



CONNECTING BOWDOIN GENEVA

A PLAN FOR COMMUNITY AND COMMERCE

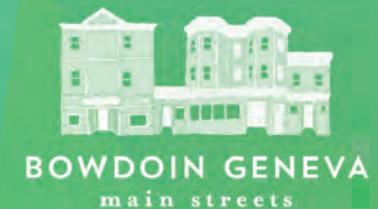


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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The planning team would like to extend a huge thank you to everyone who contributed to the creation of this plan. In particular, we would like to acknowledge:

The many residents and community members who attended the community meetings and workshops and contributed their input, feedback, and ideas;

The residents and other stakeholders who we interviewed during the analysis phase of the project;

The many business owners who completed surveys with members of the planning team;

The St. Peter's Teen Center staff, especially Paulo Debarros and Lucas Medina;

The awesome Teen Center Peer Leaders who partnered with us on the business owner survey: Vacilene Carvalo, Luisa Depina, Lenylse Ferreira, Mariza Lopes, Zeca Lopes, Dunia Medina, Alexandre Pires Da Silveira, Nuno Pires, Emerson Ribeiro, Invonelda Silva, and Miesha Tavares;

The Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets board members; and

Anh Nguyen, Executive Director of Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets, and Dulce Moreno and Elsie Antunes, Business Outreach Specialists.

FOREWORD



We entered this planning process with Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets intent on creating a plan that would be respectful, responsive, and meaningful for the commercial district and nearby residents. As graduate students who are keenly aware of the problematic history of planning in low-income neighborhoods of color and immigrant communities, we knew that creating a commercial district plan for Bowdoin Geneva would require more than gathering information and making recommendations. Our work had to consider power, politics, representation, and history.

Accordingly, we have confronted a range of complex dynamics with excitement, many iterations, and plenty of internal and external debate: how best to interact with community members; how to properly balance competing stakeholder interests; how to begin to fully account for the local dynamics of race, class, and immigration status. Throughout, we attempted to balance the desire for a plan informed by residents, community members, and business owners in Bowdoin Geneva with the complexity of planning and the goal of making specific, actionable recommendations. Our hope is that readers of this document will recognize those attempts to plan in an ethical and inclusive manner and our sincere desire to create a guide for a stronger and healthier commercial district.

We also imagine there will be questions about why certain things do not exist in this plan. This was another concern of our team—what would the scope be? What might—despite a clear connection with the life of the commercial district—necessarily fall by the wayside? We understand a commercial district plan as a tailored approach to addressing the economic and physical conditions of a unique place informed by the shared vision and goals of its many stakeholders. A plan should aspire to and help envision possible futures while remaining grounded in what can reasonably be accomplished. Plans achieve this balance by proposing recommendations that require various levels of time and resource commitments, from projects that can be completed immediately to others requiring significant investments and long-term stewardship.

Despite our fairly intensive approach in this regard, we also know a commercial district plan cannot fully account for all the influences shaping the life of the district, among them long, complicated histories and political and economic forces spanning far wider geographies than Bowdoin Street and Geneva Avenue, Dorchester, or Boston. Commercial district plans are not comprehensive community economic development agendas or targeted strategies around job creation, wealth building, public safety, and education. In many communities, these issues are understandably at the forefront of residents' concerns.

In Bowdoin Geneva, where public safety is paramount, we repeatedly bumped up against the boundaries of the plan when considering our recommendations meant to improve the current situation—largely physical interventions and proposals for organizational processes—and the many elements necessary to appropriately address the whole issue—among them good and dignified jobs, quality education, access to health care, and decriminalization. Yet recommendations in a commercial district plan can have significant public safety benefits, some of which, we believe, sit within these pages. This balance between the inability to entirely address a priority area for the community yet an ability to still have an impact was at the forefront of our minds across of this work.

Commercial district plans are also unlikely to completely balance the goals and needs of all their stakeholders. At times the priorities of these groups may, in fact, directly conflict with one another. These are tensions inherent in any planning process. While some interests might appear more represented than others, we hope you find that this plan adds value for the broad diversity of people who are invested in the district, from the barbers to the churchgoers, the medical providers to the property owners.

Before moving on to the meat of this document, we want to thank you for your interest and investment in this work. Proclaiming that this could not have happened without the community is trite but true; the ultimate test of its relevance and quality will be whether it is put to use—a process that requires far more work than the analysis and recommendations here. But if there is one takeaway that is not as well represented in this plan as we would like, it must be that Bowdoin Geneva is a highly capable community full of individuals deeply committed to its future. We are deeply grateful for the opportunity to work alongside you, and we hope this plan does your work and your investment in this community justice.

Onward!

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Bowdoin Street and Geneva Avenue intersect to form a neighborhood Main Streets district in the heart of Dorchester, the largest and most diverse neighborhood in the City of Boston. About 13,000 people live within a three to four block radius of the district, including strong immigrant communities from Cape Verde, the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, Haiti, and other Caribbean countries.

This report is the product of a partnership between graduate students in a practicum course at MIT's Department of Urban Studies and Planning and Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets in Dorchester, Boston. From January through May 2017, a team of 16 graduate students worked with residents, business owners, community stakeholders, and Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets' executive director and board to develop the commercial district plan outlined in this report.

Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets

Founded in 1997, Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets is a local non-profit organization that works to improve the Bowdoin Geneva commercial district and neighborhood in Dorchester, primarily through supporting local businesses and community activities with outreach and organization, business promotion and finance, design assistance, and economic development activities. Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets is currently focused on identifying a community vision for the district. This plan contributes to that process.

The Planning Process

The four-month planning process represented here included three phases of work. In **Phase 1**, the planning team conducted a business survey with 33 business owners, interviewed over 28 residents and community stakeholders, conducted focus groups with community members, and undertook in-depth physical and economic analyses of the district. The information collected was analyzed and then presented to the community in a public meeting. **Phase 2** included synthesis of the findings from the analysis phase into initial planning recommendations in consultation with community members and key partners. The planning team then held a community workshop to present recommendations to community members and receive feedback on how to improve and refine the proposed projects. **Phase 3** of the planning process focused on refining recommendations for inclusion in this report and the public presentation of the plan in a final community meeting on May 22, 2017.



Clockwise: Bowdoin Street, Coppens Square, Bowdoin Street

Existing Conditions

Physical Analysis

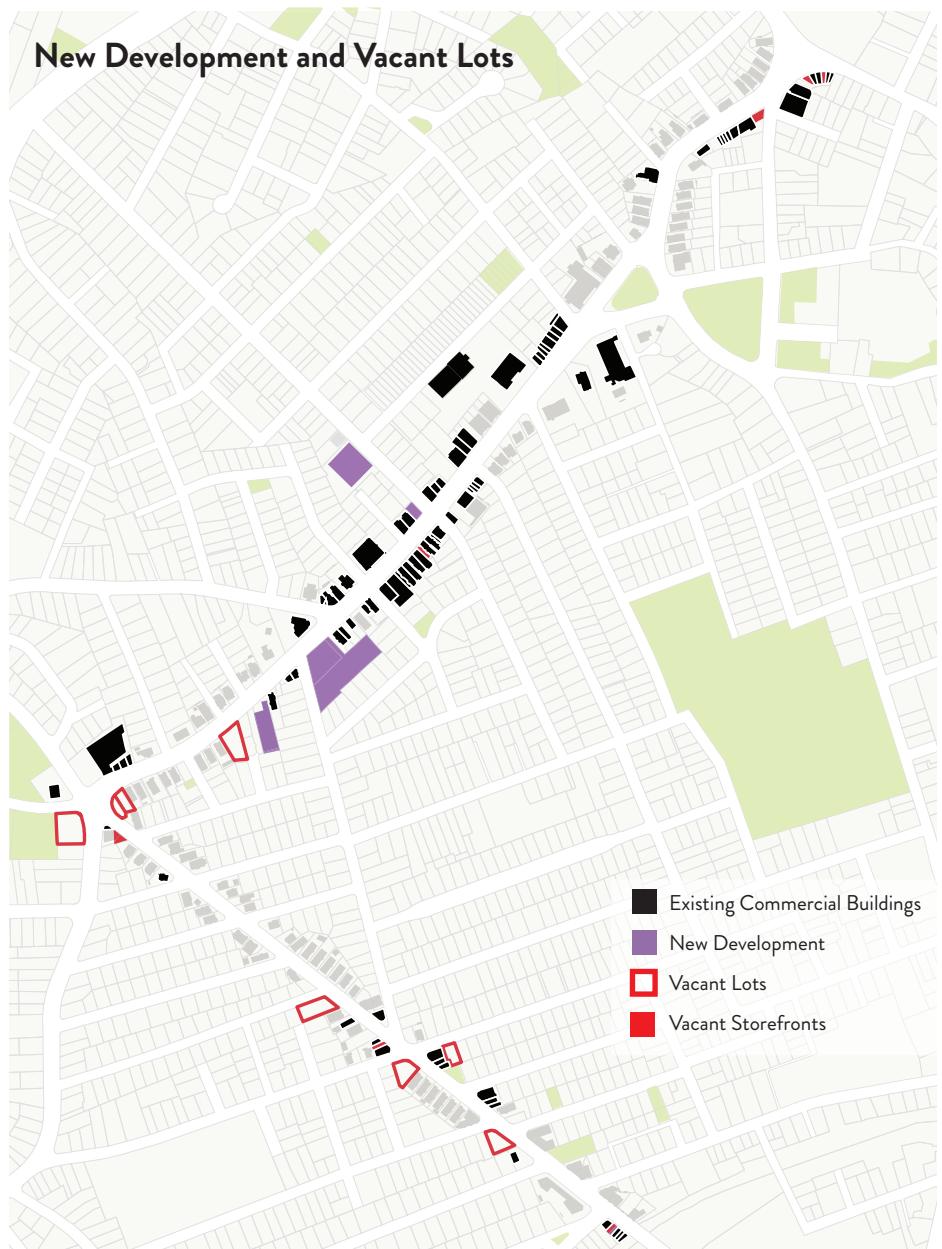
Key intersections to the neighborhood could be improved to better serve as gateways to Bowdoin Geneva, as existing entrances are not marked by signs, benches, or other visual cues. Public open spaces are close to the business district but are not always visible or activated by events. The district is also home to some public art and landmarks, but existing public art is in disrepair and does not always reflect the current residents of the neighborhood.

Zoning restrictions and existing building stock in the commercial district contribute to the clustering of businesses in certain areas of the district, and the current zoning guidelines impose a limit to development and use types along the corridor. Some of the existing storefronts lack transparency, which may contribute to the sense of inactivity and public safety concerns along the streets. Activity in the district generally decreases at night, in part due to these safety concerns.

Getting to around Bowdoin Geneva presents additional opportunities and challenges. Walking is the primary mode of transportation within the district, but hills and poorly designed intersections make walking challenging and unsafe in certain parts of the district. The district is served by numerous transit routes but service may be inconsistent, and street parking is poorly regulated and poorly marked.

Economic Analysis

Bowdoin Geneva has 103 commercial spaces with roughly 230,000 square feet generating approximately \$76 million in revenue each year. Important sectors include health and social services and personal services, such as salons, barber shops, and laundromats. The lack of business diversity and absence of certain business types is partially attributable to the Local Convenience zoning throughout the district. About 80 percent of business owners rent their space, and the remaining 20 percent own. According to local business owners, the majority of customers in Bowdoin Geneva live within three to ten blocks of the commercial district, which makes this a neighborhood-based commercial district. The 9,264 households living in the neighborhood's trade area have a median annual household income of \$46,146. There are two particularly large sales gaps in Bowdoin Geneva that present opportunities to capture more spending in the district: restaurants and bars (\$4.2 million gap) and entertainment (\$9.7 million gap). Banks and credit unions are another notable gap.



Goals, Principles, and Recommendations

Unlike many other commercial districts, businesses in Bowdoin Geneva are primarily organized in small clusters broken up by residential buildings. This unique condition led the planning team to focus on each of those clusters individually while still seeking to better connect the district overall.

The four clusters are:

1. “**Geneva Gateway**” at the southern end of the district,
2. “**The Hinge**” at the intersection of Bowdoin Street and Geneva Avenue,
3. “**Central Bowdoin**,” and
4. “**Bowdoin Gateway**” at the far north of the district.

To summarize the findings from the analysis phase into actionable recommendations, the team considered a basic question: **What makes a commercial district work well?**

Drawing from academic literature on commercial districts as well as many forms of engagement with the community and district stakeholders, the team settled on the following criteria for a successful commercial district.

A commercial district should:

- (a) **Provide community gathering spaces where people can come together,**
- (b) **Be easy to get to and get around, and**
- (c) **Host a diverse set of businesses that serves a diverse population.**

These three criteria form the basis of three thematic areas that guided the development of concrete recommendations for the district: **Community Gathering Spaces, Mobility, and Businesses.**

For each of the three thematic areas, the planning team developed a set of goal informed by the existing conditions to guide our thinking around specific interventions. These goals led to a set of priority recommendations for each cluster and the district as a whole. They are a small subset of a larger suite of recommendations that can be found in the Recommendations section of this plan.



Community Workshop, May 2017



B BUSINESSES

Goals

- Influence new development in a democratic and community-driven process and diversify business mix to capture more spending and meet residents' needs.
- Help businesses succeed and grow through efficient technical assistance.
- Increase collaboration, learning, and leadership between businesses to build their collective capacity.
- Encourage businesses to improve security for their stores and support efforts to increase public safety throughout the district.

Priority Recommendations

- Identify funds to secure Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets' "business outreach specialists" as permanent staff of the organization.
- Develop a training program for community members to volunteer to guide businesses through administrative processes.
- Support expanding the diversity of businesses in the identified gaps (entertainment, bars, restaurants, and a bank or credit union) and fill vacancies by developing and deploying a business recruitment package.
- Hold on-site, collective, and scheduled technical assistance, beginning with pilot areas of the district.

M MOBILITY

Goals

- Improve the pedestrian experience through intersection redesign and upgraded streetscape.
- Improve the availability of parking and reduce congestion.
- Use consistent streetscape and wayfinding to give distinctive character to the district and connect the clusters together.
- Create safe streets for all modes of transportation.

Priority Recommendations

- Redesign key intersections, create sidewalk extensions, and install new crosswalks to create a safer pedestrian experience throughout the district.
- Encourage alternative modes of transit to mitigate the pressures of vehicular traffic by improving bicycle infrastructure and bus stops.
- Create consistent streetscape and wayfinding to connect the clusters and create continuity along the district.
- Advocate for more parking management along the commercial areas through time limits on street parking and established loading times in front of some businesses.

CG

COMMUNITY GATHERING SPACES

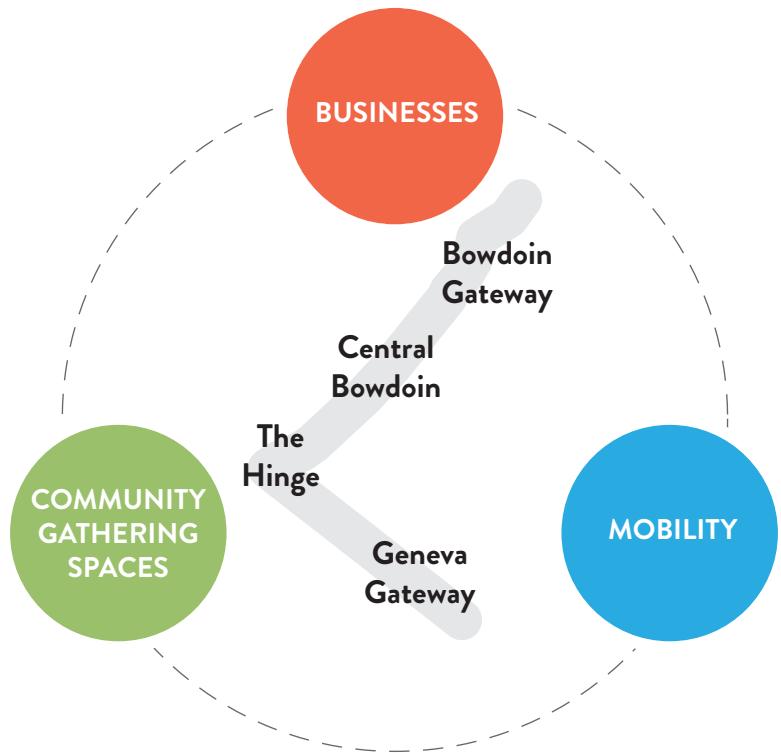


Goals

- Clearly mark and actively use the entrances to the neighborhood.
- Use programming and art to connect businesses and people with existing gathering spaces.
- Ensure that the purpose and functionality of the community gathering spaces are complementary and not competitive.
- Improve feeling of safety in the district through improved lighting, increased activity, and better visibility.
- Develop mechanisms for better maintenance of existing spaces through partnerships with community organizations and businesses.
- Fill gaps in the current network by creating areas for families and seniors and places for rest and gathering along the street.
- Connect the district to the existing parks and plazas with clear signs and wayfinding.

Priority Recommendations

- Expand the network of street furniture to make sure that pedestrians have spaces to sit and enjoy the commercial district.
- Increase pedestrian-level lighting in public spaces.
- Expand programming in open spaces across the district in a systematic way.



Influencing Development

A final district-wide goal that spans the three thematic areas is the creation of a process to influence future development in Bowdoin Geneva. New development in Bowdoin Geneva should bring benefits to existing residents without making the neighborhood less of a place for them in the process.

To achieve these goals, the planning team recommends that Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets develop an organizational process for taking stances on development and host joint public forums on development with other civic organizations and non-profits to empower residents and gain community input. We also highly recommend that community members, groups, and organizations in Bowdoin Geneva work together to create a set of development guidelines for the district. A sample set of guidelines are included in this plan.

Cluster Recommendations

Using the goals and principles developed for each of the thematic areas, the team also developed tailored recommendations for each of the four clusters in the district: Geneva Gateway, The Hinge, Central Bowdoin, and Bowdoin Gateway.

Geneva Gateway

The Geneva Gateway cluster serves as the southern entrance to the Bowdoin Geneva district. This cluster is unique for its high proportion of food businesses, presenting an opportunity to develop a food-based identity for the area. The cluster is a key gateway to the Bowdoin Geneva district due to its proximity to the MBTA Red Line. The trestle for the Fields Corner T station on the Red Line passes over the entrance to the Geneva Gateway cluster and leads right to its first few storefronts.

Based on the existing mixed residential and commercial character of the Geneva Gateway cluster and its concentration of food and grocery services, **the Geneva Gateway cluster can be developed as a welcoming food hub for residents and a food destination for visitors. The priority projects to achieve this vision include creating a plaza that provides gathering spaces for nearby businesses, adding decorative physical improvements to the Fields Corner T Station train trestle, and programming nearby green space.**

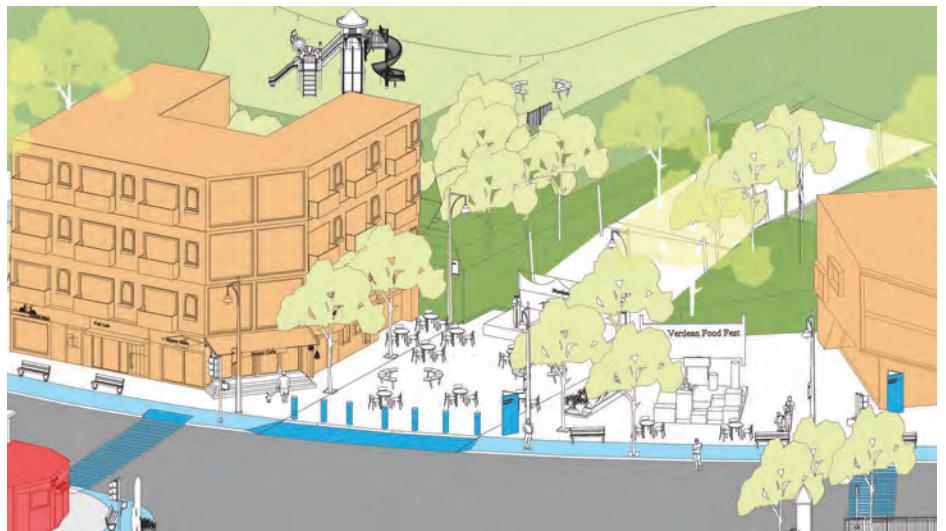
The Hinge

The intersection of Bowdoin Street and Geneva Avenue serves as a major crossroads in the district. However, the intersection does little to unite Bowdoin Street and Geneva Avenue beyond providing a street connection. The area is currently car-oriented, with fast-moving roadways and two large billboards. Multiple vacant lots and vacant storefronts in the area mean the area feels relatively inactive and unwelcoming to people walking through. The cluster includes a major gathering space for the district in the Geneva Cliffs Urban Wild, but the lack of clear signage and poor sightlines into the park make it feel disconnected from the surrounding businesses.

