeholders that have occurred since January 2004. The intent of this report is to recommend strategies that respond to the concerns and desires expressed by stakeholders, and that take advantage of Mattapan's potential. The strategies are designed to promote increased economic vitality, but also to do in a way that respects and bolsters the community's cultural diversity and builds on its history and assets.

In the Action Agenda chapters that follow, we outline the key revitalization strategies relating to various features of the Mattapan commercial districts. We begin first by focusing on business development, and then follow with discussions of housing, transportation, land use/urban design and zoning.

At the end of this report we also include several appendices that: (a) present a longer term (20 year) timetable for complete MEDI implementation; (b) identify the action steps for implementing shorter-term, high priority projects; and (c) identify a range of potential funding sources.

Endnotes

¹⁰For additional information, see Boston Redevelopment Authority, *Mattapan Economic Development Initiative: Request for Proposals*, July 2004, p. 6.

¹¹The MEDI study area includes census tracts 1010.01, 1010.02, 1011.01, and 1011.02. This is essentially equivalent to the central portion of the 02126 zip code area.

¹²Urban Land Institute, District Council of Boston, *Technical Assistance Panel: Revitalizing Mattapan Square*, 2004, p. 1.

¹³See Urban Land Institute, District Council of Boston, op. cit., p. 3.



Mattapan Vision
Mattapan Square Streetscape – One Possible Design Approach

Business Development

Introduction

The basic purpose of the Mattapan Economic Development Initiative (MEDI) is to identify strategies to stimulate greater economic activity in the commercial districts in the MEDI study area—that is, the greater Mattapan Square area, the Morton Street corridor, and the area along Blue Hill Avenue between Morton Street and Mattapan Square. The expansion of economic activity in these commercial districts is viewed as a way:

- ❖ To allow the MEDI study area to reach its full *potential as a place to live, work, invest, and play*; and in the process...
- ❖ To improve the quality of life of Mattapan residents, business operators, and property owners.

Because of the emphasis on stimulating greater economic activity in these Mattapan commercial

districts, a core focus of this study has been to find ways to *promote greater business development* along the MEDI commercial corridors, by *helping existing businesses to grow* and/or *by encouraging new businesses to locate* in these areas.

To determine the economic growth opportunities in these commercial districts, it is important to examine the types of businesses that are currently located along the MEDI commercial corridors. It is also necessary to assess the potential demand for additional goods and services. To help us to obtain this essential information—that is, data on what goods and services are currently available along the commercial corridors, and how consumers perceive those goods and services—two surveys were conducted: a business establishment survey, and a consumer survey. The results of these surveys, and the methods used in conducting them, are presented below.

The Current Business Inventory

As described above, the MEDI study area is comprised of several distinct commercial areas. Mattapan Square is currently zoned by the City of Boston as a “community commercial subdistrict.” The other portions of the MEDI commercial corridors, including Morton Street and the portion of Blue Hill Avenue running from the Square to Morton Street, are currently viewed (and zoned) as “neighborhood shopping subdistricts.”

The Business Establishment Inventory conducted in 2005 in connection with the MEDI study focused on identifying the categories of businesses and other types of establishments that are currently present in these commercial areas, and along adjacent major transportation corridors (particularly River Street and Cummins Highway).¹⁴ The information gathered from this Business Establishment Inventory (summarized by *establishment type* in the maps on pages 34 and 35 and in Exhibits 1a through 1c at the end of the chapter) shows that the MEDI study area is currently served by a wide variety of business establishments and service providers. The 2005 inventory identified over 200 business establishments on or near the MEDI commercial corridors, as well as a range of health services providers (22 such establishments), places of worship (13), social services providers (12), government offices (4), community/fraternal organizations (3), and schools (2).¹⁵

Although there are a large number of businesses in the area, some types of establishments appear to be overrepresented, whereas other categories of businesses have few if any examples in the current inventory. For example, there are 40 personal care establishments (primarily hair, nails, and/or skin salons), 26 limited service restaurants or fast food establishments, and 22 auto service or parts stores along the MEDI commercial corridors. Collectively, these represent 44 percent, or almost half, of the business establishments located along the MEDI commercial corridors.

In contrast, however, there are only 3 “full service”¹⁶ restaurants in the MEDI study area. There is also only one mid-sized or large grocery store (located at the southern end of Mattapan Square), and no “superstore”-type supermarket within the MEDI study area. Similarly, there is only one pharmacy, located on the northern periphery of the study area off Morton Street. There are no entertainment establishments (theaters, music venues, etc.).

In addition, the number of establishments in a particular category doesn't give a full picture of the range of goods offered, or the limits thereof. For example, at the time of the 2005 business establishment inventory there were 16 retail clothing stores and 3 shoe stores along the MEDI study area corridors, but the former tend to specialize in casual clothes and/or clothes for youth, and the latter focus primarily on sneakers. Most current stores along the commercial corridors compete with each other in offering

modestly priced goods, and there are only a few establishments that emphasize finer quality goods or more upscale products.

The products offered by any one establishment are also limited by the size of the retail space that it occupies. Many of the retail establishments occupy small storefront properties, often with less than 1200 square feet of retail display space for their goods. The overall business activity currently generated along the corridors is also limited by the fact that, with the exception of the food establishments and liquor stores, few establishments are open much past 6 pm.

Portions of the MEDI commercial corridors show signs of disinvestment—with some storefronts in need of painting or repair, inconsistent (and sometimes home-made) signage, poor interior lighting, and general litter along the sidewalks. This makes it more difficult for the commercial districts to appeal to a broader consumer audience. There are also at least 21 vacant properties or lots along the commercial corridors; although these vacant sites represent potential locations for new businesses, they also currently detract from the appearance of the commercial areas.

The MEDI Consumer Survey

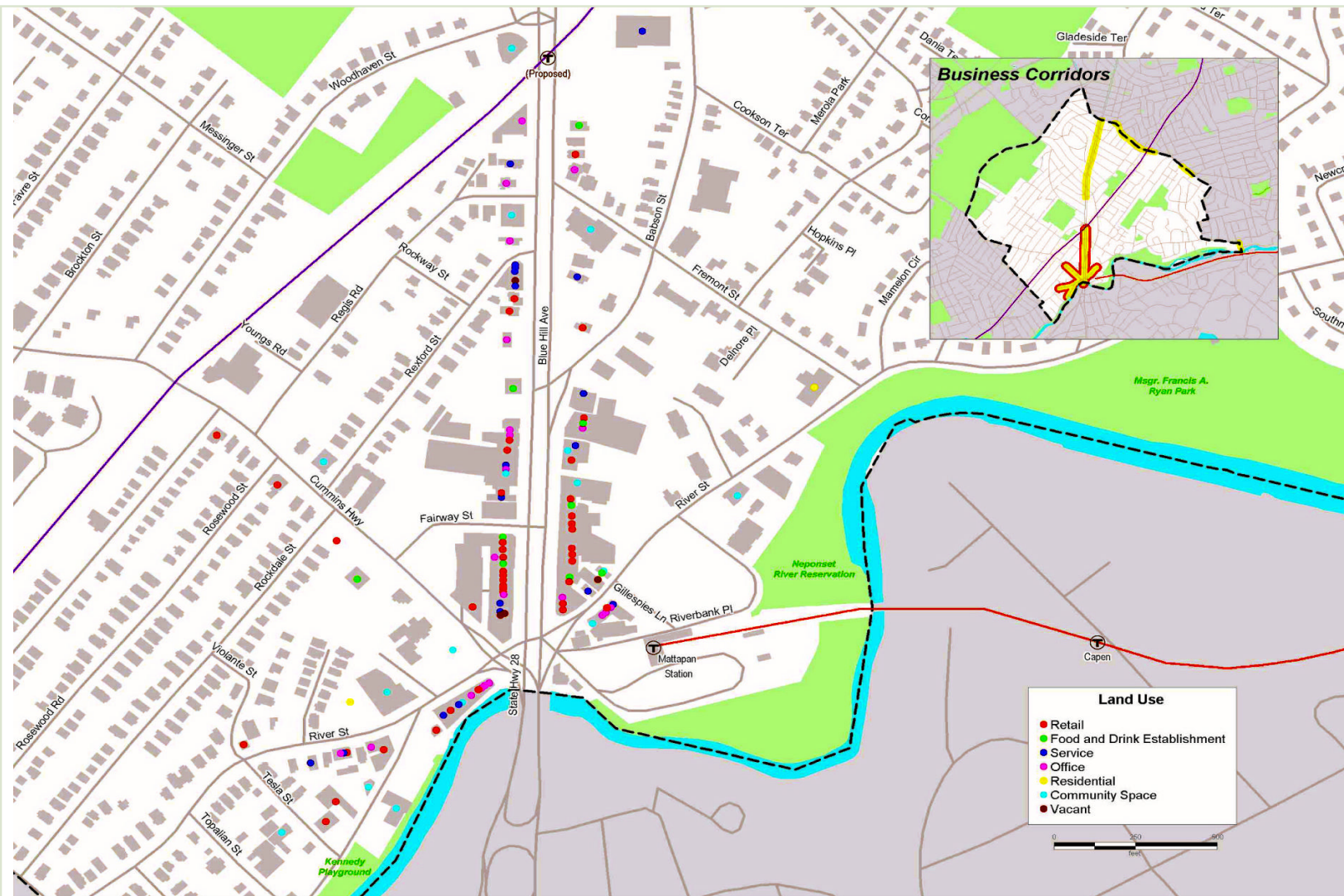
To get a sense of how consumers view the existing goods and services that can be found in the MEDI commercial districts, a consumer survey was designed and administered.¹⁷ To date 105 completed consumer surveys have been received and tabulated,



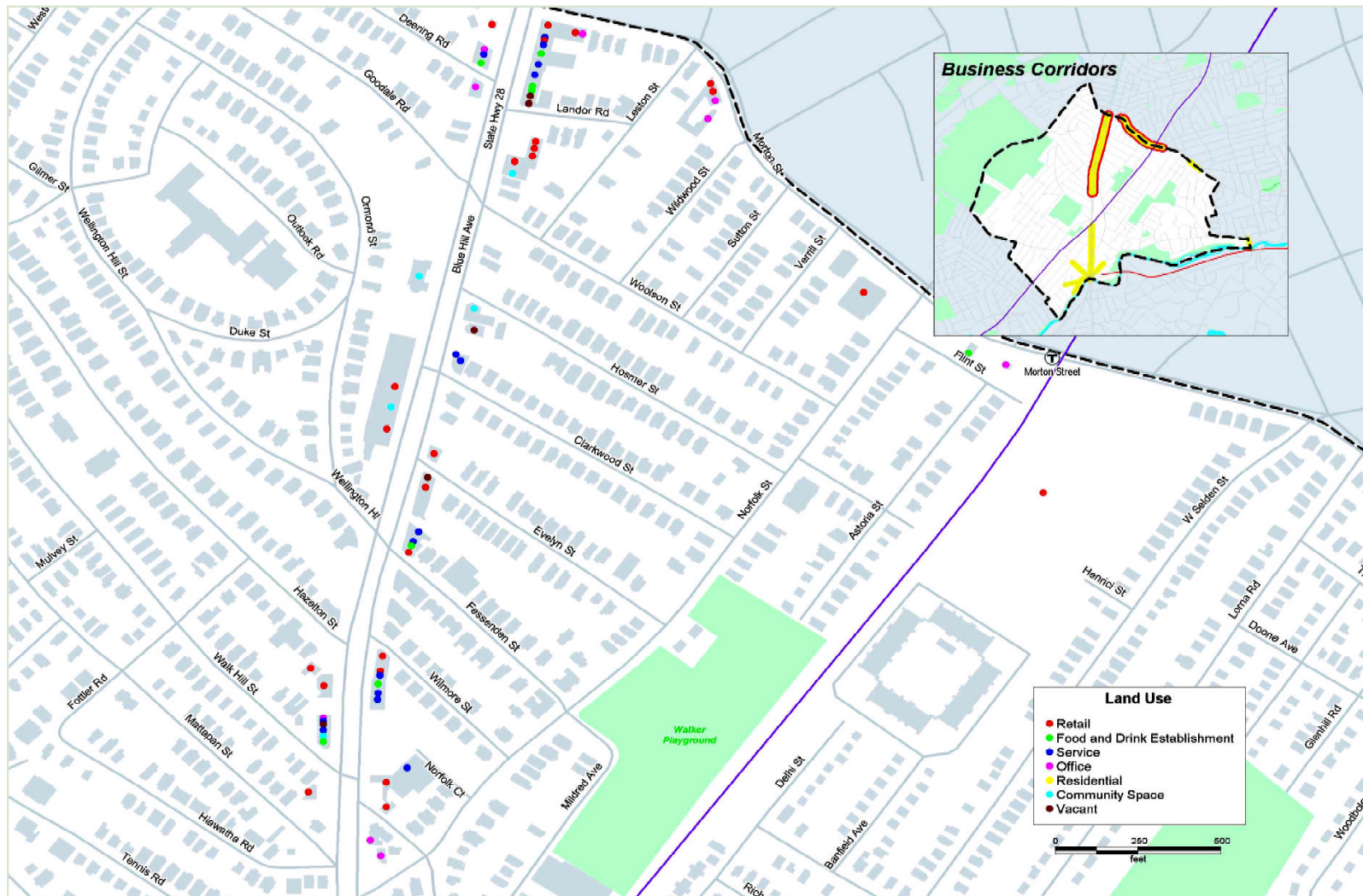
Consumers walking in Mattapan Square

55 (52%) from Mattapan residents and 45 (43%) from non-residents.¹⁸ Exhibit 2 (see end of chapter) provides the results of the analysis of responses to the consumer survey.

One of the questions posed by the consumer survey was *where the respondents shop in addition to (or as an alternative to) shopping in Mattapan*.¹⁹ This question was asked to allow the MEDI study team to identify some of the shopping destinations with whom the MEDI commercial districts may be competing, and to assess consumers' willingness to travel a considerable distance to shop. The MEDI consumer survey respondents report shopping in a variety of locations; some tend to shop in areas relatively close to Mattapan (e.g., Roslindale, Cleary Square/Hyde Park, Lower Mills/Dorchester, Roxbury/Dudley Square, West Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, and Milton), but most appear willing to travel a significant



Current Actual
Mattapan Square Commercial Land Use



Current Actual
Morton Street and Blue Hill Ave. Commercial Land Use



An example of a Mattapan commercial area along Blue Hill Avenue

distance for at least some of their goods or services (including New Hampshire, Maine, and New York). The most frequently-mentioned shopping destinations beyond adjoining neighborhoods include: Braintree, Dedham, Quincy, Brookline, Brockton, Burlington, and Avon (where there are shopping malls and/or superstore supermarkets), Downtown Boston (Downtown Crossing, the Prudential Center/Copley Square, and/or Newbury Street), Cambridge, and Chestnut Hill (Newton). Some of the survey respondents also indicated that they shop on the Internet.

Below is highlighted additional feedback received in survey responses from Mattapan residents and non-residents regarding their shopping experiences in the MEDI area and elsewhere.

“Mattapan Resident” Survey Respondents

The responses from the Mattapan residents who completed the consumer survey indicate that most of these individuals use the MEDI commercial districts primarily for convenience shopping, and do their more extensive shopping—including buying groceries—outside of the MEDI study area. The responses to the survey (and particularly to the survey's open-ended questions) also suggest that a sizable number of Mattapan residents avoid doing any but the most minimal shopping in the MEDI study area because of the districts' appearance, limited range of goods, and/or parking difficulties. Conversely, the reasons given by the Mattapan residents for shopping at other locations emphasized the greater range and/or quality of goods and services at these other locations, better parking, and better prices. Additional details are presented below:

- ❖ Four out of every five survey respondents that are Mattapan residents (44 individuals, or 80%) reported that they did at least some of their shopping in the MEDI study area. The principal reasons cited for shopping in the MEDI area were: convenience (62% of respondents) and habit (31%). For these individuals, the most common goods and services purchased in the area include, in order of frequency, beauty supplies,²⁰ banking services, fast food restaurants, gas, groceries,²¹ personal care services, and dry cleaning. The respondents indicated that they most typically shop in the MEDI area on a weekly or monthly basis.

- ❖ Fifteen percent of the Mattapan residents responding to the survey indicated that they never shop in the MEDI area. The reasons most frequently cited by these individuals for not shopping in the area related to what they see as the lack of variety in goods and services (particularly relative to higher quality goods), the appearance of the Mattapan Square commercial districts, and the double parking.
- ❖ When the Mattapan residents who responded to the survey shop outside of the MEDI area, the goods and services that they most frequently purchase are:
 - Groceries (80% of the respondents);
 - Clothing (75% of respondents);
 - Shoes (63% of respondents);
 - Sit down restaurants (56% of respondents);
 - Pharmacy-related products (51% of respondents);
 - Gas (51% of respondents);
 - Home furnishings (49% of respondents);
 - Banking (49% of respondents);
 - Electronics (47% of respondents);
 - Personal care services (45% of respondents);
 - Books (45% of respondents).
- ❖ The most common reasons given by the Mattapan residents responding to the survey for purchasing these goods and services at locations outside of the MEDI area were that the products/services were not available elsewhere, good/better quality, availability of parking, good/better price, and friendly staff and/or attractive store space.



Example of a well-designed street cafe

“Non-Resident” Survey Respondents

Non-Mattapan residents that work or shop in Mattapan also completed consumer surveys. These non-residents are equally important consumers of Mattapan goods and services. Their responses illustrate the opportunities and barriers that currently exist to attracting commuters and neighborhood residents to patronize businesses within the MEDI study area.

The non-Mattapan residents who completed the consumer survey typically indicated that they currently shop in the MEDI area primarily because of convenience, either because they work in the

area or because they are in the area to do banking or to visit friends or relatives. More than three-quarters of the non-Mattapan residents responding to the survey report doing at least some of their shopping in the MEDI area; most do such shopping on a monthly or bi-weekly basis. For these survey respondents, the goods and/or services most frequently purchased in the MEDI area are fast food, beauty supplies, groceries, gas, banking services, personal care services, and dry cleaning.

Additional Desired Goods & Services in the MEDI Study Area

In addition to describing their current shopping patterns, the consumer survey respondents also were asked to identify the types of new stores, or additional goods and services that they would like to see available in the MEDI study area. Of the 105 survey respondents, 76 individuals provided information relative to the additional stores and other facilities that they would like to see locate in the MEDI area. According to these 76 respondents, the additional types of new stores or services most desired in the MEDI study area include:

- ❖ A pharmacy located more centrally in the MEDI area or in Mattapan Square (mentioned by 31 individuals, or more than 40% of the respondents identifying additional desired services);
- ❖ A larger, higher quality supermarket (mentioned by 21 respondents);
- ❖ Sit-down, “quality” restaurants (also mentioned by 21 respondents);

- ❖ A department store offering a range of goods – clothes, housewares, etc. (mentioned by 17 respondents);
- ❖ Higher quality women's and/or men's apparel stores (mentioned by 12 respondents); and
- ❖ Major book retailer (mentioned by 9 respondents).

Other types of desired retail stores or facilities named by multiple survey respondents included a meeting hall or cultural center, a hardware store, an office supply store, an electronics store, a 24-hour store, and a bakery. In addition to an expansion in the types of businesses, the survey responses demonstrated a strong desire by consumers for *higher quality* retail and commercial goods and services being available in the MEDI study area.

The additional desired goods and services in the Mattapan area are obviously consistent with the other MEDI survey findings relative to why consumers shop in locations outside the MEDI study area, and what they purchase at these other locations. It seems clear that many consumers would like to be able to buy similar goods and services in the MEDI area.

The Challenges (and the Opportunities for Steady Improvement)

As noted above, the Mattapan commercial districts currently function largely as neighborhood and/or convenience shopping areas. The local businesses that offer products beyond

convenience-related goods and services generally focus on lower-priced or discount items. Although these existing businesses are responding to a legitimate existing demand, there also appears to be a significant unmet demand for additional retail outlets and for higher quality goods and services, including “fine” sit-down restaurants. The anecdotal information provided by survey respondents is also supported by economic analysis. According to the economic model developed by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute, residents within the MEDI study have an annual “purchasing power” of over \$62 million dollars. Of this \$62 million, nearly \$40 million is spent outside of the Mattapan neighborhood, resulting in a sizeable “retail sales leakage.”²²

Meeting the unmet demand for more retail outlets and higher quality goods and services will require convincing existing businesses to upgrade the range of products that they offer, as well as attracting some new and/or higher-end establishments to locate in the commercial districts. Achieving the latter will require property owners to be more selective and persuasive in marketing to prospective tenants, as well as (in some cases) investing in physical improvements to (or redevelopment of) current commercial space.

Existing stores and property owners will invest in such upgrading, and new or higher-end retailers and service providers will consider locating in the MEDI area, only if they are convinced that such actions represent good economic investments. Making the case for such investments will entail demonstrating that:

- ❖ The local consumer base can support the new establishments and/or upgraded goods and services;
- ❖ The commercial districts can capture a larger share of consumer dollars of local residents and of commuters; and
- ❖ The commercial districts over time can increase their appeal as shopping, dining, and/or entertainment destinations for residents from other communities beyond adjoining neighborhoods.

As mentioned above, a preliminary analysis suggests that there is a consumer base, with an estimated annual purchasing power of over \$62 million, already in place to support some of the types of expanded goods and services that are most desired by residents and others who frequent the MEDI area.

As part of the MEDI study team's efforts to document the strength of the purchasing power of local residents, we also conducted analyses of the capacity of the local consumer base to support specific types of new or expanded business establishments. As part of these analyses, we focused initially on pharmacies and grocery stores because of the clear interest in such establishments expressed in the responses to the consumer survey. We used population and per capital income information for the MEDI study area, and applied industry-specific sales information and algorithms developed by the Center for Community Economic Development at the University of Wisconsin.²³ From our analysis, we determined:

- ❖ The MEDI study area has sufficient consumer purchasing power to support 26,624 square foot of retail pharmacy space. This is equivalent to more than double the space of the average-sized Rite Aid, CVS, or Walgreen's drug store.
- ❖ The MEDI area's consumer purchasing power is also sufficient to support 75,458 square feet of grocery store retail space. This is equivalent to more than one "superstore" supermarket, or more than 2 average-sized Whole Foods Markets;

The MEDI study team conducted similar analyses looking at the capacity of the local area to economically support a hardware store and a movie theater. We must acknowledge that the demand among local residents for such establishments is not as pronounced as it is for another pharmacy or expanded grocery services. However, we felt it would be worthwhile to complete these additional analyses to provide an opportunity for the MEDI community to begin thinking more broadly about other possibilities for expanded good and services. Based on these analyses:

- ❖ The MEDI study area's consumer purchasing power was found to be sufficient to support 50,640 square feet of hardware/housewares retail space. This space could be seen as being part of a larger department store, or as a mid-sized stand-alone hardware store.
- ❖ The MEDI area's local consumer purchasing power could support a two-screen movie theater. Presuming that such a theater would draw an audience from adjoining communities as well, it is likely that the aggregate consumer demand from the

larger region could support a four-screen or larger movie theater.

Obviously, the existence of local purchasing power, and actually capturing a sufficient share of the consumer market, are two different things. Based on what the MEDI study team has heard from consumers and other community stakeholders, at a minimum the latter will require:

- ❖ Increasing the visual appeal of the MEDI commercial districts;
- ❖ Doing an effective job of communicating to the general public about the new goods and services that are being made available in the districts;
- ❖ Ensuring that people from the MEDI neighborhoods and other communities feel safe shopping in the commercial districts, particularly after dark; and
- ❖ Providing adequate parking facilities and/or eased pedestrian access for the new shoppers.

Additionally, capturing the consumer market assumes that successful business recruitment occurs. Recruiting desired businesses and locating them in adequate space and a desirable location, both for the business and the neighborhood, will be a significant challenge that will require a coordinated effort on the part of City of Boston staff, local business associations, property owners, and real estate brokers.²⁴ A targeted marketing plan also will be essential to recruitment success.

In the following section, we outline a number of inter-related business development strategies to address the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities cited above.

Business Development-related Strategies to Foster Greater Economic Activity

Business Expansion and New Business Recruitment

This portion of the MEDI Action Agenda is envisioned as a set of complementary activities designed to upgrade the range and quality of merchandise available in the MEDI commercial districts. It proposes to do this through pursuing a dual strategy—encouraging incremental improvements in goods and services offered by existing businesses, as well as attracting new retail tenants. Specific elements of this strategic component include:

Possible projects:

- ❖ Create a “Mattapan Retail Corridor” identity along the MEDI commercial corridors, including enhancing the “gateway” image at the Mattapan-Milton line;
- ❖ Work with City of Boston officials to find ways to expedite permitting/approval processes for commercial renovation projects and/or for undertaking new commercial uses consistent with MEDI priorities;
- ❖ Encourage selective expansion in the size of existing and planned commercial units to provide more appealing space options for prospective tenants;
- ❖ Attract additional core retail/commercial services and/or “anchor stores;”
- ❖ Increase the operating hours of establishments in the MEDI commercial districts;
- ❖ Provide more intentional technical assistance to existing businesses; and
- ❖ Establish links with the MBTA station improvement projects and to the Neponset River Greenway project (which is attempting to develop parkland along the Neponset River).



The Mattapan economy is supported by its existing local businesses

As the above list suggests, this element of the MEDI Action Agenda seeks to promote a more integrated, attractive identity for the Mattapan commercial districts, and to connect them more intentionally to natural assets and complementary development projects that can bring additional consumers to the commercial corridors.

Improving the Appearance of the MEDI Commercial Districts

Given the feedback from the consumer survey that the physical appearance of the Mattapan commercial districts is one of the most common reasons why many individuals decide to shop in other locations, improving the appearance of the MEDI commercial corridors will be an imperative step in revitalizing these districts.

Possible projects:

- ❖ Encourage use of security grating designed to blend in with building when raised; encourage store operators to raise their grates before rush hour so they are less obvious;
- ❖ Enforce signage regulations to promote more consistent and professional-looking storefront signs; assist qualified businesses that want to upgrade their signs to obtain signage loans or grants through the Department of Neighborhood Development's Re-Store program;
- ❖ Provide more targeted technical assistance to store owners to improve the appearance of their

window displays, and to obtain financing to upgrade interior lighting and space; and

- ❖ Engage storeowners in efforts to maintain the cleanliness of sidewalks and plantings.



A renovated Dorchester storefront completed with support from the City of Boston's ReStore Program

Improved Public Safety:

Addressing concerns about public safety is essential for attracting new retail tenants and consumers to the MEDI commercial districts, and for encouraging existing property and business owners to make additional investments in upgrading. Recent incidents of violence and related news stories have raised concerns about public safety within Mattapan. Even if the perceptions of crime in the MEDI area are far more negative than the reality warrants, the perceptions need to be taken very seriously because they will determine the behavior of potential shoppers and investors.

We are recommending a four-pronged approach to improving public safety in the MEDI area:

- ❖ Support community-wide efforts to address issues around violence;
- ❖ Address any security issues at parking facilities;
- ❖ Deal with broader public perceptions of crime; and
- ❖ Increase policing at night to coincide with expanded operating hours.