Building upon the opportunity of unique parkland located directly next to the intersection that binds Bowdoin Geneva into one district, recommendations for this cluster aim to make it both a literal and figurative connector for the neighborhood. **The Hinge is envisioned as the area where the whole community can come to congregate. To achieve these aims, priority projects include making Geneva Cliffs more welcoming and usable, redesigning the intersection to increase pedestrian safety, and promoting mixed-used development on vacant parcels.**



Geneva Gateway / Topliff Plaza



The Hinge / Mixed Use Development on Endeavor Capital site



Central Bowdoin / Coppens Square Streetscape



Bowdoin Gateway / Plaza and Intersection Redesign

Central Bowdoin

The central portion of Bowdoin Street, from Coppens Square in the north to Tebroc Street in the south, currently serves as the principal hub of activity for the district. The cluster is anchored by the Bowdoin Street Health Center, which brings significant foot traffic to the area during business hours. At various times of day, the street is congested, most notably during school pick-up. Despite the daytime activity in the area, vacant and underutilized storefronts create noticeable gaps along the street, and commercial activity dies off quickly in the early evening.

The main vision behind the recommendations for this cluster is to fill in the gaps of activity to reinforce and improve Central Bowdoin's role as the center of services and everyday activities in Bowdoin Geneva. To achieve this vision, the plan recommends priority projects that activate underutilized public and private spaces, improve the pedestrian experience, and upgrade the building stock.

Upper Bowdoin

The intersection of Bowdoin Street and Hancock Street at the far north of the district is currently unsafe for most users; the fast movement of cars through the intersection, wide traffic lanes, and poor sightlines force pedestrians into dangerous, rushed crossings. The intersection also presents major opportunities for the district. The Savin Hill T stop is less than 15 minutes away on foot. The intersection is ideally positioned between two major corridors of activity in Dorchester: Columbia Road to the west and Dorchester Avenue to the east. The construction of Dot Block, a mixed-use development with 362 residential units and 37,000 square feet of retail space, will begin two blocks from the intersection in summer 2017.

The recommendations for Bowdoin Gateway focus on the potential presented by the intersection of Bowdoin and Hancock to create an effective and inviting entrance to Bowdoin Geneva, better serve the current users of the intersection, and forge linkages to Dorchester Avenue, Columbia Road, and Dot Block. In order to achieve this vision, the priority project is a comprehensive intersection redesign, including the addition of a new plaza for businesses and community gathering.

Partnerships and Implementation

While this plan purposely includes projects that Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets can implement on its own, the majority of the recommendations will require partnerships to realize. From city agencies to local community development corporations and other civic groups, partners bring significant financial resources, expertise, and implementation capacity to the table. These partners also stand to significantly benefit from a stronger, healthier commercial district. Engaged and accountable partnerships will bring this plan to life.



INTRODUCTION



II. INTRODUCTION

This report is the product of a partnership between graduate students in a practicum course at MIT's Department of Urban Studies and Planning and Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets in Dorchester, Boston. From January through May 2017, a team of 16 graduate students worked with residents, business owners, community stakeholders, and Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets' executive director and board to develop the commercial district plan outlined in this report.

Revitalizing Urban Main Streets Practicum

For more than 15 years, the Revitalizing Urban Main Streets practicum has partnered graduate students in MIT's Department of Urban Studies and Planning with a Main Streets organization in an urban commercial district. The practicum explores how economic development and physical design interventions can support commercial district revitalization efforts. As a practicum, the course is designed to allow students to develop professional skills by undertaking a planning process with a client commercial district. Students employ a wide variety of analysis types in order to develop a commercial district plan based on a set of place-specific recommendations.

Our diverse team comes from cities and towns across the United States, including New York, Atlanta, Baltimore, Los Angeles, and Boston, and countries all over the world, including China, India, and Pakistan. The team members have a wide range of academic and professional backgrounds including architecture, affordable housing, organizing, and teaching.



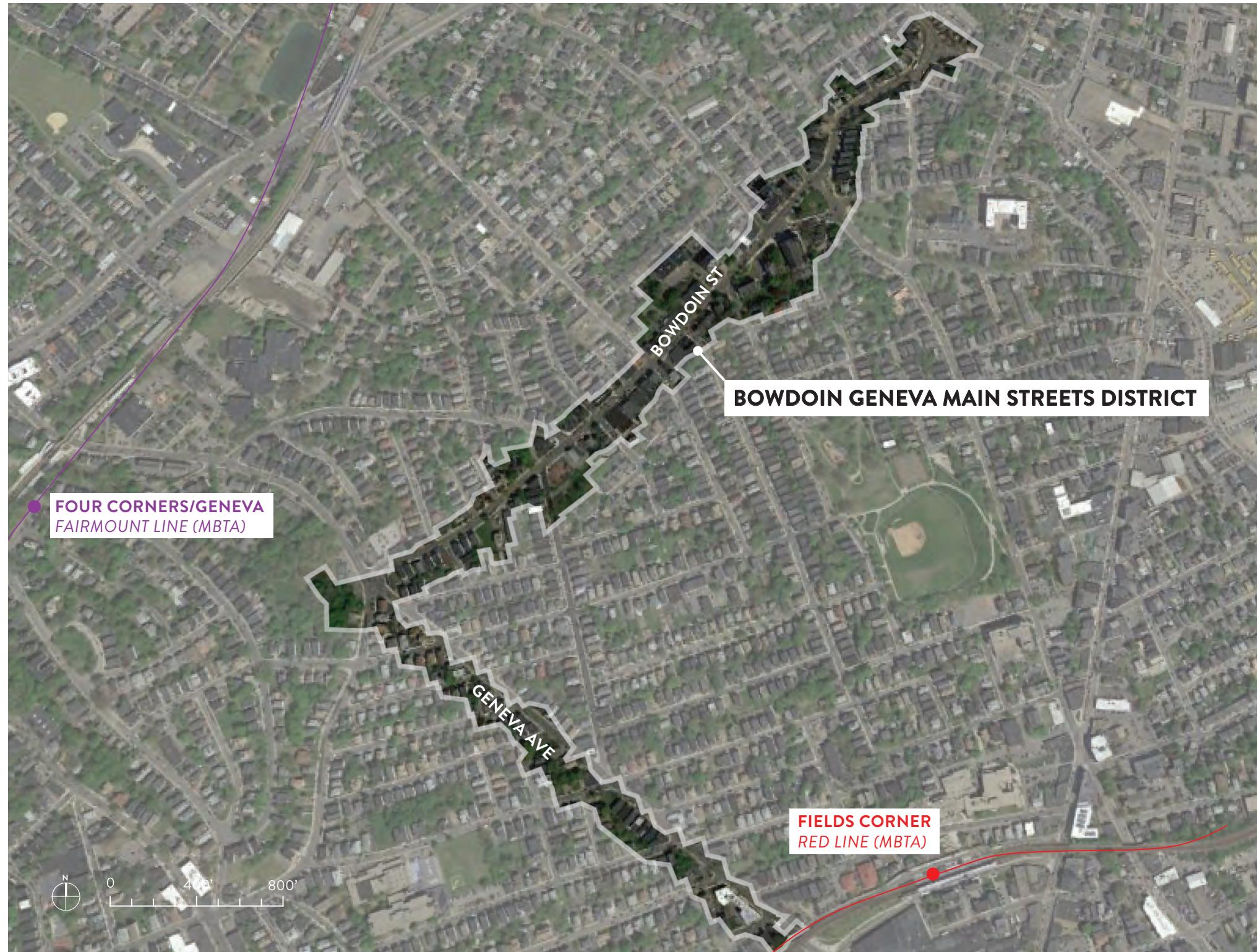
Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets

Founded in 1997, Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets is a local non-profit organization that works to revitalize and improve the Bowdoin Geneva commercial district and neighborhood in Dorchester by supporting local businesses and community activities with outreach and organization, business promotion and finance, design assistance, and economic development activities. The organization is comprised of a full-time executive director, two part-time resident staff members, and a board of directors.

Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets is one of 20 Main Streets districts in Boston, six of which are located in Dorchester. In recent years, the organization has re-established its mission and goals for its role in the community. Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets is currently focused on identifying a community vision for the district. This plan contributes to that process.



Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets Executive Director Anh Nguyen at the community workshop



A. BOWDOIN GENEVA IN CONTEXT

History of Bowdoin Geneva

Bowdoin Street and Geneva Avenue are two main streets that intersect to make a neighborhood commercial district in the heart of Dorchester, the largest and most diverse neighborhood in Boston. Dorchester's contemporary roots can be traced to a group of English settlers who established the First Parish Church of Dorchester and, in 1670, chose Meeting House Hill at the northern end of today's Bowdoin Geneva neighborhood as its permanent location. The church still operates in this location today.

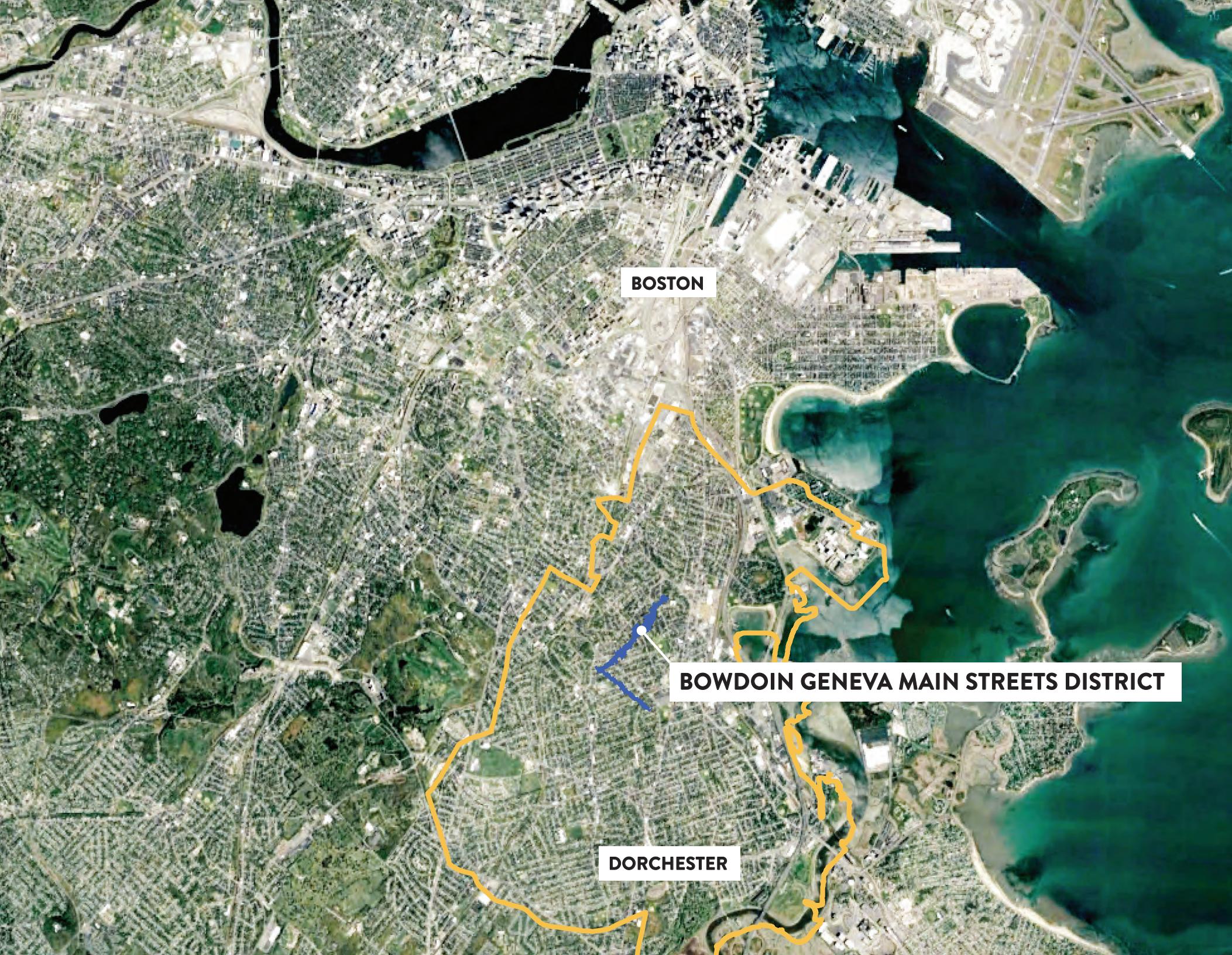
Much of the area that now makes up Bowdoin Geneva was rocky countryside through the 1800s. Large estates dominated the area, including the summer home of Governor James Bowdoin (1785-1787), whose house was located on what is now called Mount Bowdoin, just south of the intersection of Bowdoin Street and Geneva Avenue.

The arrival of the New York and New England railroad in 1872 at the location of today's Four Corners/Geneva commuter rail stop and the subsequent establishment of numerous streetcar lines throughout Dorchester ushered in a period of residential growth in the neighborhood. The bus routes which traverse Bowdoin Street today trace the paths of old streetcar lines which allowed commuters from Boston to live in this suburban community and still travel into the city. Land along Bowdoin Street was subdivided for housing and new residential cross streets were built. An 1884 atlas shows a familiar street network from Meeting House Hill to Mount Bowdoin, with Geneva Avenue laid out on the map, still in the planning stage. By the early 20th century, Bowdoin Street had begun to develop its identity as a commercial street, with businesses like the Hamilton Theater appearing as early as 1918. The streetcars were all replaced by bus service by 1949.

Dorchester has a history of housing Boston's immigrants, a role the neighborhood continues to play to this day. In the 1800s, Dorchester arose as a hub for Irish migrants, as the streetcar lines allowed for easier commutes to jobs in inner-city Boston or industrial Lower Mills. Notable Irish residents of this time included John Fitzgerald and Mayor Patrick Collins, who lived on Meeting House Hill. The Irish were soon followed by a sizeable Jewish community centered around Blue Hill Avenue in the early-to-mid-1900s. However, by the 1950s, Dorchester's Jewish population began an exodus to suburban communities, alongside an expansion of the African American community into Dorchester. Due to a number of factors, Dorchester experienced a period of economic decline in the 1960s, similar to the inner cities of other major metropolitan areas.



Bowdoin Street at Eaton Square circa 1937



BOSTON

BOWDOIN GENEVA MAIN STREETS DISTRICT

DORCHESTER

Today in Bowdoin Geneva

A Diverse Immigrant Population

Today, Bowdoin Geneva is home to immigrants from all over the world, most notably from Cape Verde, the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, Haiti, and various other Caribbean countries. Walking through the commercial district, one can hear languages and taste foods from all these countries. Many local civic organizations are organized around particular immigrant communities.

Bowdoin Geneva is home to roughly 13,000 people living in 4,000 households within three to four blocks of the commercial district. In some areas of the neighborhood more than 40 percent of the residents are foreign-born. The most commonly spoken languages in the neighborhood aside from English are Spanish, Vietnamese, French Creole (or Cape Verdean Creole), Portuguese, French, and various African languages. Over the years, the neighborhood's demographics have continued to shift and consequently so has its cultural identity.

Local Businesses, Local People

The richness of this cultural diversity is observed among the district's business owners and business types. Fifty-five percent of business owners live in Dorchester and a majority identify as either Latino or Black/African American (including individuals from Cape Verde). The most common types of small businesses along the corridor are retail and personal services, including hair braiding, barbershops, and nail salons, among others. Out of the 75+ businesses in the district, 25 percent have been in the neighborhood for 10 to 16 years, and there is an average of five employees per business.

Many of the businesses in Bowdoin Geneva attract customers from far outside the district, especially those owned by immigrants that cater to the cultural heritage of their communities. These businesses also help to form a network of community spaces along the commercial district, creating a sense of place and identity.

Neighborhood Challenges

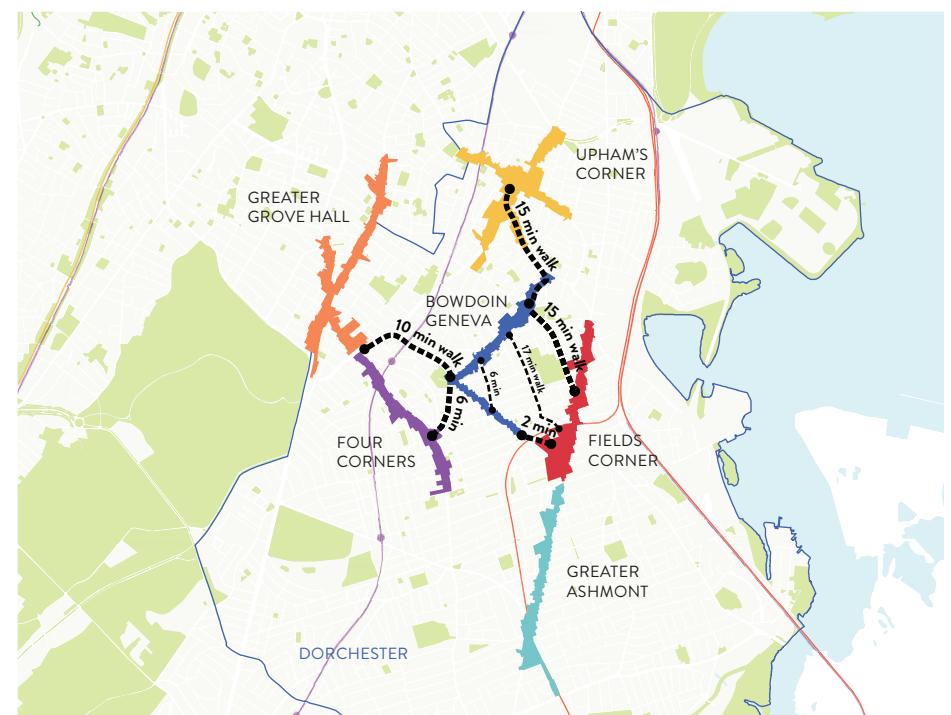
Though Bowdoin Geneva's more recent history, as told by the media, has been largely associated with crime and violence, the area is improving and becoming safer overall. City-wide, homicides have declined; in 2015 the city had its lowest homicide rate in 15 years. Improvements to public safety in Bowdoin Geneva contributed to the city's 14 percent decrease in crime between 2014 and 2016. As crime has decreased, Dorchester is increasingly subject to gentrification pressures that have made other neighborhoods in Boston unaffordable for working class families. These forces threaten to displace the immigrant communities who are integral to the fabric of this community.

A District, Divided yet United

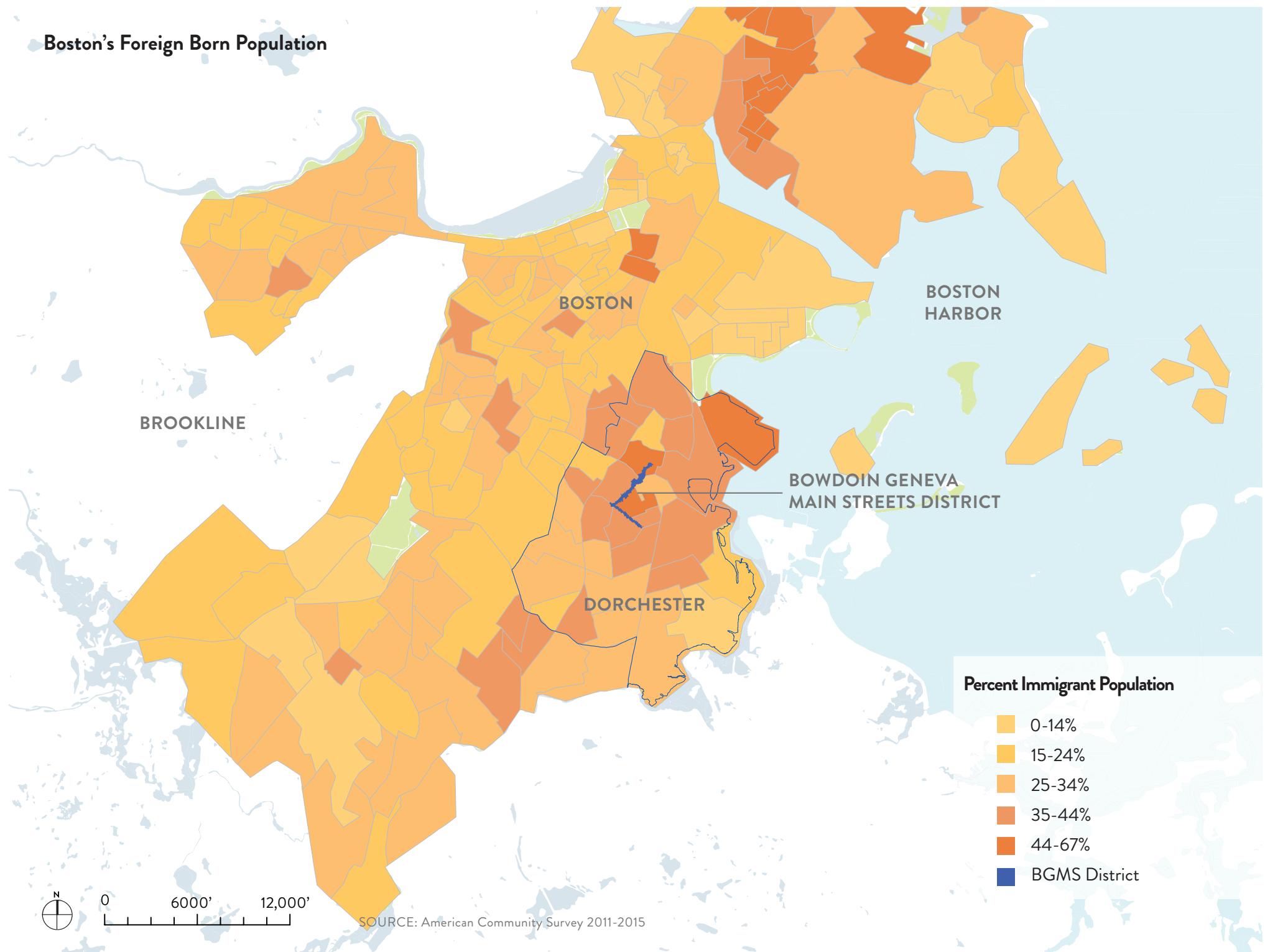
Unlike some commercial districts, Bowdoin Geneva's main streets are not entirely lined with businesses and storefronts. Instead, businesses are clustered in four areas along the district: on Geneva Avenue, at the intersection of Bowdoin Street and Geneva Avenue, along the central area of Bowdoin Street, and at the intersection of Bowdoin Street and Hancock Street. Residential buildings stretch between these areas. This distinctive distribution of businesses into clusters affects both visitors' and residents' experiences of the district and informed all phases of our work on this commercial district plan.