Possible Projects:

- ❖ Work with the City of Boston to apply for funding that will allow a more comprehensive approach to dealing with issues around violence in the Mattapan neighborhood;

- ❖ Meet with the Mattapan Board of Trade, the Morton Street Board of Commerce, and other MEDI-area business associations to identify and prioritize their public safety concerns; establish regular meetings with the District B-3 Commander and other law enforcement officials to develop plans for addressing the business community's concerns, and to monitor actions taken; and
- ❖ Work strategically with local media outlets to identify topics for newspaper articles that will create a more balanced view of public safety in the MEDI study area; meet with the editors or editorial boards of local newspapers to encourage these journals to run stories reflecting this more balanced view.

In the next chapter of the MEDI Action Agenda, we examine transportation conditions in the MEDI area, and propose transportation-related strategies that will complement the business development activities.

Exhibit 1a: 2005 Establishment Survey -- Services

Establishment Type	# in MEDI Study Area*	# adjacent to MEDI Study Area**
Services: Personal Care (hair, nails, skin, fitness)		
Hair, Nails and Skin Care	40	7
Fitness	-	-
Services: Professional		
Legal	5	-
Travel	2	-
Other (e.g. Funeral Home, Photo Studio)	8	2
Services: Insurance	8	2
Services: Financial		
Banking	4	1
Mortgage	4	1
Other (e.g. Check Cashing, Tax Preparations)	8	-
Services: Health		
Medical	7	-
Dental	2	1
Chiropractic/Rehabilitation/Physical Therapy	10	1
Other (e.g. Optometrists, Natural Health Educ.)	3	-
Services: Real Estate	6	-
Services: Dry Cleaning/Laundry		
Dry Cleaning/Alterations	7	2
Laundry	3	-
Services: Publishing	1	-
Food/Drink Service: Limited Service Restaurant	26	3
Food/Drink Service: Full service Restaurant	3	1
Food/Drink Service: Drinking Only	1	-
Total	148	21

* Establishments within the MEDI study area along Blue Hill Ave, Morton St, River St., and Cummins Hwy

** Establishments located in areas outside of but adjacent to the MEDI study area

Exhibit 1b: 2005 Establishment Survey -- Retail

Establishment Type	# in MEDI Study Area*	# adjacent to MEDI Study Area**
Retail: Clothing	16	2
Retail: Shoes	3	-
Retail: Grocery		
Convenience Store/Small Grocery	12	6
Large Grocery	1	1
Health Food/Supplements	2	-
Other (e.g. Health Food, Supplements, Smokehouse)	3	-
Retail: Liquor Store	5	1
Retail: General Merchandising	7	-
Retail/Service: Auto		
Fuel	6	-
Maintenance/Repair	15	-
Parts	1	-
Sales	1	1
Retail/Service: Home		
Furnishings	3	-
Improvements	5	-
Retail/Service: Florist	3	-
Retail/Service: Sporting/Hobby/Book and Music	12	1
Retail/Service: Office Supply and Copy Center	-	-
Retail/Service: Computer and Software	-	-
Retail/Service: Art and Framing	-	-
Retail/Service: Pharmacy/Drug Store	1	-
Retail/Service: Telephones/Electronics	4	1
Retail/Service: Beauty Supply	4	-
Total	104	13

* Establishments within the MEDI study area along Blue Hill Ave, Morton St, River St., and Cummins Hwy

** Establishments located in areas outside of but adjacent to the MEDI study area

Exhibit 1c: 2005 Establishment Survey -- Non-profit, Institutional and Public Uses

Establishment Type	# in MEDI Study Area*	# adjacent to MEDI Study Area**
Government	5	1
Residences (Age/Income Restricted)	4	1
School	2	1
Museum/Historical Sites	-	-
Places of Worship	13	-
Community/Fraternal Organization	3	1
Social Services (counseling/aid/day care)	12	-
Vacant Building	21	1
Park/Open Space	1	-
Total	104	13

* Establishments within the MEDI study area along Blue Hill Ave, Morton St, River St., and Cummins Hwy

** Establishments located in areas outside of but adjacent to the MEDI study area

Exhibit 2: MEDI Consumer Survey Results

Survey Topics and Response Categories	Mattapan Resident Respondents (N=55)	Non-Mattapan Resident Respondents (N=45)
Reasons for visiting the MEDI area?		
Banking	26 (47%)	19 (42%)
Shopping	25 (45%)	11 (24%)
Walking/browsing	10 (18%)	8 (18%)
Working	12 (22%)	24 (53%)
Religious services	14 (25%)	5 (11%)
Eating	15 (27%)	11 (24%)
Commuting/passing through	28 (51%)	11 (24%)
Visiting friends/relatives	10 (18%)	17 (38%)
Combination of reasons	15 (27%)	6 (13%)
Ever shop for goods or services in MEDI area?		
Yes	44 (80%)	35 (78%)
No	8 (15%)	10 (22%)
Missing	3 (5%)	-
Kinds of goods or services shop for in MEDI area?		
Goods		
Food – fast food restaurant	24 (44%)	19 (42%)
Food – sit-down restaurant	11 (20%)	7 (16%)
Alcohol – bar/tavern	3 (5%)	1 (2%)
Clothing	14 (25%)	11 (24%)
Shoes	12 (22%)	8 (18%)
Groceries	18 (33%)	16 (36%)
Health food/supplements	7 (13%)	5 (11%)
Liquor – liquor store	6 (11%)	1 (2%)
Gas	19 (35%)	15 (33%)
Car parts/automotive	5 (9%)	5 (11%)
Home furnishings	5 (9%)	4 (9%)
Home improvement/hardware	6 (11%)	2 (4%)
Flowers (florist)	3 (5%)	3 (7%)
Books	7 (13%)	2 (4%)
Music	6 (11%)	7 (16%)
Pharmacy	5 (9%)	6 (13%)
Cell phones/telephones	5 (9%)	5 (11%)
Electronics	2 (4%)	1 (2%)
Beauty supplies	28 (51%)	18 (40%)
Services		
Personal care (hair, nails, skin)	16 (29%)	10 (22%)
Legal services	5 (9%)	2 (4%)
Travel services	4 (7%)	3 (7%)
Insurance	8 (15%)	7 (16%)
Banking	25 (45%)	15 (33%)
Mortgage services	3 (5%)	8 (18%)
Medical/health care/dental	8 (15%)	4 (9%)
Chiropractic/rehab/physical therapy	5 (9%)	5 (11%)
Real estate services	2 (4%)	-
Dry cleaning/alterations	15 (27%)	10 (22%)
Laundry (Laundromat)	10 (18%)	7 (16%)
Car maintenance	11 (20%)	7 (16%)
Home improvement services	4 (7%)	1 (2%)
Why shop for these items or services in MEDI area?		
Convenience	34 (62%)	24 (53%)
Availability of parking	9 (16%)	5 (11%)
Good/better quality	6 (11%)	-
Good/better price	9 (16%)	6 (13%)

Exhibit 2: MEDI Consumer Survey Results (con't.)

Survey Topics and Response Categories	Mattapan Resident Respondents (N=55)	Non-Mattapan Resident Respondents (N=45)
Habit/long term relationship with store	17 (31%)	7 (16%)
Friendly store owner/staff, attractive space	7 (13%)	3 (7%)
Products/services unique or not available elsewhere	3 (5%)	6 (13%)
How frequently shop in MEDI area?		
Daily	4 (7%)	4 (9%)
Weekly	16 (29%)	7 (16%)
Bi-weekly (every two weeks)	5 (9%)	8 (18%)
Monthly	12 (22%)	13 (29%)
Several times a year	9 (16%)	3 (7%)
Annually	1 (2%)	1 (2%)
Missing	8 (15%)	9 (20%)
Kinds of goods or services shop for at other (non-MEDI area) locations?		
Goods		
Food – fast food restaurant	24 (44%)	25 (56%)
Food – sit-down restaurant	31 (56%)	17 (38%)
Alcohol – bar/tavern	7 (13%)	5 (11%)
Clothing	41 (75%)	21 (47%)
Shoes	35 (63%)	20 (44%)
Groceries	44 (80%)	32 (71%)
Health food/supplements	20 (36%)	13 (29%)
Liquor – liquor store	12 (22%)	8 (18%)
Gas	28 (51%)	19 (42%)
Car parts/automotive	19 (36%)	12 (27%)
Home furnishings	27 (49%)	12 (27%)
Home improvement/hardware	21 (38%)	14 (31%)
Flowers (florist)	15 (27%)	14 (31%)
Books	25 (45%)	17 (38%)
Music	22 (40%)	13 (29%)
Pharmacy	28 (51%)	24 (53%)
Cell phones/telephones	15 (27%)	12 (27%)
Electronics	26 (47%)	9 (20%)
Beauty supplies	16 (29%)	16 (36%)
Services		
Personal care (hair, nails, skin)	25 (45%)	15 (33%)
Legal services	10 (18%)	6 (13%)
Travel services	14 (25%)	5 (11%)
Insurance	13 (24%)	10 (22%)
Banking	27 (49%)	24 (53%)
Mortgage services	11 (20%)	6 (13%)
Medical/health care/dental	22 (40%)	12 (26%)
Chiropractic/rehab/physical therapy	1 (2%)	3 (7%)
Real estate services	4 (7%)	5 (11%)
Dry cleaning/alterations	18 (33%)	16 (36%)
Laundry (Laundromat)	9 (16%)	10 (22%)
Car maintenance	18 (33%)	10 (22%)
Home improvement services	16 (29%)	5 (11%)
Why shop for these items or services in other (non-MEDI area) locations?		
Convenience	23 (42%)	25 (56%)
Availability of parking	32 (58%)	17 (38%)
Good/better quality	33 (60%)	17 (38%)
Good/better price	27 (49%)	15 (33%)
Habit/long term relationship with store	12 (22%)	9 (20%)
Friendly store owner/staff, attractive space	21 (38%)	11 (24%)
Products/services unique or not available elsewhere	33 (60%)	16 (36%)

Endnotes

¹⁴The corridors inventoried are Blue Hill Ave, Morton St, River St., and Cummins Hwy; all portions of these corridors within the MEDI study area were inventoried. Members of the Abt Associates consulting team conducted a visual survey in August 2005, assisted by members of the MEDI Community Advisory Group and Boston Redevelopment Authority staff.

¹⁵As part of the MEDI data gathering activities, business establishments just outside of the boundaries of the MEDI study area were also inventoried. This data collection effort revealed that there are an additional 31 business establishments located adjacent to the MEDI study area.

¹⁶By “full service,” we mean sit-down restaurants with waitresses and/or waiters to take and deliver food orders (as opposed to cafeteria-style).

¹⁷The consumer survey used a two-page, self-administered form. The form was distributed at MEDI community meetings, to addresses on the BRA Mattapan mailing list, to a variety of Mattapan civic and business groups, and to other Mattapan residents, businesses, and organizations through the members of the Community Advisory Group. The form was also posted on the BRA website for MEDI. It is important to note that because of the way in which this consumer survey was administered, we cannot assume that the information that was reported is *statistically representative* of the views of consumers that do (or might) shop in the MEDI study area. Nonetheless, any patterns in the survey responses provided are worth noting, particularly when this consumer feedback seems to be consistent with information that the MEDI study team has obtained from other sources (such as a similar survey completed by the Mattapan Board of Trade).

¹⁸Five respondents (5%) did not indicate whether they were Mattapan residents or non-residents.

¹⁹This was asked through an “open-ended” question to ensure that responses on shopping destinations were not being influenced by pre-coded response categories.

²⁰Given the large number of personal care (hair, nails, skin) establishments along the MEDI commercial corridors, this finding is not unexpected.

²¹Since 80 percent of the Mattapan residents who responded to the survey indicated that they also shop for groceries in locations outside the MEDI area, it is likely that a significant portion of the grocery purchases in the MEDI area may be limited to “convenience shopping” (for such items as bread, milk, etc.).

²²University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute, 2005. The analysis is based on 2000 Census data, the 2002 Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Expenditure Survey, and the U.S. Census 2000 Place-of-Work Census Transportation Planning Package (CTPP) tabulations released in 2005.

²³For more information on the algorithms developed by the University of Wisconsin, visit <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cced/dma/9.html>.

²⁴Because of the interest of MEDI area consumers in attracting “fine, sit-down restaurants” to the Mattapan commercial corridors, the study team investigated whether a “purchasing power” analysis would be an appropriate method to assess the appeal of the MEDI districts for an individual looking to open a restaurant in the area. The study team spoke to several operators of Boston-area “fine restaurants” to find out how they would make their decision about where to locate. From this research, it appears that although having some general sense of the overall purchasing power of the surrounding community would be part of the decision-making process, other factors often would prove to be more critical factors to a prospective restaurant operator seeking a location. In particular, individuals considering a site for a restaurant would look for:

- A location along a transportation corridor that gets a lot of traffic, and/or is perceived as an easy destination to reach;
- Convenient parking (or valet parking service);
- A perception by the public that the location is safe at night;
- Reasonable rents (and a long-term, stable lease, or right-of-first-refusal to buy the property);
- The availability of a liquor license (since a high percentage of profits in restaurants comes from liquor sales); and
- The presence of some other restaurants (to ensure general consumer awareness of the location as an eating destination), but not excessive competition, particularly for the same style of cuisine.

A number of these factors relate directly to the challenges that we have noted in the text regarding marketing the MEDI districts to new prospective retail or service establishments.



Mattapan Vision
New Connection to River Street – Example of Possible Design for Mixed-use Development

Transportation

Introduction

Transportation options and patterns are important for measuring the appeal of Mattapan as both a residential location and as a consumer destination. The extent to which its transportation networks make Mattapan an attractive location to live will add to the area's ability to attract and retain residents across a range of incomes; these residents represent an important consumer base for the business establishments in MEDI's commercial districts. The transportation system (and related infrastructure) also determine how convenient it is to shop in the MEDI commercial districts, both for Mattapan residents and for individuals traveling from other communities, and what other shopping destination alternatives are readily accessible to Mattapan residents.

For these reasons, the existing transportation system (and improvements that occur to it) can be important factors in enhancing the economic vitality of the MEDI business districts. With a strong vision for Mattapan's economic development future, the community can work with the City of Boston and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to ensure that future transportation investments are undertaken in a way that fosters additional economic opportunities.

In this report, we highlight some of the opportunities that exist for using Mattapan's transportation resources to increase economic activity in its commercial districts and improve the quality of life of Mattapan residents. We begin by summarizing key features of the current transportation system in the MEDI area, noting some of the economic development implications of this system.

Existing Conditions

The convergence of transportation routes that gave birth to Mattapan (see Chapter 3) is still one of its greatest economic resources. The current transportation system in Mattapan includes both major transportation arteries for vehicular traffic, and a range of public transit alternatives.

Major Transportation Arteries

Blue Hill Avenue and Morton Street are the primary arteries in Mattapan. Morton Street experiences the highest daily traffic volume, 27,600 vehicles according to a recent traffic count study commissioned by the BRA, and is a major cross-town thoroughfare



Looking North along Blue Hill Avenue, one of Mattapan's main transportation corridors

connecting Jamaica Plain and the Emerald Necklace parkway system with south Dorchester and Interstate 93. Blue Hill Avenue, with an average of 21,200 vehicles per day, according to the traffic count study, connects the Mattapan neighborhood with Dorchester and Roxbury to the north and Milton and Route 128 to the south. Other major Mattapan roadways include Cummins Highway (16,943 vehicles/day), and River Street (11,173 vehicles/day), which serve to link Mattapan to surrounding communities. Cummins Highway links Mattapan Square to Roslindale. River Street follows the course of the Neponset River, linking Mattapan to Lower Mills, Hyde Park and Dedham.

Blue Hill Avenue remains the arterial that most defines the character of the MEDI neighborhood. It is the gateway and primary image of Mattapan for many commuters from other communities. As a wide boulevard, Blue Hill Avenue can also function as a neighborhood divide, making its crossing points take on significance when trying to foster a more cohesive community, or to promote a more pedestrian-friendly shopping experience.

Much of the traffic passing through Mattapan along these routes originates in other Boston neighborhoods or in the suburbs. Many auto-oriented businesses (gas stations, fast food restaurants, convenience shops, etc.) have located along these busy Mattapan corridors to take advantage of this traffic. However, although many passing motorists already shop along the Mattapan commercial corridors, as noted in the results to the consumer survey (see Chapter 4), efforts could be made to more fully capture the spending power of these commuters.

Public Transit

The MEDI study area benefits from a variety of public transportation options.

Mattapan is served by several bus routes, most of which originate out of Mattapan Square.²⁵ The buses travel along the major road arteries (for example, during peak hours approximately 39 buses travel along Blue Hill Avenue per hour) and/or connect with the Mattapan High Speed PCC²⁶ trolley. In addition to local service within Mattapan, these bus routes provide connections to the MBTA Orange Line and Silver Line and to the neighboring communities of Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, Dorchester, Hyde Park, Roslindale, Milton, Quincy and Canton.

The Mattapan High Speed PCC trolley at the MBTA Mattapan Station connects travelers to the MBTA Red Line at Ashmont Station in Dorchester. The High Speed PCC trolley serves several stations in Milton and Dorchester along the way to Ashmont, including Lower Mills/Milton Station, which has the potential to be a retail center that competes with Mattapan's commercial districts. In addition, the Fairmount Commuter Rail passes through the MEDI study area, stopping at the Morton Street Station.

The existing transit system provides an extensive network of alternatives that residents use extensively. The constraint of the current public transit system, however, is the time that it takes to access central Boston and other destinations. To provide context



MBTA buses are a critical part of the transit system serving the MEDI study area

on this issue, information is provided below on the travel destinations of Mattapan residents, and the travel times associated with the various transportation modes.

Travel Patterns of Mattapan Residents

Given the transportation alternatives currently available, it is important to understand resident travel patterns within Mattapan, to other Boston neighborhoods, and to outside the city, because it helps to indicate what types of improvements would have the biggest impact on improving residents' quality of life. Understanding travel patterns also allows the community to anticipate how proposed recommendations will likely affect existing traffic patterns.

Travel Destinations and Modes²⁷

Based on available data it is possible to examine the destination, mode, and purpose of travel for all trips that begin in Mattapan. When all trips originating in Mattapan are totaled, travel by automobile is the most common mode of travel (see Exhibit 3).

Exhibit 3: Mode of Travel

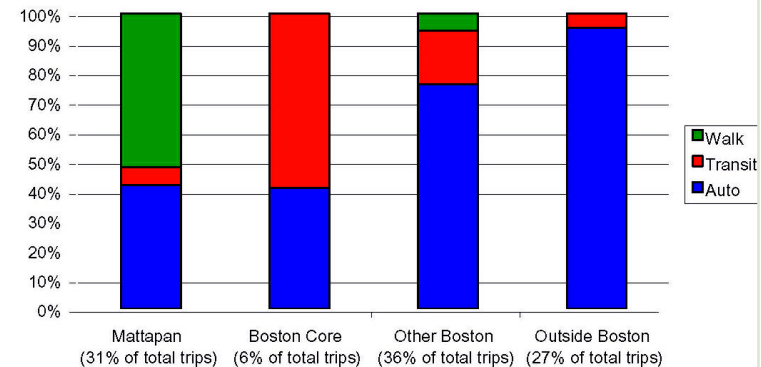
	Auto	Transit	Walk
Mattapan - All Destinations	68%	13%	19%
City Average - All Destinations	51%	19%	30%

Source: Access Boston 2000-2010, Boston's Citywide Transportation Plan

There is roughly an even distribution between trips originating in Mattapan that stay in Mattapan, trips to other parts of Boston (excluding the "Boston Core"), and trips with destinations outside of Boston (see Figure 1). Trips to Downtown Boston (i.e. to the Boston Core) surprisingly make up only 6% of the total trips originating in Mattapan, meaning that the neighborhood is not highly reliant upon or integrated into the Boston inner core. The MEDI consumer survey findings that suggest that more residents shop throughout the South Shore than in downtown Boston are consistent with the data in Figure 1.

The mode of travel varies widely by destination. For trips within Mattapan, walking is the most common form of transportation (at 52% of all trips). Conversely, for trips to other parts of Boston and outside of Boston, vehicular travel is preferred. Transit is the

Figure 1: Trips Originating in Mattapan (Showing Destination and Mode of Travel)



Source: Access Boston 2000-2010. Boston's Citywide Transportation Plan

dominant mode of transportation only for trips to the Boston Core (downtown).

The pervasiveness of walking trips by residents within Mattapan is one indicator suggesting the importance that pedestrian amenities and safety should be given in the revitalization effort. With so many residents walking through the neighborhoods and along the commercial corridors, well-designed, pedestrian-friendly commercial districts should be able to attract substantial numbers of local consumers that will help them to thrive.

Travel to Work²⁸

According to the 2000 Census, over 65% of MEDI study area residents who work rely on a car, truck or van to get to work; most of the balance (31%) rely on public transportation to get to work.

When examined comparatively, commutes for MEDI study area residents are longer, on average, than for the typical Boston resident. Over 32% of residents that live within the 02126 zip code (the closest approximate for the MEDI study area available) are daily commuting for at least 45 minutes each way, whereas only 19% of Boston residents have one-way commutes of 45 minutes or more. (See Exhibit 4.)

Exhibit 4: Travel Time to Work

	Zip Code 02126		Boston (citywide average)	
Less than 30 minutes:	3,766	34.5%	142,230	52.3%
30 to 44 minutes:	3,638	33.3%	77,861	28.6%
45 to 59 minutes:	1,815	16.6%	29,114	10.7%
60 or more minutes:	1,700	15.6%	22,665	8.3%
Total Number of Workers:	10,919	100.0%	271,870	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

To illustrate the length of an average transit commute for MEDI study area residents, 2000 Census workforce data were examined to determine the employment sector in which the largest segment of the Mattapan workforce is employed. The Health and Social Services sector is currently the largest source of jobs for MEDI area residents, and employs an estimated twenty-five percent of

Mattapan residents who are working. Since so many of health and social services jobs are concentrated in downtown Boston and in the Longwood Medical Area, it is logical to examine travel times to these locations from Mattapan. Exhibit 5 presents data showing such travel time for various public transit alternatives.²⁹

The average travel time from Mattapan Square to Longwood Medical Center falls in the range of 40 to 63 minutes. The average travel time from Mattapan Square to Downtown Crossing falls in the range of 35 to 56 minutes. As indicated by the transit options

outlined in Exhibit 5, travel from Mattapan to downtown Boston and to the Longwood Medical Area by public transportation requires at least one transfer (and sometimes several), which add to the travel time involved.

Accordingly, travel to these destinations from Mattapan by public transit are likely to take somewhat longer than for

Exhibit 5: Average Transit Commute Times from Mattapan Square

Public Transit Modes	Longwood Medical Area		Downtown Crossing		2005 Cash Fare
	Rush Hour	Midday	Rush Hour	Midday	
Bus to Orange Line	40 min	47 min	41 min	42 min	\$2.15
Bus to Bus	44 min	46 min	53 min	56 min	\$.90
High Speed Line to Red Line	57 min	63 min	35 min	39 min	\$1.25

Source: Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority, 2005

many other neighborhoods in and around Boston (such as portions of Dorchester or Jamaica Plain) that have direct service downtown.

If new residents are to be attracted to new developments along the Mattapan commercial corridors (see discussion in Housing chapter which follows), a key strategy will be the need to improve transit service and create shorter commutes to central Boston. In acknowledgement of this fact, later in this chapter we propose action steps relating to transit improvement projects under consideration (such as the Silver Line extension and additional Fairmount Line stations) that would enhance direct service downtown from Mattapan.

Parking Facilities

The MEDI study area offers a combination of off-street and on-street parking. Exhibit 6, for example, identifies the off-street municipal and MBTA parking located in Mattapan Square. There are also several private parking lots associated with existing business establishments in Mattapan Square and along the Blue Hill Avenue, River Street and Morton Street corridors.

Exhibit 6: Off-Street Municipal or MBTA Parking Lots

	# of Spaces	Cost	Utilization Rate
Mattapan MBTA Station	216	\$2.50 per day	29%
451 River Street	90	Free	Moderate
23 Fairway Street	40	Free	Moderate

Source: Observations by staff of Planners Collaborative, Inc. (Spring 2005)



Existing parking lot signage

On-street parking options include angled parking on Blue Hill Avenue in Mattapan Square, and parallel parking north of Mattapan Square along Blue Hill Avenue and along Morton Street and River Street. In Mattapan Square, much of the on-street parking is designated two-hour parking. This is not highly enforced, however, and business owners and employees often occupy a large number of the 2-hour parking spaces. Thus, these

spaces may not be readily available to potential consumers.

An additional transportation challenge is that shoppers and delivery vans frequently double park in Mattapan Square and along Blue Hill Avenue, even in cases when there is available on-street parking a short walk from the establishment or parking at the rear of the stores. Double-parking at night is particularly common near the Morton Street/Blue Hill Avenue intersection due to the high concentration of convenience stores and fast food establishments located along this portion of the corridor.



Car double-parked on Blue Hill Avenue

In general, although there generally appears to be available parking within a short walk of shopping destinations within the MEDI study area, the municipal and MBTA lots in and near Mattapan Square are not well-linked to the retail district, due to inadequate signage, uncertain security, and lack of inviting rear entrances to stores adjacent to the parking. Outside of Mattapan Square, with the exception of the problems of double-parking (which could be addressed through enforcement), on-street parking generally seems sufficient to meet existing business needs. However, if property redevelopment involving higher density uses begins to occur, a parking shortage along these portions of the commercial corridors may quickly develop if additional parking options are not provided.

Conditions of the Pedestrian Environment

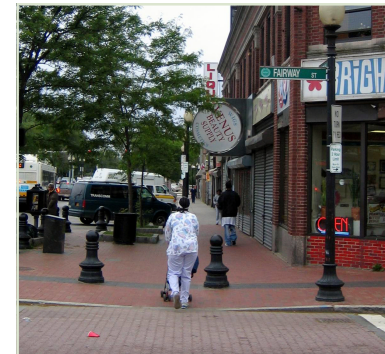
Currently, Mattapan Square is the only MEDI commercial district that has pedestrian “amenities” such as traffic neckdowns (in which the road is narrowed through widened sidewalks in order to

Exhibit 7: Sidewalk Widths

	Sidewalk Width
Mattapan Square (Blue Hill Avenue)	Near intersections: 22 feet Between intersections: 12 feet
Morton Street Village	North-side: 8 feet South-side: 11 feet
Blue Hill Center	East-side: 16 feet West-side 16 feet

Source: Visual Observation by MEDI Study Team, 2006

slow traffic and increase pedestrian safety), pedestrian lighting (generally fixtures that are 8 to 15 feet tall), differentiated crosswalks (crosswalks constructed out of a different material than surrounding street), and a few pieces of street furniture. In the other MEDI commercial districts, the existing pedestrian amenities are limited to wide sidewalks, crosswalks, and some small shade trees.



A pedestrian in Mattapan Square

In each of the MEDI commercial districts, there are some physical features that may limit their

appeal as a shopping destination for pedestrians. Blue Hill Avenue is quite wide (up to 140 feet wide in spots), with a high volume of traffic. This can make it quite challenging for pedestrians (especially seniors or individuals with disabilities) to cross the street within the time allowed at traffic lights—pedestrians may require one “walk” cycle at a cross-



Very wide intersection at Blue Hill Avenue and River Street

walk to reach the median and a second cycle to complete the crossing. In addition, except for the “neckdowns,” sidewalks are relatively narrow in Mattapan Square, and particularly in the portions where there is angled parking. This pinches the flow of pedestrians, and makes it more difficult for consumers to window shop. In front of stores that display some of their goods on the sidewalk or where construction is occurring, smooth pedestrian flow is further impeded.

As noted above, there is also only limited street furniture or shade trees along the corridor, even in the portions of Mattapan Square that have the highest pedestrian volume. Moreover, the bases of many of the existing shade trees are overgrown with weeds, limiting their appeal. The sidewalks along the corridors also are often littered.

Mattapan Transportation Improvements “In the Pipeline”—Current Plans and Proposals

There are a variety of public transportation and greenspace projects that are underway, or in the planning stages, that could help to address some of the Mattapan community's transportation needs. The final form of some of these projects is still being determined, and in some cases funding constraints may necessitate that the City or State choose between more than one worthy project.



One of the site designs proposed for the Mattapan Station Parking Lot during MBTA RFP Study

Redevelopment of the MBTA Mattapan Station Site

The MBTA is rebuilding its Mattapan Station with the goals of re-routing bus circulation, making better use of the station's adjacency to the Neponset River, and creating an “urban edge” for the station at Mattapan Square. The MBTA is also looking at creating the ability to transfer between trolleys and buses without the need to change platforms.

This redevelopment project is expected to include:

- ❖ Construction of a new MBTA station, along with an MBTA police substation;
- ❖ Reconfiguration of the adjacent surface parking lot (while maintaining the same number of spaces); and
- ❖ Development of a portion of the site to accommodate residential, retail, and commercial space.

If carefully coordinated with other activities occurring as part of the MEDI effort, the redevelopment of the MBTA Mattapan Station site has the potential to serve as a major stimulus to economic revitalization in Mattapan Square and along the adjoining commercial corridors.

Neponset River Trail Extension

The Lower Neponset River Trail was opened to Central Avenue by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation in 2003. Long-range plans include the extension of the trail one mile to the west through Milton to Blue Hill Avenue and Mattapan Square, thereby linking Mattapan to other recreational facilities up river and on Boston Harbor. An extended Neponset River Trail will bring recreational trail users into Mattapan's primary business district.

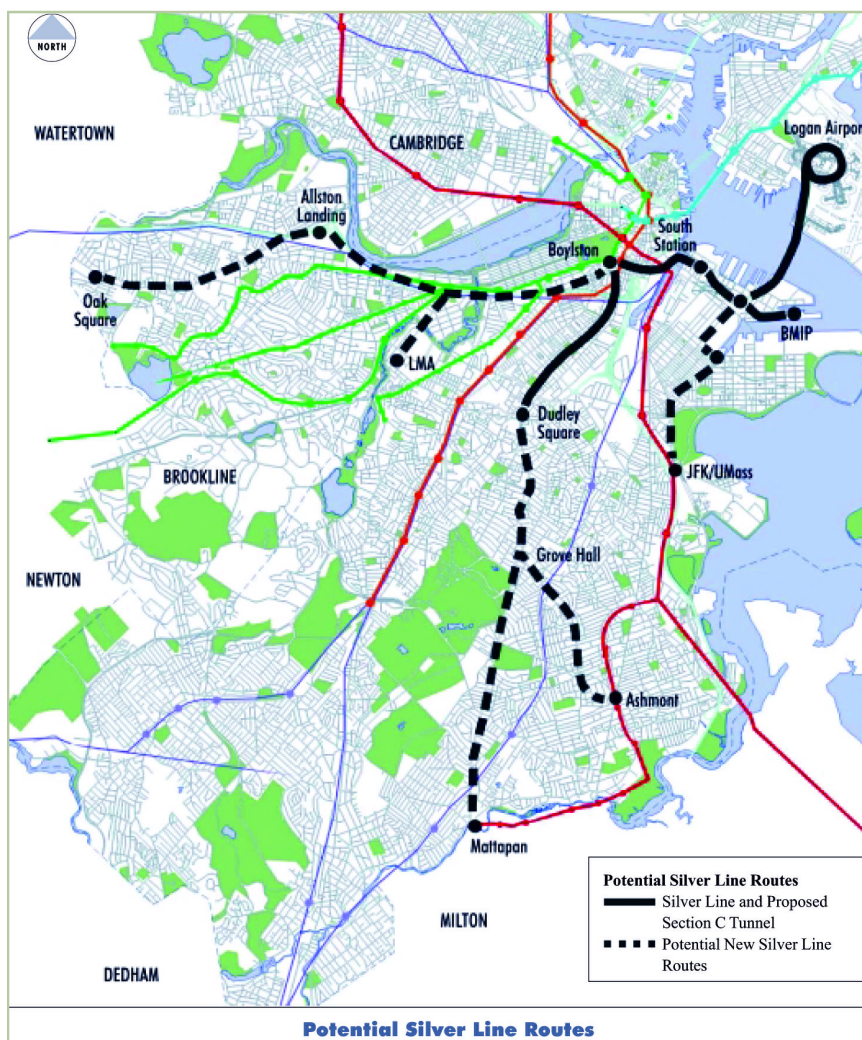
Morton Street Station Modernization (Fairmount Line)

Morton Street Station on the Fairmount Commuter Rail Line is currently being modernized. Improvements include new shelters,

lighting fixtures, signage, and accessibility to passengers with disabilities. The design will increase the visibility of the station from the street level, and should improve Mattapan residents' ease of access to the downtown Boston employment market, which in turn may result in increased economic activity back in Mattapan. Construction on this project began in October 2005, and should be completed by the end of 2006 or early 2007.

Silver Line Extension to Mattapan

The City of Boston has identified the extension of Silver Line bus rapid transit service from Dudley Square to Mattapan Square as one of its transportation priorities (see map). The route would run along Warren Street to Blue Hill Avenue via Grove Hall, following the route of the current #28 bus. This project is one of two (including a Blue Hill Avenue station) that would create a one-seat ride from Mattapan Square to downtown Boston. This project would improve Mattapan residents' access to the Boston employment market, which potentially could result in increased Mattapan resident purchasing power and economic activity in the MEDI study area. The MBTA has rated the Silver Line extension to Mattapan as a "high priority transit project" in its Program for Mass Transportation (PMT). Although this is an important designation, the PMT is a planning tool that is financially unconstrained, meaning that projects can be included in the program even if there are no current resources to pay for them, which is the case for the Silver Line extension. Additionally, federal funding resources channeled through the State cannot be allocated until the



Source: Access Boston, 2000-2010, Boston Transportation Department

extension has been “fully included” in the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) regional transportation plan (RTP)—currently, the status is “illustrative.”³⁰ With an update of the RTP scheduled for 2007, an opportunity exists for the project to transition from “illustrative” to “fully included.”

New Blue Hill Avenue Station on Fairmount Line

The still unfunded Phase II of the Fairmount Commuter Rail Line calls for the construction of five new stations along the line. (See map on page 63.) One of these proposed new stations would be in the vicinity of Blue Hill Avenue, a few blocks north of the Mattapan Square business district. This station potentially could reduce the travel time from Mattapan Square to downtown Boston to less than 25 minutes. This project would also improve Mattapan residents' access to the Boston employment market. The Blue Hill Avenue station and the other three new Fairmount stations have been identified as high priority projects by the MBTA's PMT, and are included in the Boston MPO's regional transportation plan. The MBTA has conducted conceptual planning for this potential new station, and is awaiting funding approval from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts before proceeding to the design phase.

Access to the Mattapan Square commercial district would be further enhanced by increased train frequencies along the Fairmount commuter rail line, allowing for more flexibility in the scheduling of trips between downtown Boston and Mattapan. It

is important to note, however, that the MBTA's Fairmount Improvements Project, as currently defined, is primarily a capital project and does not plan for increased frequency of service or other operational improvements.

The economic benefits from the transportation improvement projects identified above range from the physical addition of new commercial space (Mattapan Station), to attracting new visitors to Mattapan Square (Neponset River Trail), to improving current Mattapan residents' access to employment (Silver Line, Blue Hill Avenue Station, etc.). If successfully implemented, the cumulative effect of these changes will be to further integrate the historic crossroads that is Mattapan with the larger city and metropolitan economies.



Rush hour traffic in Mattapan Square blocking crosswalk

Transportation-related Strategies to Foster Greater Economic Activity

Mattapan residents have excellent access to a variety of transportation options, including direct access to many destinations through public transportation. Unfortunately, these options do not necessarily translate into fast commute times, or easy access to local businesses and offices because of traffic congestion, which slows down both cars and buses, and parking constraints. Patrons can often struggle with parking and safe crossings in the Mattapan Square area, further along Blue Hill Avenue, and along Morton Street.



Rush hour traffic congestion at the intersection of Morton Street and Blue Hill Avenue

A quick review of the existing transportation conditions highlights a few of the challenges and opportunities facing the MEDI study area:

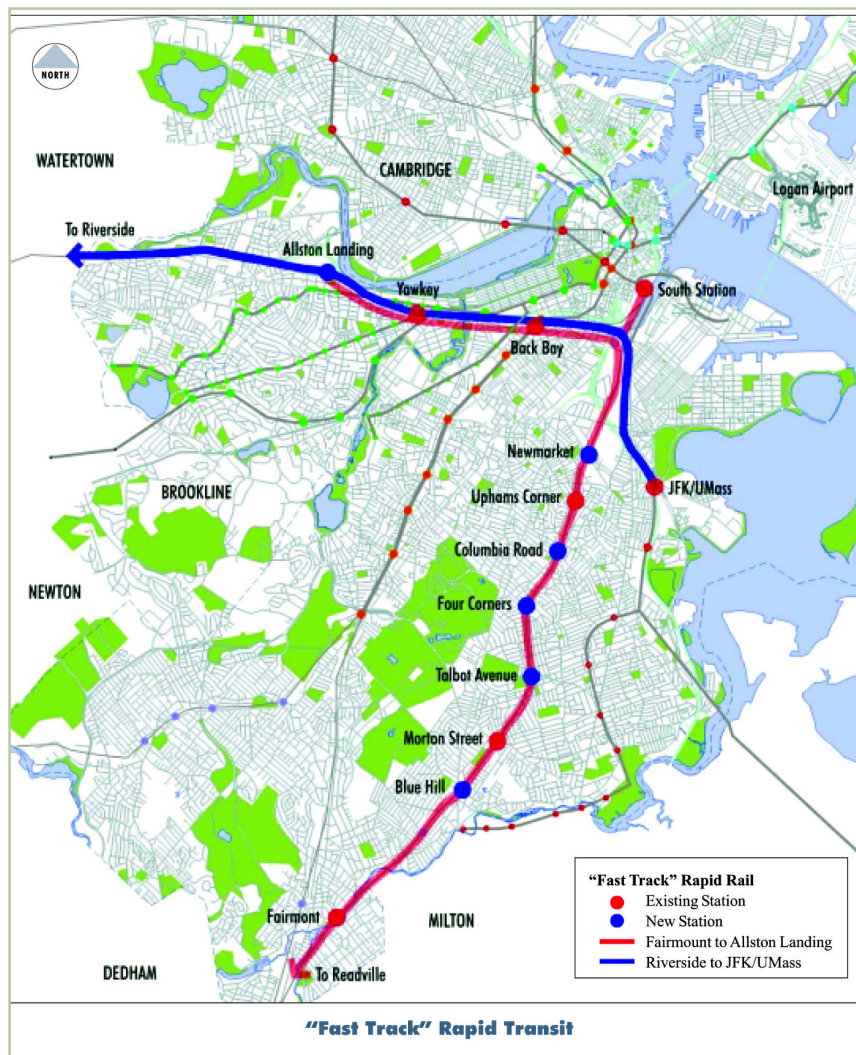
- ❖ The large percentage of trips that occur on foot within Mattapan suggests the need to enhance the pedestrian pathways from Mattapan's neighborhoods to its commercial centers, as well as the environment within these centers. The goal is to make the commercial areas as attractive as possible to consumers on foot. Such enhancements may also serve as an incentive for commuters from outside Mattapan who are driving along the corridors to stop and explore shopping opportunities.
- ❖ For both the commuters from outside Mattapan traveling along the corridors by auto, and for Mattapan residents who travel by car throughout the community, achieving a reduction in congestion and increased parking availability adjacent to Mattapan retail destinations are critical.
- ❖ From the standpoint of users of public transportation, the MEDI study area has the potential to be a relatively convenient residential location for individuals working (or interested in working) in downtown Boston or in the Longwood Medical Area. With the abundance of transit alternatives, improvements to the MBTA bus routes and/or modes could shorten commute time or at least make it more direct.
- ❖ The collocation of MBTA transit stops and MEDI commercial "focus areas" is something that must be maximized. MEDI commercial focus areas are defined in the Land Use, Urban

Design, and Zoning chapter (Chapter 7) as locations along the commercial corridors where there is a nexus of existing commercial and transportation infrastructure, as well as a recent or proposed catalyst for growth. Three locations are proposed – Mattapan Square, Morton Street between Norfolk and Selden Streets, and Blue Hill Ave between Hiawatha and Hazelton Streets. Current station upgrades at the MBTA Mattapan Station and the Morton Street commuter rail station can serve as leverage points for private investment and greater integration of the transit stops into the surrounding community. Designs that seek to connect new development with existing transit should be the focus of any new private development.

Given these challenges and opportunities, we have identified three main transportation-related strategies that have the potential to support the revitalization of the MEDI study area's commercial corridors. They are:

- ❖ Support changes that will enhance Mattapan's accessibility and build upon planned MBTA transportation improvements;
- ❖ Increase the appeal and ease of access for pedestrians in the MEDI study area's commercial districts; and
- ❖ Improve the accessibility of the MEDI commercial districts to motorists.

The following describes each of these strategies in more detail, and highlights potential projects that represent initial action steps to implement them.



Source: Access Boston, 2000-2010, Boston Transportation Department

Enhance Mattapan's Accessibility and Build Upon Planned MBTA Transportation Improvements

In order for Mattapan Square to thrive as a commercial area, it will be necessary to retain existing residents and capture their purchasing power, as well as to attract new residents to live in the community.

The Action Agenda's housing strategies (see Chapter 6) include a recommendation for higher density mixed-use buildings in the commercial centers. Individuals that choose to live in this type of location typically place a high value on convenient transit access. Although there are currently a variety of options for traveling throughout Boston from Mattapan on the MBTA, all public transportation options to downtown involve at least one transfer. The trips can also be lengthy. Travel via the High Speed Line and Red Line from Mattapan Square to Downtown Crossing can take a rider about 40 minutes, a considerable amount of time. More efficient transit links, such as the Silver Line extension or the creation of the "Fast Track" Rapid Rail (see map), would create a one-seat ride from Mattapan Square to downtown Boston. This would increase the viability of the high-density development approach by making the Mattapan commercial corridors a more appealing residential location to transit-oriented commuters.

Unfortunately, these major transit projects (the Silver Line extension to Mattapan and the Blue Hill Avenue station) are currently unfunded or uncommitted. There is intense

competition for funding for transit projects in the Commonwealth and nationally, as an increasing number of metropolitan areas compete for scarce federal transit funding to address their own regional needs. The Mattapan community must advocate strongly and in a coordinated manner to reinforce that these projects' transportation benefits—which have been documented by the MBTA's and Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization's planning processes—are also complemented by significant economic development benefits for the MEDI commercial districts, as identified in this document. Since the competition for transit funding appears to be growing more intense with time, and given the importance of these projects towards the goal of economic development in the MEDI study area, it is imperative that the compelling case for these worthy projects be made emphatically until sufficient funding has been identified and secured.



The MBTA's Mattapan Station in Mattapan Square

In addition to increasing Mattapan's accessibility, the flow of energy and investment created by the new MBTA transit stations should be harnessed to benefit the commercial centers in which they are located. Current improvements being made are of a scale that is rare in urban areas that are already built-out. The Mattapan Station and Morton Street projects have the potential to be a catalyst for transit-oriented development projects and the overall revitalization of Mattapan. Therefore, it is vital to ensure that the redevelopment occurring at these sites creates links to the nearby Mattapan retail and service establishments.

Relative to the MBTA Mattapan Station site, immediate steps should be taken to establish direct communications between the MEDI Community Implementation Team and MBTA officials coordinating the Mattapan Station redevelopment effort, in order to create an opportunity to positively influence this important project. Once the developer is selected, members of the MEDI Community Implementation Team will need to be formally introduced to the selected developer, with the intention of requesting an ongoing relationship that allows the Implementation Team to dialogue about the economic development goals of the initiative and how the MBTA development can further these goals. Fortunately, the MBTA plan for the Mattapan Station site appears to be consistent with the economic goals of the MEDI initiative. Accordingly, the main Community Implementation Team responsibility likely will be to ensure that the details of implementation of the Mattapan Station redevelopment continue to reflect these goals, when

inevitable budgetary constraints require that tough decisions be made.

A similar approach should be followed for all subsequent MBTA improvement efforts within the MEDI study area.

Possible Projects:

- ❖ Using MEDI Action Agenda, engage with officials at the MBTA about extending the Silver Line and/or creating new stations for the Fairmount Line “Fast Track” service.
- ❖ As MBTA station improvements are planned:
 - Work with the MBTA station designers to ensure that the new stations are oriented toward the existing commercial districts; and
 - As part of the design specifications, request space for signage at the stations directing riders toward the services/goods in the commercial districts.
- ❖ For the Mattapan Station Parking Lot project, some key factors that should be incorporated into the design are:
 - Ensuring that the project includes sufficient retail footage along River Street so that the station redevelopment essentially extends the retail district of Mattapan Square; such development could be used to stimulate private investment in near-by parcels on River Street;
 - Encouraging the intentional selection of retail tenants at the Mattapan Station site that will complement or supplement, rather than compete with, existing businesses in Mattapan Square; and

- Using transit-oriented design principles to create a pedestrian-friendly environment that will encourage consumers to linger and window-shop at the new retail establishments.
- ❖ As part of the Mattapan Station redevelopment, implement sidewalk improvements along River Street, and locate crosswalks (with signal lights) that match pedestrians’ desired pathways across River Street and foster pedestrian flow into Mattapan Square.

Increase the Appeal and Ease of Access for Pedestrians in the Mattapan Commercial Districts

Highly successful neighborhood and sub-regional commercial districts typically are able to achieve that distinction by combining high quality stores selling products that people want with a pedestrian-friendly environment that people want to visit and relax in. The specific character of a pedestrian-friendly environment varies from place to place, depending on local residents, businesses, history and culture. The basic



Example of a pedestrian focused, transit-oriented development in Cambridge, MA

elements of pedestrian-friendly design, however, are consistent throughout the country. Design elements generally include: wide clean sidewalks; clearly marked crosswalks; “way-finding” signage that points visitors to key local amenities or attractions; places for visitors to sit and places to dispose of their garbage; public art; shade trees; and lower street lighting.

Although Mattapan Square has many of these elements, there are areas where additional improvements can be made. For example, to date the timing of crosswalks and the design of streets and traffic flow have been oriented to moving traffic through the neighborhood as quickly and as safely as possible. If the MEDI Action Agenda is to be successful, it will be important to give pedestrians and vehicles equal consideration.



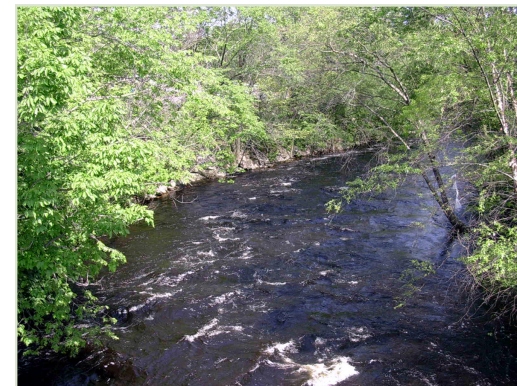
Pedestrian amenities in Mattapan Square

Also, on-going attention should be placed on creating links (and convenient pathways) from Mattapan Square to the Neponset River Greenway. Creating these connections between the river greenway and Mattapan Square will not only increase the amenities available to pedestrians traveling around the Square, but will give another

reason for individuals from outside of Mattapan to visit the MEDI commercial districts.

At present, Morton Street Village, Blue Hill Center, and the expanse of the other MEDI transportation corridors outside Mattapan

Square have few pedestrian amenities. Improvements in pedestrian amenities should initially be targeted for the commercial “focus areas” in these districts where other development activities are already occurring,



Neponset River Greenway Expansion could enhance pedestrian access to river and Mattapan Square

in order to build off of these efforts. However, the longer-term goal should be to create a consistent standard of enhanced pedestrian amenities throughout the entire MEDI study area, as part of the effort to create a brand identity (a look and feel) for all the Mattapan commercial corridors.

Increasing the appeal of the MEDI commercial districts for pedestrians also includes attracting residents from neighborhoods surrounding the commercial corridors who could easily walk to the

districts instead of drive. The steps that can be taken to increase the safety and desirability of walking to the commercial districts include identifying key walking paths that residents from different MEDI neighborhoods would commonly take, and ensuring that



Broken sidewalks and ill-positioned crossing signals are examples of needed pedestrian improvements in Mattapan Square

along these routes sidewalks, crosswalks, and crossing signals are well-maintained.

Possible Projects:

- ❖ Study the main MEDI study area transportation intersections (e.g. River Street and Blue Hill Avenue; Walk Hill Street and Blue Hill Avenue; Blue Hill Avenue and Morton Street; and Morton

Street and Evans St.) to determine the best ways to balance the needs of pedestrian and vehicular access. Potential pedestrian-focused solutions could include:³¹

- (Re)Locate and configure crosswalks and the timing of traffic signals to ensure that pedestrians—particularly senior citizens—have appropriate locations and adequate time to cross safely; and
 - Redesign key intersections, such as by changing one of more of the intersection corners so that they have a sharper vehicle turn radius, to slow down traffic and increase pedestrian visibility.
- ❖ Encourage the Mattapan Board of Trade, Mattapan CDC, and the Morton Street Board of Commerce to work together with the City of Boston to foster improvements in building storefronts, the cleanliness of sidewalks, and the maintenance of existing shade trees and planters; in particular, well-capitalized establishments located in the Square or along the corridor, such as Sovereign Bank, should be approached about upgrading the exteriors of their buildings, which will establish a model and set the tone for other establishments along the corridor.
 - ❖ Integrate the Neponset River Greenway into the overall planning of Mattapan Square improvements.
 - ❖ Improve the alleyway between Blue Hill Avenue and River Street to enhance pedestrian flow through the business district and to potentially improve the connection between the new MBTA development and the Mattapan Square commercial district.

- ❖ Maintain and enforce existing pedestrian infrastructure. For example:
 - Report any broken or misdirected crosswalks walk-signals to the Boston Transportation Department and Public Works Department; and
 - Request stricter enforcement of laws regarding vehicles yielding to pedestrians at crosswalks and for pedestrian jaywalking.

Improve the Accessibility of the MEDI Study Area's Commercial Districts to Motorists.

Motorists are an equally important group of potential patrons for the commercial districts in the MEDI study area. Whether motorists are commuters passing through or local residents arriving by car, increasing the number that stop at stores and businesses along these arteries will support local businesses and fuel commercial district enhancements.

Two main transportation-related obstacles deter motorists from doing business in the commercial districts: traffic congestion during peak hours, when most people would stop and shop, and a lack of parking (or the perceived lack of parking).

Alleviating traffic congestion is a challenge with which the Boston Transportation Department is constantly grappling. In fact, some of the pedestrian recommendations in this report would potentially cause additional delays for motorists. Because of this, a recommendation is being made that a complete transportation

study be completed for major intersections in Mattapan (River Street, Blue Hill Avenue, and Cummins Highway; Walk Hill Street and Blue Hill Avenue; and Morton Street and Evan Street). The goal of the study should be to create the best possible balance between meeting the needs of motorists and pedestrians. Increasing traffic back-ups along Blue Hill Avenue for the sake of attracting additional pedestrians is not a viable alternative; neither is continuing to pass traffic along the transportation corridors without creative solutions that support pedestrians and the emerging commercial centers.

Parking is also a frequently cited obstacle to motorists stopping and conducting business in the commercial districts. Although on-street parking is in short supply throughout Mattapan Square and, at times, along portions of the Blue Hill corridor, there is generally a reasonable amount of off-street parking in the Square and Morton Street Village to supplement existing need. Currently, motorists seem unaware of these parking lots or simply unwilling to use them.

In the short term, steps such as improved signage, facilitated access to off-street parking, and improved lighting and



Public parking in Mattapan Square

security can be taken to encourage increased use of the surface parking lots. Enforcing parking regulations, including time limits and ticketing for double-parking, and encouraging employees of stores in Mattapan to park in existing lots are additional steps that can be taken.

If major redevelopment occurs in any of the commercial districts (such as on parcels in or adjacent to Mattapan Square), efforts should be made to ensure such projects add to the net number of off-street parking spaces available. The actual number of parking spaces to be provided by a given use should reflect the parking standards established by the Boston Transportation Department in the *Access Boston 2000-2010, Citywide Transportation Plan* (also discussed in the chapter on Land Use, Urban Design, and Zoning, later in this Action Agenda report).

When major commercial development is proposed for the MEDI study area, the effected areas should be evaluated using the same methodology developed for the Boston Corridor Improvement Program, a program developed in 2000 by Boston's Transportation Department to identify and implement an effective regulatory approach for commercial loading and unloading zones and procedures. As part of this approach, a survey of existing parking resources and parking patterns would be completed. Information from the survey could be used to determine when and where the majority of parking violations relative to loading/unloading occur, the need for temporary loading zone(s) along Blue Hill Avenue for high peak loading hours, the need for changes in the length of time



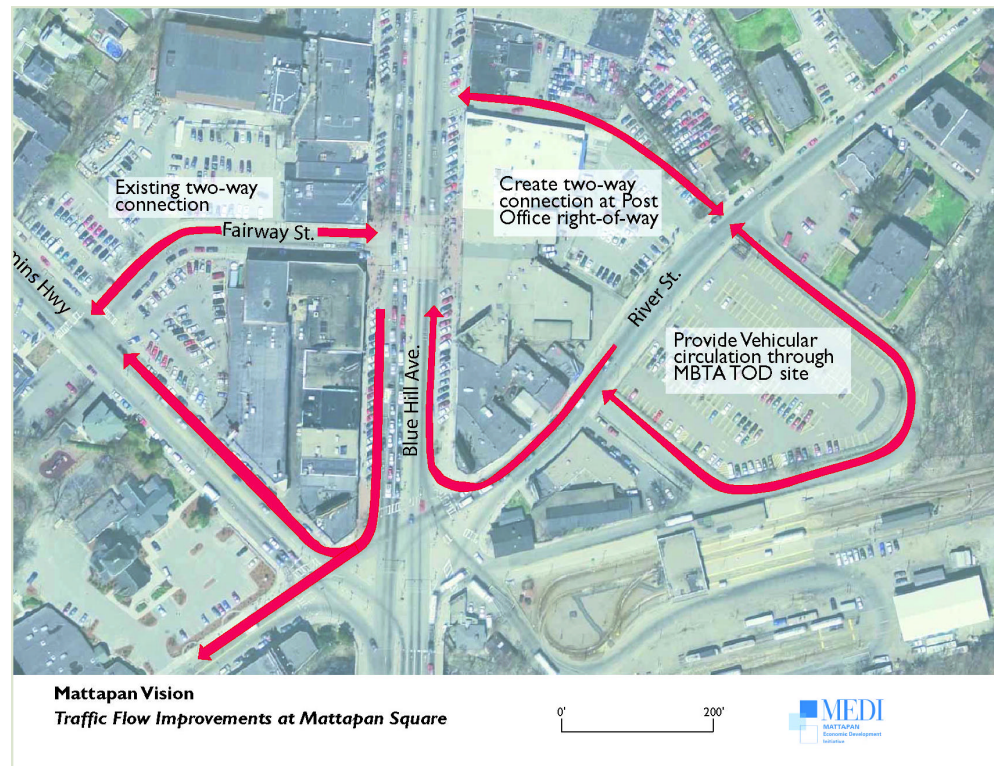
Double parking in Mattapan Square

that parking is allowed for loading/unloading activities, and the need for meters at high volume locations—all potential parking solutions.