The district is situated between the Fields Corner, Four Corners, and Upham's Corner Main Streets districts in Dorchester, which indicates that Bowdoin Geneva both competes with other commercial districts in the area and operates as part of a larger network of neighborhood commercial districts.

Main Streets Districts in Dorchester



Boston's Foreign Born Population



B. PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

In order to provide recommendations and guidance on economic development and urban design in Bowdoin Geneva and support commercial district revitalization, the MIT planning team followed a three-phase planning process between January and May 2017. Community engagement was an essential part of each phase and guided both our analysis of the existing conditions in the neighborhood and the recommendations put forward in these pages.

Phase 1: Analysis

Phase 1 consisted of intensive field work to gain knowledge of local businesses and the Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets organization, document existing conditions, and complete a detailed analysis of the existing conditions in the neighborhood (discussed in Section III of this report).

Kick-off Field Work—In January, Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets and the MIT planning team held a joint 3-day kickoff work session, which included a tour of the district, multiple observational walks to record and document details of the neighborhood's physical and economic characteristics, and initial interviews with stakeholders from the community.

Stakeholder Interviews—The planning team interviewed 28 residents, community members, and city officials to learn more about their experiences living and working in Bowdoin Geneva.

Business Survey—The planning team conducted in-person surveys with 33 business owners in partnership with Peer Leaders from the St. Peter's Teen Center.

Community Focus Groups—The planning team convened four focus groups with different resident groups and organizations to learn more about how different people use the commercial district.

Analysis—The information gathered was then analyzed through a broad range of methods. The Forms of Analysis section that follows details those methods, and additional details on methodology can be found in Appendix A of this report.

Community Meeting—The team presented the analysis to the Bowdoin Geneva community on April 5, 2017 at local business Pollo Centro. In two public meetings, a presentation by the project team was followed by community engagement and feedback activities.

Phase 2: Recommendations

Phase 2 included synthesis of analysis findings, initial formulation of recommendations, further consultation with community members and key partners, and a public workshop to gather community feedback. It is discussed in Section IV of this report.

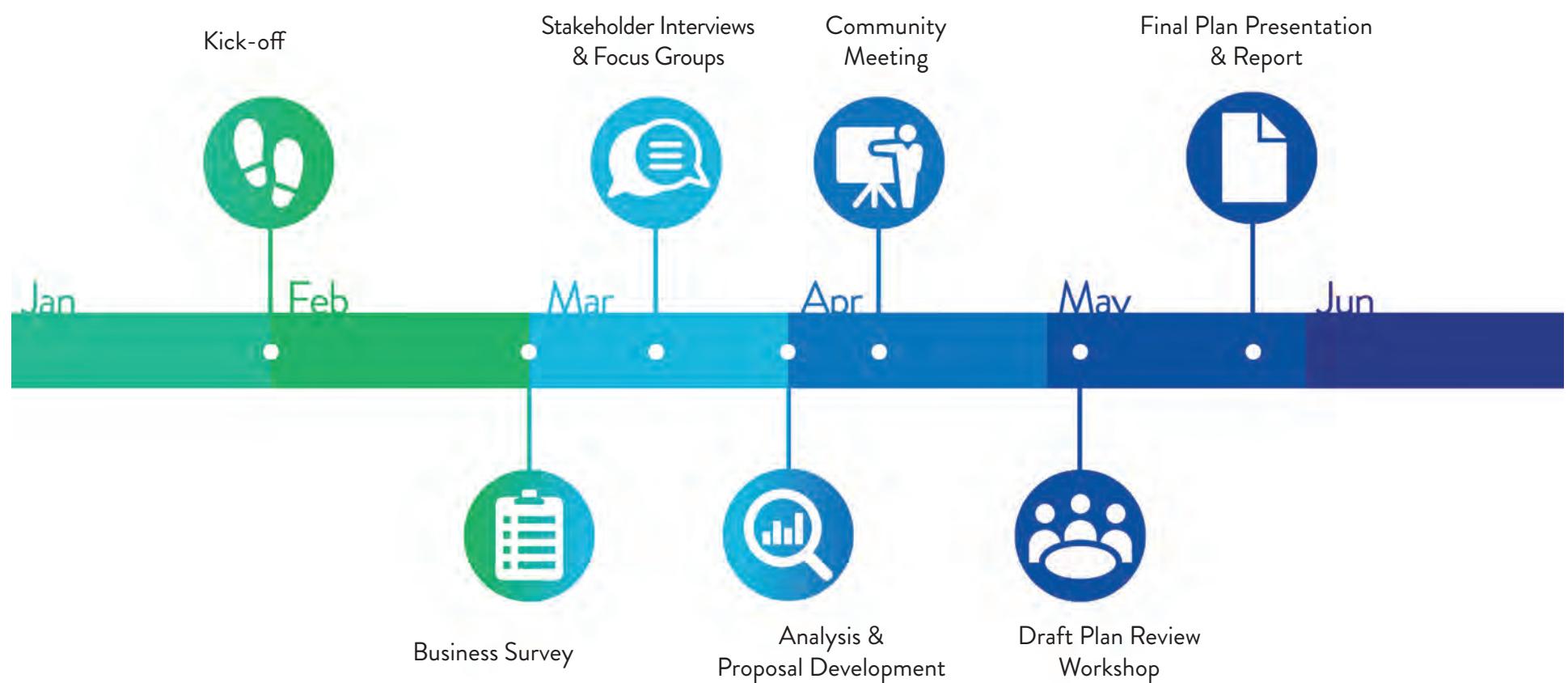
Development of Recommendations—Based on our analysis and the community meeting, initial recommendations for the district were formulated to enhance the strengths of Bowdoin Geneva and address the district's challenges and limitations.

Community Workshop—The community workshop provided an opportunity for the team to present plan recommendations to residents and other community stakeholders and receive feedback and ideas about how to improve and refine the proposed projects.

Phase 3: Refinement

In Phase 3, the team integrated feedback from the community workshop into our recommendations for inclusion in a final report. This document and the public presentation of the report held on May 22, 2017 represents the culmination of the project and the conclusion of our work in Bowdoin Geneva.

Project Timeline



Community Engagement

Community engagement was a central part of our work throughout each phase of the project. All community events were publicized through community outreach by the project team and Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets staff, including through contacts the team made with organizations and individuals in the district, posting flyers in English, Spanish, and Cape Verdean Creole, and canvassing local businesses and community institutions.

Forms of Analysis and Methodologies

We analyzed the district with a focus on two major (and intertwined) components: (1) the businesses in the district and economic development and (2) the physical environment of the district, including its urban design. The economic analysis involved a quantitative analysis of market supply and demand, extensive survey interviews with businesses owners and analysis of the resulting survey data, a detailed business inventory, and the definition of the district's trade area and competing trade areas.

The urban design analysis involved in-depth mapping of the physical environment and district image that drew on deep observation of the district and information gathered from the City of Boston, such as assessors' data on land ownership. Physical analysis considered a wide range of topics, from building and streetscape conditions, to parks, open space, and public safety. Physical analysis also considered mobility and transportation around the district and involved a parking inventory, traffic congestion monitoring, and evaluation of frequency and accessibility of public transportation.

Based on the analysis and community feedback at the end of Phase 1, the team decided to formulate recommendations and interventions under three themes—Mobility, Community Gathering Spaces, and Businesses—with each intervention related to one or more of the four clusters of commercial activity in the district. This approach will be discussed further in following sections.

A more detailed methodology of each component of our work can be found in the Appendix A of this document.



Community Meeting, April 2017



Community Workshop, May 2017

Using This Document

Report Organization

This report is organized into five sections: (1) Executive Summary (2) Introduction, (3) Existing Conditions, (4) Recommendations, and (5) Implementation.

Section I, the ***Executive Summary***, provides an overview of the project, including the plan's priority recommendations.

Section II includes an ***Introduction*** to the project team and Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets and ***Process and Methodology***, which describes the scope and timeline of the project. Additionally, it offers an overview of the forms of community engagement and analysis undertaken for this plan.

Section III, Existing Conditions, examines the current conditions of the physical spaces and the commercial activity present in the district and begins to explore the potential for revitalization.

Section IV, Recommendations, outlines a series of projects that offer specific guidance on how to better support the businesses in the district and what types of physical improvements and urban design projects would benefit the community in Bowdoin Geneva. These include streetscape and open space improvements, façade renovation, intersection redesign, and new mixed-use development, among other recommendations.

Section V, Implementation, considers how Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets and the Bowdoin Geneva community might move forward with priority recommendations and proposals most effectively. It considers potential timelines for the projects, funding sources, and key partners.

The ***Appendix*** contains supplemental information upon which the analyses, conclusions, and recommendations in this report are based.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

A. ASSESSING THE EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Existing Conditions section presents our analysis of the economic and physical conditions within the commercial district.

During the first phase of this project, our team conducted extensive research on the existing economic and physical conditions within the Bowdoin Geneva commercial district. The purpose of this research was to understand the assets and strengths that currently exist and to identify priority areas for the plan. To gather sufficient depth and breadth of data for this analysis, our team deployed multiple methods, including 28 interviews with community stakeholders, 33 surveys with business owners, 4 focus groups with residents, in-depth mapping of the physical environment, and a quantitative market analysis. We present the result of these efforts in this section, which serves as the foundation for the recommendations presented in this plan.



Intersection of Bowdoin Street and Geneva Avenue



Intersection of Topliff Street and Geneva Avenue

B. PHYSICAL ANALYSIS

Zoning

Zoning in Bowdoin Geneva creates business clusters in certain areas of the district and currently imposes a limit to development and use types along the corridor.

Zoning is a set of governmental regulations that governs both physical development, such as building size, and what types of businesses and uses can happen in those buildings. Dorchester has several types of zoning sub-districts that allow for commercial activity, but the only sub-district type that occurs within Bowdoin Geneva is “Local Convenience.” Local Convenience zoning limits the types of businesses that are able to operate in the commercial district. Mapping the zoning in Bowdoin Geneva revealed that this sub-district does not extend along the entire stretch of Bowdoin Street or Geneva Avenue. In fact, commercial zoning only exists where clusters of businesses currently exist, and residential zoning exists along most of the rest of the commercial district. The non-continuous commercial zoning makes it unlikely that the commercial district will become a continuous corridor of commercial uses.

The Local Convenience zoning sub-district dictates the following use and building size restrictions:

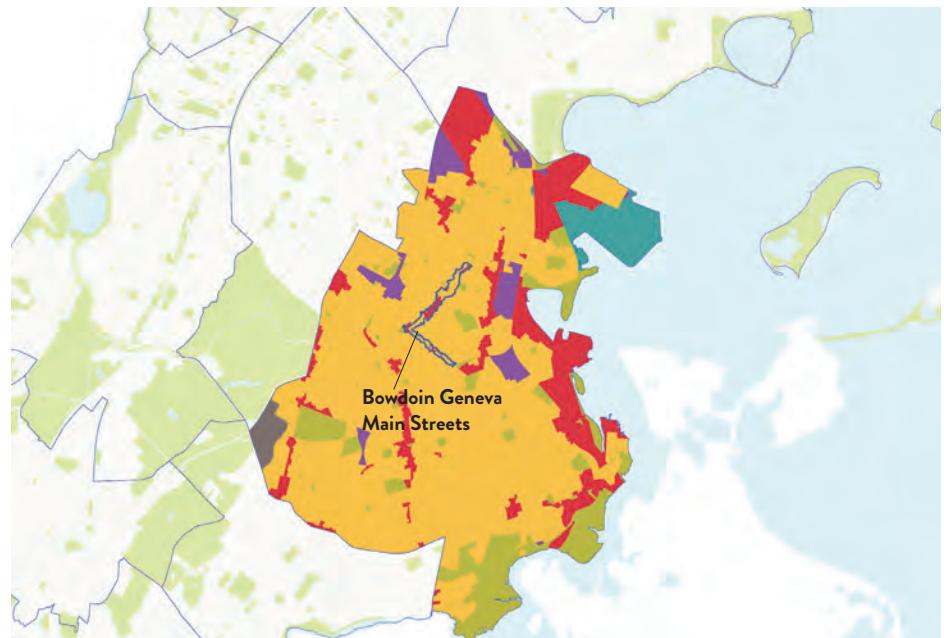
Zoning Guideline	Explanation	Regulation
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	A standard measure of development density equal to the area of the building floors divided by the area of the lot itself	Maximum 1.0
Building height	How tall can a building be?	Maximum 40 feet (roughly three stories)
Allowed, Forbidden, and Limited Use Types	What types of businesses can exist in the zoning sub-district?	Allowed: Bank, post office, retail space, local retail, barbershops, and personal services Limited & Conditional: Small restaurants, art galleries, community center Forbidden: Cultural and entertainment uses, general retail, large restaurants, warehouses

Note: This summary list is not comprehensive. For a full list of uses allowed under Local Convenience zoning, please refer to the latest Boston Planning and Development Authority zoning code documentation.

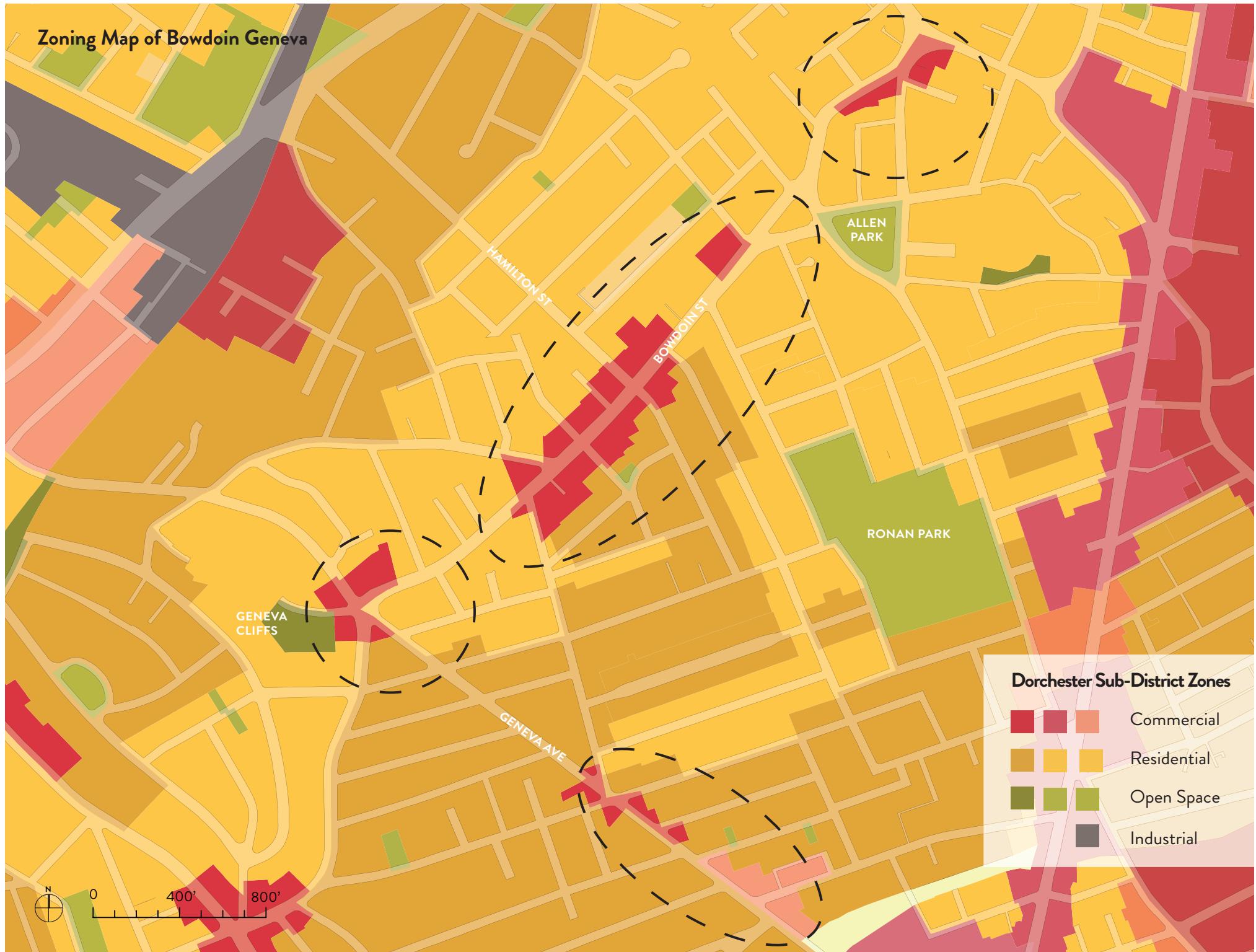
Zoning regulations can be bypassed through a zoning variance, a special allowance that the city gives to a development on a case-by-case basis. Zoning variances are common in Boston and may account for newer building stock in the area that does not appear to conform to these zoning requirements.

Zooming out to all of Dorchester reveals that residential zoning is dominant in the neighborhood as a whole and that much of the commercial zoning is limited to areas along Dorchester Avenue. Larger areas of commercial zoning exist along the waterfront and areas north of Bowdoin Geneva. Bowdoin Geneva is surrounded by areas of dense residential zoning, which highlights its role as an important neighborhood shopping area.

Zoning Map of Dorchester



Zoning Map of Bowdoin Geneva



Building Stock

The existing building stock of the neighborhood significantly influences what kinds of businesses can operate in the district and can define the district's future growth.

There are four primary types of buildings in the Bowdoin Geneva commercial district: residential triple-deckers, mixed-use triple-deckers, one-story commercial buildings, and four to five-story civic buildings. Though individual buildings can vary in dimensions, the building types on the right show typical dimensions for each type of building.

As noted in the previous section on zoning, clustering of building types prevents the district from feeling like one continuous commercial area. The typology map shows four clusters of commercial and mixed-use buildings, which are primarily one-story commercial and mixed-use or converted triple-decker buildings. These commercial buildings are broken up by corridors of triple-decker residential buildings and one group of civic buildings around Coppens Square. The divisions in building typology would complicate an effort to use architecture to physically unite the Bowdoin Geneva commercial district into one continuous corridor.

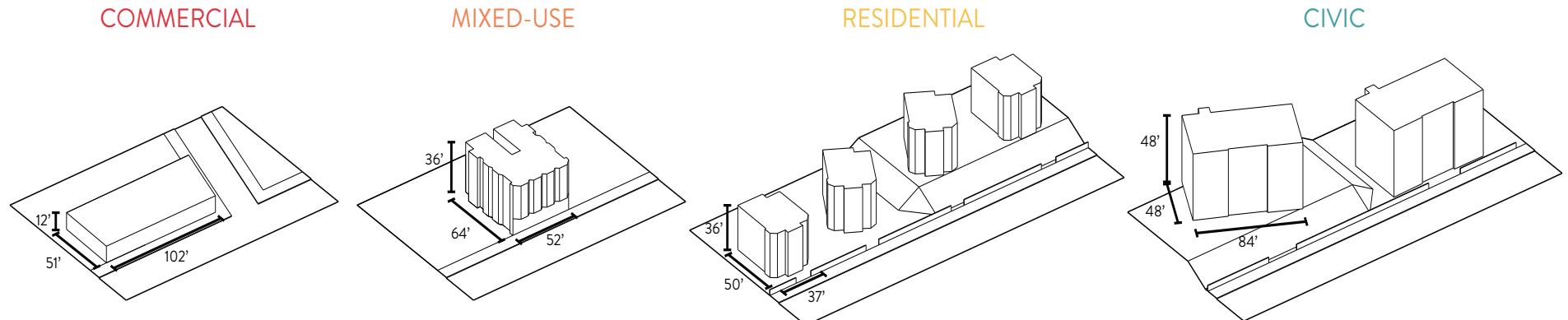
Building Setbacks

The building stock in Bowdoin Geneva was also evaluated according to the buildings' varying relationships with the street. The relationship to the street varies widely across different parts of the district, creating a spectrum of privacy and integration with the public realm among existing buildings. For example, buildings that are set back from the road and angled away create a more private feeling around their entrances, whereas buildings that open directly to the sidewalk indicate that pedestrians are welcome. The latter may be especially appropriate for businesses.