Possible Projects:

- ❖ Study the main transportation intersections (e.g., River Street and Blue Hill Avenue; Walk Hill Street and Blue Hill Avenue; Blue Hill Avenue and Morton Street; and Morton Street and Evans Street) to determine the best way to balance the needs of pedestrian and vehicular access. Potential motorist-focused solutions could include:³¹
 - Upgrade the alleyway between Blue Hill Avenue northbound and River Street (across Blue Hill Avenue and just north of Fairway) to provide a more direct connection between Mattapan Square businesses and the MBTA parking lot.

- Examine, with the Boston Transportation Department, the traffic implications of changing Fairway Street into a one-way street. This change would increase additional on-street parking adjacent to Mattapan Square; and
- ❖ Improve parking signage visibility: an assessment of all signage, commercial and public, should be completed to determine where signage “clutter” could be minimized; existing signs directing motorists to parking need to be inspected for rust, legibility, and applicability; if the parking signs are in poor condition, are no longer applicable, or are inappropriately placed, they should be reported and a change requested.
- ❖ Lobby for better enforcement of parking laws along Blue Hill Avenue to free-up parking spaces more quickly; if staffing constraints hinder continuous enforcement, request a periodic but consistent enforcement campaign to encourage frequent shoppers, employees, and store owners to change their parking habits.
- ❖ Survey existing parking resources and parking patterns—assess parking violations locations, loading zone needs, and the need for meters at high volume locations.



The next chapter of this MEDI Action Agenda report examines the role that housing can play in stimulating greater economic vitality in Mattapan.

Endnotes

²⁵Nine of the 12 MBTA or MBTA-subsidized bus routes in Mattapan originate out of Mattapan Square.

²⁶PCC=Presidential Conference Car.

²⁷Data in this section reflect the City of Boston's Mattapan Neighborhood definition; it was not possible to break out data focusing only on the MEDI study area.

²⁸Data for mode and travel times to work are for zip code 02126, a close approximation to the MEDI study area.

²⁹Travel times were calculated by using the MBTA published schedules from Fall 2005. The most likely linked trips were identified and then calculated. The trips include:

To Downtown Crossing:

Bus to bus: #28 bus from Mattapan to Dudley, transfer to the Silver Line bus to Downtown Crossing

Bus to Orange: #31 bus from Mattapan to Forest Hills, transfer to the Orange Line to Downtown Crossing

High Speed Line to Red Line: Mattapan High Speed Line to Ashmont, transfer to the Red Line to Downtown Crossing

To Longwood Medical Area (LMA) (defined as the intersection of Longwood and Huntington):

Bus to bus: #31 bus from Mattapan to Forest Hills, transfer to the #39 bus to LMA

Bus to Orange: #31 bus from Mattapan to Forest Hills, transfer to the Orange Line to Ruggles, then walk up Ruggles Street to Huntington Avenue.

High Speed Line to Red Line: Mattapan High Speed Line to Ashmont, transfer to the Red Line to Park Street, transfer to the Green Line E Branch to LMA

The starting point was assumed to be Mattapan Station for all trips. To estimate the average waiting time for a trip, the headway (either rush hour or midday) in the MBTA's published schedule was divided by two. The travel time was taken from the MBTA's published schedule. Where necessary (for LMA trips on the Orange Line), walking time was estimated at a 3 miles per hour walking pace. An example calculation follows:

Bus to Bus to Downtown Crossing During Rush Hour:

Rush hour headways on the #28 are 7 minutes; therefore, average wait time would be 3.5 minutes. Travel time to Dudley would be 31 minutes according to MBTA schedules. Rush hour headways on the Silver Line are 4 minutes; therefore, the average wait to transfer at Dudley would be 2 minutes. Travel time to Downtown Crossing would be 19 minutes according to MBTA schedules. Therefore: $3.5 + 31 + 2 + 19 = 55.5$. Note that the MBTA adjusts its schedules (both headways and travel times) every three months, so the 2-minute difference between this estimate and the one provided in Exhibit 5 is the product of changing schedules. Schedule changes reflect changes in demand for service and roadway congestion, which can be caused by seasonal changes (thus the three-month schedule cycle) or longer-term travel trends.

³⁰The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) defines illustrative projects as "major capital projects that could significantly contribute to improved mobility in the region," but are not currently included "because there is not now sufficient revenue to fund them."

³¹See also the discussion on motorist-oriented solutions later in this section.



Mattapan Vision
Blue Hill Avenue at Babson Street – Possible Design for Mixed-use Development Along Commercial Corridor

Housing

Introduction

Housing is a critical component in the overall economic development and stability of the MEDI study area. A two-way relationship exists between housing and economic development: success in the retail sector depends on a healthy consumer base in nearby residential neighborhoods (as well as the ability to draw shoppers from neighboring communities); conversely, to be a successful residential neighborhood, one needs to provide for convenient shopping, dining and entertainment opportunities, and a range of community services for residents, as well as an assortment of good housing choices.

“Good housing,” defined as well-maintained structures that are affordable to households across a range of incomes, contributes significantly to the character and feel of an area. An adequate supply of good housing



A typical residential street in the MEDI study area

meets the needs of current residents, and increases the likelihood that they will remain in the area even as their incomes increase. It also encourages broader investment, and attracts new residents to the area, thereby expanding the consumer base.

The housing strategies recommended in this chapter are in keeping with the Menino Administration's *Leading the Way* campaign and work to support the overall goals

of the MEDI initiative. Specifically, the recommendations for selective increases in density, the incentives for mixed-income housing, and the focus on homeownership opportunities all correspond to the City of Boston's funding priorities for housing and the needs of the Mattapan community.

Existing Housing Conditions

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there are a total 19,724 individuals living in the MEDI study area.³² As Exhibit 8 shows, the residential population of the MEDI study area has held fairly steady over the decade from 1990 to 2000, increasing only slightly. The residents of the MEDI study area make up 6,681 households; these households represent the core consumer base for the Mattapan commercial districts.

Residential structures in the MEDI study area are predominantly single-family and two-family buildings, with a smaller number of

Exhibit 8: MEDI Study Area Housing Facts

	1990	2000
Number of Residents	19,585	19,724
Number of Households	6,272	6,681
Owner-Occupied	38%	37%
Renter-Occupied	62%	63%

Source: US Census, 1990 and 2000

three- and four-family structures and multi-family apartment buildings.³³ The larger multi-family structures and the apartment buildings tend to be located on or near the major Mattapan thoroughfares.

Given the predominance of single-family and two family buildings, it is not surprising that the MEDI study area has a higher owner-occupancy rate (37% of total units) than the city as a whole (31% of total units).³⁴ Owner-occupancy is generally considered an indicator of neighborhood stability and resident commitment to the neighborhood in which they live. The higher than average owner-occupancy rate can be used as a sign of neighborhood strength in MEDI marketing materials.

During the spring of 2005, a windshield survey was completed of housing throughout the MEDI study area by the Abt consultant



Two-family residential structures are common in the MEDI study area

team.³⁵ The survey confirmed that most of the housing in the MEDI study area is in very good condition. However, the survey also revealed that pockets of distressed housing exist. The distressed housing tends to be located on or in proximity to the main commercial corridors of Morton Street and Blue Hill Avenue. These distressed pockets were more likely to have higher numbers of housing units in need of repair, vacant lots, under-utilized or abandoned property, and streetscapes with few trees and minimal set-backs.

It is the appearance of these commercial corridors (Blue Hill Avenue and Morton Street) that creates the initial and principal impression of the MEDI commercial districts for consumers and potential investors passing through the area. Therefore, the distressed housing along these arteries contributes to an inaccurate impression, not only of the housing quality in the community, but also about the overall appeal of the area as a shopping destination.

In addition to housing condition, residential density is another important dimension of a community's housing stock. As shown in Exhibit 9, residential density within the MEDI study area is lower than most surrounding Boston neighborhoods. Only Roslindale and Jamaica Plain are less dense.

The residential density is generally greater within the major commercial districts of the MEDI study area due to the greater frequency of larger residential structures (see Exhibit 10).

Exhibit 9: Neighborhood Residential Density

	Persons per square mile
MEDI Study Area	13,568
Roslindale	9,306
Jamaica Plain	12,442
North Dorchester	14,245
Roxbury	14,380
South Dorchester	15,835

Source: US Census, 1990 and 2000

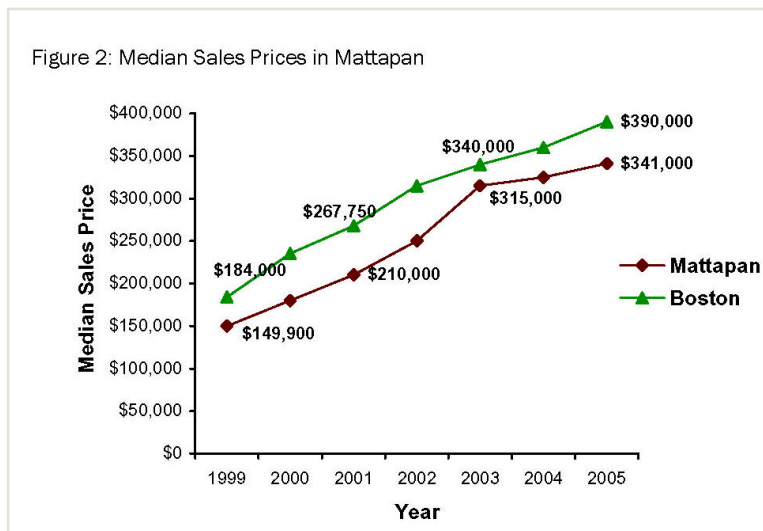
Exhibit 10: MEDI Commercial Focus Areas – Current Residential Density

	Population	Square Mileage	# of people/ square mile
Mattapan Square	865	0.082	10,492
Morton Street Village	1,536	0.090	17,082
Blue Hill Center	534	0.026	20,786

Source: US Census, 2000

However, the residential density along these commercial corridors is still significantly less than the density suggested for transit-oriented development areas, where the recommended density is between 20 and 40 units per acre (or between 25,600 and 51,200 people per square mile, assuming an average household size of two people).

“Transit-oriented development” (TOD) is defined as high density, high-quality development that occurs within a 10-minute walk of a train or public transit station. Such developments generally contain a mixture of uses, including office, residential, retail, and/or civic. TOD is a nationally tested and proven approach to combating traffic congestion, protecting the environment, and creating economic vitality. In the Boston region, transit-oriented developments are now underway in Revere, Roxbury, and Jamaica Plain, as well as in Mattapan Square at the Mattapan Station and at the location of the old police station on Morton Street.



Trends in the Market

Median sales prices for residential properties in the Mattapan district are below the citywide average, though they have been rising steadily over the last six years (see Figure 2 below). Similarly, the median monthly-advertised *rent level* for 2-bedroom apartments is somewhat below the citywide average (\$1,200 for Mattapan compared to \$1,450 in Boston), but this gap has been decreasing over time.³⁶

In recent years, demand for housing in Mattapan has been strong due to the general condition of the housing, the comparative favorable costs of housing in Mattapan relative to other areas of Boston, and (to some extent) the public transit options serving the neighborhood. The overall vacancy rate for residential structures in the MEDI study area decreased from 7.6 percent in 1990 to 4.3 percent in 2000.³⁷ Despite a net increase in the number of units in Mattapan over the previous decade, the 2000 vacancy rate in Mattapan (4.3%) remained lower than the citywide rate (4.9%). Additionally, Mattapan is one of three Boston neighborhood districts that have had the most significant declines in the number of abandoned buildings, as demand for housing has intensified.

Based on the low vacancy rates and decreasing levels of abandoned property, individuals and investors appear to be comfortable investing in the Mattapan housing stock, either through initial property purchases or through rehabilitation and redevelopment of property. As shifts in the Boston housing market

occur, it will be important to understand how prospective home-buyers and renters view Mattapan as a place to live, and how these views may be changing over time. This includes their perceptions about safety, downtown accessibility, and available amenities such as restaurants, shopping, or recreation. This understanding is an integral part of developing (and refining) strategies for attracting new residents in the future, and for ensuring long-term neighborhood stability.

Affordability and Crowding Concerns

Despite comparatively favorable housing costs in Mattapan, it is important to recognize that housing affordability is an issue for some current residents in the MEDI study area. The general standard for housing affordability is a household paying no more than 30 percent of its income for rent. An estimated one in four households in the MEDI study area is paying 30 percent or more of its income on housing costs, and 13 percent are paying more than half of their household income for housing.³⁸ Mattapan also experiences a greater rate of overcrowded housing than many Boston neighborhoods. “Overcrowding” is defined according to the number of persons that are living in a room. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, if there is on average more than one person sleeping in each room, a home is considered overcrowded. An estimated 12 percent of MEDI study area households are overcrowded, compared to 7 percent in Boston and 3 percent in Massachusetts and the United States (U.S. Census, 2000).

As economic revitalization occurs in the MEDI commercial districts, it is likely that there will be increased demand for Mattapan housing, which will tend to drive comparative housing prices even higher and increase the burden of housing affordability for current Mattapan residents.

For commercial revitalization and community preservation to occur simultaneously, it will be important to encourage a modest percentage of all new housing units to be designated as affordable *workforce* housing. Based on community input, it is desirable that these units: (a) be integrated into market rate housing developments, rather than isolated in lower-income developments; and (b) be targeted to households earning between 80 and 120 percent of median income—that is, aimed at working families.

Recent and Planned Housing Development

An examination of recent housing construction starts is one indication of how investors and the development community are responding to the demand for housing, including affordable housing, in the MEDI study area.

Since 2000, nearly 500 units of new housing have been built or are in construction or pre-construction phases in and around the MEDI study area, an increase of 3.8% in the Mattapan housing stock (See Exhibit 11). At least 60 percent of this new development represents rental units targeted at low- and moderate-income households.

Exhibit 11: Recently Completed Development Projects in Neighborhoods
In and Around the MEDI Study Area

Development Name	Address	Number and Type of Units
Alpine Village	Thorn St.	44 residential units
Boston Rehab – Building E	249 E. River St.	18 units – group home for women and their children
Boston Rehab – Foley Building	249 E. River St.	165 units – independent senior living
Harvard Commons Coop	507 Harvard St.	45 units – cooperative housing
Horizons I	Confidential location	7 units – battered women's shelter
Mattapan Heights II	249 E. River St.	94 units – mixed income rental housing 75% of the units will be affordable

Source: Boston Redevelopment Authority. 1/23/06 and 8/24/05

An additional 975 housing units are planned in the neighborhoods in and around the MEDI study area (See Exhibit 12). Currently, 37 percent of these units are planned as homeownership units; most of these will be sold at “affordable market rates.” Over fifty



An example of new housing construction in the MEDI study area

percent of the planned units will be affordable rental housing for low- and moderate-income households, with half of these dedicated for elderly residents.

This planned housing development shows that private sector investors believe that mixed-income housing in the Mattapan area can be financially successful. By combining housing for residents earning low- or moderate-incomes with housing for those who can afford market rates, developers are replicating existing neighborhood development patterns in the MEDI study area. This pattern should reinforce the existing sense of community diversity.

Moreover, if current MEDI area seniors who are homeowners relocate into the newly constructed elderly units, this may open up

Exhibit 12: Planned Development Projects in Neighborhoods
In and Around the MEDI Study Area

Development Name	Address	Number and Type of Units
872 Morton	872 Morton St.	21 units – ownership 7 units – affordable ownership
Adams Court, Phase I	415 River St	50 units – affordable
Adams Court, Phase II	435-439 River St	45 units – affordable
Mattapan Heights III	249 E. River St.	79 residential units
Mattapan Large Site project	Alabama St	20 affordable units
Neponset Field	Poydras and Chapitoulas St.	48 units - mixed income for-sale ownership 80 units – affordable rental senior housing
Olmsted Green	Former Boston State Hospital property	287 units – ownership 153 units – affordable rental 83 units – affordable rental senior housing
Woodrow Condominiums	250-258 Woodrow Ave.	20 units – market rate rental 3 units – affordable rental

Source: Boston Redevelopment Authority. 1/23/06 and 8/24/05

existing units in the housing market for homeownership opportunities. This could be a benefit for the MEDI study area neighborhoods, since frequently seniors living in larger properties have increasing difficulty maintaining the properties (younger owners that purchase the homes from the seniors also may be more likely to invest in rehabilitation of these properties). A change of ownership in these senior-owned structures also could be negative, however, if the properties are converted from owner-occupied to higher density renter-occupied housing, unless such conversion is accompanied by a commitment to properly maintain the structures.

Resident Involvement in Housing Development Decisions

During the MEDI study's public meetings, some local community members voiced concern that residents often have little or no influence on the type of housing that is developed and where it is located in their neighborhoods. Even when residents have been able to exert some degree of influence and negotiate with developers, some of the developers have failed to honor the agreements reached with the neighborhood groups regarding the type of housing (e.g., size; rental versus ownership; density) or on the types of individuals who will occupy the units.

To illustrate their concerns, community members cited several recent housing projects in which developers have broken their

promises to local residents, and where very negative neighborhood impacts have resulted. In one case, a project that the developer originally proposed as homeownership units was actually developed as rental housing.

Housing-related Strategies to Foster Greater Economic Activity

The trends and conditions described above suggest several areas that are worth examining as a focus for strategies that will not only address the housing issues facing the MEDI study area, but also will help to stimulate more economic development. The principal housing strategies are:

- ❖ Increase density and mixed-use development in key areas along the major transportation corridors of Blue Hill Avenue and Morton Street;
- ❖ Promote a mix of quality housing choices across a broad range of incomes; and
- ❖ Create mechanisms to give MEDI residents more voice and influence in shaping future housing development that occur in the MEDI study area.

Each of these strategies is described in more detail below, along with suggested projects and sets of activities for implementing them.



New multi-family construction on Blue Hill Avenue

Increase Residential Density Along Commercial Corridors

Increasing residential density along commercial corridors, particularly in close proximity to transit stations, is a proven way to bolster the local retail market and spur greater economic vitality. The combination of transit accessibility, residential units, and local commercial development can create energy that is attractive to consumers, residents, and investors alike. In communities throughout Massachusetts, New England, and the U.S., *transit-oriented development* is being implemented to great success. Locally, Davis Square in Somerville is an example of a commercial district in which successful transit-oriented development has occurred over the last twenty years and has fostered a thriving retail and commercial area.

Transit-oriented development “focuses a mix of land-uses such as residential, office, and entertainment within easy walking distance from a transit station (1/4 mile). This mix of uses forms a vibrant, village-like neighborhood where people can live, work, and play.”³⁹ Mixed-use redevelopment represents the most cost-effective and desirable approach for adding housing to the MEDI commercial corridor, as well as a way to increase retail activity. New development and increased density along the commercial corridors will bring additional consumers to the MEDI commercial districts, and create an important new visual image for the community, as this is a “front door” to Mattapan.



An example of a successful mixed-use commercial two to four stories of housing center with above commercial uses

It is important to acknowledge, however, that during the MEDI planning process some community members expressed concerns about increasing residential density anywhere in the Mattapan study area. These community members have cited concerns about increased traffic, crime, and public service needs resulting from increased density. While these concerns are valid, each of them can be addressed with proper planning and development design. For example, related to the concern about additional traffic, if the MEDI Action Agenda is implemented in a comprehensive way and additional housing is focused in areas with improved public transit access, the increased density and housing might actually lead to a decrease in traffic as residents rely on more efficient transit service rather than solely on their personal automobiles.

It is important to note that it is unrealistic to expect the enhancements in commercial goods and services in the MEDI area desired by current residents to occur without an increase in housing density along the commercial corridors to expand the consumer base for local businesses. Moreover, current market trends favor mixed-use and mixed-income developments, so such development is likely to occur along the Mattapan commercial corridors anyway. Rather than having such development occur in a haphazard fashion, the MEDI Action Agenda provides an opportunity to take a more intentional approach to guiding such development, so that the interests of all stakeholders can be taken into consideration.

Within the MEDI study area, the three commercial “focus areas”—Mattapan Square, Morton Street Village, and Blue Hill Center—are

strategically positioned to maximize existing transportation infrastructure to spur development and reinvigorate the surrounding commercial districts. By concentrating density increases just in these commercial nodes, sufficient scale will be developed to attract additional retail and service outlets, while at the same time the existing lower-density neighborhoods that surround these commercial districts will be preserved.

Throughout the country, the typical density levels for transit-oriented development areas tend to fall between 15 and 50 residential units per net acre. This range has been established based on input from national experts, and on actual experience that demonstrates the scale that is necessary to achieve desired economic development goals. The target density level within this range set by individual communities will vary depending on the pre-existing residential development patterns, the specific economy activity that the community wants to support, and the nature and location of the available transit services.

Within the MEDI study area, we recommend that the target density level for the three commercial focus areas should be between 15 and 25 units per acre. Exhibit 13 provides information on the current residential population in the three commercial focus areas, and on the “population potential”—the population levels that will be necessary to achieve a residential density of 20 units per acre in these focus areas (assuming an average household occupancy rate of 2 people per unit). The difference between each area’s current population and its “population potential” is the amount of growth

Exhibit 13: Commercial Focus Areas – Potential Residential Density

	Current Population	Population Potential
Mattapan Square	865	2112
Morton Street Village	1,536	2302
Blue Hill Center	534	656

that should be encouraged to fully maximize the development potential of the focus area.

Each of the three commercial focus areas has characteristics that make higher density redevelopment feasible. For example, Mattapan Square and Morton Street Village are perfect candidates for transit-oriented development because of their close proximity to transit stations and the existence of vacant or under-utilized parcels of land. Blue Hill Center may have somewhat less potential for transit-oriented development than the other focus areas, but it is nonetheless a viable community retail center that could sustain residential units above ground floor retail uses. (Additionally, the proposed Blue Hill station on the Fairmount Line represents another potential location for TOD, and should be designated accordingly when station development occurs.)

Traditionally, Mattapan Square has had a lot of the features of a transit-oriented commercial district, with historic access to the high-speed trolley line, densely located businesses, and a pedestrian-oriented environment. This Action Agenda recommends an enhancement of the Square's existing strengths by allowing an

increase in residential and commercial density. Through an increase in the Floor-Area Ratio (FAR),⁴⁰ it will be easier for Mattapan Square property owners to increase the number of stories in their buildings, creating space for mixed-use redevelopment to take hold. Since Blue Hill Avenue is a broad urban boulevard—over 120 feet wide in places—it can easily support multi-story development without the buildings' mass overwhelming pedestrians.

The planned redevelopment of the MBTA Mattapan Station parking lot, which calls for a mixed-use, multi-story project, will be the first project to significantly increase the residential density of the Square. This project has the potential to be a catalyst for denser development throughout the Square, but only if an intentional and coordinated strategy is put in place.



For the Morton Street Village area, developing vacant or underutilized land into higher-density, mixed-use projects, as is being planned for 872 Morton Street, would capitalize on existing potential that has not been fully realized in the past. The MBTA is currently in the process of making improvements to the commuter rail facilities at this site, which will increase the area's attractiveness for local developers, and could spur the desired redevelopment.

The potential density level reflected in Exhibit 13 (in the “population potential” column) is only a general guide, based on national recommendations. Before any housing is built in these areas, additional market research will need to be conducted to determine the number, type and price of residential units that the market will bear in Mattapan. In addition, it is important to note that the goal of increasing density to support economic development is best supported by creating housing targeted at young professionals and older individuals wishing to downsize their living space. This is because both of these demographic groups tend to have substantial disposable income and frequently value community amenities over living space size. Young professionals also value the availability of multiple transportation options.

Possible Projects:

- ❖ Change the FAR and Zoning in the commercial focus areas, as described in the Land Use, Urban Design, and Zoning chapter (Chapter 7), to allow for multi-story and mixed-use development.
- ❖ Create more partnerships for housing development by meeting with property owners and developers (including the Mattapan CDC and other local nonprofits with development expertise) to identify a development team willing to undertake a “demonstration” mixed-use project of 2-3 stories of housing over retail space along Blue Hill Avenue.
- ❖ Seek an allocation of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and/or HOME funds from the City of Boston for housing rehabilitation assistance to promote incentives to build higher density, mixed-use projects along Blue Hill Avenue and Morton Street.
- ❖ Research new funding sources emerging for “green” development, in part to identify opportunities for improving the financial feasibility of housing development along the corridors.⁴¹

Promote Quality Housing Choices Across A Broad Income Range

Well-maintained residential units that are affordable to households across a range of incomes are essential, both to strengthen the consumer base for the commercial districts, and to make sure that current residents can continue to live in the MEDI study area as economic revitalization occurs. There are three approaches that can be employed to ensure a variety of housing types to meet residents’ needs—support the maintenance of quality housing, support the development of quality housing, and create additional opportunities for home-ownership.

The recommended efforts to support the maintenance of housing in the MEDI study area are specifically designed to improve the quality of housing along Mattapan's commercial corridors. As we have noted, the visual appearance of some pockets of housing along the commercial corridors in the MEDI study area is significantly worse than that of homes in the interior neighborhoods of the community. For a combination of reasons, these properties along and adjacent to the corridors have suffered from varying degrees of neglect and are now in need of considerable physical improvements. The relevancy of this need is increased when one considers the important role these properties play in shaping initial impressions of the community. To spur economic revitalization, it will be important to create a more positive image of the community as a place for investment, which



An example of decent three-family housing in the MEDI study area

City of Boston Resources for Housing Rehabilitation, Development, and Affordability

The City of Boston's *Department of Neighborhood Development (DND)* offers an array of programs and resources to help create and maintain affordable housing, and to promote homeownership opportunities. Some of these programs are highlighted below:

- **Boston HomeWorks:** Assists Boston homeowners in making home improvements through the Historic HomeWorks, HomeWorks, HomeWorks Emergency Loan, and PaintWorks Plus programs. These programs offer financial and technical assistance, conditional grants, and expert advice to income-eligible owner-occupants of 1-4 family homes and condominium units. (617.635.0600)
- **Services for Seniors:** Enables income-eligible Bostonians 62 years and older to live in their home safely and to make necessary repairs to their owner-occupied 1-4 family homes through HeatWorks, Senior Emergency Home Rehab, Senior Minor Repairs, and the Senior Vacant Unit Initiative. Working in partnership with nonprofit agencies across the city, free technical and financial assistance is offered to elderly homeowners to prioritize, execute, and complete necessary repairs and reduce costs. (617.635.0338)
- **The Boston HOME Center:** Boston's one-stop homeownership information and referral center where people can learn about and register for homebuyer, homeowner, and credit counseling classes and seminars. (617.635.4663; www.bostonhomecenter.com)
- **Rental Housing Resource Center:** Help for tenants and landlords with rental-housing concerns, from dispute mediation to legal information. (617.635.7368; www.cityofboston.gov/rentalhousing)
- **Programs for Developers:** DND also has programs that provide loans to private and nonprofit developers to create and improve rental units for low- and moderate-income families, and to create first-time homeownership opportunities of both newly-constructed and rehabilitated 1-4 family buildings. DND also has programs that make City-owned land available for housing development in Boston's neighborhoods. (617.635.0397)

the distressed residential properties currently do not do. It is also important to recognize that improving code compliance at any of the distressed structures that are rental properties will benefit the tenants who reside in them.