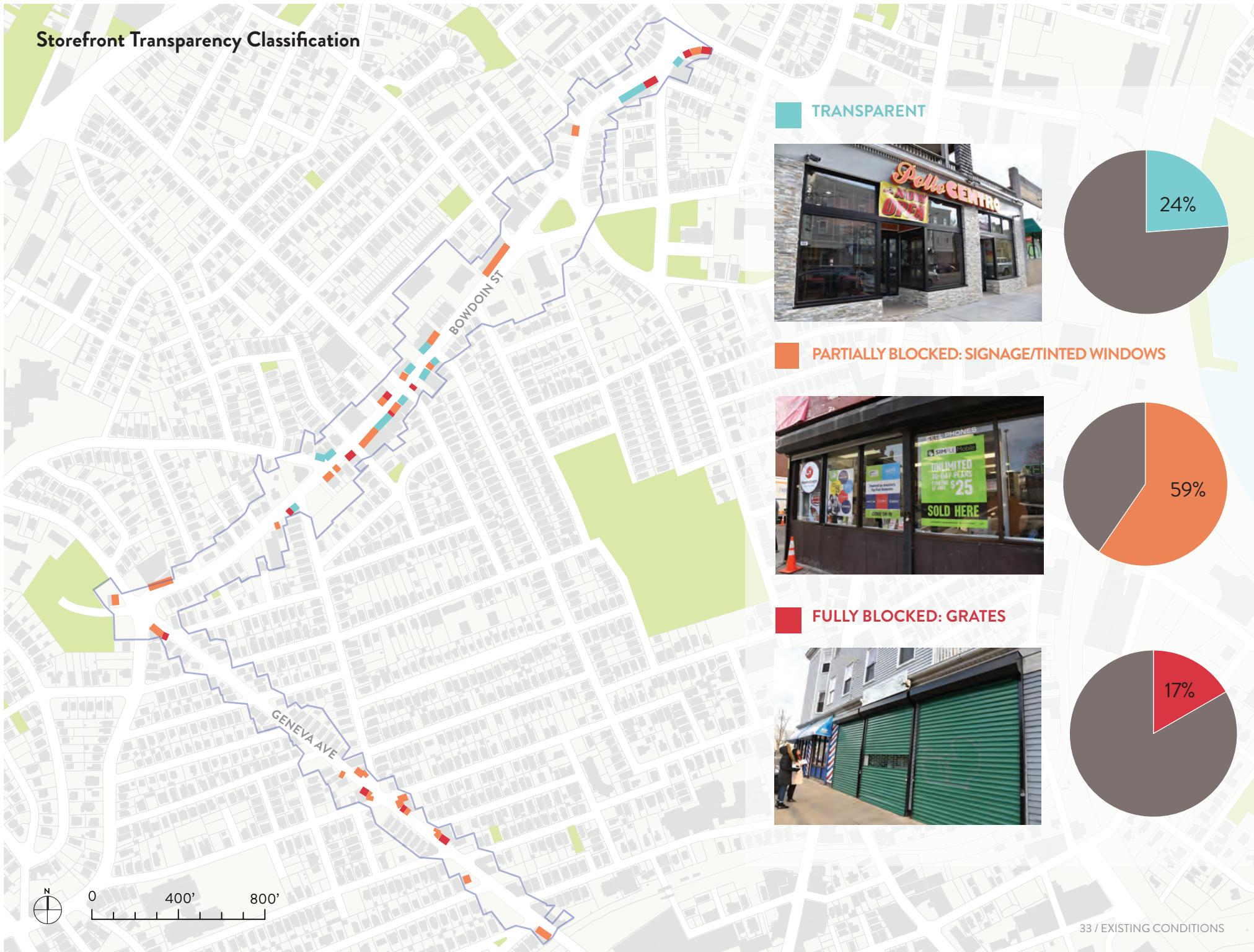
Storefronts

When evaluating the existing building conditions for businesses and commercial uses, we also assessed window transparency to see how easy it is to see inside each business. We categorized buildings into varying levels of transparency. Only 24 percent of storefronts were considered "transparent," or not blocked by signage. Almost 60 percent of storefronts were partially blocked by signage or grates, and an additional 17 percent were fully blocked. Blocked storefronts detract from stores' attractiveness to customers and contribute to feelings of unsafety on the street and within stores due to limited visibility from outside and inside businesses. The highest concentration of very transparent storefronts is in the Central Bowdoin cluster of the commercial district.

Typical Building Typologies



Storefront Transparency Classification

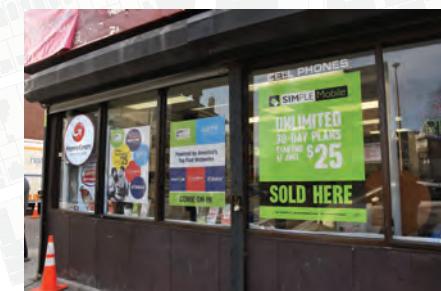


TRANSPARENT



24%

PARTIALLY BLOCKED: SIGNAGE/TINTED WINDOWS



59%

FULLY BLOCKED: GRATES



17%

Streetscape + Public Realm: Landmarks and Art

Public art and landmarks are important tools to provide the district's residents and visitors a sense of community identity, culture, and history in Bowdoin Geneva. They can act as visual cues of entrances to the district, serve as a means of wayfinding between the commercial clusters, and celebrate the identity of the neighborhood.

Several prominent landmarks and pieces of public art exist throughout the commercial district, including three monuments, two churches, four works of public art, and two pieces of decorative signage. However, landmarks and public art are not distributed evenly across the district. The monuments and landmark church buildings are clustered at the northern end of Bowdoin Street, and Geneva Avenue has less public art than Bowdoin Street.

In some cases, the public murals in Bowdoin Geneva are not well maintained and may need repair. Neighborhood residents also noted that the murals do not adequately represent the people who are currently living in the neighborhood. These findings suggest that there is opportunity both to restore the public art that is in disrepair and commission new artworks that represent the community character. Open spaces close to the district and key intersections would be good locations for new art and landmarks. At the time of this report, a group of residents are working to restore the historic fountain in Coppens Square. Advocacy for public art and landmarks is necessary to protect and promote these visual assets.



Public Art



Monuments



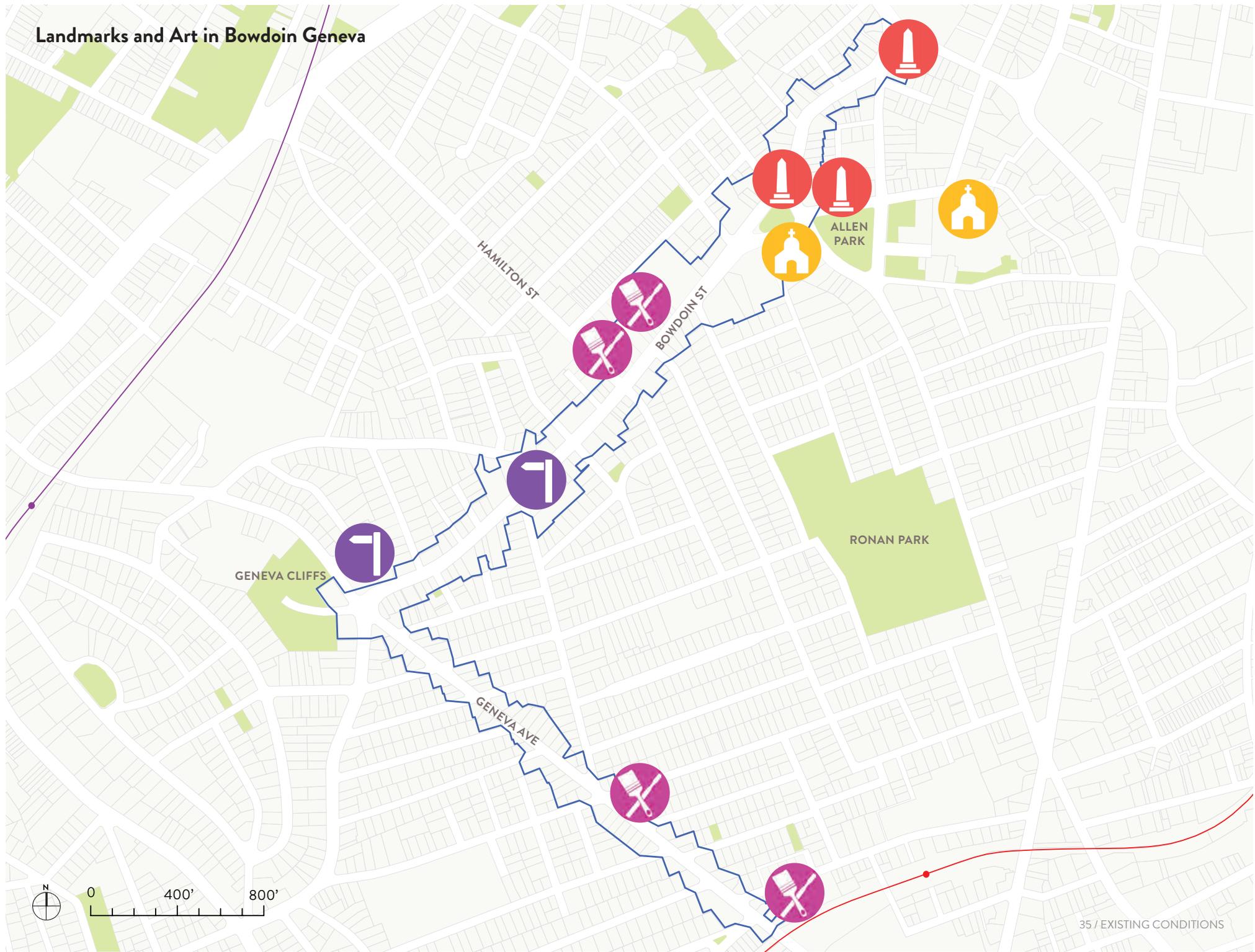
Churches



Signage



Landmarks and Art in Bowdoin Geneva



Streetscape + Public Realm: Open Space

Bowdoin Geneva is close to or adjacent to several open spaces and parks, but connecting residents and visitors to open spaces and ensuring that they are accessible to all will require ongoing work and cooperation between the city, residents, and other partners.

Accessible indoor and outdoor community spaces are important for creating an inviting and pleasant commercial district. Dorchester has a smaller amount of open space per capita compared to surrounding neighborhoods. It is also nearly built-out, limiting the potential to expand the open space network. Given the constrained nature of space in the neighborhood, maximizing the existing open space in the district is key. Bowdoin Geneva is fortunate to have several significant open spaces within and close to the commercial corridor.

Coppens Square and **Allen Park** are classic New England green spaces, directly abutting two large, landmark churches in the neighborhood: First Parish Dorchester and St. Peter's Parish. They mark the area as a major entrance to the neighborhood. Residents described how these parks are used as occasional recreation space by neighborhood residents and churchgoers, as well as passive spaces to wait for the bus or hang out. Neighborhood residents are currently undertaking a planning and fundraising process for the renovation of the historic fountain in Coppens Square, with plans to update the park design at the same time.

Geneva Cliffs is an urban wild located at the intersection of Bowdoin Street and Geneva Avenue. Geneva Cliffs is one of only two urban wilds in Dorchester. The urban wild designation is a special type of city-owned parkland that preserves ecological integrity by protecting the land from future development and dictating the types of recreation that can happen in the park. The designation limits the types of events that can happen in the Cliffs to passive recreation, which means that more active outdoor activities spill onto an adjacent open space that is owned by Eversource, a gas utility, but maintained by the Boston Parks Department.

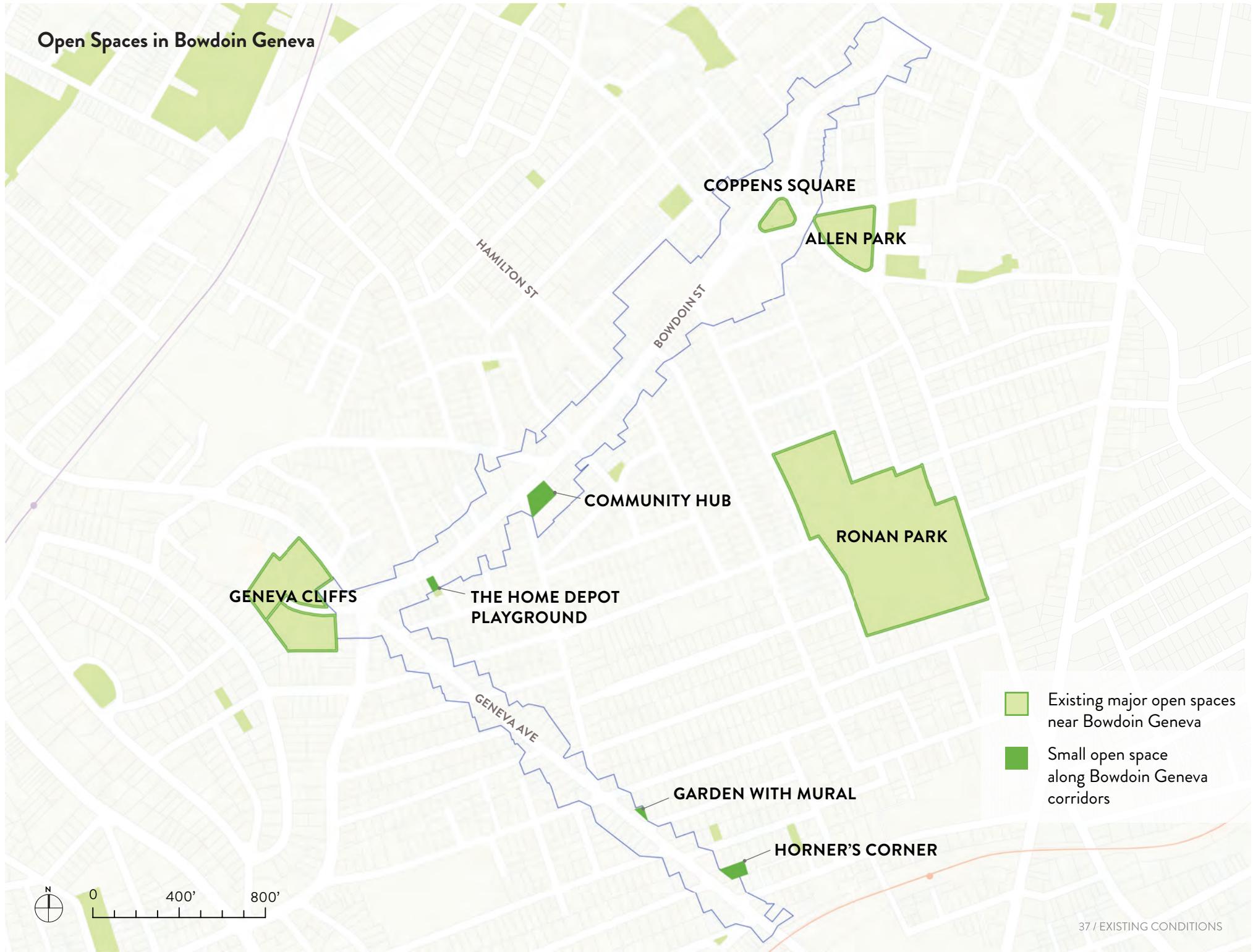
Ronan Park is a large neighborhood park located in the residential area between Geneva Avenue and Bowdoin Street. The park is home to a playground, basketball courts, a dog park, and baseball diamonds. A local group called Friends of Ronan Park hosts outdoor movie nights in the park and organizes neighborhood clean-ups. Because Ronan Park is situated away from the commercial district and uphill, it is not immediately obvious to visitors and residents how close it is to the commercial district. Young and older residents alike described a desire for additional sports fields, notably soccer fields, which are not currently accommodated in Ronan Park.

Small Green Spaces dot the commercial district, but many are underutilized. Horner's Corner, a small green space along Geneva Avenue, and an urban garden space at the intersection of Geneva Avenue and Leroy Street are not currently serving the community to their full potential. Issues of accessibility and maintenance are especially prevalent in these small spaces. Horner's Corner, for example, is currently locked to the public. These spaces are privately owned but could serve as important public spaces.



Above: Coppens Square; Below: Garden space at Geneva Avenue and Leroy Street

Open Spaces in Bowdoin Geneva



Streetscape + Public Realm: Open Space (continued)

Community members are proud of their parks but say that they are not always well marked, safe, maintained, or inclusive of all residents. Ronan Park and Geneva Cliffs used to be home to large community events that no longer occur due to lack of funding and safety concerns. Some of the smaller open spaces along the commercial district are locked and inaccessible to the public, while others lack clear signage that is visible from the commercial district to let residents and visitors know that the spaces are open to the public. These issues undoubtedly impact residents' access to and enjoyment of these important spaces.

Zooming out to the broader Dorchester open space network reveals that Bowdoin Geneva is situated between two larger open spaces in the city, Franklin Park and the Boston Harbor. The Go Boston 2030 plan proposes Columbia Road becoming a green corridor that links these two larger open spaces, fulfilling the last link of Frederick Law Olmsted's Emerald Necklace. Bowdoin Geneva is about a 30-minute walk from Franklin Park, and the Columbia Road green corridor will pass just to the north of the district. This presents an important opportunity for the community to advocate for its open spaces as additional connections to the broader open space network. This adjacency may provide opportunities for additional maintenance or restoration funding or may simply be a way to call the city's attention to these local open spaces.



Fencing



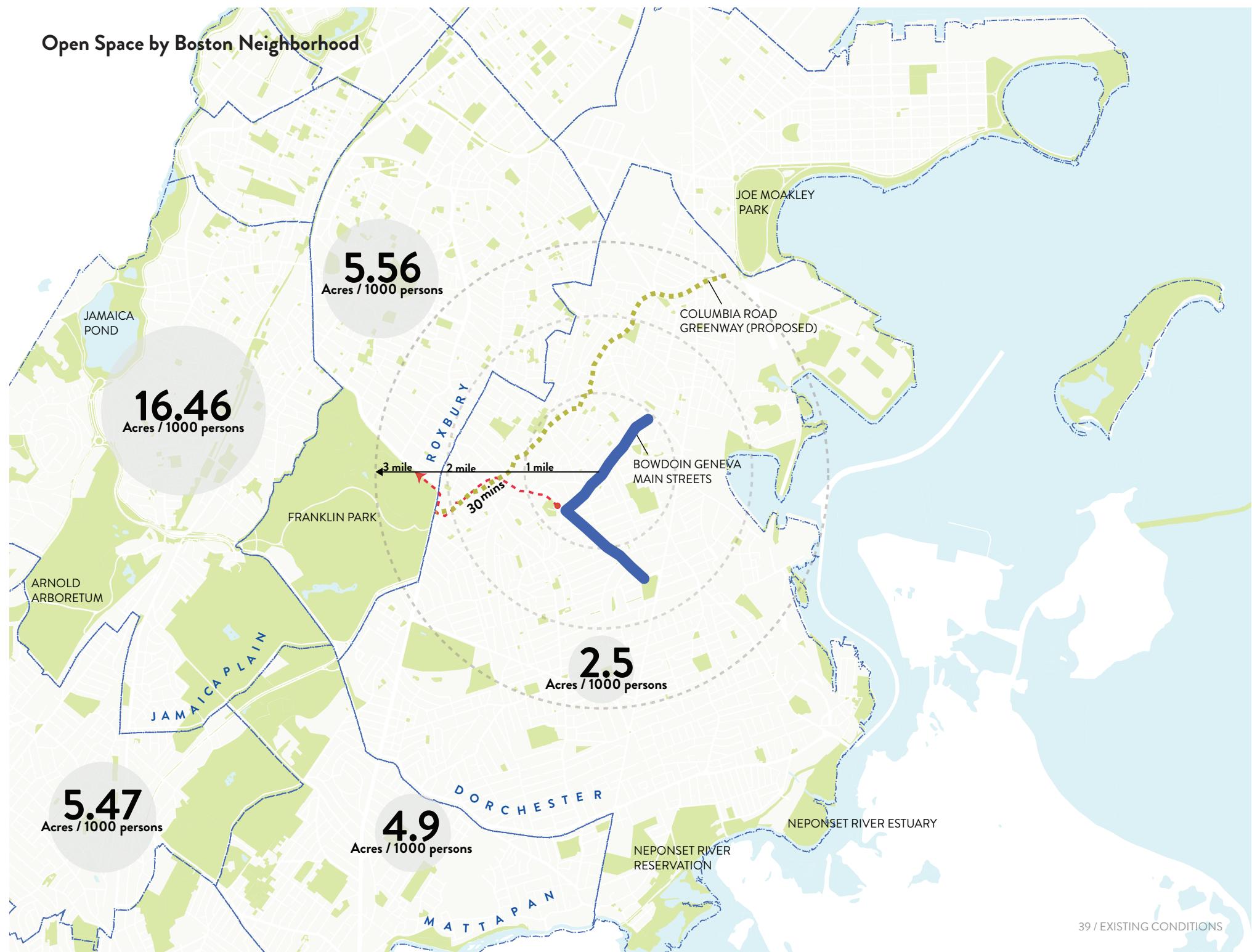
Maintenance



Unclear Signage



Open Space by Boston Neighborhood



Streetscape + Public Realm: Intersections and Entrances

Several key intersections act as entrances to Bowdoin Geneva and could be enhanced with signs and public art to welcome both visitors and community members to the commercial district.

In Bowdoin Geneva five key intersections act as major entrances to the district, but none are marked to promote the district and create a strong sense of place. Commercial district entrances can serve as gateways that welcome and orient people to the district. Such entrances are activated with signs, art, benches, and other amenities and impact the perception of a district and a community's connection to businesses.

Hancock and Bowdoin: The northern entrance to the district is located between Dorchester Avenue and Columbia Road, two major vehicular throughways. The physical design of the intersection of Hancock Street and Bowdoin Street makes it dangerous to pass through as a driver and as a pedestrian. Neighborhood residents have reported safety concerns and have noted that there are no crossing signals or street furniture for pedestrians to use in this area. There is also no strong visual indication that this area is part of a broader commercial district.

Coppens Square: Coppens Square serves as an entrance to the district because of its unique landmark fountain, open spaces, and surrounding civic and religious buildings. Coppens Square is also a major entrance for vehicles coming north on Adams Street from I-93. Pedestrian access and safety are one of the biggest challenges when entering the district through Coppens Square. There are very few crosswalks connecting the sidewalk network, particularly in the north-south direction. The square is missing some street furniture that once provided spaces for pedestrians to sit.

Bowdoin Street and Olney Street: Olney Street is a major path of travel for pedestrians and vehicles coming into the district from Columbia Road or the Four Corners/Geneva commuter rail stop. Similar to other entrances in the district, this intersection is not marked with an entrance sign or other visual cue, and the intersection is challenging for pedestrians to cross due to the lack of a crossing signal and heavy vehicle flow.

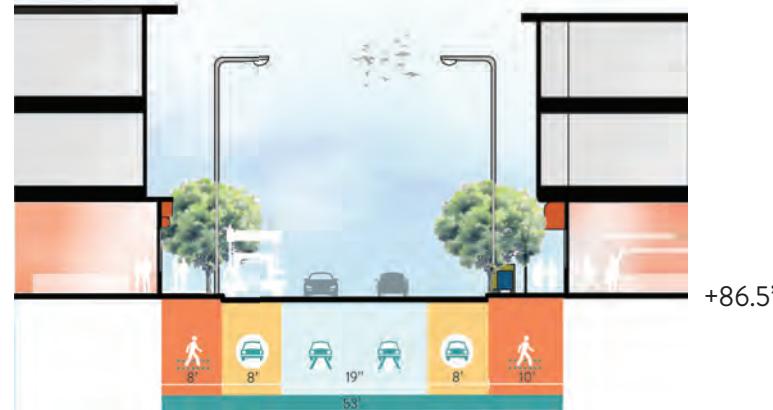
Street Section Cuts and Entrances



A - Intersection at Coppens Square



B - Intersection of Bowdoin & Olney

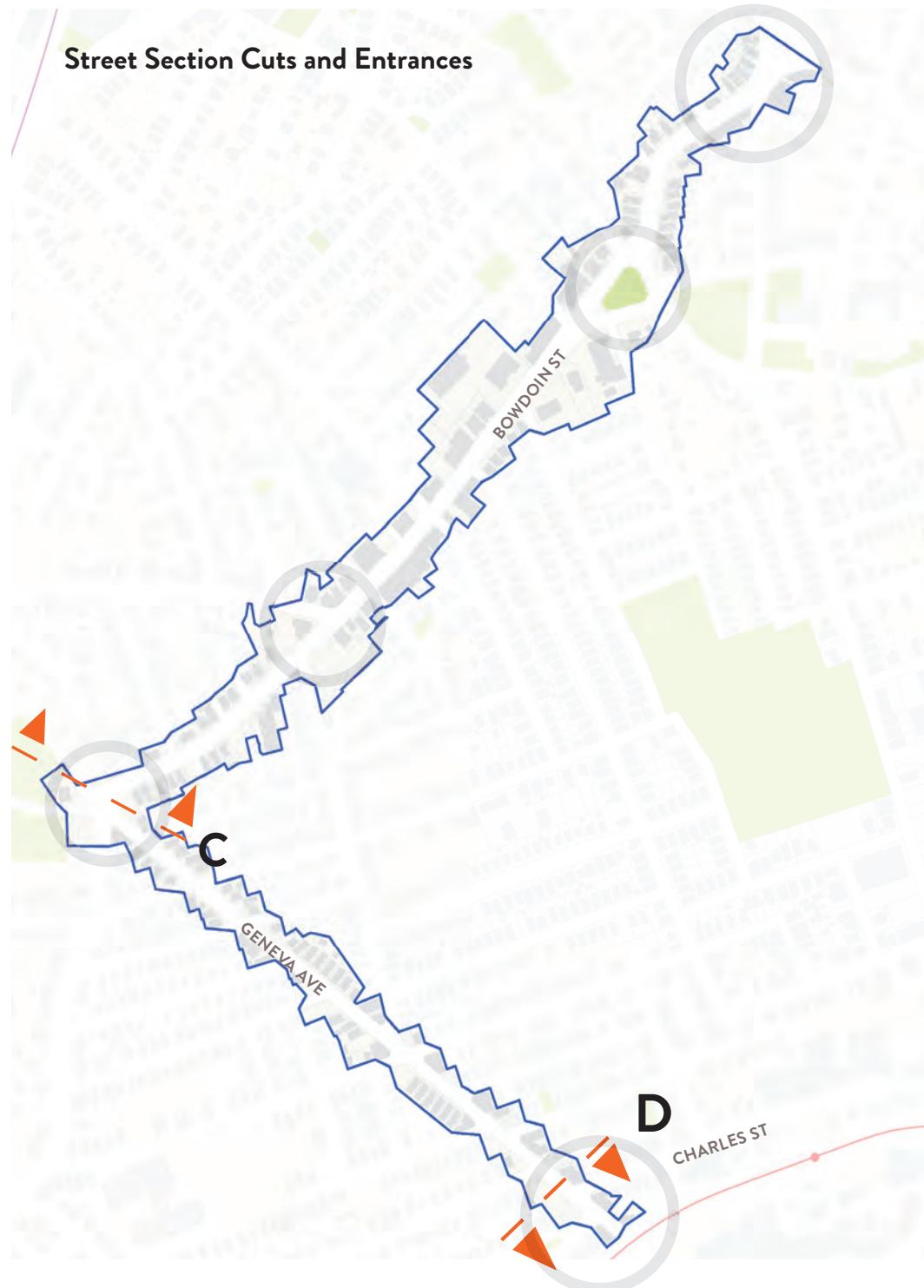


Geneva Avenue and Bowdoin Street: This important entrance also serves as the connection between the two main streets of the district, Geneva Avenue and Bowdoin Street. This intersection includes the Geneva Cliffs Urban Wild and a stone street marker at the corner Walgreen's parking lot. The largest visual cue at this intersection is a double billboard that visually dominates the intersection but does not announce the district itself. The intersection is currently home to some underused open space and vacant lots but does not contain any public space, benches, or areas for the general public to use.

An additional concern about this entrance to the district is the very wide crosswalk across the intersection itself. Crossing Bowdoin Street where it meets Geneva Avenue requires a pedestrian to make an 80-foot crossing in just 17 seconds, at a walking pace of 4.7 feet per second. This crossing pace far exceeds Massachusetts recommendations and guidelines.

Geneva Avenue at Fields Corner: Many visitors to the district undoubtedly enter under the MBTA Red Line train trestle, where Geneva Avenue passes next to the Fields Corner T stop. This overpass provides a natural entrance point to the district but is largely unmarked by an entrance sign or public art.

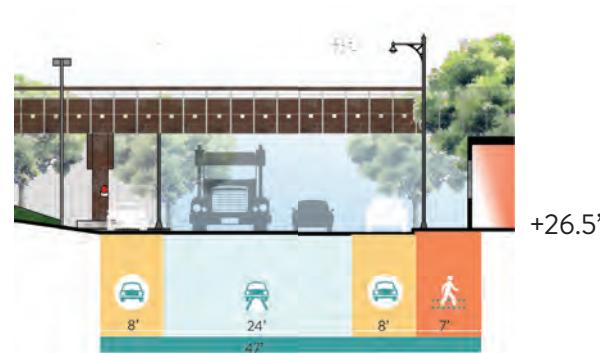
Street Section Cuts and Entrances



C - Intersection of Bowdoin & Geneva



D - Intersection of Geneva & Charles



Mobility

Easy movement to and from Bowdoin Geneva and easy travel within the district are key to the success of the commercial district.

This section explores and evaluates a wide array of transportation modes used by the residents, visitors, and businesses of Bowdoin Geneva. This includes:

- Walking
- Biking
- Public Transit (bus, subway, and commuter rail)
- Driving and Parking

These are all important modes of transportation for the district; however, these modes currently are not integrated safely and equitably throughout the district.

Walking is largely used for shorter trips or moving between shops within the district.

Biking is the least-used mode. Public transit and driving are used for longer-distance trips to and from the district. Periods of significant car congestion or speeding, during less congested times, negatively impact the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists.

Walking

Walking is the primary mode of transportation within the district, but hills and poorly designed intersections make walking challenging through parts of the district.

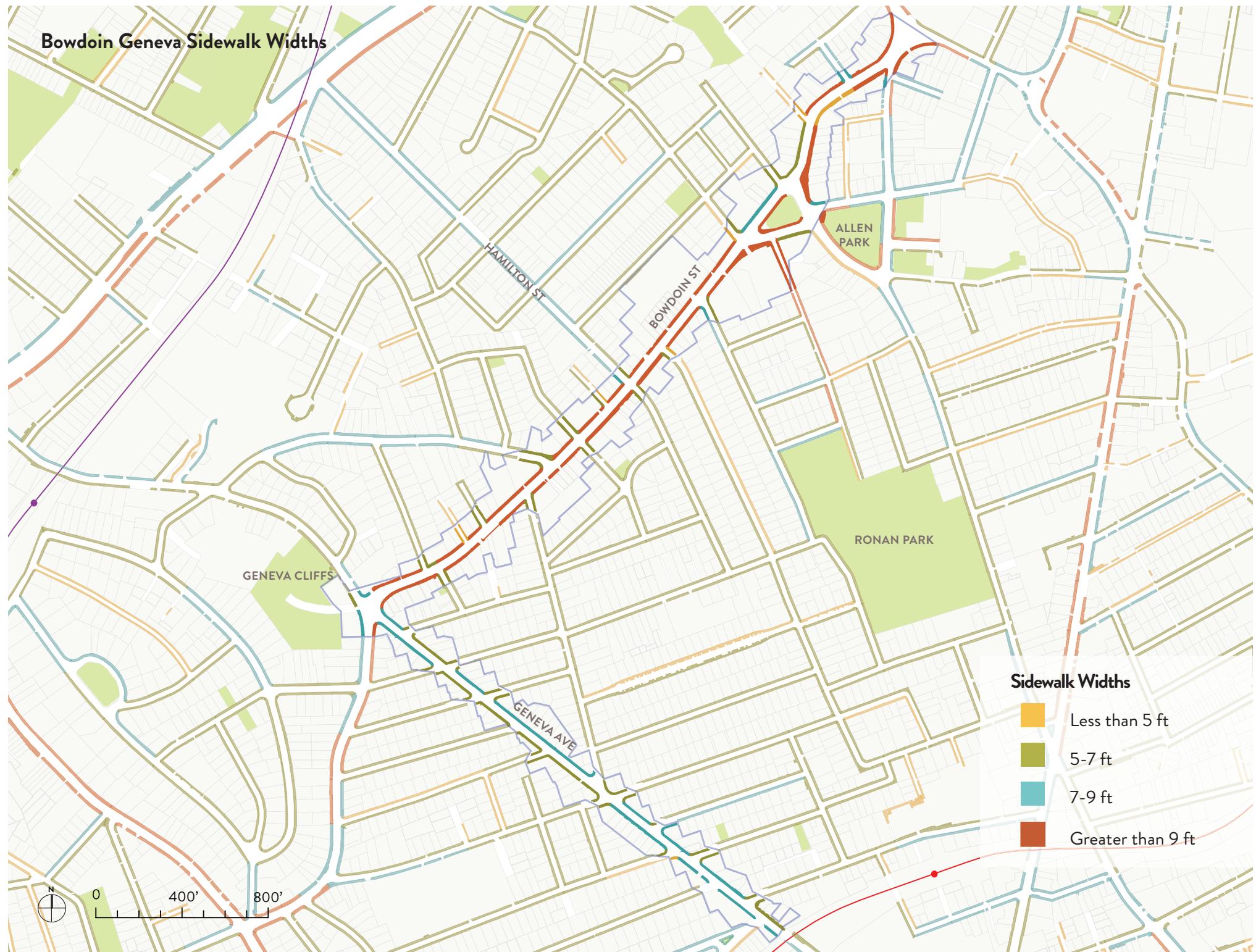
Bowdoin Geneva is a hilly district, which limits visibility and separates the commercial clusters. Bowdoin Street falls within a valley between four high hills. Ground elevation along Bowdoin Street varies from 46.5 ft. to 86.5 ft. above sea level, with the highest point close to the intersection of Bowdoin and Olney Streets. The rapid changes in elevation along Bowdoin Street raises walkability issues for residents with disabilities.

Sidewalk widths range from 7 to 15 feet on much of Bowdoin Street to 7 to 9 feet on Geneva Avenue. Crossing intersections is difficult for many pedestrians across the district. Some intersections are very wide and have insufficient pedestrian infrastructure, such as crosswalks or signals. The five district entrances identified in the previous section all have their own physical design challenges that detract from the pedestrian experience. In parts of the district with little congestion, cars speed, adding an additional layer of pedestrian safety issues.

Biking

Biking is the least-used mode of transportation in the district; there is limited bicycle infrastructure to support bicyclists in Bowdoin Geneva.

Bowdoin Geneva has less bicycle infrastructure than adjacent neighborhoods in Dorchester and is disconnected from the greater bicycle network in Boston. Bowdoin Street and Geneva Avenue are both fairly narrow streets, with only one driving lane in each direction flanked by on-street parking on either side. The narrow roads do not allow much room for the installation of dedicated bike lanes. On Geneva Avenue, there are shared bike lanes, or “sharrows” in both directions, but there are no bike lanes on Bowdoin Street. A Hubway bike-sharing station was recently installed on Bowdoin Street in front of St. Peter’s Parish.



113'

Topography in Bowdoin Geneva (feet above sea level)

63.5'

HAMILTON ST

BOWDOIN ST

45.3'

ALLEN PARK

91.9'

113'

120.1'

86.5'

136'

RONAN PARK

GENEVA CLIFFS

156.5'

GENEVA AVE

Contour Gradation



10'

100'

150'

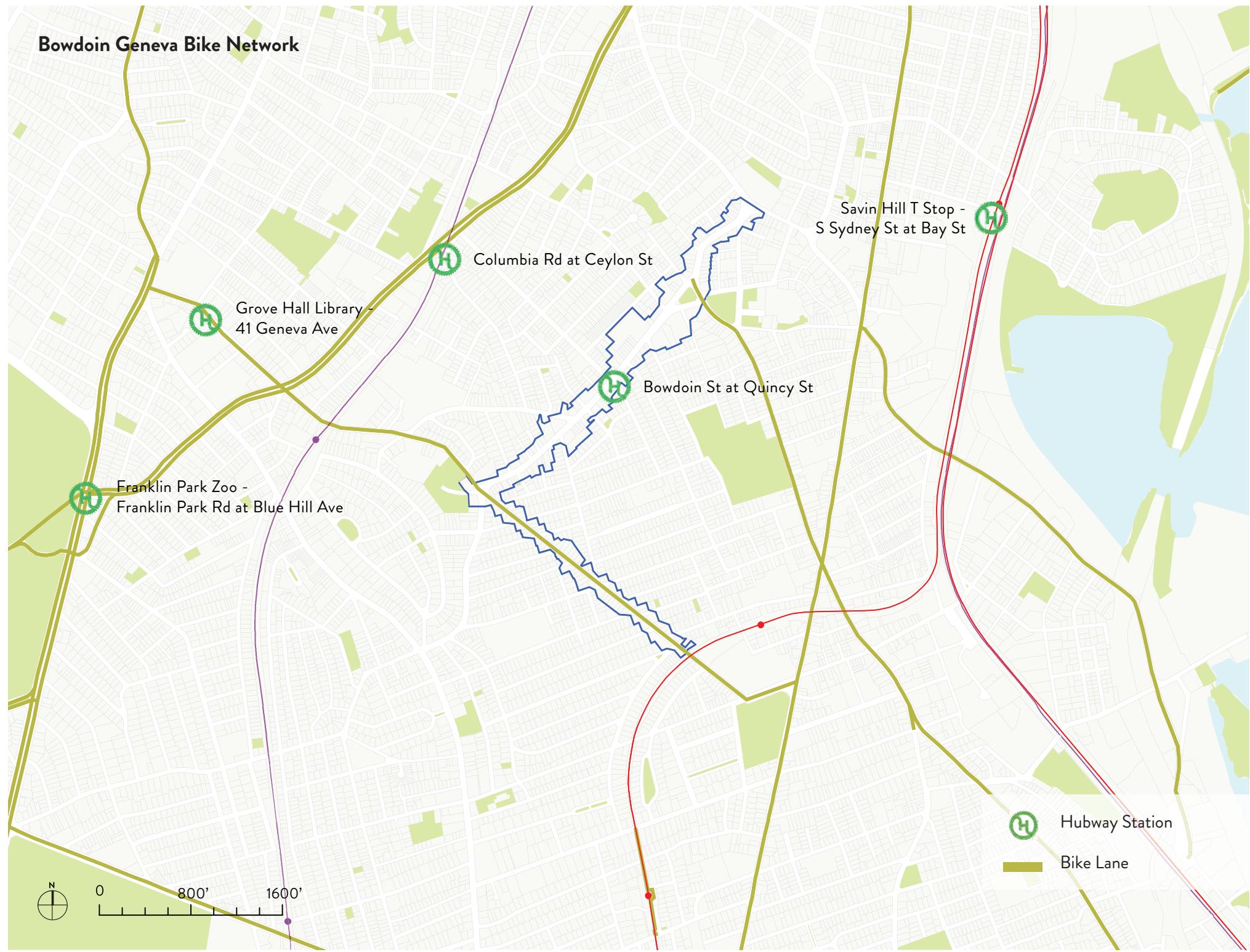


0

400'

800'

Bowdoin Geneva Bike Network



Public Transit

The district is accessible by multiple forms of public transit. A subway line and commuter rail line are within walking distance of most of the district, and multiple bus lines run down Geneva Avenue and Bowdoin Street. However, service can be inconsistent.

The district is served by several Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) public transit options. Most bus routes are scheduled to run through the district once every 15 minutes during rush hour but less frequently during off-peak hours and weekends. However, service quality can be inconsistent as the schedule and running times are unreliable. Buses sometimes arrive at stops in tandem with no spacing, and congestion along the bus routes can put the buses behind schedule. Our analysis shows, and residents repeatedly confirmed, that the bus stops throughout the district lack any street furniture, including bus shelters, benches, or trash bins.

Subway service through the MBTA Red Line to Ashmont is somewhat frequent, with train headways of less than 10 minutes during rush hour and less than 16 minutes during off-peak hours and weekends. The Fields Corner T stop is adjacent to the district's southern end, at the intersection of Geneva Avenue and Charles Street, and the Savin Hill T stop is a 15-minute walk from the northern end of the district. Outside the district further west on Geneva Avenue is the Four Corners/Geneva stop on the Fairmount commuter rail line, which charges fares equivalent to the subway. Service on the Fairmount Line, however, is every 45 minutes to an hour. The MBTA has plans to increase service along the Fairmount Line through the use of diesel motorized units (DMUs) in the near future, but no firm timeline has been proposed for increased service at the time of writing.



Driving and Parking

Visitors to the district and business owners report access to and the location of parking as a problem.

Both Bowdoin Street and Geneva Avenue are major vehicular thoroughfares, and adjacent streets, such as Quincy Street, also serve large amounts of vehicular traffic. Business owner surveys and stakeholder interviews highlighted significant congestion and speeding as issues with vehicular mobility in the district. These issues are related, as drivers may speed at times when there are brief openings in congestion, which also affects pedestrian movement and safety.

Business owners ranked parking availability as one of their top concerns. Most of the on-street parking in the district is unregulated, without parking meters or time limits. Without time limits on parking, drivers are able to park on the street for extended periods of time. This limits the parking turnover upon which local businesses depend. The time limits that do exist for some parking spots do not seem to be enforced, or are enforced inconsistently, leading to large and unexpected tickets for customers and visitors. Parking signage is inconsistent and poorly maintained, which may contribute to the poor management of parking.

As a result of insufficient access to parking spots and unenforced regulations, drivers frequently park cars and trucks in areas not marked for parking, including at bus stops. This causes congestion as buses are forced to allow passengers to embark and disembark in the middle of driving lanes.

Commercial deliveries are also a source of congestion in the district, particularly in Central Bowdoin. Here, on-street parking is heavily utilized and commercial spaces do not have loading docks or rear loading zones. This forces delivery trucks to double park and occupy driving lanes, reducing traffic along Bowdoin to one-way movement for periods of time. Commercial loading contributes to the congestion issue and causes safety issues for drivers and pedestrians alike.