Efforts to support the development of additional quality housing in the MEDI study area should be seen as ongoing opportunities to increase both the appeal and diversity of the neighborhood. As mentioned in the previous section of this chapter, new housing development should be targeted toward increasing density along the commercial corridors and taking advantage of infill opportunities throughout the study area. Although there are not as many buildable vacant lots in Mattapan as there once were, parcels can be found to build upon.

Finally, maintaining the MEDI study area's high owner-occupancy rate and providing more homeownership opportunities is a key way to ensure a broad range of incomes in the community. Homeownership not only benefits the homeowner, through the ability to build wealth and create a stable financial future, but also benefits the neighborhood. Homeowners are more likely to be committed to their neighborhoods, investing resources into maintaining their property, building relationships with their neighbors, and becoming involved in larger community issues. Additionally, by creating opportunities for moderate-income would-be homebuyers to move from rental units into homeownership, rental units will be freed-up for new families with more modest incomes that are looking for housing.



An empty lot in Mattapan with potential for in-fill development

Possible Projects:

To support maintenance and development of “good housing” (defined as well-maintained buildings that are affordable to households across a range of incomes):

- ❖ Seek an allocation of CDBG and/or HOME funds from the City of Boston for concentrated code enforcement activities and/or rehabilitation assistance for residential structures along Blue Hill Avenue and Morton Street.

- ❖ Work with the City's Inspectional Services Department to enforce regulations in order to encourage residential building improvements along the corridors.
- ❖ Develop new in-fill housing (or mixed-use developments) on “opportunity lots,” such as vacant lots, underdeveloped space or vacant space above retail. Work with City of Boston officials to create development incentives for these sites.

To maintain Mattapan's high owner-occupancy rate, and provide more homeownership opportunities:

- ❖ Initiate and/or support homeownership programs and financial assistance to new homeowners in the MEDI neighborhoods. Work with City of Boston agencies and other funding sources to identify homeownership programs that could be accessed to increase the range of homeownership opportunities that are available in the MEDI study area.
- ❖ Encourage financial assistance that creates an incentive to develop alternative forms of homeownership (e.g., cooperative housing, condos, etc.).
- ❖ In part, target homeownership financial assistance to owner-occupied properties that are likely to turn over because their long-time owners are elderly.
- ❖ For the elderly owner-occupants that want to stay in their homes, identify resources—such as property tax rebates or freezes, targeted rehab funds, carpenter assistance programs, etc.—that will help these owners to maintain their properties in good condition.



An example of publicly-assisted new construction in the MEDI study area

- ❖ Work with banks to provide financing for owner-occupied units in mixed-use developments.

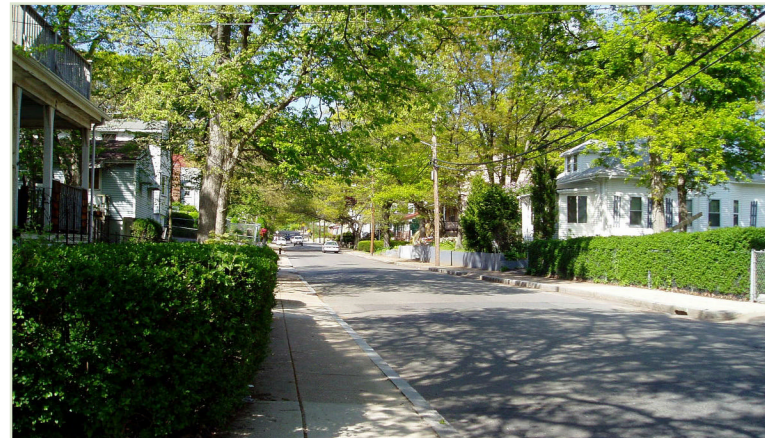
Empower Residents To Influence and Shape Future Residential Developments

Residents in the MEDI study area desire a greater level of influence over the types and location of housing that is developed in their neighborhoods. Although new development is generally desirable, residents feel that they have the best understanding of the community's culture, needs, and goals; therefore, they should be consulted during the development process, and should be given a significant role in setting standards for the housing and other development that occurs.

The type of influence that Mattapan community members desire can best be secured by working within the City of Boston's Article 80 process. This mechanism was designed to ensure that residents are provided access to the development review process, and the City is not likely to set aside this established mechanism for a competing review protocol. Additionally, the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) can only enforce those agreements/concessions made by developers within the Article 80 review process. If developers agree to neighborhood resident demands outside of this process, there is no legal or institutional way that the BRA can enforce the agreement.

Citizen participation in the Article 80 process principally can occur in two ways, through participation in public meetings and through participation on an Impact Advisory Group (IAG). Impact Advisory Groups are created for large-scale projects to assist the BRA in determining the appropriate mitigation for expected pressures to be caused by a proposed development. The Mayor appoints the members of the Impact Advisory Group, with consideration given to nominations received from the project location's City Councilor, State Representative, State Senator, and at-large City Councilors.⁴² In addition, any local Neighborhood Council will have at least one representative on the IAG.

Impact Advisory Groups cease to exist once the project has been approved for permitting. Accordingly, once the Article 80 planning process is completed, a sub-committee of the MEDI Community Implementation Team (CIT) could be established with the



A MEDI study area sample of the type of residential development desired by residents of Mattapan

responsibility of vigilant oversight of projects as they move through the construction process. One main responsibility of the CIT sub-committee would be to ensure that concessions made by developers are actually incorporated into built projects. If the developer does not honor his or her commitments to the community, the oversight sub-committee could then work with the BRA staff to enforce any provisions agreed to under the Article 80 process. Using the established protocol under Article 80 is the most effective way to rectify such situations.

Another way to increase the community's oversight of proposed developments would be to request that the BRA and the City of Boston create a zoning committee for the Mattapan Neighborhood.

This committee, like the one established in Jamaica Plain, would work with the City officials, proposing changes to existing zoning and reviewing projects that trigger Article 80.⁴³ This would be a more formal process than creating the CIT subcommittee, as described above, and also would not be limited to a project-specific focus.

Possible Projects:

- ❖ Provide all community organizations with a copy of *A Citizen's Guide to Development Review under Article 80 of the Boston Zoning Code* that explains the development review process. Follow-up with a well-publicized community meeting to discuss the Article 80 process and answer questions.
- ❖ Meet with the BRA Neighborhood Planner for Mattapan, the MEDI Implementation Project Director, and the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services Coordinator assigned to the MEDI study area in order to establish a channel of communications. This channel of communications can be used to understand proposed development projects, the details of plans that are eventually approved, and the most effective ways to work within the zoning system to achieve local goals.
- ❖ Determine, in consultation with the MEDI Implementation Project Director, whether an oversight sub-committee of the MEDI Community Implementation Team or a formal zoning committee is more desirable for the Mattapan neighborhood. The zoning committee would have a formal place in the development process but would require additional time

commitments from its members, and would be more difficult to fit within the proposed MEDI Implementation Team structure.

- ❖ Ensure that Impact Advisory Groups are designated by elected officials to participate in the design review process for all large-scale projects in the MEDI study area.
- ❖ Develop residential design standards that can be used to negotiate with developers on all future residential projects. If a zoning committee is created, this entity could take on this responsibility as well.
- ❖ Arrange a roundtable with community organizations from other Boston neighborhoods that have successfully negotiated with developers and ensured compliance. If a zoning committee is created, it could coordinate this activity with BRA planning staff.
- ❖ Periodically review the Inspectional Services Division's (ISD) list of *As of Right* Permits (<http://www.cityofboston.gov/isd/cservices/default.asp>) to identify planned development projects that do not have to go through the Article 80 process. This would be an ideal role for a resident oversight group or the zoning committee, whichever is created.

In the next chapter of this Action Agenda report, additional recommendations regarding land use, design standards, and zoning are outlined.⁴⁴

Endnotes

³²Whenever possible, this Housing chapter presents data specifically for the MEDI study area, which include census tracts 1010.01, 1010.02, 1011.01, and 1011.02. However, in some instances, data are only available at the district level—that is, for all of Mattapan as defined by the Boston Redevelopment Authority (the BRA's Mattapan neighborhood planning district includes census tracts 1001, 1002, 1003, 1010.01, 1010.02, 1011.01, 1011.02). For all data references, there will be a clear indication of whether the data reflects Mattapan overall or just the MEDI study area.

³³However, in terms of total units, the group of 3- and 4-unit structures has the largest aggregate number of housing units among the various building types, because each residential structure has more units.

³⁴Another statistic that reinforces the higher than average owner-occupancy rate in the MEDI area is the number of residential buildings in Mattapan that are owner-occupied—71% (Boston Dept of Assessing, 2004). Though this number reflects all of Mattapan (i.e., the BRA neighborhood planning district), there is no reason to doubt its accuracy for the MEDI study area since the owner-occupancy rate is higher in the MEDI study area than in Mattapan as a whole. Also, the difference between the two statistics quoted is that the overall owner-occupancy rate reflects all *units*, whereas the owner-occupancy rate for buildings focuses on residential structures (which may include multiple housing units) as the unit of analysis.

³⁵Staff from ICON Architecture, Inc. and Guzman Architects, Inc.—firms that are part of the Abt consulting team—completed the windshield survey. These team members drove through each of the neighborhoods in the MEDI study area, assessed each residential building's use, apparent number of housing units, and exterior condition, and recorded this information.

³⁶Source: *Real Estate Trends Annual Report—FY 2004 and FY 2005*, Boston Department of Neighborhood Development, 2005.

³⁷Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000.

³⁸Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000.

³⁹*Transit Oriented Development*. www.rtd-denver.com/Projects/TOD.

⁴⁰See Land Use, Urban Design, and Zoning chapter (Chapter 7) for additional information on Floor-Area-Ratio and for specific details on density recommendations.

⁴¹Under the Massachusetts Green Communities™ initiative, MassHousing, The Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MTC), and Enterprise have joined forces to invest at least \$209 million worth of incentives to build 1,000 new homes in Massachusetts that promote health, conserve energy and natural resources, and provide easy access to jobs, schools, and services. The resources under this initiative include:

- MassHousing will provide approximately \$125 million in mortgage financing;
- MTC will provide \$8.5 million in grants specifically for renewable energy technologies such as photovoltaic panels, wind-powered electricity generators, water-power electricity generators and fuel cells used in the construction of affordable housing; and
- Enterprise will provide up to \$75 million in private equity to developers from the sale of low-income housing tax credits. Enterprise will also provide up to \$500,000 in grants as well as loans for the pre-development, acquisition, and construction of green projects.

⁴²" IAGs ensure that local communities have a voice at every stage of the review process. IAG members are appointed by local elected officials and the Mayor, and include neighborhood residents and business and community organization representatives. An IAG does not replace any part of the public process, but instead offers an opportunity for community members to join the BRA in procedural aspects of Article 80—such as the public agency scoping session or the drafting of the cooperation agreements where public participation was previously unlikely." ("Letter to the Editor," *Dorchester Reporter*; by Mark Maloney; July 24, 2003).

⁴³To maximize its control over new development and/or redevelopment, the Jamaica Plain zoning committee has decreased the amount of square footage that can be altered without triggering an Article 80 review process to 300 square feet. Additionally, the Jamaica Plain zoning committee has created special districts, within which an Article 80 review is also triggered.

⁴⁴See also appendices for proposed schedule for implementing key recommendations.



Mattapan Vision
Morton Street Village – A Possible Design for Mixed-use Development

Land Use, Urban Design, and Zoning

Introduction

This chapter examines land use, urban design, and zoning. **Land use** is concerned with the types of uses that occur on any parcel of land. Recommendations regarding the “best use” for a particular parcel of land are generally based upon a community’s goals, real estate and business market realities, and individual property characteristics. Land use guidelines are formalized and considered binding once they are adopted as part of the municipal zoning code. **Zoning** determines the types of uses that are allowed or forbidden in a particular portion of the city, or on a given property. Additionally, the zoning code regulates the scale, dimensions, and density of structures that can be constructed on a parcel of land.

Urban design guidelines articulate the size, shape, and aesthetic characteristics that a community would

like to see in any new development or infrastructure projects. Specifically, guidelines can deal with building height, building placement on lots, overall building size (regulated by Floor to Area Ratio, or “FAR”), and the appearance and size of signage, as well as pedestrian amenities such as sidewalk design, landscaping, and lighting. Design guidelines are generally incorporated into the municipal zoning code as policy recommendations, and are used by City of Boston staff during the site plan review process in order to ensure that new developments reflect these standards. Targeted zoning incentives can also be used to encourage the types of investment that meet the specific development objectives for an area.

Zoning regulations and urban design guidelines are the best way (and perhaps the only binding way) to implement a community's land use goals. Clear urban design policies and zoning regulations are essential. If

policies and regulations are vague or out of date, they are ineffective at guiding where development happens or the type of development (or redevelopment) that occurs.

Summary of Recommendations – A Vision for Targeted, Intentional Development

According to what the MEDI study team has heard from community stakeholders, Mattapan should have pockets of commercial activity designed primarily to meet the needs of MEDI area residents, and to a lesser degree the needs and desires of individuals coming to the area from other communities. These pockets of commercial activity should be clearly identifiable to both residents and



Example of use of street furniture, wide sidewalks, and shade trees to create pedestrian friendly environment.

visitors—identifiable through the design of public infrastructure (streets, sidewalks, landscaping, etc.), through business signage, and through the areas' increased density. The existing residential neighborhoods that lie outside of these commercial areas are to be preserved as is, or enhanced, but the principal focus for development is on the commercial centers themselves.

To support community members' desire for improved access to a diversity of high-quality goods and services while preserving the quality of residential areas, we are recommending an approach to land use that maximizes the strengths of different locations in the MEDI community. This strategy will create commercial space to help meet the unmet retail demand discussed in the Business Development chapter (Chapter 4), and provide residential space within the commercial districts to broaden the consumer base for the retail and commercial outlets. Under the land use policies being recommended, the commercial districts will become denser than current use patterns, with building heights averaging between two and four stories, depending on the specific commercial area where buildings are located. Within the commercial centers, a variety of uses will be encouraged, including restaurants, entertainment venues, unique retail stores, pharmacies, office supply and services stores, and bookstores. Increased residential density in the commercial centers and along the commercial corridors will be encouraged, in part, through an incentive program that rewards the inclusion of residential development above first and second floor retail and office uses.

Additionally, in developing this new housing along the corridors, unit configurations and building amenities will be designed specifically to attract young professionals as owners or tenants, as part of the effort to increase the consumer base for the commercial districts. In marketing to this young professional population, the residential development will also be complemented by improvements in community facilities and greenspace areas (bike paths, etc.), and in the diversity of dining and entertainment options available in the MEDI area.

The commercial areas in Mattapan currently vary relative to their ability to cater to customers arriving by vehicle or on foot, the availability of developable land, the size of current commercial spaces, and the proximity to residential areas. In recognition of this variation in existing conditions, our recommendations are structured around an approach that allows for the customization of land use and design policies for each commercial center. Our basic proposal is the recommendation that zoning subdistricts be created for the following “commercial focus areas” within the Greater Mattapan Neighborhood Zoning District:

- ❖ Mattapan Square;
- ❖ Morton Street Village (Morton Street between Norfolk and Selden Streets); and
- ❖ Blue Hill Center (Blue Hill Avenue between Hiawatha and Hazelton Streets).⁴⁵ (See map on page 104 for location of these sub-districts.)

Within each of these sub-districts, we are proposing guidelines that clearly outline allowed and prohibited uses, design standards, and incentives for new development. These guidelines are designed to be appropriate to each commercial center, while helping to ensure that these commercial focus areas are developed to their highest and best uses.

As has been noted above (and will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter), a key element of the proposed land use strategy is increasing density through increasing the allowable building heights in portions of the commercial districts. It should be acknowledged that during the May 2006 public meeting to discuss the draft MEDI Action Agenda, a few community members expressed concerns over this recommendation to increase the allowable building heights. The primary concerns expressed were a fear of increased crime caused by the increased building and residential density, and the danger that the taller buildings would create a “canyon effect” along the commercial corridors. Given the emphasis on designing housing along the commercial corridors to market to young professionals, the concerns over increased crime may be misplaced. However, such community concerns still should be taken seriously. To address the fears about crime, for example, it will be important for the MEDI Community Implementation Team to monitor the design process for any housing or building development that occurs in these sub-districts, as well as to place a priority emphasis on the Action Agenda recommendations for enhancing public safety. Similarly, although the widths of Blue Hill Avenue and Morton Street are such that the building height

increases will not result in a dramatic change in the scale of the commercial centers along these corridors, it will still be important to carefully review the proposed designs for any development projects to assess their impact on the “feel” of the neighborhoods.

On the other hand, it is unwise and impractical to remove this increased height provision given the overall economic development goals of this Action Agenda. There is a critical need to increase height limits in these commercial centers in order to create adequate financial incentives for owners and developers to undertake property improvement and redevelopment. Without such investment and redevelopment, it is unlikely that the MEDI study area will see the expansion of goods and services that so many members of the community have longed for, and asked the MEDI effort to pursue.

Existing Conditions

Existing Urban Design Guidelines

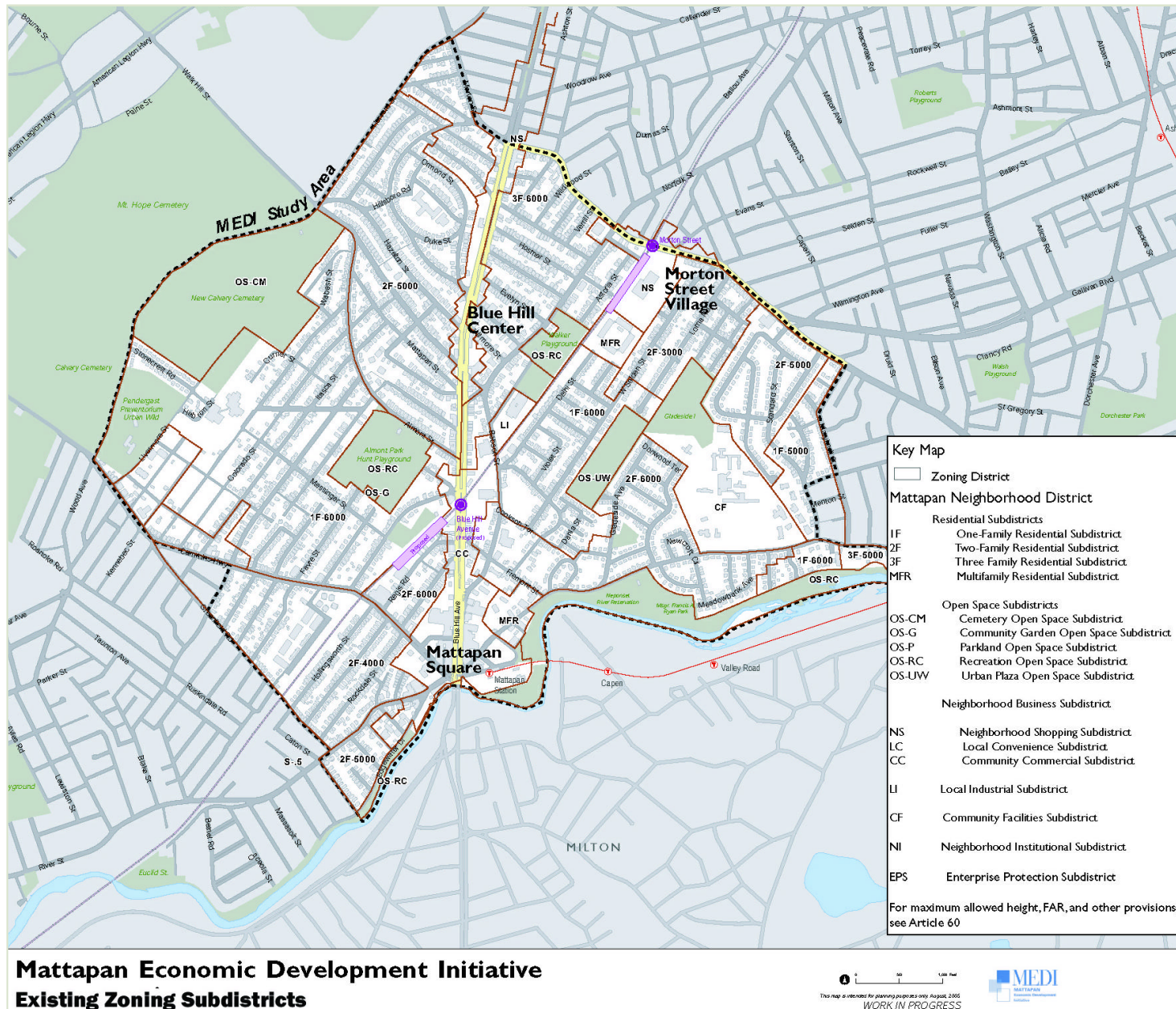
Urban design guidelines are built into the Boston zoning code. There is not a separate urban design handbook that regulates development in Boston. Currently, all land zoned for commercial uses in the Greater Mattapan Neighborhood Zoning District has nearly identical urban design guidelines for building height, parking location, setback requirements, etc. Examples of existing guidelines include:

- ❖ The Maximum Building Height in Neighborhood Shopping sub-districts (such as along portions of Morton Street) is 35 feet; in the Community Commercial sub-district (i.e., Mattapan Square), it is 45 feet.
- ❖ There are no minimum lot sizes, lot widths, lot frontages, front yards or side yards.
- ❖ The Maximum Floor Area Ratio is 1.0 in the Neighborhood Shopping subdistrict and 2.0 in the Community Commercial subdistrict.
- ❖ Off-Street parking requirements are also consistent across sub-districts, with 2 spaces required for 1,000 square feet of gross floor area dedicated to office, retail and/or service uses.

Existing Zoning

Zoning in Boston is governed by the City of Boston’s zoning code. There are specific districts that allow various combinations of residential and business uses. Additionally, there are special districts that fit within the larger zoning code. Within these special districts unique zoning guidelines can be established to reflect and support local goals and objectives.

As we have noted, the land in the MEDI study area falls within the Greater Mattapan Neighborhood Zoning District. This zoning district is comprised primarily of four residential subdistricts (One-Family Residential, Two-Family Residential, Three-Family Residential, and Multifamily Residential), various open space



subdistricts (i.e., cemetery, parkland, recreation), and Neighborhood Business Subdistricts (Neighborhood Shopping and Community Commercial sub-districts). There are additional types of subdistricts provided for in the code, but none of them play a major role in the MEDI study area. (See map showing Existing Zoning Subdistricts on page 95.)

Existing zoning separates the MEDI study area's commercial sub-districts into two types, Neighborhood Shopping and Community Commercial. The existing Neighborhood Shopping sub-district includes Morton Street between Norfolk Street and Selden Street and Blue Hill Avenue between Hiawatha Road and Morton Street. The Community Commercial sub-district includes Mattapan Square north to Blue Hill Avenue and Almont Street. These two sub-districts allow slightly different uses, with the Community Commercial sub-district allowing more intense commercial uses, such as banks, cinemas, and retail businesses on the second story, "as of right" (meaning that no approval is required before beginning a use).

In general, the existing Boston zoning code is supportive of the types of development being called for in the MEDI Action Agenda. For instance, most retail and office uses are allowed on the street level, with residential permitted on the second story and above. However, some changes to the zoning code that should be considered include allowing parking garages, at least conditionally in the Mattapan Square Area, and limiting the amount of office space that can be located on the street level. Additionally, a

refinement of the uses that are allowed "as of right" and those that require conditional approval should be completed. For example, outdoor cafes are only conditionally allowed in the Community Commercial sub-district, meaning that for someone to open an outdoor café, they would need to enter the development review process with no guarantee of an ultimate approval. If the MEDI community's goal is to create a vibrant atmosphere in the Square, removing the uncertainty surrounding the conditional use approval process by making outdoor cafes an allowable use "as of right" might be desirable.

The zoning code can also include built-in incentives that will encourage development that is consistent with the community's broader revitalization goals. For example, incentives can be incorporated into the zoning code for the inclusion of residential units in commercial developments, for the inclusion of a limited number of affordable housing units in commercial developments, and for parking bonuses for developments that allocate spaces for carpool vehicles, dedicated shared-use vehicles, and alternative fuel vehicles. All of these proposed changes should be made within the context of the new zoning subdistricts that have been proposed for the commercial focus areas, and should be designed to reflect existing strengths and development potential of the commercial centers.

MEDI Urban Design Guidelines

The recommended MEDI study area Urban Design Guidelines have been written to foster high quality development that creates opportunities for residents to shop, live, and gather together as a community. The intention is for buildings to be tall enough and large enough to create the critical mass of retail, office and residential space needed to foster a vibrant urban energy, while not being so big or tall that residents feel that the sense of their neighborhood is lost. Parking located behind the buildings and wide sidewalks are recommended in order to create interesting street lines. Ultimately, the goal is for cafes and businesses to spill out onto the sidewalks in ways that enhance the pedestrian experience, encouraging residents and visitors to walk, linger, and relax in Mattapan's public community spaces. Where applicable, the urban design also should foster an integration of transit with property use through building positioning, sidewalks, paths, and mix of uses.

While the MEDI Urban Design Guidelines apply primarily to properties within the proposed commercial subdistricts, all commercially zoned properties should seek to apply the standards, when feasible. Creating a consistency of appearance throughout the Mattapan neighborhood will enhance the overall physical quality of the neighborhood.

The guidelines below are a mixture of current policies “on the books” and refinements that we are proposing. Some of the

recommendations, such as the provisions for street level units and features relative to the pedestrian environment, are largely new, while others, such as the provisions for signage and the street wall, mimic guidelines that currently exist.

The main changes proposed for the existing urban design guidelines relate to building height, street-level unit limitations (size and use), and parking requirements. The maximum building heights proposed increase from 45 ft to 55 ft for Mattapan Square, and from 35 ft to 45 ft for the other two proposed commercial focus areas, respectively, in order to allow increased density and incentive for redevelopment. As we have noted above, while there has been some resident concern over the proposed height increases, the width of both Morton Street and Blue Hill Avenue are sufficiently to balance taller buildings and maintain the existing sense of place in the districts.

The street-level unit size and use recommendations are meant to encourage property owners to place a priority on retail uses, since these uses generate the most foot traffic and visitor interest in the commercial districts. Additionally, property owners are encouraged to selectively consolidate units to create larger spaces for desired businesses, as outlined in the Business Development chapter, keeping in mind the need for diversity of business size and type.

Finally, a recommendation is made to reduce the parking requirements from 2 spaces per 1000 sq. ft. gross floor area to 1 space per 1000 sq. ft. gross floor area in Mattapan Square and

1.5 spaces in Blue Hill Center and Morton Street Village. This change corresponds with the Boston Transportation Department's recommended levels for the neighborhood commercial districts. This recommendation is being made in an effort balance the need for parking with a desire to maximize the use of all land in the commercial focus areas, since land used for parking is land not used for a more intense retail or office use. Additionally, it may be feasible to allow developers to pay for parking spaces in lieu of providing the spaces directly. This revenue could be used to improve existing municipal parking lots or provide initial capital for the construction of a parking structure.