Parking signage around Bowdoin Geneva

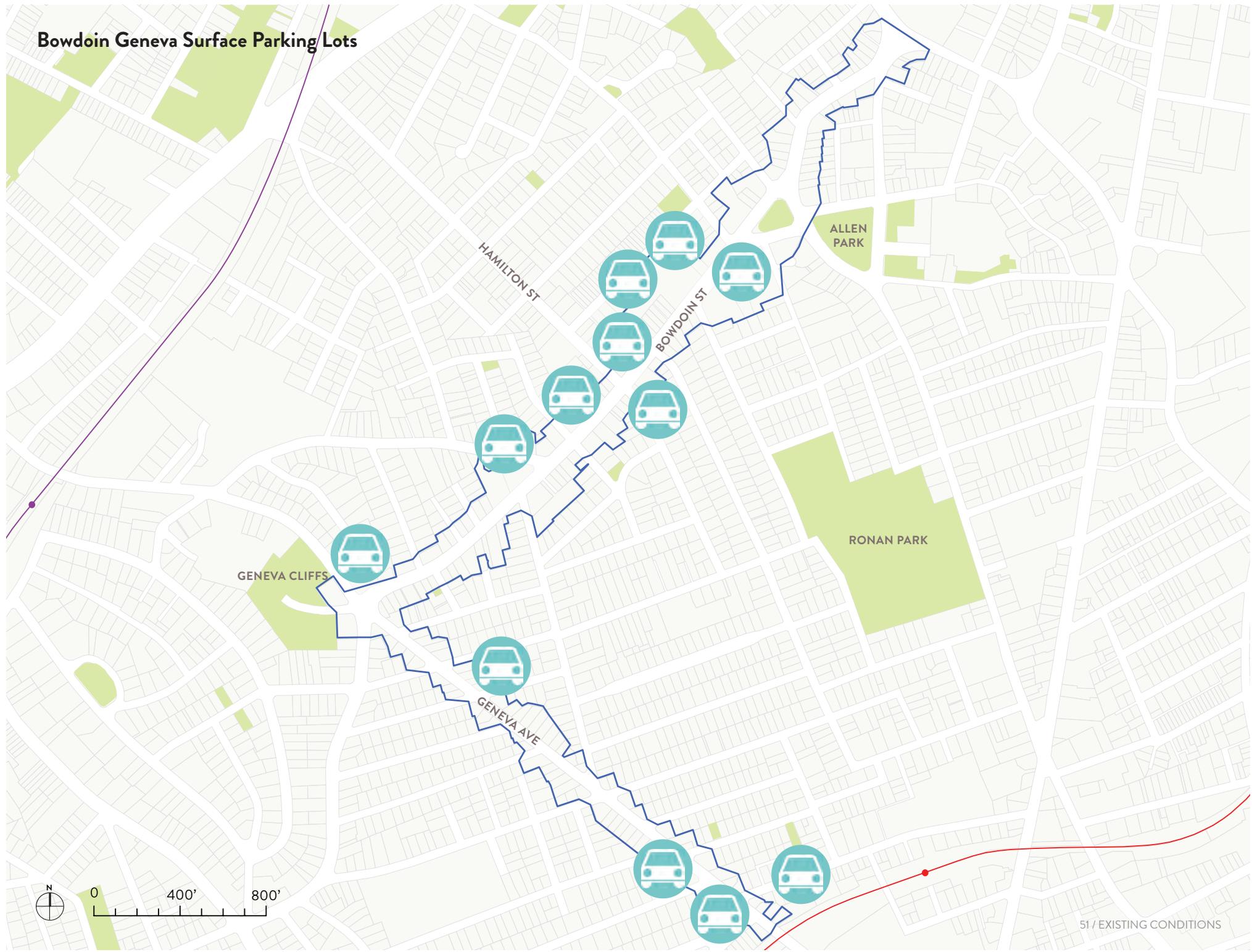
Surface Parking Lots



On-street Parking



Bowdoin Geneva Surface Parking Lots



C. ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Business Inventory Analysis

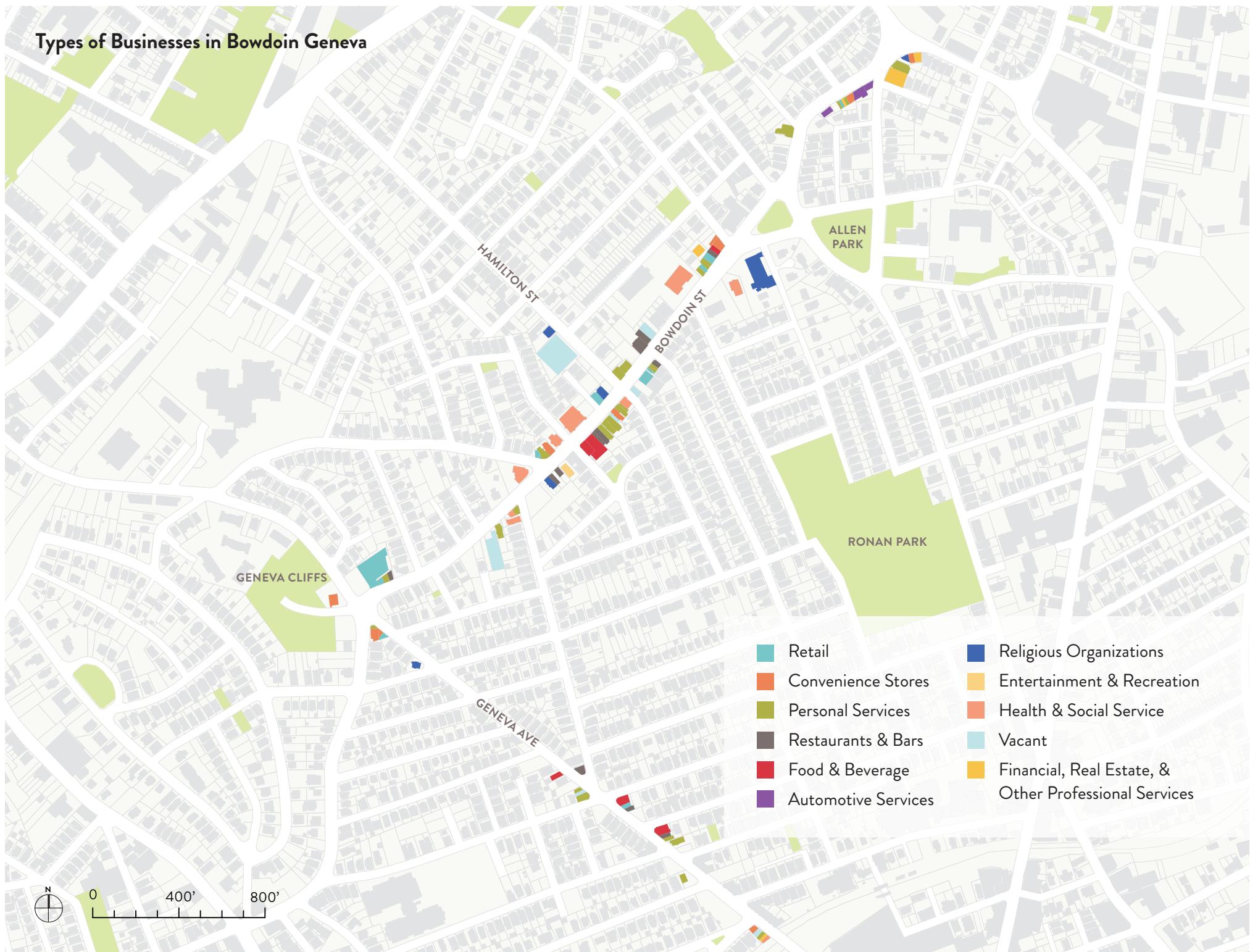
Bowdoin Geneva has 103 commercial spaces with roughly 230,000 square feet generating approximately \$76 million in revenue each year.

The Bowdoin Geneva commercial district generates significant commercial activity every year, supporting the businesses and non-profit institutions in the neighborhood. There are 103 commercial storefronts throughout the district with an average of 1,250 square feet. Important sectors include health and social services and personal services, such as salons, barber shops, and laundromats. The total revenue of the commercial organizations is approximately \$76 million per year, with the health and social services accounting for half of that revenue. These organizations, such as the Bowdoin Street Health Center, the Family Nurturing Center, St. Peter's Teen Center, and College Bound, are not traditional commercial businesses, but they are a significant source of economic activity and occupy the largest amount of space in the district. There are relatively few vacancies along the Bowdoin Geneva corridor and existing vacancies are small storefronts.

While most of the health and social services are concentrated along the central part of Bowdoin Street, most other types of businesses are evenly dispersed among the different commercial clusters. There is a significant amount of personal services such as salons, barber shops, and laundromats in Bowdoin Geneva (28 of the 103 businesses in the area). There is also a sizeable retail sector (12 businesses), but it is not very diverse; it consists primarily of small electronics stores and clothes retailers and does not have other forms of retail such as furniture, shoes, and jewelers. Commercial businesses missing from the district include certain types of professional services, such as real estate agents, banks, and tax services, and cultural or entertainment uses such as movie theaters and dance studios. The lack of business diversity and absence of notable business types is partially attributable to the Local Convenience zoning designation. In particular, this zoning places restrictions on entertainment and cultural uses. See Appendix B for the full business inventory conducted for this analysis.

Business Type	Number of Businesses	Total Square Footage
Personal Services	28	27,815
Retail	12	29,595
Restaurants & Bars	11	15,354
Financial, Real Estate, and Professional Services	8	9,539
Health & Social Services	8	56,934
Religious Organizations	8	33,502
Vacant	8	6,533
Vacant, Under Development	4	29,050
Food & Beverage	6	9,850
Convenience Stores	7	8,134
Automotive Services	2	2,000
Entertainment & Recreation	1	1,500
Total	103	229,806

Types of Businesses in Bowdoin Geneva



Bowdoin Geneva in the Context of Dorchester's Commercial Districts

The Bowdoin Geneva commercial district is located in the center of several commercial districts in Dorchester with the Main Streets designation. The differences and similarities between the amount, proportion, and spatial distribution of commercial and mixed-use buildings in each Main Street district in Dorchester are important. They can reveal not only what is unique about Bowdoin Geneva, but also what its biggest competitors are, and what challenges the district will face in attracting and retaining new business types.

Dorchester has many commercial districts of which Bowdoin Geneva is just one. Fields Corner Main Street is adjacent to Bowdoin Geneva's southern end and Upham's Corner Main Street is within walking distance of its northern end. Dorchester Avenue, parts of which are not captured in any Main Streets organization, also serves as a busy commercial hub for residents throughout Dorchester. The close proximity of Fields Corner, Upham's Corner and Dorchester Avenue undoubtedly impact Bowdoin Geneva's ability to attract locals to its commercial area.

Given the Bowdoin Geneva commercial district's location in the middle of several other commercial districts, a comparison of the business types in the different districts can identify comparative advantages and potential for competition. In comparison to other commercial districts, Bowdoin Geneva has a very limited supply of commercial and mixed-use space with only 195,000 square feet across the entire district. Nearby Upham's Corner and Fields Corner Main Streets have more than double this amount.

Bowdoin Geneva also has a smaller number of commercial spaces compared to these other two Main Street districts, and, in comparison, lacks particular types of businesses. Bowdoin Geneva lacks banks and has fewer restaurants and professional services compared to these other districts. Bowdoin Geneva also lacks gyms or other fitness-related businesses.

The limited space, combined with the relatively small size of storefronts, impacts the types of businesses that are able to locate and thrive in Bowdoin Geneva. However, it is worth noting that across all the Main Streets districts in Dorchester, there are very few businesses providing entertainment opportunities for the community. This is a potential opportunity to develop in the business mix.

There are relatively few vacant storefronts in Bowdoin Geneva (six at the time of writing), and the spaces that are vacant are fairly small, averaging about 1,000 square feet. There are, however, a few large parcels under development in the district:

- **181 Bowdoin Street** is under construction and will serve as a building materials warehouse with a new commercial storefront.

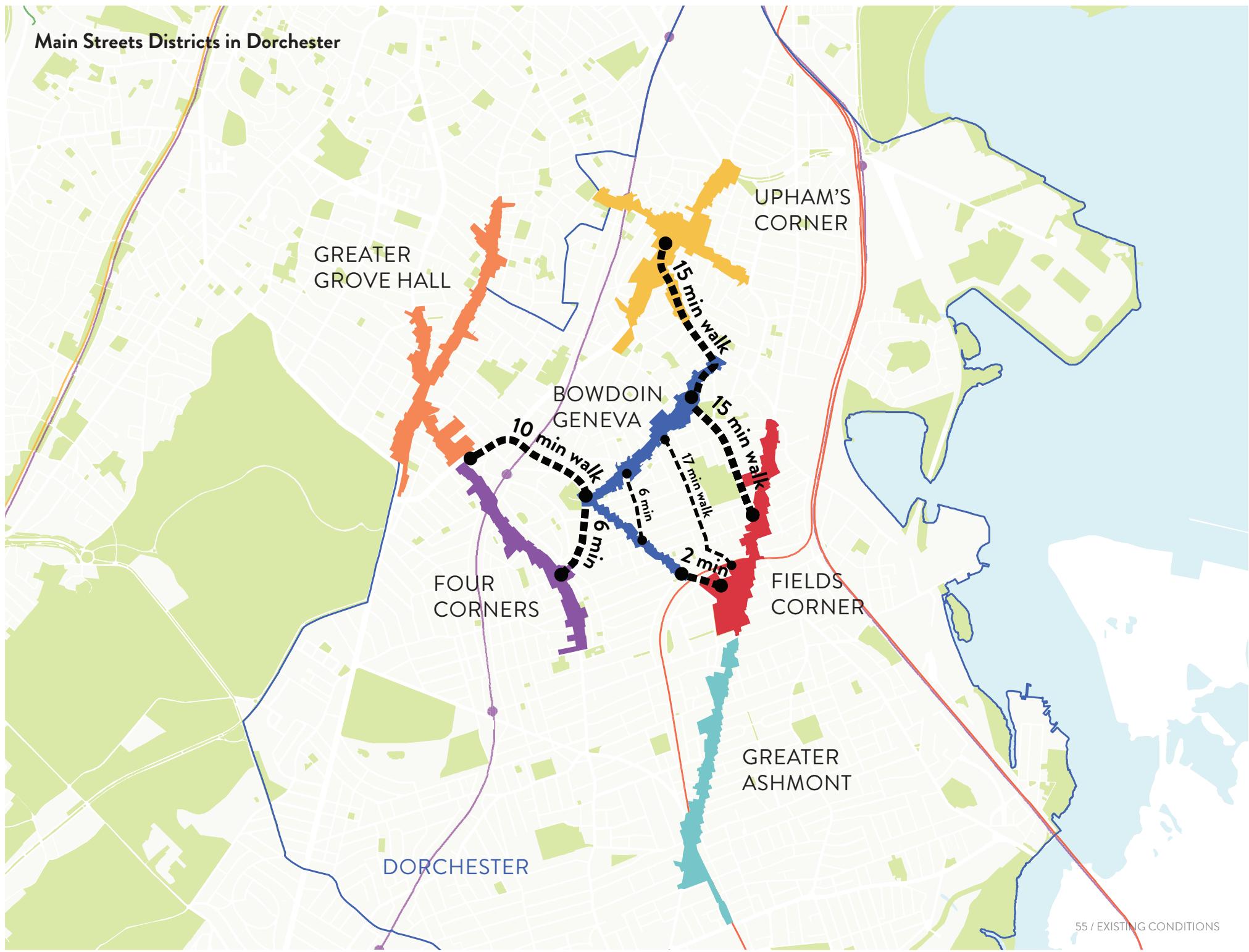
- **123 Hamilton Street** will be developed into 52 studio units for residents of Pine Street Inn.
- **191-195 Bowdoin Street** is proposed to be developed into 41 affordable apartments and over 6,000 square feet of commercial space by the local community development corporation VietAID. As of this writing, it is expected that Dorchester Community Food Co-op, a local grocery store, will be the tenant for the commercial space in the building.
- **Dot Block** is the proposed development of approximately 362 residential units and 37,000 square feet of new commercial space just north of the district, at the intersection of Hancock Street and Dorchester Avenue.

Land Use Comparison of Select Dorchester Main Streets

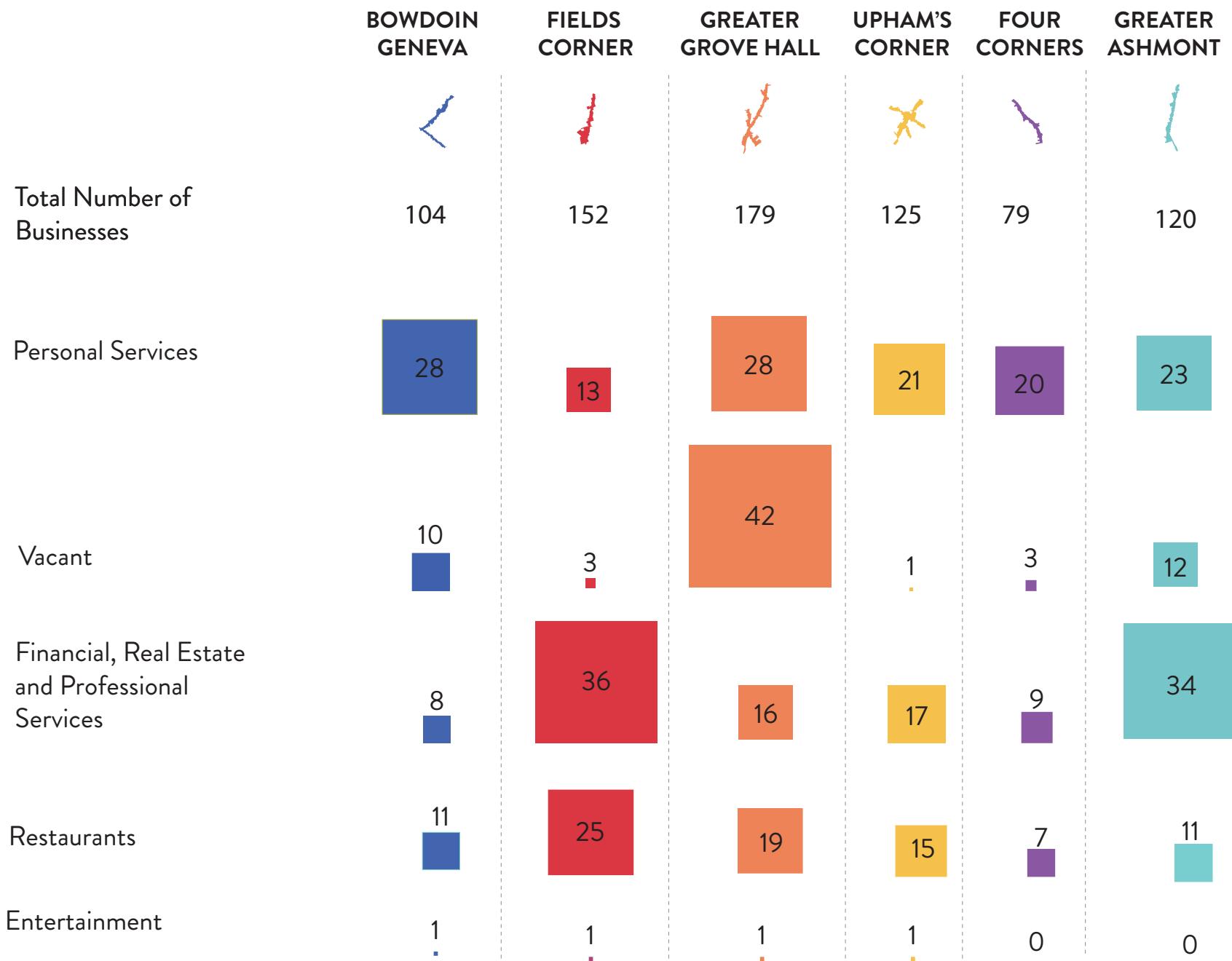
- Commercial
- Mixed-use
- Residential
- Open Space
- Industrial
- Transportation



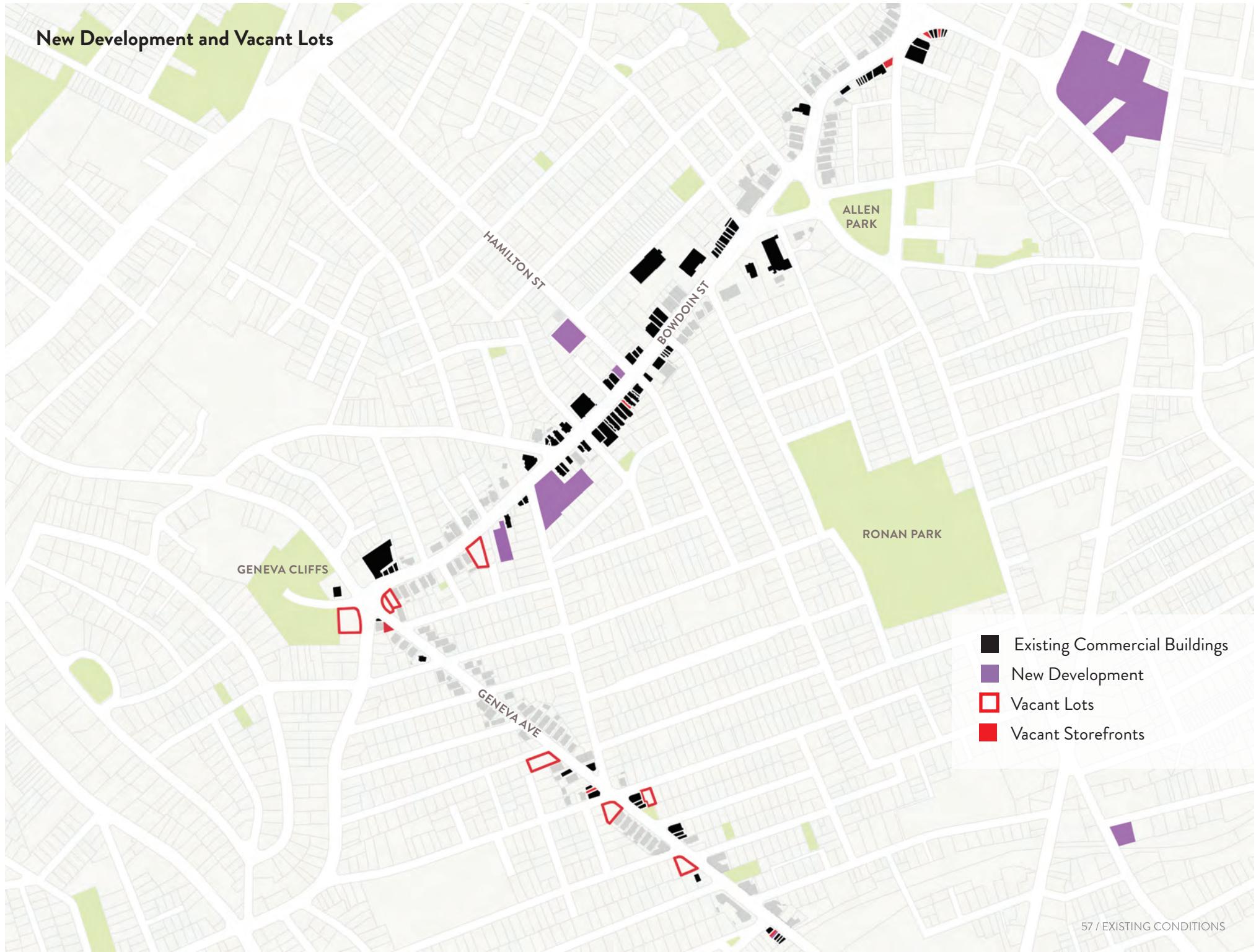
Main Streets Districts in Dorchester



Dorchester Main Streets Districts Business Comparison



New Development and Vacant Lots



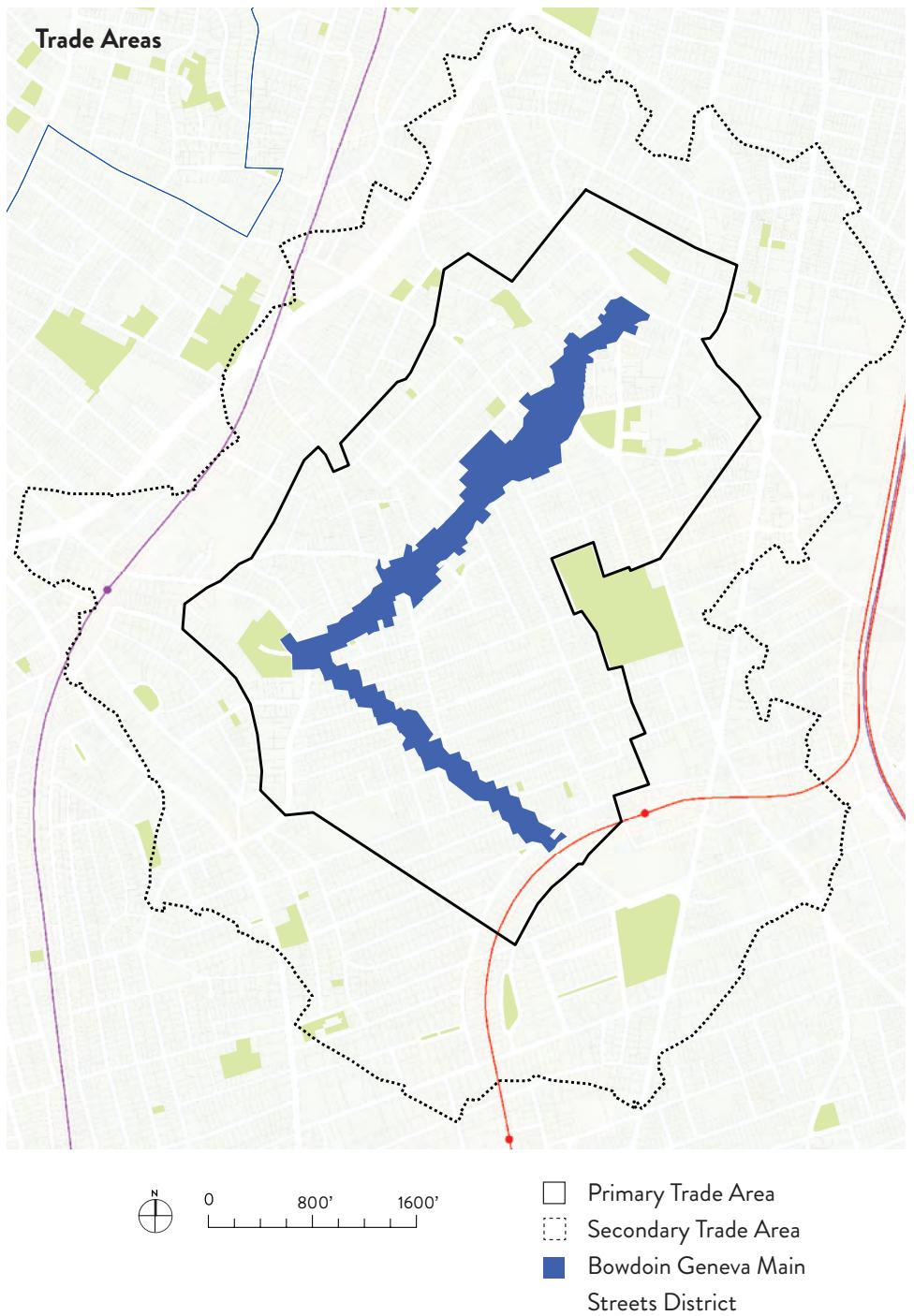
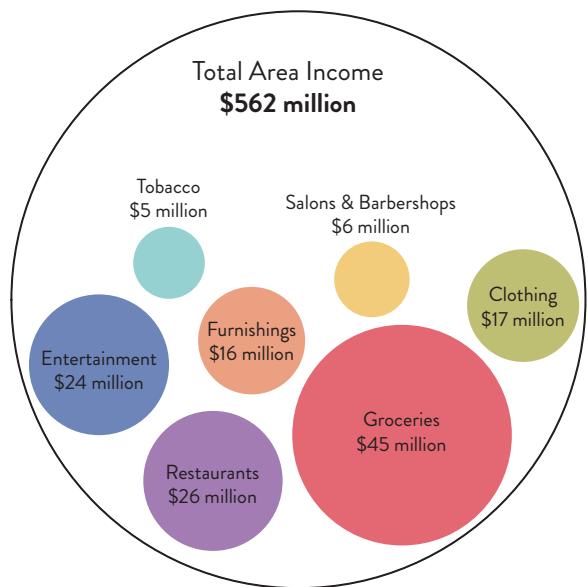
Neighborhood Customers

While some of the district's businesses have a large customer base that come from surrounding areas of Boston, the majority of Bowdoin Geneva business owners report that their customers live within three to ten blocks of the commercial district.

According to local business owners, the majority of customers in Bowdoin Geneva live within three to ten blocks of the commercial district, which makes this a neighborhood-based commercial district. Some businesses, such as barber shops and Restaurante Cesaria, have a larger regional pull as customers travel from more distant areas. Given that most businesses have a local neighborhood customer base, we defined the primary trade area, the geographic area where most of the regular customers come from, as a four block radius around the district. The secondary trade area, which indicates semi-regular customers, is a half-mile walking distance from the district. This trade area is relatively small compared to many commercial districts given the local nature of Bowdoin Geneva's businesses and its location in between other competing commercial areas.

The 9,264 households living in the secondary trade area have a median annual household income of \$46,146. About 44 percent of these households have children. The total area income for all residents living in the secondary trade area for one year is \$562 million. Collectively, these residents spend approximately \$45 million on groceries, \$26 million on restaurants, and \$24 million on entertainment each year.

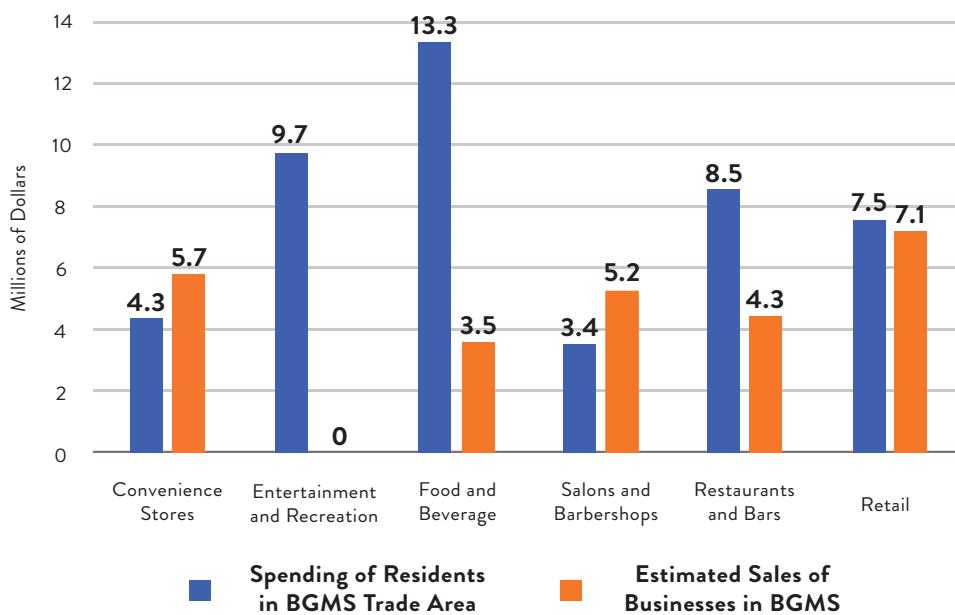
Total Area Income & Spending (Annual)



By comparing the money being spent by residents living in the Bowdoin Geneva trade area and sales made by businesses in the commercial district, we can identify gaps in the market where money is being spent at certain types of businesses outside the district. These sales gaps mark opportunities for new businesses to capture a greater amount of the residents' spending power in the local commercial district.

There are two particularly large sales gaps in Bowdoin Geneva that present opportunities to capture more spending in the district: restaurants and bars (\$4.2 million gap) and entertainment (\$9.7 million gap). Given that the residents already have spending power in these areas, new local businesses in Bowdoin Geneva in these categories would keep more money within the neighborhood. While there is also a sales gap for food and beverage (\$9.8 million), we expect that much of that money is spent at the nearby America's Food Basket in Fields Corner, so there may not be enough market power for another major supermarket in this district. As such, food and beverage does not present an opportunity for expansion despite the sales gap. Salons and barbershops show a significant overage (\$1.8 million) indicating that these businesses likely draw customers from other areas of the city.

Spending Analysis



Business Survey

A survey of Bowdoin Geneva's business owners revealed important information regarding business owners' needs and aspirations for their businesses and feelings and attitudes about the commercial district as a whole.

A critical component of a well-informed commercial district plan is a sophisticated understanding of the strengths, needs, and aspirations of current businesses and business owners. The success of businesses and the future of the Bowdoin Geneva commercial district as a whole are intimately intertwined. Businesses are not only locations for the exchange of goods and services; they are also key community stakeholders. To better understand them, we conducted a survey of the district's business owners.

Our team developed a survey instrument in English and Spanish based on questions used in previous commercial district surveys. During a two-week period in March, we partnered with youth Peer Leaders from the Teen Center at St. Peter's to conduct multiple visits to every business in the district. This collaboration gleaned 33 in-person surveys out of a total of 77 eligible businesses for a response rate of over 40 percent. See Appendix A and C for detailed survey results, English and Spanish copies of the survey, flyers given to business owners on the purpose of the survey, and a more detailed survey methodology.

Collaborating with St. Peter's Teen Center

The process of developing this plan began at St. Peter's Teen Center, whose executive director, Paulo Debarros, hosted us on our initial visit to Bowdoin Geneva in January 2017. The value and importance of our continued collaboration with an organization empowering youth in the community became quickly apparent. Not only was the organization a natural host for workshopping ideas with the community; the center's youth Peer Leaders also actively engaged with us as partners.

In conducting the business survey, language barriers, particularly with Cape Verdean Creole, stood in the way of reaching all the business owners in the neighborhood. In stepped the Peer Leaders, who we trained to conduct the survey with business owners and explain its purpose. Following the collection of the survey results, they received further training in how to interpret the information and how to use spreadsheet software to analyze the raw data. Importantly, the knowledge flowed both ways. While in many planning processes youth voices are drowned out or simply unheard, the Peer Leaders and many other youth from the Teen Center joined our meetings and workshops, weighing in on the recommendations and articulating their experience in the neighborhood.

Business Owners and Their Customers

A little under half (45 percent) of business owners identified as Latino; among those, the vast majority (85 percent) were Dominican. Of the business owners who did not identify as Latino, 60 percent were Black or African American, and 50 percent of those were Cape Verdean. Despite the concentration of Latino food-related businesses on Geneva Avenue, only half of Latino business owners owned a business on Geneva Avenue. About 55 percent of business owners live in Dorchester, but only 29 percent say that they “live in the neighborhood” surrounding their business.



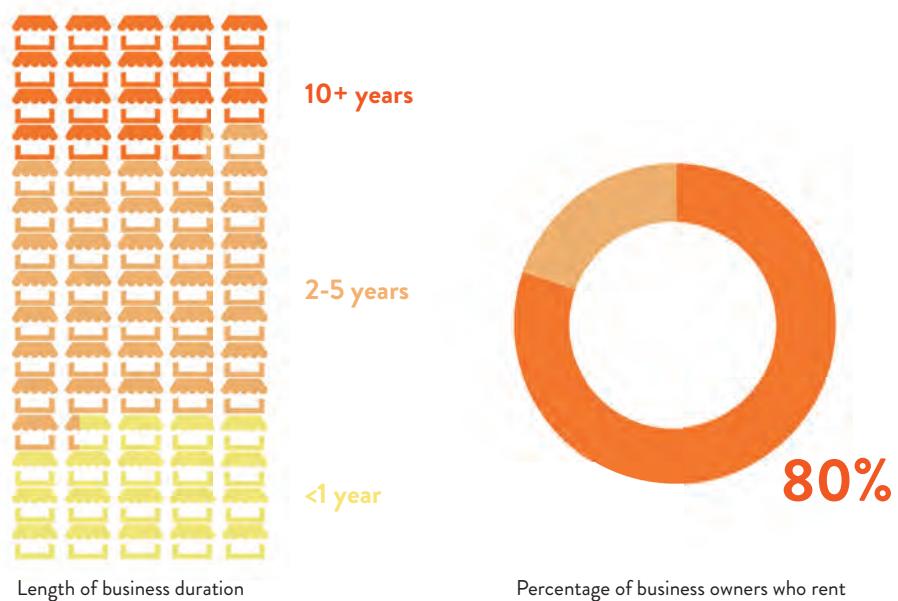
Business owners at the community workshop, May 2017

Business Stability and Activity

Surveyed business owners reported a near universal desire to stay and expand in the neighborhood and indicated the types of assistance they need to realize their goals.

The survey indicated a mix of both long-time and newly opened businesses. About half had established their business within the last 5 years, and 22 percent were established within the last year. However, about 25 percent of business have been in the neighborhood for 10 or more years, with a few having operated for more than 20 years.

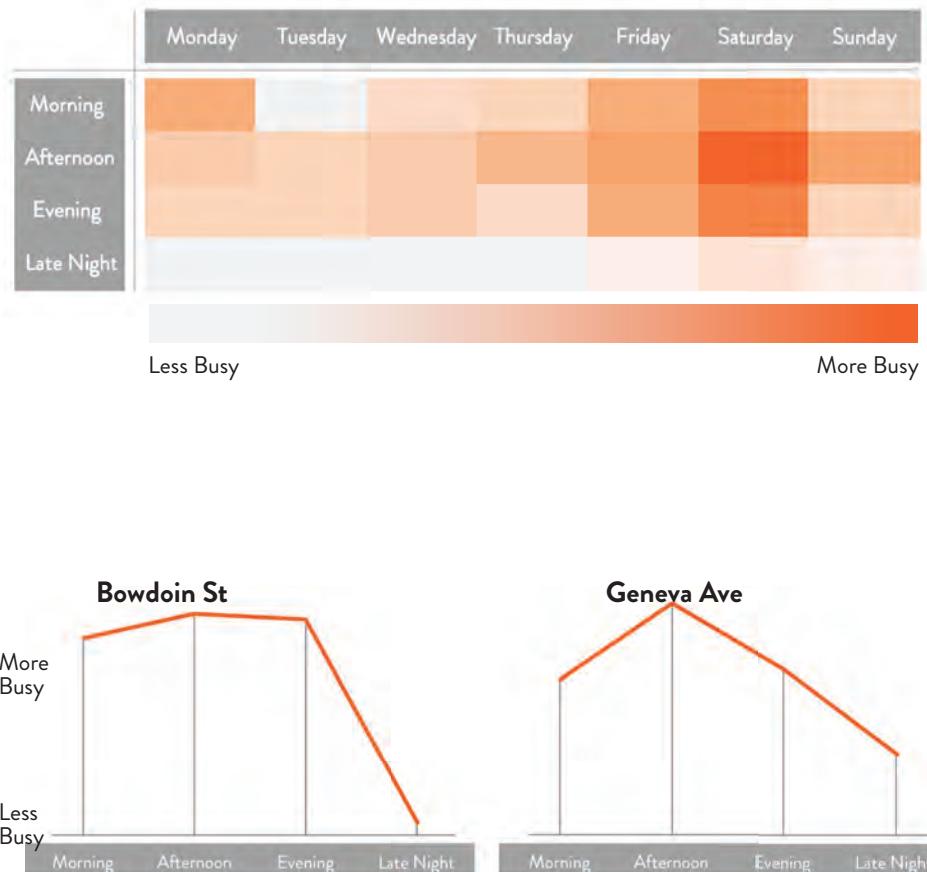
About 80 percent of business owners rent their space, and the remaining 20 percent own. All renters have formal leases. About two-thirds (67 percent) of businesses were in leases of 4 or more years, and another 20 percent were in leases between 1-3 years. Only one business was in a month-to-month lease. About 63 percent of businesses plan to renew their lease when it expires, and the majority who do not plan to renew instead intend to buy their space, indicating an overall desire among businesses to stay in the neighborhood. The most commonly cited reason business owners chose to locate in the district was the cost and availability of space.



Business owners reported an overall increased level of sales activity or stability in sales in recent years. Almost half of business owners (49 percent) reported increased overall sales in the past three years and another 31 percent reported a stability in sales (“stayed the same”). About 10 percent reported decreased sales and another 10 percent were unsure.

There are clear patterns across times of day and the week when businesses have the most activity. There is very little activity after 8pm across the district. There is a steep drop in business on Bowdoin Street after 5pm. Geneva Avenue stays active into the early evening, then falls off after 8pm. The lack of activity at 8pm likely reflects a variety of interrelated factors, including store hours, perceived night-time safety, and the types of businesses in the commercial district.

Business Activity



Business Owner Aspirations, Activities, and Technical Assistance Desires

Most surveyed business owners are interested in expanding their business. Many business owners currently rely on informal sources for business advice but are interested in technical assistance to achieve their goals.

Concurrent with the general desire to stay in the neighborhood, owners also want to expand and grow their businesses. Many owners reported wanting to open new stores, expand their current space, hire more employees, and offer more products. There was less consistency in the barriers to reaching their goals businesses identified but answers included access to credit and funding, neighborhood safety, parking availability, and other constraints in expanding the customer base.

The survey indicated that business owners use informal sources of information for advice and assistance. The vast majority of businesses rely on personal networks like family or friends or self-taught sources like the internet for advice and assistance. Those businesses that receive formal support tend to be larger chain stores (e.g., Walgreen's) that have internal corporate systems for support. The most common marketing tool for businesses is social media (55 percent) followed by signage or flyers (29 percent). About a quarter of owners (23 percent) do not market their business.

The most common types of assistance businesses owners identified as needed in order to grow are business planning (11 total businesses identified as a priority), building/façade renovation (10), interior design (8), marketing (6), and window displays (6). Although none of the businesses reported engaging in joint marketing, special events, or promotions with other businesses, owners reported a strong interest in participating in such collaborations to encourage more people to visit the district. Over 50 percent of owners reported being friends or acquaintances with other business owners, but only 3 businesses reported sharing advice with other owners.

Owners identified several district-wide improvements they would like to see. The most common were improved safety and more police, improved amount and location of parking, and improved cleanliness of public spaces.