Below is a brief description of each of our recommendations for the key urban design features that may impact the MEDI study area's revitalization.

Building Height

Variations in height are encouraged in order to create a visually interesting streetscape.

Street Level Units

Retail uses are a priority for street-level units. Street-level space is most accessible to pedestrians, and therefore most attractive to desired retail and restaurant outlets. Since it is a goal of the MEDI Action Agenda to attract a variety of retail businesses to the commercial areas, it is important to ensure that key retail units are



An example of ground floor retail and multi-story residential development

not occupied by uses that could easily have economic success in a second (or third) story space.

The size of street level-units should be flexible and accommodating. Currently, many of the retail stores in the MEDI commercial areas have limited square footage, hindering the commercial districts' ability to attract larger scale retail stores. Where feasible and desirable, property owners should be encouraged to consolidate retail spaces to create larger units to meet the needs of prospective new retail tenants. At the same time, there is also a danger of retail uses that are so large (in terms of unit square

footage) that they overwhelm the other businesses on the block (or in the commercial district) and discourage pedestrian store-to-store browsing and shopping. To maintain a reasonable array of businesses on street level and ensure that there are enough businesses to create a “district” feel, any use desiring over 10,000 square feet of street level space will require a conditional use permit. Larger businesses will be encouraged to create multi-story stores or locate a portion of their business on the second floor to meet their space requirements.

Street Wall

A street wall is the wall or portion of a building facing the street. A consistent street wall, such as adjacent buildings being setback a similar distance from the street, is desired for all three commercial focus areas. As the current zoning code requires, new development should be consistent with the street wall of one or more adjacent buildings. If there is no contiguous building, some flexibility in setback might be allowed, for example, to provide room for outdoor café space or product displays (such as for flower shops, etc.). In general, building lines should be built within 5 to 10 feet of existing sidewalks. Upper story setbacks (or “stepbacks”) might be encouraged where extra height is allowed with zoning incentives.

Building façade materials should be masonry or glass. Display windows, with transparent glass, should be used. Signage should be consistent with architectural features and limited in size to minimize obscuring pedestrian’s line-of-sight into businesses.

Parking Lots

All parking should be placed behind or beneath buildings. When necessary, parking placed to the side of a building should be enhanced by landscaping that creates a visual connection with adjacent properties.

Pedestrian Environment

Through-Block Passages

Through-block passages are desirable because they allow for greater flow of foot traffic, increasing pedestrians’ sense of safety and accessibility. The passages can also increase the use of parking areas located on side streets or behind main buildings.



An example of creative and aesthetically pleasing through-block passage



An example of pedestrian oriented streetscape improvements

There is a current need for a safe two-way through-block passage between the municipal parking lot on River Street and Blue Hill Avenue. Such a passage could provide an additional link between Blue Hill Avenue and potential development at the MBTA Mattapan Station site. There may be potential for additional passages as commercial blocks are redeveloped; when possible, such passages should be considered and accommodated in redevelopment plans.

Defined Pedestrian Areas

Pedestrian areas, such as sidewalks, crosswalks, and plazas, can be defined through various means including:

- ❖ Utilizing unique paving materials to delineate crosswalks and enhance sidewalks;

- ❖ Creating corner circulation spaces, through the setback of corner buildings, allowing pedestrians to congregate safely while waiting to cross a street; or
- ❖ Visually narrowing a street by using a neckdown to create the illusion that the street is more narrow at intersections, leading drivers to slow down and expect pedestrians. Neckdowns at corners do not generally lead to a loss of road way or significant parking; the loss of a few parking spaces would likely be the extent of the loss. Blue Hill Avenue currently uses neckdowns at River Street and Fairway Street.

Street Trees

Trees, when newly planted, should be substantial enough to have an immediate impact on the streetscape. Trees along Blue Hill Avenue should have a higher tree canopy and wider base at current neckdown areas, since the sidewalk width tends to be greater. Conversely, it is not possible to plant trees along the narrow sidewalks where angled parking is provided. In the Mattapan Square Mixed-Use Sub-district and Morton Street Village Neighborhood Sub-district, mid-size trees should be considered.

A variety of trees are recommended. The variety provides an interesting visual experience and helps to protect the trees from common disease.

As additional convenient off-street parking is created through new development projects, Blue Hill Avenue sidewalks in Mattapan Square should be widened by changing angled parking to parallel

parking, allowing for provision of additional street trees and other streetscape amenities.

Planters

Planters should be strategically placed and planted with vegetation that balances the need for the planters to be attractive with the expected maintenance schedule. Plants that require significant watering or pruning are poor choices for public planters. (Unfortunately, an area without planters can be more attractive than an area where existing planters are left empty or where planters are filled with dying or dead plants.) Before any planters are purchased or planned, a maintenance schedule should be adopted.

Moveable planters supplied by local businesses or property owners should be welcomed and encouraged throughout the Mattapan Square and the Morton Street Village sub-districts, as long as they do not impede pedestrians' ability to walk on the sidewalk or browse along store windows. Planters should be removed in winter unless evergreen plants are used.

Signage

The use of internally-lit signs throughout the MEDI study area should be minimized, and their use in Mattapan Square and Morton Street Village should be prohibited. Public service message devices and freestanding signs should also be prohibited in Mattapan Square and Morton Street Village, with freestanding signs conditionally allowed in Blue Hill Center.



A new backlit sign partially funded by the City of Boston ReStore Program

All billboards should be eliminated and the installation of future billboards should be prohibited. While current billboards are grandfathered, and therefore cannot be forcibly removed, it is possible that property owners may be able to revoke the lease they have provided to the billboard companies.

Gratings

Security gratings are often unattractive, though understandably necessary. When used, security grating that provides pedestrians with a view through the display window, such as grill-type security

grates, should be used. Security grates should be integrated into the design of the storefront and raised as soon as possible in the morning to minimize their impact on the overall appearance of Mattapan's commercial areas.

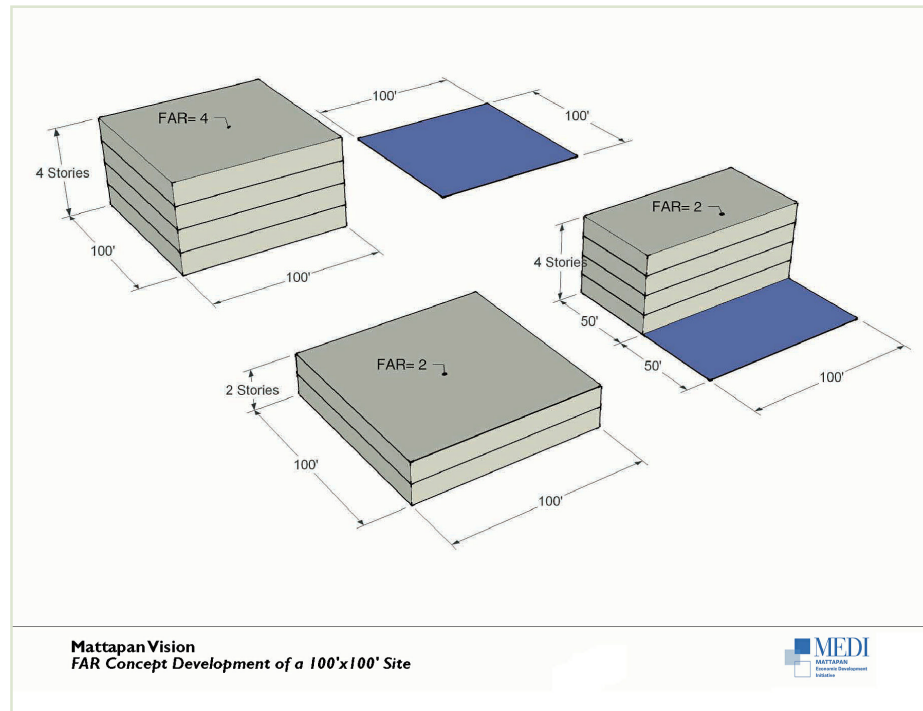
Proposed MEDI Zoning Principles

The main goal for recommending refinements to the existing Mattapan Neighborhood Zoning District is to focus efforts on the commercial areas of Mattapan with the greatest potential for development or redevelopment to occur.

Current zoning in the commercial districts does not provide adequate incentives for the redevelopment of underutilized sites. For example, typical commercial sites in Mattapan Square have a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 2.0, with single or two-story buildings covering virtually an entire lot. These structures are either at or exceeding the maximum allowed buildout, and no additional development or redevelopment is possible without seeking a zoning variance, a risky proposition.⁴⁶

We believe that the zoning within the MEDI study area should emulate recently adopted revisions to zoning in other Boston neighborhoods, which have encouraged desired types of development, including mixed-use development, through the use of incentives such as height and density bonuses.

In this Action Agenda, we are recommending that existing zoning rules be maintained except in the three commercial centers of the study area where we have recommended the creation of commercial “focus area” subdistricts.⁴⁷ The proposed commercial sub-districts will be fully contained within the boundaries of larger, existing commercial zones. The sub-district boundaries for these commercial focus areas were determined by studying the locations of business concentrations, transit stations, underutilized property, and planned private or public investment. Three subdistricts were



selected as focus areas because of the existing concentrations of commercial uses, development patterns that support the concept of mixed-use development, and the need for zoning changes to encourage this type of redevelopment. The commercial areas identified for zoning changes and designation as commercial sub-districts include Mattapan Square, Morton Street Village (Morton Street between Norfolk and Selden streets), and Blue Hill Center (Blue Hill Avenue between Hiawatha and Hazelton streets).⁴⁸

Each of the proposed commercial sub-districts is described below (see also map showing boundaries of the proposed sub-districts on page 104).

Mattapan Square Mixed-Use Sub-district

Current Conditions in Mattapan Square

Mattapan Square is the densest commercial area in Mattapan, given the heights of buildings and the number of commercial units in each building. However, compared to the main commercial areas in other Boston neighborhoods, such as Dudley Square or Upham's Corner, Mattapan Square is moderately to significantly less dense than these other commercial centers, depending on the comparison area selected.

In Mattapan Square, there is a mix of retail, office, and institutional (e.g., churches, government offices, social services) uses. Additionally, there are a few properties being used for non-retail commercial uses, such as auto repair and warehousing. The retail businesses seem to be primarily oriented to serving neighborhood

residents and residents from nearby areas, though our consumer survey (see Business Development chapter) indicates that many local residents do not do much of their shopping in this district.

The buildings in Mattapan Square along Blue Hill Avenue form a continuous street wall and are located in close proximity to the sidewalk and street. This placement typically creates a welcoming environment for pedestrians.

Additionally, public improvements to lighting

and the streetscape that have occurred, and the Square's direct access to public transportation, further enhance the Square's potential attraction for pedestrians. Pedestrian amenities are partially compromised along Blue Hill Avenue, however, by the angled parking, which reduces sidewalks to minimal widths and does not allow for the planting of street trees.

River Street provides additional retail frontage adjacent to the Square, especially in the immediate vicinity of Blue Hill Avenue, but the retail environment quickly dissipates, with underutilized



An example of higher density mixed use development with strategic street-level retail space

properties and a loss of easy pedestrian and vehicular connection back to Blue Hill Avenue.

Parking, provided through a combination of on-street parking and centralized parking areas, is a constrained resource throughout the Square. As is described in the Transportation chapter (Chapter 5), business patrons often double-park along portions of Blue Hill Avenue because of a shortage of on-street parking, while parking lots on adjacent side streets are often under-utilized.

Purpose of Sub-district

The MEDI vision for Mattapan Square is that of a neighborhood retail area that eventually meets not only the needs of Mattapan residents, but also those of surrounding communities such as Milton, Dorchester, Hyde Park, and other nearby communities. In this vision, the sub-district will be populated by a diverse mix of retail businesses, with some open throughout the evening hours. Residential units on the second, third, and fourth stories of buildings will increase the sub-district's population and its vitality.

Sub-district Boundaries

The proposed Mattapan Square sub-district follows the boundaries of the current Community Commercial sub-district, which includes the MBTA Mattapan trolley terminal site, and extends up Blue Hill Avenue almost to Almont Street. Consideration might be given to including the area along Cummins Highway up to the Cote Ford site and the Fairmount Line as well.

Uses to be Encouraged

As recommended, encouraged uses will include restaurants (with and without live entertainment), entertainment and cultural venues, residential space above first or second floor retail/office space, unique retail stores, pharmacies, office supply and services stores, and bookstores.

Uses to be Conditionally Permitted

Under the proposed vision for the Mattapan Square sub-district, conditionally permitted uses will include retail over a certain specified size – perhaps 10,000 to 20,000 square feet, possibly with stricter limitations on street level area but allowing second floor expansion; also non-retail uses on street level will be conditionally permitted.

Uses to be Discouraged or Prohibited

Uses to be discouraged or prohibited in the Mattapan Square sub-district include wholesale business and storage, institutional uses, industrial uses, repair garages, gasoline service stations, non-accessory parking and vehicle storage and service uses, offices on the street level, and discount stores.⁴⁹

Parking

Buildings will be built along the street line, with all parking below grade or behind buildings.



The corner of Morton Street and Norfolk Street located in the Morton Street Village

Morton Street Village Neighborhood Sub-district

Current Conditions in Morton Street Village

Morton Street Village, the area along Morton Street roughly between Norfolk Street and Selden Street, is a low-density retail district. The mix of uses currently includes about fifteen businesses, with types ranging from retail businesses and eating establishments to auto-related businesses and warehousing. Most of these businesses are located in single-story buildings located close to the street. Additionally, there are detached two- and three-story multi-unit residential buildings, and a large 200+ unit residential building on the edge of the sub-district.

The proposed sub-district currently serves the residents in the surrounding community, commuter traffic, and customers of established businesses. The Morton Station on the Fairmount Commuter Line is located within the Morton Street Village and is in the process of being upgraded by the MBTA. The upgrade will enhance the rider platform, increase handicap accessibility, and provide a drop-off area for riders.

The area is not currently a pedestrian-oriented environment, in spite of the commuter rail station. Morton Street is a major road with steady traffic and no median. Without street trees, landscaping, or other pedestrians-scale amenities, there also is little to indicate that pedestrians traffic is encouraged. Parking, while constrained, is generally provided through on-street parking or limited parking on business property.

Purpose of Sub-district

The MEDI vision for the Morton Street Village sub-district is a transit-oriented neighborhood shopping area that meets the needs of Mattapan residents, commuter rail riders, and through-traffic drivers that are attracted by the stores in the sub-district. The sub-district will be populated by locally-owned convenience businesses such as a coffee shop/bakery, florist, dry cleaner, etc., as well as services outlets such as a bank branch. Residential units will be encouraged above ground floor commercial space. Buildings will be built along the street line with all parking below grade or behind buildings. Significant pedestrian improvements, such as street trees, wide sidewalks, pedestrian lighting, varied crosswalks and

neckdowns, will be made to indicate the boundaries of the sub-district and to increase its appeal to pedestrians.

Sub-district Boundaries

The proposed boundaries of the sub-district are Morton Street from Norfolk Street to Selden Street.

Uses to be Encouraged

Under the proposed vision for the Morton Street Village sub-district, encouraged uses include small-scale retail and commercial services such as banks, coffee shops, bakeries, florists, etc.

Uses to be Conditionally Permitted

Proposed conditionally permitted uses include non-retail uses on the street level, and retail over a certain specified size — perhaps 10,000 square feet, possibly with stricter limitations on the street-level area but allowing second floor expansion.

Uses to be Discouraged or Prohibited

Proposed discouraged or prohibited uses in the Morton Street Village sub-district include wholesale business and storage, institutional uses, industrial uses, repair garages, gasoline service stations, drive thru businesses, large single-use buildings, off-site parking



lots, and vehicle storage and service uses, and detached dwellings.^{50 51}

Parking

Buildings will be built along the street line, with all parking below grade or behind buildings.

Blue Hill Center Neighborhood Sub-district

Current Conditions in Blue Hill Avenue between Hiawatha and Hazelton Streets

The area along Blue Hill Avenue between Hiawatha and Hazelton Streets is a low-density commercial corridor. It is being singled out from the rest of Blue Hill Avenue as a commercial “focus area” sub-district because it seems to function as an informal center of Community Resources for the MEDI area — because of the health center, new library, community center, and social services providers that are located there. Although all of these resources are not necessarily on Blue Hill Avenue itself or directly between Hiawatha and Hazelton Streets, they are close enough, in combination with existing retail uses, to have the potential of creating the sense of a cohesive commercial area. In addition to the community uses listed above, properties are used for local retail stores, offices, and multi-unit residential buildings.

A hindrance to creating the image of a cohesive commercial center in this focus area is the current lack of homogeneity between building size and location within lot lines, specifically in relation to Blue Hill Avenue. Without some level of consistency, it is difficult for



An example of a medium density mixed use development

residents and commuters to perceive the area as an integrated commercial center.

The area also is not currently a pedestrian-oriented environment. Without street trees, landscaping, or other pedestrians-scale amenities, there is little to indicate that pedestrian traffic is encouraged.

Parking, while constrained, is generally provided through on-street parking or limited parking on business property.

Purpose of Sub-district

The MEDI vision for the Blue Hill Center sub-district is a medium-

density commercial area built around the existing concentration of community-focused resources and retail establishments. Additional retail and office uses will complement the family-oriented businesses in the area, and define the sub-district as the heart of the neighborhood. To the extent feasible, mixed-use buildings will be the focus of new development, with parking being placed behind buildings. Significant pedestrian improvements, such as street trees, wide sidewalks, pedestrian lighting, varied crosswalks and neckdowns, will be made to indicate the boundaries of the sub-district and increase its appeal for pedestrians.

Sub-district Boundaries

The proposed boundaries for the Blue Hill Center sub-district are Blue Hill Avenue from Hiawatha to Hazelton Streets.

Uses to be Encouraged

As envisioned, encouraged uses for the Blue Hill Center sub-district will include businesses that are family-oriented and/or consistent with existing community-focused stores and organizations, such as restaurants, bookstores, and other locally-owned retail businesses.

Uses to be Conditionally Permitted

Proposed uses to be conditionally permitted in the Blue Hill Center sub-district include non-retail uses on the street level and retail over a certain specified size – perhaps 10,000 square feet, possibly with stricter limitations on street level area, but allowing for second floor expansion.

Uses to be Discouraged or Prohibited

Proposed discouraged or prohibited uses include wholesale business and storage, additional institutional uses, industrial uses, repair garages, gasoline service stations, drive thru businesses, large single use buildings, entertainment uses, off-site parking lots and vehicle storage and service uses.⁵²

Parking

Buildings will be built along the street line, with all parking behind buildings or below grade.

Gateway Parcels

In addition to the three commercial sub-districts described above, specific “community gateway parcels” should be designated and governed by regulations that foster attractive and memorable entrances to the neighborhood.

Examples of Gateway Parcels

Examples of candidate gateway parcels include the corners of Blue Hill Avenue and River Street, the corners of Morton Street and Blue Hill Avenue, 875 Morton Street, and 820 Cummins Highway (the former Cote Ford site).

Density and Dimensional Standards for Gateway Parcels

Under certain conditions, such as mixed-use development, additional height limits and an increased Floor Area Ratio (FAR) would be allowed on Gateway Parcels, in addition to what is currently permitted under the existing zoning. Formal design review would be required on all proposals.



Potential gateway parcel at 820 Cummins Highway

Density and Dimensional Standards

For each of the recommended commercial sub-districts, excluding the Gateway Parcels, the Density and Dimensional Standards Table (see next page) outline the specific parameters that should be applied. These standards will help to create the urban form that supports the desired character for each sub-district. (Note: when changes are being proposed to the existing zoning code in the table of page 111, the current zoning standard is provided in parentheses.)

Bonus/Incentive Programs

In order to encourage a mix of uses in Mattapan’s commercial centers, creativity in dealing with parking constraints, as well as the inclusion of affordable housing in any new development, an

incentive program is being proposed to accompany the recommended zoning changes. The Bonus/Incentive Programs Table (see page 112) outlines the proposed incentives for each commercial focus area.

Implementation of the Land Use, Zoning and Urban Design Recommendations

To implement the recommendations in this chapter, there are three main projects: revise the zoning code, enforce the zoning code (both the existing code and any changes made therein), and begin to market the community vision and development incentives to current property owners and potential developers. As recommended in the Housing chapter (Chapter 5), a MEDI Community Implementation Team (CIT) subcommittee or a formal zoning committee should be formed to oversee the first two projects. The difference between the two entities would be the roles that each entity would play in reviewing changes to the zoning code and proposed development projects. The MEDI CIT subcommittee would function in the capacity of a “watchdog” and advisor. The subcommittee would advocate for the interests of local stakeholders and provide input on projects. However, the CIT subcommittee likely would not have an official role in the zoning process.

In contrast, the zoning committee likely would be a formal body established by the City of Boston. The zoning committee would make recommendations on changes to the zoning code for Mattapan. The zoning committee would also make recommendations regarding proposed projects that would be provided to the Zoning Board of Appeals to consider in its decision-making. The formal zoning committee would have more input on development decisions, but probably would be more difficult to incorporate into the MEDI Implementation Team structure. This lack of integration could lead to duplication of efforts between the MEDI Community Implementation Team and the zoning committee, with the potential for competing messages from the Mattapan community to City Hall.

The decision about which type of entity to create will need to be made by the MEDI Community Implementation Team, in consultation with BRA staff. BRA staff will be able to advise on the types of structures that have been successful in other neighborhoods.

Revise the Zoning Code

To revise the zoning code, BRA staff would need to draft a revised version of the existing zoning code and then begin the public input process to discuss the proposed changes. It is likely that one of the two entities described above (either the MEDI CIT subcommittee or a zoning committee) would be tapped to work closely with City of Boston staff during this entire process.

Density and Dimensional Standards

	Mattapan Square Mixed-Use Sub-district	Morton Street Village Neighborhood Sub-district	Blue Hill Center Commercial Sub-district
Floor Area Ratio	4.0 (Currently: 2.0)	2.0 (Currently: 1.0)	2.0 (Currently: 1.0)
Building Height	55 ft or 4 stories (Currently: 45 ft)	45 ft or 3 stories (Currently: 35 ft)	45 ft or 3 stories (Currently: 35 ft)
Minimum Front Yard Maximum Building Setback from Sidewalk (where there is no defined street wall)	None 5 ft (Currently: None)	None 10 ft (Currently: None)	None 10 ft (Currently: None)
Minimum Rear Yard (except where abutting residential use)	None 20 feet	20 feet	20 feet
Usable Open Space (Square feet per dwelling unit) (Note: applies only to residential development)	50	50	50
Maximum Allowable Single Retail Use on Street level	15,000 sf, except grocery stores which may be allowed with special permit (New)	10,000 sf, except grocery stores which may be allowed with special permit (New)	10,000 sf (New)
Parking Maximums: Retail Uses (GFA = Gross Floor Area)	1 space per 1000 sq. ft. GFA (Currently: 2-spaces/1000 sq. ft.)	1.5 spaces/ 1000 SF GFA (Currently: 2 spaces/1000 sq. ft.)	1.5 spaces/1000 SF GFA (Currently: 2 spaces/1000 sq. ft.)
Parking Maximums: Residential	1 space per dwelling unit	1 space per dwelling unit	1 space per dwelling unit
Parking Areas	On-site and behind building, or communal parking area. Option: payment in lieu of parking.	On-site and behind building, or communal parking area.	On-site and behind building, or communal parking area.
Signage	Recommended, externally lit signs; No internally lit or free standing signs; conditional use permit for back-lit signs. (Currently: All Permissible)	Recommended, externally lit signs; No internally lit or free standing signs; conditional use permit for back-lit signs. (Currently: All Permissible)	Recommended, externally lit signs; No internally lit signs; conditional use permit for back-lit or free standing signs. (Currently: All Permissible)

Bonus/Incentive Programs

	Mattapan Square Mixed-Use Sub-district	Morton Street Village Neighborhood Sub-district	Blue Hill Center Commercial Sub-district
Residential Bonus (for mixed-use development; not available for purely residential development)	FAR bonus of 0.4 (total 4.4) when 50% or more of building is residential.	FAR bonus of 0.4 (total 2.4) when 50% or more of building is residential.	FAR bonus of 0.4 (total 2.4) when 50% or more of building is residential.
Affordable Housing Bonus (for on-site affordable housing – i.e. mixed-income housing)	A FAR increase of 1 sq. ft. for every square foot of floor area dedicated to affordable housing on-site, up to a total FAR bonus of 10%, or FAR 4.84, provided that at least 10% on-site affordable housing is provided.	A FAR increase of 1 sq. ft. for every square foot of floor area dedicated to affordable housing on-site, up to a total FAR bonus of 20%, or FAR 2.88, provided that at least 10% on-site affordable housing is provided.	A FAR increase of 1 sq. ft. for every square foot of floor area dedicated to affordable housing on-site, up to a total FAR bonus of 20%, or FAR 2.88, provided that at least 10% on-site affordable housing is provided.
Parking Bonus	Up to 5% additional parking spaces (maximum of 10 spaces) for dedicated shared-use vehicles, alternative fuel, or carpool vehicles.	Up to 5% additional parking spaces (maximum of 10 spaces) for dedicated shared-use vehicles, alternative fuel, or carpool vehicles.	Up to 5% additional parking spaces (maximum of 10 spaces) for dedicated shared-use vehicles, alternative fuel, or carpool vehicles.

It is worth noting that an Interim Planning Overlay District (IPOD) is not being recommended at this time. This is because the changes to the zoning regulations being proposed are actually more generous than the current code, in terms of density, height, and parking restrictions, in order to encourage more intense development. These types of changes do not generally lead developers to file site plans under existing zoning regulations in order to be grandfathered and avoid future regulations—which is the type of behavior that often motivates the creation and adoption of IPODs.

Enforce the Zoning Code

Boston's Inspectional Services Department (ISD) Building Division is responsible for overseeing the City's zoning ordinances, which determine the types of activities allowed in any given building as well as physical aspects of any development or redevelopment. The MEDI Community Implementation Team subcommittee or the zoning committee (depending on which entity is established) should initiate a conversation with key ISD staff to determine how to support ISD's efforts and improve the overall look and feel of Mattapan's commercial corridors.

One area where zoning enforcement efforts might be focused is signage. Many signs in the MEDI study area do not comply with established signage regulations. This occurs for a number of reasons, but a major factor is that business owners often do not follow the proper permitting procedures and therefore no signage

review occurs. MEDI CIT subcommittee or zoning committee members can work with ISD to educate business owners about the signage procedures and existing regulations, as well as to report non-conforming signs when they are identified. This effort could be jump-started by a Signage and Permitting workshop scheduled for Mattapan business and property owners in early 2007. This type of educational workshop could be an initial step toward more intense code enforcement and targeted staff assistance.

Another area of concern is non-conforming uses. However, it is less likely that non-conforming uses will occur without the knowledge of ISD, because of the building permit process. Whenever changes are made to existing buildings or lots, permits must be secured from ISD. As part of this process, ISD confirms that the zoning regulations allow the proposed use. If the MEDI Community Implementation Team or zoning committee members notice new businesses that are not in compliance with zoning regulations, they can notify ISD staff, who will work to address the issue.

Market the MEDI Community Vision and Development Incentives to Property Owners and Developers

As part of the MEDI planning process, renderings (i.e., hypothetical illustrations) have been developed for each of the proposed zoning sub-districts. These renderings (see following pages) are intended to illustrate the scale of development that is desirable and that would be permissible under the proposed urban design guidelines

and zoning changes. They do not reflect actual development projects and were only developed for illustrative purposes. Once zoning changes have been made, these images can be used by the Community Implementation Team and the MEDI Implementation Project Director to initiate conversations with existing property owners about the perceived potential of the sub-district and their properties. Additionally, they can be used as marketing materials to entice interested and potential developers.

Simultaneous with this marketing outreach, property owners and developers should be encouraged to think creatively about existing commercial buildings and spaces. As has been stated earlier, the existing commercial space along the MEDI commercial corridors may be too limited in size to meet the requirements of the new commercial establishments that the MEDI effort hopes to attract, even for mid-sized retailers. To create the kind of commercial properties that will appeal to such businesses, it may be necessary for property owners to merge or redevelop some of the existing commercial sites into larger spaces. This type of consideration should be encouraged as voluntary initiatives of property owners in response to market opportunities. Eminent Domain, if used at all, should be used judiciously and strategically.

Endnotes

⁴⁵The intersection of Blue Hill Avenue and Morton Street also is a key commercial area within the MEDI study area. It was not included as a commercial “focus area” for rezoning because the existing zoning supports the current and feasible development patterns for this portion of the study area.

⁴⁶Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is defined as the gross floor area permitted on a site divided by the net area of the site. FAR describes and regulates development intensity.

⁴⁷For example, for all areas currently zoned for residential, no changes are being recommended. Specifically, existing patterns of residential development, which favor single-family housing in the interior of the community and slightly higher density multi-family housing near the commercial corridors, should continue.

⁴⁸Other areas along the MEDI commercial corridors are zoned appropriately to foster their highest and best use, as is the case for the area around the Blue Hill Avenue and Morton Street intersection. In the areas not specifically identified as the commercial focus areas, efforts nonetheless should be focused on implementing or enforcing existing zoning and urban design guidelines.

⁴⁹Institutional uses such as government and social service offices, in limited numbers, create foot traffic that supports retail and service oriented businesses. If too much space is dedicated to institutional uses, however, an area can lose its economic vitality and be unable to attract sufficient consumers to make it a viable retail destination. Currently, Mattapan Square street-level space dedicated to institutional uses includes the Post Office, and the Commonwealth of MA Building. Because space is limited in the Square, it is desirable that retail and service oriented businesses be encouraged, and additional institutional uses be discouraged.

⁵⁰Existing auto repair garages and gasoline service stations will not be affected by this proposed change. If the changes are adopted, existing uses will be grandfathered and allowed to continue their use as under the previous regulations.

⁵¹Off-site parking lots are excluded because parking should be integrated with a higher, more intensive use for a property. It will be feasible to create a larger parking lot to accommodate the needs of surrounding businesses, but only if designed to minimize the visual impact of parking for pedestrians walking along the sidewalks.

⁵²Auto-oriented businesses are recommended for exclusion because they tend to be very low-density uses while often requiring large parcels of land, which would break up the flow of uses on either side of the parcel. Such use would hinder the desired goal of creating a sense of a distinct commercial sub-district in the middle of the MEDI study area along Blue Hill Avenue.



Morton Street Village – Existing Condition



Mattapan Vision
Morton Street Village – A Possible Design for Mixed-use Development



Blue Hill Avenue at Babson Street – Existing Condition



Mattapan Vision

Blue Hill Avenue at Babson Street – Possible Design for Mixed-use Development Along Commercial Corridor





New Connection to River Street – Existing Condition



Mattapan Vision
Possible Design Approach for New Connection to River Street and Mixed-use Development



Blue Hill Center – Existing Condition



Mattapan Vision
Blue Hill Center – Possible Design Approach for Mixed-use Development



Blue Hill Avenue – Existing Condition



Mattapan Vision
Possible Design Approach for Mattapan Square Streetscape

Appendix A


Mattapan Economic Development Initiative (MEDI) Action Agenda Projects

The *MEDI Action Agenda Projects* table proposes implementation timing and division of labor for all projects recommended in the MEDI Action Agenda. In the following appendix, Appendix B, more detailed action steps can be found for a subset of the projects that have been deemed appropriate for the first stage of implementation.

Proposed MEDI Projects	Expected Timeline							Recommended Project Lead*			
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010 - 2014	2015 - 2019	2020- 2024	MEDI CIT	BRA/ City	Business Owners/ Business Assns	Property Owners
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT											
Business Expansion and New Business Recruitment											
Create and promote a Mattapan Retail Corridor identity								X			
Expedite permitting processes for (re)development projects									X		
Encourage expansion of existing/planned commercial unit size								X			X
Attract core retail/commercial services								X	X		X
Increase the operating hours in commercial districts										X	
Provide technical assistance to existing businesses									X		
Establish link between MBTA station improvement and Neponset River Greenway project								X			
Improving the Appearance of the MEDI Commercial Districts											
Encourage use of transparent security gratings								X			X
Enforce signage regulations and assist with signage upgrade grants									X		
Improve and maintain cleanliness of sidewalks and plantings								X		X	
Fund concentrated code enforcement and/or rehab assistance for commercial structures along corridors									X		
Improved Public Safety											
Apply for funding to deal with issues around violence									X		
Identify, prioritize, & address public safety concerns								X		X	
Work with media to create a more balanced view of MEDI study area								X			
TRANSPORTATION											
Conduct traffic study of main intersections (e.g. River St. & Blue Hill Ave.; Walk Hill St. and Blue Hill Ave.; and Morton St. and Evans St.)									X		
Enhance Mattapan's Accessibility											
Advocate for MBTA improvements to Silver Line and Fairmount Line								X			
Influence redevelopment of Mattapan Station Parking Lot to reflect larger MEDI objectives								X		X	
For Mattapan Station project, implement River St. improvements to foster pedestrian flow into Mattapan Sq.									X		
With MBTA TOD projects, ensure pedestrian-friendly environment								X			

* The group or organization designated as project lead is expected to take initial and primary responsibility for initiating project activity. It is expected that multiple parties will participate in implementation. Multiple project leads (i.e., co-leaders) are indicated for some of the projects; this is due to an equal level of responsibility.

Legend:

 indicates implementation period or, for longer-term projects, initial implementation phase




 indicates periodic ongoing activities

 indicates continuous ongoing activities

Proposed MEDI Projects	Expected Timeline						Recommended Project Lead*				
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010 - 2014	2015 - 2019	2020- 2024	MEDI CIT	BRA/ City	Business Owners/ Business Assns	Property Owners
Increase the Appeal for Pedestrians in the Mattapan Commercial Districts											
(Re)Locate and configure crosswalks and the timing of traffic signals									X		
Redesign key intersections to slow down traffic/increase pedestrian safety									X		
Improve building storefronts, cleanliness of sidewalks, and the maintenance of shade trees and planters									X	X	
Integrate the Neponset River Greenway into Mattapan Square improvements								X			
Improve the alleyway between Blue Hill Ave. and River St.									X		
Maintain existing pedestrian infrastructure; enforce pedestrian right of way									X		
Improve the Accessibility of Commercial Districts to Motorists.											
Study traffic implications of changing Fairway Street into a one-way street									X		
Improve parking lot accessibility (existing lots)									X		
Lobby for better enforcement of parking laws along Blue Hill Avenue										X	
Survey existing parking resources and parking patterns									X		
HOUSING											
Increase Residential Density Along Commercial Corridors:											
Change zoning to allow for multi-story and mixed-use development.									X		
Identify development team for mixed-use project on Blue Hill Ave.								X			
Research new funding sources for "green" development								X			
Promote Quality Housing Choices Across A Broad Income Range:											
Fund concentrated code enforcement and/or rehab assistance for residential structures along corridors									X		
Develop new in-fill housing; work with city officials to "incentivize" development											X
Initiate and/or support homeownership programs								X			
Incentivize alternative forms of homeownership									X		
Target homeownership assistance to elderly owner-occupied properties likely to turn over									X		
Identify resources to help senior owners maintain their properties								X			
Work with banks to provide financing for owner-occupied units in mixed-use developments								X	X		

* The group or organization designated as project lead is expected to take initial and primary responsibility for initiating project activity. It is expected that multiple parties will participate in implementation. Multiple project leads (i.e., co-leaders) are indicated for some of the projects; this is due to an equal level of responsibility.


Legend:

 indicates implementation period or, for longer-term projects, initial implementation phase
  indicates periodic ongoing activities
  indicates continuous ongoing activities

Proposed MEDI Projects	Expected Timeline						Recommended Project Lead*				
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010 - 2014	2015 - 2019	2020- 2024	MEDI CIT	BRA/ City	Business Owners/ Business Assns	Property Owners
Empower Residents To Influence and Shape Future Residential Developments:											
Provide CBOs with A Citizen's Guide to Development Review								X			
Meet with City staff to establish a channel of communications for project review								X			
Determine most effective structure for influencing future development decisions								X			
Ensure that Impact Advisory Groups are designated for all large-scale projects									X		
Develop residential design standards									X		
Arrange meeting with CBOs that have successfully negotiated with developers								X			
Review ISD's list of As of Right Permits periodically								X			
LAND USE, URBAN DESIGN, AND ZONING											
Revise the zoning ordinance								X	X		
Enforce zoning regulations									X		
Market renderings of potential design scenarios to property owners/developers								X	X		X

* The group or organization designated as project lead is expected to take initial and primary responsibility for initiating project activity. It is expected that multiple parties will participate in implementation. Multiple project leads (i.e., co-leaders) are indicated for some of the projects; this is due to an equal level of responsibility.

Legend:

 indicates implementation period or, for longer-term projects, initial implementation phase

 indicates periodic ongoing activities

 indicates continuous ongoing activities

Appendix B

Mattapan Economic Development Initiative (MEDI) Initial Implementation Projects

The MEDI Action Agenda includes fifty recommendation projects. It is expected that these projects will be carried out over a fifteen to twenty year time frame (see Appendix A). In order to assist the Community Implementation Team and City staff in prioritizing the implementation process, a set of high priority projects have been selected for the first stage of implementation. The eleven projects outlined on the following pages are relatively feasible for short term implementation and are likely to generate a significant amount of momentum for the MEDI revitalization process. Specific responsible parties' in-kind commitments and financing strategies have been identified for each project. These are only recommendations and do not indicate an existing commitment.

MATTAPAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (MEDI)

Initial Implementation Projects

Strategy: Implement the MEDI Action Agenda

Project: Create MEDI Community Implementation Team

Expected Overall Duration: Six Months (July 2006 – December 2006)

Potential Financing Strategies: Not applicable because activities carried out through in-kind commitment

Key First Steps	Expected Duration	Responsible Party	In-Kind Commitment (Estimated Time/Resources)
1. Finalize role of MEDI Community Implementation Team (CIT)	Month of July 2006	Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA)	16-24 hours per designated BRA staff member
2. Request nominations for Implementation Team members	Month of July 2006	BRA	4-8 hours per designated BRA staff member
3. Solicit applications from nominated Implementation Team members	July – August 2006	BRA	4-10 hours per designated BRA staff member
4. Determine MEDI CIT members	September 2006	BRA & Community Stakeholders	30-40 hours per designated BRA staff member; hours of community stakeholders will vary
5. Establish structure of the CIT (potential formats include a single committee, multiple committees, a guiding committee with multiple subcommittees) and desirability of non-profit status	September – December 2006	Community Implementation Team (CIT)	12-20 hours per designated CIT member and BRA staff member
6. Determine CIT relationship with existing Community Based Organizations (CBOs) related to staffing of functions	September – December 2006	Community Implementation Team (CIT)	24-40 hours per designated CIT member and BRA staff member

MATTAPAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (MEDI) Initial Implementation Projects

Strategy: Business expansion and new business recruitment

Project: Create a “Mattapan Retail Corridor” identity¹

Expected Overall Duration: Two years – 2006-2008

Potential Financing Strategies: Business owners and City of Boston seed money

Key First Steps	Expected Duration	Responsible Party	In-Kind Commitment (Time/Resources)	Estimated Cost and Potential Financing Strategies
1. Using consumer survey results and business owners' experience, seek to understand current and potential customer market segments	September 2006 – January 2007	Community Implementation Team (CIT)/ Mattapan Board of Trade (MBT)/ Morton Street Board of Commerce (MSBC)/ Boston Redevelopment Authority BRA	24 hours per designated CIT/MBT/MSBC member and BRA staff	--
2. Define a new positive image based on physical attributes, such as landmarks or geographic features, cultural assets, stores, businesses, festivals, or celebrations. The image should be framed to attract distinct customer segments	January – March 2007	CIT/ MBT/ MSBC/ BRA	24 hours per designated CIT/MBT/MSBC member and BRA staff	--
3. Develop an effective image campaign using a logo, signs, banners, group ads, special events to reinforce district identity, and by recruiting businesses that contribute to the district image Taylor marketing message and media to distinct customer segments	March – June 2007	CIT/ MBT/ MSBC/ BRA	24 hours per designated CIT/MBT/MSBC member and BRA staff	\$10,000 for marketing consultant
4. Implement marketing campaign	July 2007 – August 2008	CIT/ MBT/ MSBC/ BRA	24 hours per designated CIT/MBT/MSBC member and BRA staff	\$5,000 for simple print campaign; up to \$100,000 to more complex campaign

¹ See *Revitalizing Commerce for American Cities*, Karl Seidman, Fannie Mae Foundation, 2004, Chapter 5 for additional information.

MATTAPAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (MEDI)

Initial Implementation Projects

Strategy: Improve the appearance of the MEDI commercial districts

Project: Maintain the cleanliness of sidewalks and plantings²

Expected Overall Duration: Beginning in 2007; On-going

Potential Financing Strategies: City Operating Fund, Business Owners, Property Owners

Key First Steps	Expected Duration	Responsible Party	In-Kind Commitment (Time/Resources)	Estimated Cost and Potential Financing Strategies
1. Develop a informational brochure to educate merchants about the value of attractive sidewalks and their "clean-up" responsibilities (see Mission Hill Main Street example)	Month of January 2007	Community Implementation Team (CIT)/ Mattapan Board of Trade (MBT)/ Morton Street Board of Commerce (MSBC)/ Boston Redevelopment Authority BRA	4 – 8 hours per designated CIT/MBT/MSBC member and BRA staff	--
2. Distribute brochures in person and discuss merchant concerns and opportunities for cooperation	February – March 2007	CIT/ MBT/ MSBC	20 – 24 hours per designated CIT/MBT/MSBC	--
3. Identify and prioritize maintenance needs, based partially on merchant feedback	Month of April 2007	CIT/ MBT/ MSBC/ BRA	8 – 10 hours per designated CIT/MBT/MSBC member and BRA staff	--
4. Meet with Boston Public Works Department staff to discuss increased maintenance in the commercial centers	Beginning of May 2007 (before the summer season)	CIT/ MBT/ MSBC/ BRA	4 – 6 hours per designated CIT/MBT/MSBC member and BRA staff	--
5. Organize merchants and provide them supplies for cleaning storefronts and planting flowerpots.	Beginning in April 2007; periodic but on-going	CIT/ MBT/ MSBC/ BRA	20 – 24hours per designated CIT/MBT/MSBC member and BRA staff	Approx \$1000 for cleaning supplies and flowers/ BRA or DND
6. Organize periodic volunteer clean-up days to energize merchants.	During month of April or May 2007; periodic but on-going	CIT/ MBT/ MSBC/ BRA	20 – 24 hours per designated CIT/MBT/MSBC member and BRA staff	Approx \$1000 for food, t-shirts, supplies/ BRA or DND

² See *Revitalizing Commerce for American Cities*, Karl Seidman, Fannie Mae Foundation, 214, Chapter 4 for additional information.

Key First Steps	Expected Duration	Responsible Party	In-Kind Commitment (Time/Resources)	Estimated Cost and Potential Financing Strategies
7. Consider alternative funding mechanisms for long-term maintenance funding	Month of August 2007	CIT/ MBT/ MSBC/ BRA	10 – 16 hours per designated CIT/MBT/MSBC member and BRA staff	--

MATTAPAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (MEDI)

Initial Implementation Projects

Strategy: Improve the appearance of the MEDI commercial districts

Project: Fund code enforcement and rehabilitation assistance for distressed commercial structures along main commercial corridors

Expected Overall Duration: Beginning in September 2006; on-going

Potential Financing Strategies: ReStore Boston

Key First Steps	Expected Duration	Responsible Party	In-Kind Commitment (Time/Resources)	Estimated Cost and Potential Financing Strategies
1. Work with City of Boston's Inspectional Services Department (ISD) and Department of Neighborhood Development (DND) to identify commercial properties that are distressed (dilapidated and/or exhibiting obvious code violations).	November 2006 – January 2007	Community Implementation Team (CIT), along with City of Boston DND and/or ISD staff	20-25 hours per designated CIT member; 40-50 hours per DND/ISD staff time	--
2. For each property, determine who is likely responsible for needed maintenance and potential rehabilitation – property owner and/or business owner ³	Month of January 2007	Community Implementation Team (CIT), along with City of Boston DND and/or ISD staff	5 hours per designated CIT member; 20 hours per DND/ISD staff time	--
3. Identify owners of these properties, whether they are owner-occupant business owners, and if not, other relevant business owners.	Month of January 2007	Community Implementation Team (CIT), along with City of Boston DND and/or ISD staff	5 hours per designated CIT member; 20 hours per DND/ISD staff time	--

³ Business owners are more likely to take responsibility for upgrading signage, ground floor windows, and limited façade work. Property owners are responsible for the building's structure, the overall façade, and old signage.

Key First Steps	Expected Duration	Responsible Party	In-Kind Commitment (Time/Resources)	Estimated Cost and Potential Financing Strategies
<p>4. Advise business and/or property owners of potential availability of financial assistance through DND's ReStore program. Assist interested owners in determining their eligibility and, if eligible, applying for such assistance.</p> <p>Outreach strategies for absentee property owners, owner-occupied business owners, and leasing business owners should each be unique and tailored to personal interest.</p>	Intensive initial outreach effort, February 2006 through August 2007	DND staff, with support of CIT	40 hours of DND staff time, for initial outreach activities to targeted properties; 8-10 hours per month per designated CIT members, to assist with outreach and to monitor progress	\$70,000-\$105,000/ ReStore Program ⁴
<p>5. For distressed buildings where business owner or property owner will not voluntarily upgrade the property, initiate formal inspections and cite properties for any code violations that are documented as a result of such inspections. Follow normal code enforcement procedures.</p>	March 2007 through August 2007, for initial phase of inspection and enforcement effort	ISD staff, with support of CIT	60-100 hours of ISD staff time, for initial code enforcement activities to targeted properties owned by absentee landlords; 2-4 hours per month per designated CIT members, to assist with outreach and to monitor progress	--

⁴ The ReStore program provides matching loans and grants (up to \$7,000 per storefront) to help neighborhood business and property owners complete storefront renovation projects. ReStore Boston also provides professional architectural design services. If goal is to serve 10-15 Mattapan properties along the commercial corridors per year through this mechanism, annual cost of \$70,000-\$105,000 in ReStore funds, depending on the number served.

MATTAPAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (MEDI)

Initial Implementation Projects

Strategy: Improve public safety

Project: Identify, prioritize, and address stakeholder public safety concerns; establish regular meetings with law enforcement officials.

Expected Overall Duration: Beginning in September 2006; on-going.

Critical Timeframe: September 2006 – December 2006⁵

Potential Financing Strategies/Options: The Weed and Seed program and other programs of the Office of Justice Programs/U.S. Department of Justice; Boston Police Department operating budget; business owners' in-kind or cash contributions.

Key First Steps	Expected Duration	Responsible Party	In-Kind Commitment (Time/Resources)
1. Meet with Board of Trade, Morton Street Board of Commerce, and other Mattapan-area business groups to identify and prioritize principal public safety concerns of local businesses and commercial property owners. Reach agreement on who will represent the Mattapan business community in on-going discussions with law enforcement officials as part of MEDI revitalization effort.	September-October 2006	Community Implementation Team (CIT)	4-8 hours of each designated CIT member's time
2. Meet with the District B-3 Commander and other law appropriate enforcement officials ⁶ to present the Mattapan business community's public safety concerns and priorities, to identify strategies through which the business community can work with law enforcement officials to address the priority public safety concerns, and to establish a series of monthly meetings to track	Starting in October 2006, monthly meetings	CIT and Business Community representatives	2-3 hours per monthly meeting for each designated CIT member and Business Community representative

⁵ There is an immediate need to address violence issues in Mattapan, especially in Mattapan Square where crime has increased over the last year. The anticipated start date for this project was pushed back from July 2006 to September 2006 to acknowledge the need for the Community Implementation Team (CIT) to become established before undertaking this work. However, this public safety project needs to become a priority once the CIT is in place in order to create a more favorable business investment climate for existing and potential businesses; hence, the September to December 2006 "critical timeframe".

⁶ Other relevant law enforcement officials include representatives of the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office and of the U.S. Attorney's Office for Boston.

Key First Steps	Expected Duration	Responsible Party	In-Kind Commitment (Time/Resources)
progress and to develop refinements to the strategies as necessary.			
3. Working with the District B-3 Police Commander and other law enforcement officials, identify the most appropriate funding sources to implement the strategies selected to address the Mattapan business community's public safety concerns. Assist law enforcement officials in applying for this funding, including generating letters of support from Mattapan community and petitioning elected officials to support the funding request.	November-December 2006	City of Boston/Boston Police Department, CIT and Business Community representatives	8-20 hours per designated CIT member and Business Community representative
4. Explore the potential benefits of creating broader partnerships – such as between the Mattapan business community and the Boston Public Schools– as part of the efforts to address public safety issues in the Mattapan commercial districts.	Beginning in December 2006, then on-going as appropriate	CIT and Business Community representatives	8-10 hours per designated CIT member and Business Community representative for initial set of meetings

MATTAPAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (MEDI)

Initial Implementation Projects

Strategy: Support changes that will enhance Mattapan's accessibility and build upon planned MBTA transportation improvements

Project: Advocate for MBTA improvements to the Silver Line and the Fairmount Line

Expected Overall Duration: Five years – 2006-2010

Potential Financing Strategies: Federal New Starts/Small Starts Funding, Massachusetts Transportation Bond Bill (for the capital improvements)

Key First Steps	Expected Duration	Responsible Party	In-Kind Commitment (Time/Resources) ⁷
1. Elevate Silver Line South project from "illustrative project" to "recommended project" in the 2007 Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) Regional Transportation Plan. Key tasks include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter writing to the MBTA (which typically presents its package of projects to the Boston MPO) and attendance at MBTA forums. • Attendance at public meetings in support of the RTP, including advisory committee meetings. • Letter writing campaign during RTP comment period. • The City of Boston can work through its representative on Boston MPO Board. CIT should petition state and local representatives to do the same. 	Present – 2007	Community Implementation Team (CIT)/ City of Boston	4-10 hours per month per designated CIT member and City of Boston staff
2. Encourage MBTA to pursue Federal Transit Administration Small Starts funding for Silver Line South. Monitor the federal rulemaking process for this new Section 5309 program. If the final rules on the new Small Starts program result in a program that could be a good fit for Silver Line South, reinforce this option during all correspondence with the MBTA and Boston MPO (on TIPs, CIPs, RTPs, etc.)	2007 – 2010	CIT/ City of Boston	4-8 hours per month per designated CIT member and City of Boston staff
3. Encourage the Boston MPO to explore the option of "flexing" eligible Federal Highway funds to the MBTA to cover funding shortfalls preventing the Silver Line South or Blue Hill Avenue station from moving forward. Key tasks	Ongoing	CIT/ City of Boston	4-10 hours per month per designated CIT member and City of Boston staff.

⁷ These resources are for the related MEDI advocacy and planning activities only.

Key First Steps	Expected Duration	Responsible Party	In-Kind Commitment (Time/Resources) ⁷
<p>include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at public meetings in support of the RTP and TIP development processes, including advisory committee meetings. • Letter writing campaign during certification document comment periods. • City can work through representative on Boston MPO Board. • CIT should petition state and local representatives to do the same 			
<p>4. Petition Mattapan's elected state officials to include Silver Line South and Blue Hill Avenue Station in the Massachusetts Transportation Bond Bill. Key tasks include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter writing and phone calls to state representatives and state senators representing MEDI study area. 	2006 – 2010	CIT/ City of Boston	10-20 hours per year per designated CIT member (to coordinate letter writing)
<p>5. Involvement in the MBTA's Capital Investment Program (CIP) development process to move Silver Line South from a study identified as an "anticipated future effort" to a "programmed project", and to secure funding for Blue Hill Avenue station (the five-year program currently only programs funds for the design of Four Corners station). Key tasks include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at public meetings held in support of the CIP development process (9 were held in 2005); • Letter writing to the MBTA during the public comment period. • CIT should petition state and local representatives to do the same. The 5-year program is updated annually 	2006 – 2010	CIT/ City of Boston	20-30 hours per annual CIP development cycle per designated CIT member
<p>6. Become involved in a station-level advisory committee (should one be developed for Blue Hill Avenue station once funding for its design is programmed in the CIP)</p>	2007 – 2010	CIT	4-6 hours per meeting (approx: 4) per designated CIT member
<p>7. Work for inclusion of Silver Line South and Blue Hill Avenue in the Boston MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP -- annually produced program)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter writing to the MBTA (which typically presents its package of projects to the Boston MPO) and attendance at MBTA forums. • Attendance at public meetings in support of the TIP development process, including advisory committee meetings. • Letter writing campaign during TIP comment period. • City of Boston can work through its representative on Boston MPO Board. 	2006 – 2010 (Inclusion in the RTP is required for Silver Line South before it can be included in the TIP; Blue Hill Avenue is already in the RTP; both must still be included in the CIP.)	CIT/ City of Boston	10 to 20 hours per annual TIP development cycle per designated CIT member.

MATTAPAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (MEDI)

Initial Implementation Projects

Strategy: Improve the accessibility of commercial districts to motorists

Project: Improve existing parking lot accessibility

Expected Overall Duration: April 2007-March 2008

Potential Financing Strategies/Options: Boston Transportation Department or Public Works Department funds (for signage and minor lighting repairs); Public Works Economic Development Program, District Improvement Financing, or Business Improvement District funds (if more significant capital expenses are required)

Key First Steps	Expected Duration	Responsible Party	In-Kind Commitment (Time/Resources)	Estimated Capital Cost and Potential Financing
1. Increase visibility of parking lot signage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the size of signs at the entrances of municipal parking lots • Add signage on Southbound Blue Hill at River Street – parking sign with a straight arrow into Milton and parking sign with a left arrow at the turnaround • Install parking sign after post office directing motorists onto alley 	Month of May 2007	Boston Transportation Department (BTD) or Public Works Department (PWD)	24-40 hours of BTD or PWD staff time	Approx \$1,000 for new signage (BTD/PWD)
2. Improve the lighting at all municipal parking lots <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspect existing lighting, at night, to identify bulbs that are burnt out and areas that are dimly lit • Replace broken bulbs • Request additional lighting be funded and installed, as needed 	May – July 2007	BTD or PWD	40-60 hours of BTD or PWD staff time	\$500-\$1,000 for bulb replacement (BTD/PWD); up to \$20,000 if new equipment must be installed (District Improvement Financing, Business Improvement District, or Public Works ED program)

Key First Steps	Expected Duration	Responsible Party	In-Kind Commitment (Time/Resources)	Estimated Capital Cost and Potential Financing
<p>3. Improve the lighting between main corridors (especially Blue Hill Avenue) and municipal parking lots (Fairway Street and River Street)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspect existing lighting, at night, to identify bulbs that are burnt out and areas that are dimly lit • Replace broken bulbs • Request funding for additional lighting, especially for River Street, in conjunction with Mattapan Station Parking Lot redevelopment • Install new lighting 	May – October 2007	BTD or PWD	40-60 hours of BTD or PWD staff time	\$500-\$1,000 for bulb replacement (BTD/PWD); up to \$100,000 if new equipment needs to be installed (District Improvement Financing, Business Improvement District, or Public Works ED program)
<p>4. Improve landscaping at entrances and throughout parking areas, especially for River Street lot, in conjunction with Mattapan Station Parking Lot redevelopment</p>	May – July 2007	Community Implementation Team (to lead planning process and identify funding)	40 hours per designated CIT member	\$2,000 - \$25,000 depending on scope of landscaping work undertaken (District Improvement Financing, Business Improvement District, or Public Works ED program)

MATTAPAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (MEDI)

Initial Implementation Projects

Strategy: Promote quality housing choices across a broad income range

Project: Fund code enforcement and rehabilitation assistance for distressed residential structures along main commercial corridors.

Expected Overall Duration: Intensive effort for up to four years – 2006-2009; periodic efforts after 2009 as needed.

Potential Financing Strategies/Options: City of Boston's Community Development Block Grant-funded resources, particularly the Department of **Neighborhood** Development's (DND) HomeWorks programs and Senior Homeowner Services programs.

Key First Steps	Expected Duration	Responsible Party	In-Kind Commitment (Time/Resources)	Estimated Cost and Potential Financing Strategies
1. Work with City of Boston's Inspectional Services Department (ISD) and Department of Neighborhood Development (DND) to identify residential properties along MEDI commercial corridors that are distressed (dilapidated and/or exhibiting obvious code violations). Identify owners of these properties, and whether they are owner-occupants or absentee owners.	November 2006 – January 2007	Community Implementation Team (CIT), along with City of Boston DND and/or ISD staff	20-30 hours per designated CIT member; 40-60 hours per DND/ISD staff time	--
2. For the distressed residential properties that have an owner-occupant (even in multi-unit structures if less than 5 units), advise owners on potential availability of financial assistance through DND's HomeWorks and Senior Homeowner Services resources. Assist interested owners in determining their eligibility and, if eligible, applying for such assistance.	Intensive initial outreach effort, December 2006 through June 2007	DND staff, with support of CIT	40 hours of DND staff time, for initial outreach activities to targeted properties; 8-10 hours per month per designated CIT members, to assist with outreach and to monitor progress	\$40,000 - \$100,000/ HomeWorks Program ⁸

⁸ The HomeWorks program can provide conditional grants to owner-occupant for 1/3 of total project cost for certain home improvements, up to \$4,000-\$5,000. If goal is to serve 10-20 Mattapan properties along the commercial corridors per year through this mechanism, annual cost of \$40,000-\$100,000 in HomeWorks funds, depending on nature of home improvements. (Note: Urgent health and safety repairs can be funded thru deferred loans – capped at \$7,000 -- from the HomeWorks Emergency Loan Program.)

Key First Steps	Expected Duration	Responsible Party	In-Kind Commitment (Time/Resources)	Estimated Cost and Potential Financing Strategies
3. For residential properties along commercial corridor owned by absentee landlords, initiate formal inspections for any properties that appear to exhibit health or safety violations, and cite properties for any code violations that are documented as a result of such inspections. Follow normal code enforcement procedures.	January 2007 through June 2007, for initial phase of inspection and enforcement effort	ISD staff, with support of CIT	60-100 hours of ISD staff time, for initial code enforcement activities to targeted properties owned by absentee landlords; 2-4 hours per month per designated CIT members, to assist with outreach and to monitor progress	--
4. Determine if there are substantial numbers of distressed residential properties along the MEDI corridors whose absentee owners require financial assistance to be able to complete repairs to their properties; if so, work with DND to see if an allocation of CDBG funds can be set aside to provide financial assistance to these owners, to create an incentive to complete the repairs on these properties. (One of the conditions for receiving such assistance will be maintaining the affordability of the rental units.)	June – Dec 2006	CIT, with DND staff	20-40 hours for each designated CIT member	\$15,000-\$40,000/ CDBG funds ⁹

⁹ Assuming a goal of assisting 5-10 such properties per year, with maximum assistance of \$3,000-\$4,000 per property, would require an annual allocation of \$15,000-\$40,000 in CDBG funds

MATTAPAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (MEDI)

Initial Implementation Projects

Strategy: Build upon planned MBTA Transportation Improvements

Project: Influence redevelopment of Mattapan Station Parking Lot to reflect larger MEDI objectives

Expected Overall Duration: Two years – 2006-2008

Critical Timeframe: June 2006 – December 2006¹⁰

Potential Financing Strategies: Not applicable because activities carried out through in-kind commitment.

Key First Steps	Expected Duration	Responsible Party	In-Kind Commitment (Time/Resources)
1. Detailed review of existing plans for site (RFP) – outlining similarities and differences between MEDI and MBTA goals.	Month of July 2006	Community Advisory Group (CAG) or Community Implementation Team (CIT) ¹¹	4 hours per designated CAG/CIT member
2. BRA facilitated introduction of CIT members to key decision makers at Nuestra Comunidad Development Corporation (the project developer).	Month of July 2006	Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA)	2 hours per BRA staff and designated CIT member
3. Understand Nuestra CDC's goals and present MEDI goals for discussion with developer.	Month of August 2006	CAG or CIT/BRA	8 hours per designated CAG/CIT member
4. Request representation in Nuestra CDC's design process	September 2006	CIT	2 hours of designated CIT member time
5. Participate in on-going planning and project oversight with Nuestra CDC, either through formal involvement or monthly communications	Fall 2006-Fall 2007	CIT	2 hours monthly per designated CIT member

¹⁰ Over the next six months, Nuestra CDC will be making key decisions about the direction of the project. If CAG/CIT members are not represented and involved in these decisions, the goals and objectives of MEDI will not be integrated into the overall design and a major opportunity will be lost.

¹¹ Until CIT is established, CAG members will continue to serve in community advisory role.

MATTAPAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (MEDI) Initial Implementation Projects

Strategy: Increase residential density and commercial revitalization along commercial corridors

Project: Revise zoning ordinance

Expected Overall Duration: January 2007-December 2007

Potential Financing Strategies: Not applicable because activities carried out through in-kind commitment.

Key First Steps	Expected Duration	Responsible Party	In-Kind Commitment (Time/Resources)
1. Meet with BRA zoning staff to discuss proposed recommendations	Month of January 2007	Community Implementation Team (CIT) and MEDI Implementation Project Director (BRA)	4-8 hours per designated CIT member and BRA staff
2. Develop a revised zoning code to reflect proposed changes	February – March 2007	Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA)	60-80 hours of BRA staff time
3. Hold public hearings to allow the public to comment on the proposed changes	April 2007	CIT/BRA	4 hours per designated CIT member; 6-8 hours for designated BRA staff
4. Revise proposed zoning code to reflect citizen concerns	May 2007	BRA	40-60 hours of BRA staff time
5. Petition the Zoning Commission to adopt the revised zoning code	May 2007	BRA	4-8 hours of BRA staff time
6. Hold public hearing on revised zoning code	June 2007	Boston Zoning Commission	4 hours per designated CIT member; 6-8 hours for designated BRA staff

MATTAPAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (MEDI)

Initial Implementation Projects

Strategy: Increase residential density and commercial revitalization along commercial corridors

Project: Market renderings of potential design scenarios to property owners and developers.

Expected Overall Duration: Beginning of marketing in July 2006; ongoing until significant redevelopment occurs.

Potential Financing Strategies: Not applicable because activities carried out through in-kind commitment.

Key First Steps	Expected Duration	Responsible Party	In-Kind Commitment (Time/Resources)
1. Until overall marketing strategy developed (see Step 2), opportunistically share the renderings and Action Agenda Executive Summary with interested potential developers and property owners that contact BRA or approach engaged property owners	On-going	Boston Redevelopment Authority/ Property Owners	2-4 hours per developer interaction for each participant
2. Develop a strategy for marketing the MEDI Development Vision as illustrated by the graphic renderings. Identify key property owners, potential developers and business owners who might be interested in getting involved.	August – October 2006	BRA, Community Implementation Team (CIT)	24-40 hours per designated BRA staff and CIT members
3. Schedule and hold meeting with identified list of key property owners, developers, and business owners to share vision and gauge their interest in Mattapan's development potential; follow-up with each as appropriate.	November 2006 – January 2007 for initial meetings	CIT/BRA	2-4 hours of designated BRA staff or CIT member

APPENDIX C

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

Following is a sampling of funding sources available to support the recommended revitalization strategies. Additional information about city services can be found at www.cityofboston.com/business

Business Development and Expansion

Capital and Financial Assistance

Boston Local Development Corporation (BLDC)

City of Boston, Department of Neighborhood Development

The BLDC provides loans between \$15,000 and \$150,000 for businesses in, or relocating to, the City of Boston, with an emphasis on the Enhanced Enterprise Community and Boston Main Streets neighborhoods. These loans can be used to buy new business property, purchase equipment, enlarge an existing plant, or to make leasehold improvements.

Commercial Real Estate and Business Development Finance

City of Boston, Department of Neighborhood Development

This program provides loans through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant and Section 108/Economic Development loan programs. Funding covers the gap between the financing needed to fund economic development projects and the amount that conventional lenders can provide. On average, projects must create or retain at least one full-time job for every \$50,000 borrowed.

Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI)

U.S. Treasury Department

CDFIs are mission-driven financial institutions that provide financial products and services to people and communities underserved by traditional financial institutions. There are 38 CDFIs in Massachusetts. These institutions have received over \$25 million from the federal government's CDFI fund to invest in Massachusetts communities. In Boston, some of the largest recipients include Boston Community Capital (one of the funders of revitalization work in Dudley Square), Massachusetts Housing Investment Corporation, Boston Bank of Commerce, Fleet Community Banking Group, and Acción USA. CDFIs implement capital-led strategies to fight economic infrastructure issues such as: quality affordable housing, job creation, wealth building, financial literacy and education, and micro enterprise development and training.

MassDevelopment Financing Programs

MassDevelopment

MassDevelopment offers a range of bond financing programs, loans, and guarantees to assist new and expanding businesses. The loans and guarantees cover real estate, equipment, and seafood loans, as well as export financing, Brownfield redevelopment, and predevelopment assistance. MassDevelopment staff offer technical assistance in addition to their financing programs.

Commonwealth Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP)

Massachusetts Office of Business Development, Economic Assistance Coordinating Council

This program offers state tax incentives to certified projects within an Economic Opportunity Area located in an Economic Target Area. Certified projects, including businesses expanding, relocating, or building new facilities, can receive incentives including a five-percent investment tax credit for depreciable assets or a ten-percent abandoned building deduction for renovation costs. Boston is a designated Economic Target Area. The BRA and the Boston City Council would need to apply to the Commonwealth's ECAC to create an Economic Opportunity Area within Mattapan.

New Markets Tax Credits (NMTC)

U.S. Treasury

New Markets Tax Credits are a flexible, leveragable equity investment tool that can be used for catalytic development projects in lower-income areas. The credits are seven-year credits against federal tax liability up to 5%-6% of dollar amount invested in community development entities (CDE), which provide the capital and financial assistance to low-income communities. The credits can be used to fund loans, make equity investments in for-profit and nonprofit businesses or other CDEs. An example of a CDE to CDE investment would be when a CDE invests in a development corporation's project to build a mixed-use development in a low-income area. The City of Boston has established a certified CDE to facilitate receiving and utilizing the NMTC.

Commercial District Transformation

Management of District Transformation

Main Street Program

City of Boston, Department of Neighborhood Development
Main Street organizations are privately funded, non-profit organizations comprised of a collaboration of merchants, property owners, community activists, and residents dedicated to revitalizing local commercial areas using the national Main Streets model, which organizes local programs around four interconnected points - design, economic restructuring, organization, and promotion. Boston neighborhood Main Street organizations receive technical assistance (organizational development, strategic planning, and market development) and matching grants through the DND's Office of Business Development.

Business Improvement District

City of Boston

A Business Improvement District (BID) is a downtown management strategy and financing tool. It is a publicly sanctioned, yet privately directed organization that supplements public services to improve shared, geographically defined, outdoor public spaces. The property owners within the pre-defined district fund the organization through a self-taxing mechanism. BIDs tend to be innovative service providers, offering services such as sidewalk cleaning, graffiti removal, landscape maintenance services, security patrols, safety seminars, district marketing, and comprehensive streetscape improvements. For information on

establishing a BID in Massachusetts, see "Business Improvement Districts: A guide to Establishing a BID in Massachusetts" developed by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Affairs, Downtown Initiative.

Assistance for Upgrading of Storefronts, Interiors, Signage Improvements

ReStore Boston

City of Boston, Department of Neighborhood Development

ReStore Boston is a citywide program that provides grants and loans up to \$7,000 per storefront to help neighborhood business and property owners complete storefront renovation projects. In addition to funding, ReStore Boston provides professional architectural design services at no cost to the business to ensure improvements are well planned and of the highest quality. Eligible improvements include: restoration of exterior finishes/materials, repair/replacement of storefront windows and/or doors, signage, building and sign lighting, removal of roll-down grills, installation of awnings, and general repairs.

Infrastructure - New parking facilities, improved lighting, signage, walkways for existing parking, sidewalk and median improvements, including trees, plantings, street furniture

District Improvement Financing

Massachusetts Office of Business Development, Economic

Assistance Coordinating Council

District Improvement Financing (DIF) is a locally driven designation that enables municipalities to fund public works, infrastructure, and development projects by allocating future, incremental tax revenues collected from a predefined district to pay project costs. A municipality must define the district and document a development program describing, among other things, how the DIF will encourage increased residential, commercial, and industrial activity within the district.

Public Works Economic Development Program (PWED)

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Transportation

The Public Works Economic Development program was created to assist municipalities in funding transportation infrastructure that stimulates economic development. The program is administered as part of the Commonwealth Capital Initiative. Applications are evaluated based on the employment and economic development opportunities expected, consistency with and support of other state and local smart growth and transportation goals, including the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles, and the project's support of a balanced and multimodal transportation plan.

City of Boston Capital Budget

City of Boston, Office of Budget Management (OBM)

The City of Boston has a five-year, \$1.3 billion capital plan. The Office of Budget Management (OBM) is responsible for developing

and managing the City's capital plan and budget. OBM coordinates the evaluation of capital requests, forecasts the timing and financial requirements of new construction and rehabilitation, and recommends the allocation of current and future resources. The underlying framework for the current capital plan emphasizes: (1) the strategic use of infrastructure to promote economic development, neighborhood revitalization, quality education, health care, and public safety; (2) comprehensive planning to lay the foundation for future growth; and (3) effective government management to deliver necessary municipal services efficiently.

Financing for the City's capital plan comes from a variety of sources, including general obligation bonds (representing two-thirds of all project funding), miscellaneous state and federal funds, the School Building Assistance program, Chapter 90 funds from the Massachusetts Highway Department, the Transportation Improvement Program (financed through state bonds and federal transportation funds), the Massachusetts Water Pollution Abatement Trust, and other trust funds. In recent years, the City's expenditures have ranged from \$91 million to an estimated \$128 million annually. The City's FY-07 capital plan includes allocations for the new Mattapan branch library, as well as for traffic signal and safety zone improvements, and neighborhood business district improvements, among other uses.

Transit-oriented Development (may include funding for code revision, transportation, or infrastructure improvements)

Smart Growth Technical Assistance Grants

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

Smart Growth Technical Assistance Grants are an effort to encourage municipalities to implement land use regulations that are consistent with Sustainable Development Principles. Funding is suitable for: implementing techniques from the Smart Growth Toolkit such as Open Space Residential Design, Low Impact Development, Transit Oriented Development, etc; specific changes to make zoning consistent with Master Plans; development of mixed-use zoning districts; feasibility studies, land-use analysis, and other plans necessary for successful redevelopment of sites and buildings; Brownfields inventory; or site planning.

Community Development Action Grant (CDAG) Program

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Housing and Community Development

As part of the Commonwealth Capital program, the Community Development Action Grant (CDAG) Program provides support for publicly owned or managed projects in areas where private investment will not otherwise occur. CDAG can be used for construction, repair and rehabilitation of facades, streets, roadways, throughfares, sidewalks, rail spurs, utility distribution systems, water and sewer lines for site preparation and improvements, demolition and relocation assistance.

Transit-Oriented Development Infrastructure and Housing Support Program

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Transportation

The "TOD Bond Program", as this program is also known, was designed to increase compact, mixed-use walkable development close to transit stations. The program will provide financing for pedestrian improvements, bicycle facilities, housing projects, and parking facilities within .25 miles of a commuter rail station, subway station, bus station, bus rapid transit station, or ferry terminal. Depending on the type of funding requested, maximum awards range from \$500,000 to \$2.5 million.

Housing

Code Enforcement and Unit/Building Rehabilitation

Boston HomeWorks

City of Boston, Department of Neighborhood Development

Boston HomeWorks assists Boston homeowners in making home improvements through the Boston's Historic HomeWorks, HomeWorks, HomeWorks Emergency Loan, and PaintWorks Plus programs. These programs offer financial assistance and technical assistance, conditional grants and expert advice to income eligible owner-occupants of 1-4 family homes and condominium units.

Senior Homeowner Services

City of Boston, Department of Neighborhood Development

Senior Homeowner Services enables income-eligible Bostonians 62 years and older to live in their homes safely and to make necessary repairs to their owner-occupied 1-4 family homes through HeatWorks, Senior Emergency Home Rehab, Senior Minor Repairs, and the Senior Vacant Unit Initiative. Working in partnership with non-profit agencies across the city, free technical and financial assistance is offered to elderly homeowners to prioritize, execute and complete necessary repairs and reduce costs.

Residential Development Program

City of Boston, Department of Neighborhood Development

The Residential Development Program sells tax-foreclosed properties to income-eligible first-time homebuyers and helps redevelop these properties into quality affordable housing. Buyers work with the DND team to apply for financing and to select a contractor. DND Construction Specialists provide written repair specifications. The DND team also provides bidding services to obtain a contractor price for work, assist with loan closing, and provide oversight of contractor performance during construction period.

Affordable Housing Development

Boston HOME Center

City of Boston, Department of Neighborhood Development

The Boston HOME Center was founded in 1996 by Mayor Thomas

Menino to serve as a "one-stop" homeownership information and referral center. Qualified first-time homebuyers can participate in homeownership lotteries, affordable mortgage programs, and can receive financial assistance to help with the purchase of a home.

Affordable Housing Development Programs - Department of Neighborhood Development

City of Boston, Department of Neighborhood Development

DND funds building projects that produce affordable housing.

Qualified private and non-profit contractors can help to increase the housing supply in Boston's neighborhoods by participating in an RFP process for the following programs: Buildable Land for Owner-Occupied Homes, Create a Buildable Lot, Home Again, Homeownership Development, Rental Development, and Homeless and AIDS Housing.

Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHC)

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, through Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development

The Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program was created by the Tax Reform Act of 1986 as an alternate method of funding housing for low- and moderate-income households. Tax credits are allocated by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and are used to leverage private capital into new construction or acquisition and rehabilitation of affordable housing. The actual credit award is determined by the development costs. The project owner receives the 10-year credit to use against federal tax liability.

Green Communities - Grants, Loans, LIHTC Equity

Enterprise Foundation

Green Communities offers grants to help cover the costs of planning and implementing green components of affordable housing developments, as well as tracking their costs and benefits; green components promote health, energy, conservation, operational savings and sustainable building practices in affordable housing design. Enterprise Community Loan Fund offers three lending products to support the development of affordable rental and homeownership housing that adheres to Green Communities Criteria: Early Predevelopment Loans, Predevelopment Loans, Acquisition Loans, and Construction Loans. Enterprise Community Investment also offers competitively priced Low-Income Housing Tax Credit equity to nonprofit and for-profit developers for construction and/or rehabilitation of affordable rental housing that generally adheres to the Green Communities Criteria.

Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC)

Boston LISC has assisted Greater Boston CDCs in developing rental housing, apartments for families, homes for the elderly, limited equity co-ops (offering advantages of both home ownership and rental housing), assisted living, housing for special populations (such as people with AIDS or with mental disabilities). LISC also provides funding and financing for homeownership development projects of CDCs, and offers nonprofit housing developers a wide range of financing products, some of which are unique to LISC and most of which are offered at terms that are not available through conventional financing institutions.

Enterprise Foundation

Enterprise is a leading provider of capital for and expertise on affordable housing, providing the following products to organizations that share a commitment to making sure every American lives in a decent home in a thriving community: tax credit equity and asset management; commercial and mixed-use financing; short-term debt through Enterprise's loan fund-a certified community development financial institution-for predevelopment, acquisition, working capital and other financing needs; and permanent financing for multifamily housing through Enterprise's special delegated Fannie Mae lender program.

Transit Oriented Development/Urban Center

Urban Center Housing –Tax Increment Financing Program (UCH-TIF)

Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development, Division of Community Services

The UCH-TIF Program is a statutory program authorizing cities to promote housing and commercial development, including affordable housing, in commercial centers. The UCH-TIF program provides real estate exemptions on all or part of the increased value (the "Increment") of improved real estate. Tax increment financing may be combined with grants and loans from local, state, and federal development programs.

Commercial Area Transit Node Housing Program (CATNHP)

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development

CATNHP provides funding for rental and ownership housing in commercial areas within ¼ mile of transit, provided that not less than 51 percent of the units assisted benefit persons earning not more than 80% of the area median income. When projects are considered for funding, specific characteristics of the project that make it likely to result in housing of particular benefit to the commercial area will be evaluated. Preference will be given to projects that increase density, provide a mix of uses, incorporate adaptive re-use of vacant or underutilized buildings, incorporate transportation demand management (TDM) methods, pedestrian access, and shared parking or parking ratios that encourage transit use and site amenities in support of transit use.

Priority Development Fund

MassHousing

Priority Development Fund is a source of funding dedicated to increasing the supply of mixed-income housing (primarily rental). Funds for the program, totaling \$100 million, are provided by MassHousing in conjunction with first-mortgage financing. The bulk of funds are awarded in the form of low- or no-interest "soft second" loans to help achieve financial viability of developments that reserve at least 20% of units for low-income residents. A Transit-Oriented Development Set-Aside of \$22 million for construction of mixed-income housing around transit nodes was created to primarily support rental or mixed-use development projects.

Support to Nonprofits

Improvements to Nonprofit Facilities

Partners with Nonprofits

City of Boston, Department of Neighborhood Development

This program provides matching grants up to \$25,000 to help nonprofit organizations enhance the infrastructure of facilities that serve the immediate community. Awards are made annually based upon a competitive Request-for-Proposal process.

Support to Foster Community Capacity Building and Community Oversight of Transformation Processes

The Boston Foundation

The Boston Foundation is Greater Boston's community foundation. Through its current grantmaking, the Foundation funds hundreds of nonprofit organizations and programs including those working to support local housing and community economic development. High priority funding projects in the housing and community economic development area include: public education, public policy, and advocacy on housing and community development issues; capacity-building for organizations focused on housing, tenants rights and homelessness; and community planning.

Local Initiatives Support Corporation

In partnership with Mass. Association of CDCs, LISC has operated the Rianne Hadrian Initiative for Community Organizing (RHICO)

since 1997. RHICO helps CDCs stay connected (and re-connect) with community residents to set local community development agendas. RHICO seeks to introduce community organizing to some CDCs and to assist CDCs in integrating their community organizing work with their real estate development and other program work. RHICO provides multi-year grants, direct technical assistance to grantees, training, peer learning sessions and one-time grants to help CDCs become effective community organizers within a community development framework.

Acknowledgements

The Mattapan Economic Development Initiative has benefitted greatly from the interest, expertise, and dedication of members of the MEDI Community Advisory Group and the Mattapan community. The MEDI Community Advisory Group is comprised of neighborhood residents, business and institutional representatives, and property owners. We thank all participants who gave generously of their time.

Mattapan Economic Development Initiative Mayoral Community Advisory Group

Emma Berarducci
Paula Bonney-Haughton
Eva Clarke
Louise Gant
Dawn Greenidge
Daniel Hardaway
Russell Holmes (*Chair*)
Fr. William “Bill” Joy
David Lopes
Azid Mohammed
Verita Pitts
Delores Richardson
Stuart “Stu” Rosenberg
Lillie Searcy
Nicholas Souffrant, Jr.
Azzie Young

Boston Redevelopment Authority

Mark Maloney, Director & Chief
Economic Development Officer
Anthony M. Marinello, Director of
Administration and Finance
Thomas A. Miller, Director of Economic
Development
Dana Whiteside, Deputy Director &
MEDI Project Director
Alvaro Lima, Director of Research
Kairos Shen, Director of Planning
Carolyn Bennett, Director of
GIS/Mapping
Randi Lathrop, Deputy Director for
Community Planning
Prataap Patrose, Deputy Director for
Urban Design
Richard Shaklik, Deputy Director for
Zoning

James Alberque, GIS/Mapping
John Avault, Research
Dave Bassett, Jobs & Community Services
Linda Brandon, Jobs & Community
Services
John Dalzell, Urban Design
Alan Gentle, Career Resource Center
Armando Goncalves, Economic
Development
Jill Griffin, Economic Initiatives
Kristin Keefe, Retail Initiatives-Retail
Jeremy Rosenberger, Community
Planning
Jessica Shumaker, Communications
Rodney Sinclair, Economic Development
Alla Ziskin, GIS/Mapping

Department of Neighborhood Development

Charlotte Golar-Richie, Director &
Chief Housing Officer
Sheila Dillon, Deputy Director for
Housing
Mary Knasas, Deputy Director for
Research
Reggie Nunnally, Special Assistant for
Community Development
Andre Porter, Deputy Director, Office
of Business Development
Barbara Salfity, Deputy Director, Real
Estate Development

Inspectional Services Department

William H. Good, Commissioner
Darryl Smith, Assistant Commissioner

Transportation Department

Thomas Timlin, Commissioner & Chief
Transportation Officer
Vineet Gupta, Director of Transportation
Policy/Planning
Ralph Denisco, Senior Transportation
Planner

Office of the Mayor

Michael Kineavy
Director of Planning & Policy
Jay Walsh, Director Mayor’s Office of
Neighborhood Services
Freda Brasfield, Mattapan Community
Liaison

Elected Officials

U. S. Congressman Michael Capuano
State Senator John Hart
State Representative Linda Dorcena-Forry
State Representative Shirley Owens-Hicks
City Councilor Robert Consalvo
City Councilor Charles Yancey

Abt Associates Team Principal Members

Scott Hebert, Abt Associates Inc.
Amy Minzner, Abt Associates Inc.
Stefanie X. Falzone, Abt Associates Inc.,
Graphic Design
Steven Heikin, ICON architecture, inc.
Terry Regan, Planners Collaborative, Inc.
Scott Hamwey, Planners Collaborative, Inc.
Jose Guzman, Guzman Architects, Inc.