Pollo Centro Grand Opening

D. TOWARD AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

Bringing Economic and Physical Analysis Together

While choosing to consider the economic and physical aspects of Bowdoin Geneva separately made sense from an analysis process standpoint, this distinction is rarely observed in real life. The lived experience of any neighborhood or commercial district always includes aspects of each that are not easily untangled. Accordingly, moving toward recommendations for a district requires that these two forms of analysis be melded into something cohesive and more in line with how commercial districts operate in practice.

To effectively summarize the findings from these two types of analysis into a form that could be readily operationalized in crafting recommendations, the team considered a basic question: **What makes a commercial district work well?**

We set out to craft a few basic answers that are broadly applicable while also staying true to the particular experience of Bowdoin Geneva. Drawing from academic literature on commercial districts as well as our many forms of engagement with the community and district stakeholders, the team settled on the following three criteria for a successful commercial district.

A commercial district should:

- (a) **Provide community gathering spaces where people can come together;**
- (b) **Be easy to get to and get around; and**
- (c) **Host a diverse set of businesses that serves a diverse population.**

These answers form the basis of three thematic areas that guided the development of concrete recommendations to make the district work better: **Community Gathering Spaces, Mobility, and Businesses.**



Conclusions & Priorities

Using each of these thematic areas, key conclusions from the existing conditions analysis spanning both the economic and physical analysis became clear. As with any plan, certain conclusions are more important and/or more actionable than others. To guide the process of developing discrete recommendations, the team further honed those conclusions into specific priorities for the district in each of the thematic areas.



COMMUNITY GATHERING SPACES

Conclusions

- Key intersections do not serve as gateways to the neighborhood and often lack signs and benches.
- The district lacks structured community spaces that are directly visible along the street.
- Some public art is in disrepair and may not reflect the current residents of the neighborhood.
- Public open spaces are close to the district but are not always visible or activated by events.
- Activity decreases at night, in part due to public safety concerns of residents and business owners.
- Some storefronts lack transparency, which may contribute to a sense of inactivity and public safety concerns along the streets.

Priorities

- Articulating the entrances to the neighborhood and improving overall streetscape
- Better utilizing and connecting the district to existing open space through special events, programming, and public art
- Exploring ways to improve the sense of activity on the street through later business hours, increased storefront transparency, and public night-time events



M MOBILITY

Conclusions

- Unsafe intersections and speeding cars makes pedestrians feel unsafe.
- Hilly topography and inconsistent sidewalks present accessibility challenges for seniors and families and make the district feel less cohesive.
- The district is served by numerous transit routes but service may be inconsistent.
- Street parking is poorly regulated and poorly marked.

Priorities

- Improving the pedestrian experience and safety by redesigning intersections
- Reevaluating parking management in the district to improve availability of spaces and clarity of regulations
- Creating consistent signage to direct people to transit, open space, and to different parts of the commercial district



B BUSINESSES

Conclusions

- Business owners report increased sales and desire to stay in neighborhood. Owners ask for assistance on a variety of areas.
- Businesses are geographically clustered rather than spread across a continuous commercial district.
- Small store sizes limit the types of businesses that can locate in the district but may lower barriers to entry for new businesses.
- Vacant storefronts and lots are opportunities. Market analysis shows the district could support additional professional services, restaurants, and entertainment businesses.

Priorities

- Identifying businesses that can fill vacancies while successfully filling gaps in the existing business mix
- Developing strategies to respond to demand for restaurants, bars, and entertainment venues
- Exploring opportunities to connect business owners with existing resources, advocate for additional resources, and address owners' expressed assistance needs

The Cluster Framework

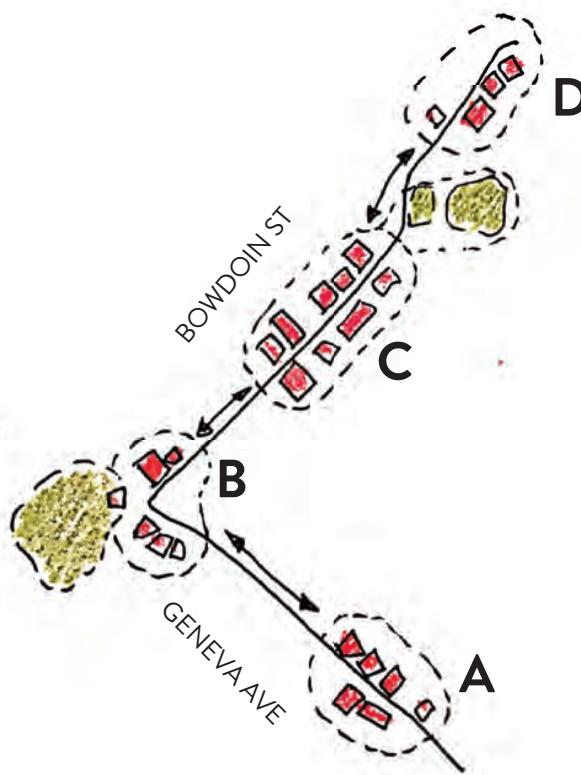
In addition to developing recommendations for the district through the lens of the three thematic areas, the existing conditions analysis identified another aspect of the district salient to considering different possible interventions: unlike many other commercial districts, Bowdoin Geneva is relatively discontinuous. Instead, businesses are primarily organized in small clusters broken up by stretches of residential buildings.

This unique condition led to a consideration of whether to develop our recommendations while (a) considering the district as one entire district (the Continuous District approach) or (b) focusing on each of those clusters individually while still seeking to better connect the district overall (the Cluster approach).

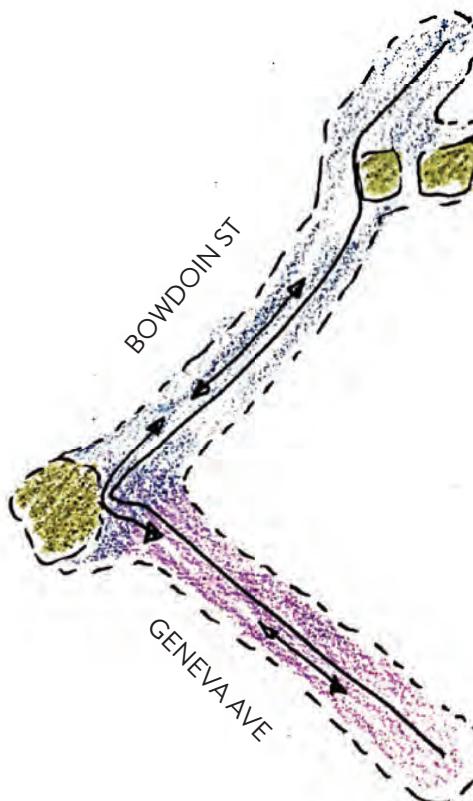
Both approaches prioritize making Bowdoin Geneva work better in line with the criteria for a successful commercial district highlighted earlier. The distinction comes through how to implement each of the priorities across the thematic areas. For example, under a Cluster approach, the team might focus on creating a shared identity for the businesses in each cluster (e.g., highlighting food businesses along Geneva Avenue). Under a Continuous Corridor approach, the team might instead focus on creating a single district image.

Following presentation of each of these approaches in a community meeting, most residents were in favor of moving forward with the Cluster approach the team had also favored.

Cluster Approach



Continuous Corridor Approach



Developing Recommendations

The next chapter of this plan lays out the recommendations that the team developed looking across three thematic areas—Community Gathering Spaces, Mobility, and Businesses—at each of the clusters and at the district as one unit.

Recommendations are accordingly attached to either one cluster (e.g., the addition of a public plaza at a specific intersection) or the whole district (e.g., the addition of street-level lighting spanning Bowdoin Street and Geneva Avenue). Each recommendation also fits into at least one of the thematic areas (e.g., a business recruitment strategy fits in Businesses) or may span multiple (e.g., a plaza that improves pedestrian safety and creates more public space fits into both Mobility and Community Gathering Spaces).

Regardless of where or in what theme a recommendation may fall, each has been considered as part of an overall plan for a stronger Bowdoin Geneva—a district that does not just exist as clusters of businesses but works together as a single place. This is a strategy that aims for an integrated approach that brings physical and economic analysis together to achieve all criteria of what a successful commercial district should provide.



RECOMMENDATIONS

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

In the preceding sections, we presented analysis on the existing conditions in Bowdoin Geneva and our process for arriving at a set of conclusions across three thematic areas — Businesses, Mobility, and Community Gathering Spaces. These conclusions, and the priorities developed from them, underlie the content of this section: our recommendations for the district.

As noted previously, these recommendations may span the whole district or be tied to specific clusters and sites; they may also span thematic areas. Recommendations vary from physical projects, like an intersection redesign, to programmatic ideas and organizational structures that might facilitate the implementation of the plan as a whole.

For each thematic area, we have developed a set of goals to guide our thinking around specific interventions. These goals are presented first. Next, we lay out a set of district-wide recommendations that span all clusters. Finally, we articulate a set of recommendations for each cluster that relates to the distinct character each brings to the neighborhood.

How to Read the Recommendations

The cost and timeline figures noted throughout the report are rough estimates. While the team has considered general figures for how much a recommendation might cost to realize, we have not completed detailed cost analyses for each. The timelines noted are similarly rough—many factors in the time scale for any project could not be taken into full consideration. Please treat these as approximations.

Theme	Cost
B Businesses	 \$10,000 or less
M Mobility	 \$10,000 to \$50,000
CG Community Gathering Spaces	 \$50,000 or more

Example Recommendation

5. Activate underused storefronts



Key Partners: Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets, Local Community Groups, Local Businesses

Timeline



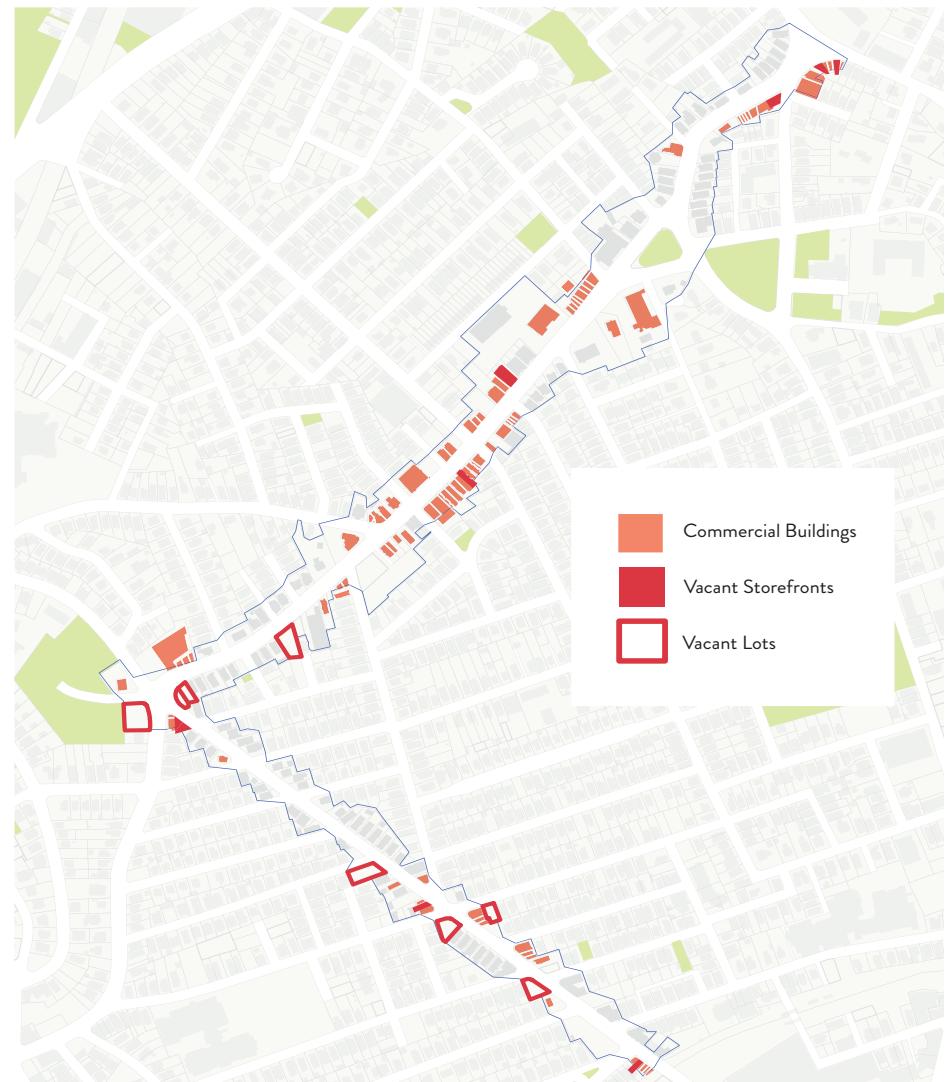
A. GUIDING PRINCIPLES & GOALS BY THEME

B Businesses

Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets is eager to build its capacity to assist businesses and expand its work to include advocacy on behalf of its largely Black (including Cape Verdean) and Latino residents in broader community development efforts. The business recommendations in this report are guided by the organization's vision, the work that Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets is already doing, the business services currently offered by the City of Boston, and the key priorities for the district discussed in the previous section.

Each recommendation is designed to meet at least one of four major business goals:

- Influence new development in a democratic and community-driven process and diversify business mix to capture more spending and meet residents' needs.
- Help businesses succeed and grow through efficient technical assistance that meets owners where they are.
- Increase collaboration, learning, and leadership between businesses to build their collective capacity.
- Encourage businesses to improve security for their stores and support efforts to increase public safety throughout the district.

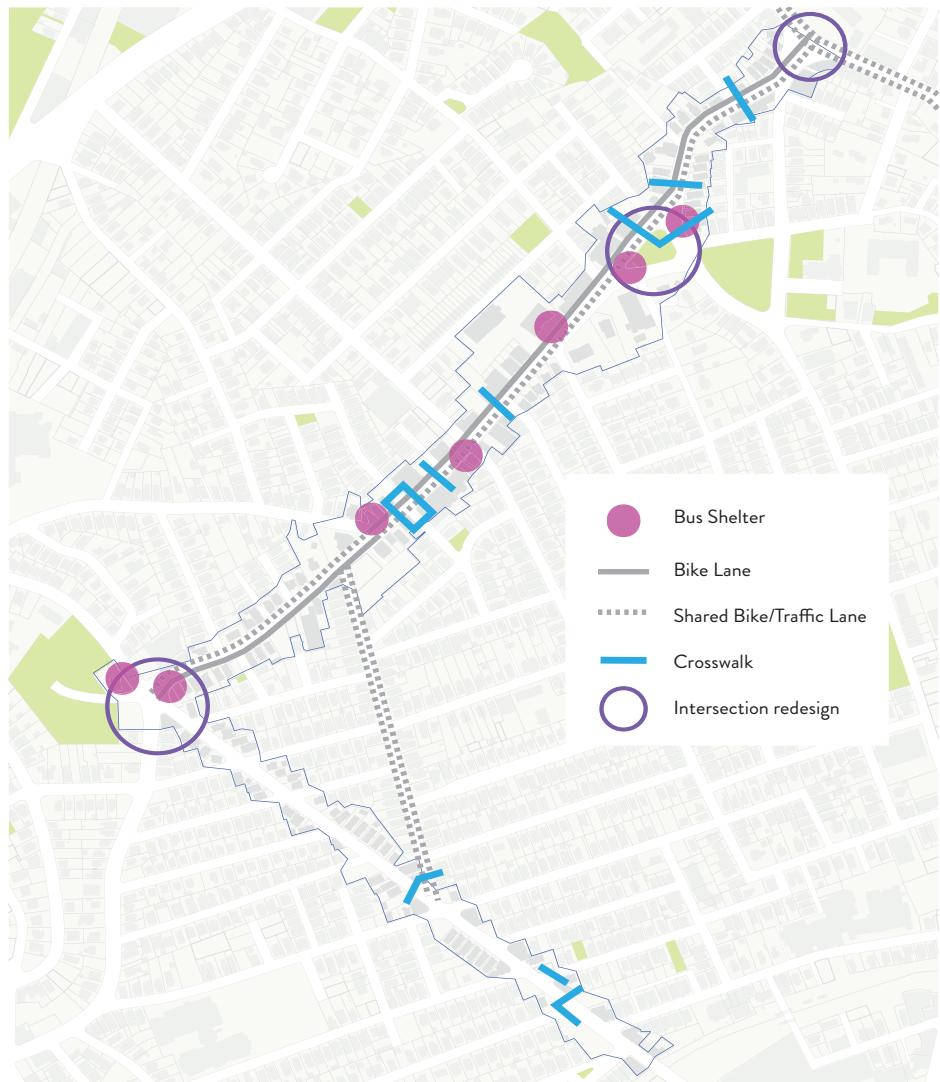


M Mobility

A successful main streets district makes it easy for people to get to and around the district. In Bowdoin Geneva, the district's mile-long "L" shape and lack of clear gateways can pose challenges to that goal. Bowdoin Geneva also features higher proportions of public transportation users and drivers compared to elsewhere in Boston. Focusing on a mobility strategy that aims to improve the commercial district, connect clusters, and carefully consider all modes of transit proved important to the development of our recommendations.

The key goals we sought to achieve through improvements to the mobility network include:

- Improve the pedestrian experience through intersection redesign and upgraded streetscape.
- Improve the availability of parking and reduce congestion through better parking management and creation of loading zones.
- Use consistent streetscape and wayfinding to give distinctive character to the main street and connect the clusters together.
- Create safe streets for all modes of transportation.

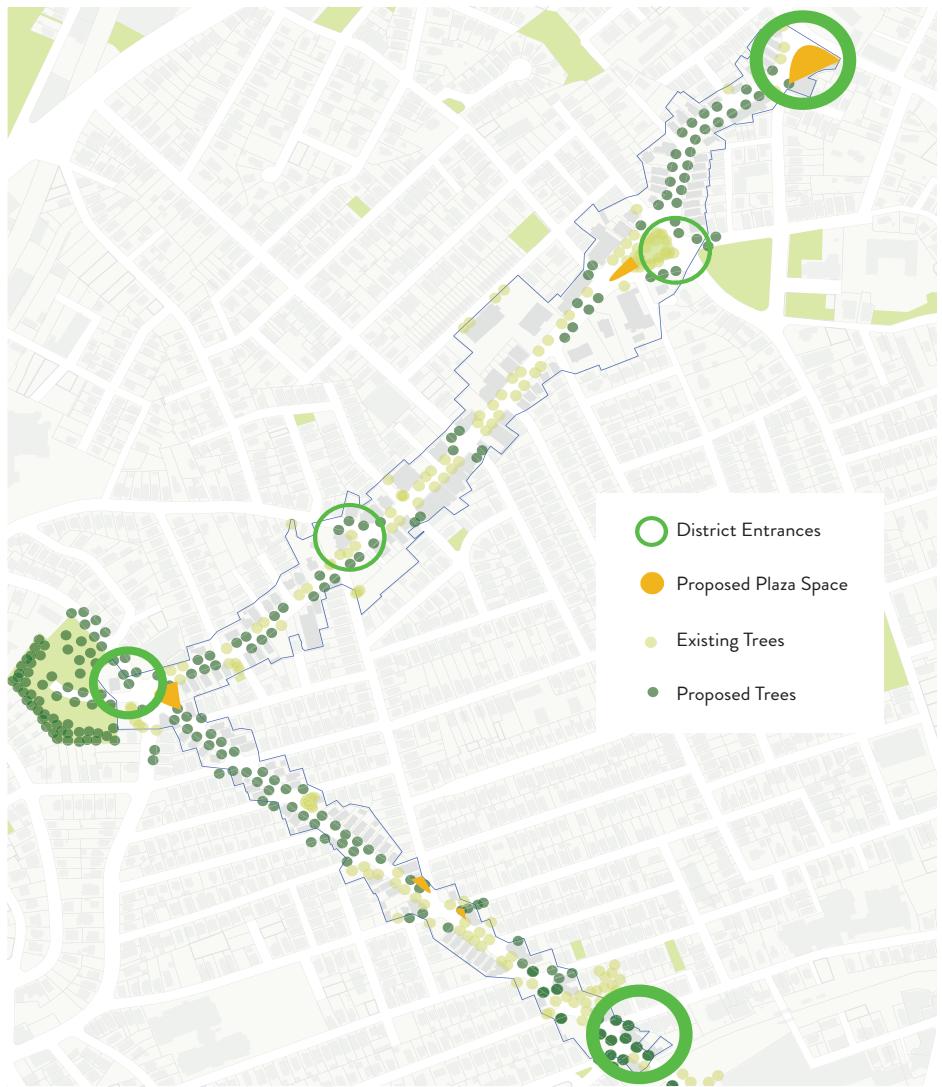


Spaces where community members can come together in Bowdoin Geneva are both big and small—the sidewalk, parks and plazas, civic institutions, and businesses that facilitate people meeting up and spending time together. Making sure that enough community spaces exist and that they are accessible to residents and businesses is important, but what events and activities happen in those spaces are just as crucial to the life of the district.

The recommendations for this theme aim to both activate and enhance existing community gathering spaces, create new spaces that serve currently unmet needs, and better support commercial activity in the district.

The following goals form the basis of our recommendations for community gathering spaces throughout the district:

- Clearly mark the entrances to the neighborhood and make the most of their key location in the commercial district.
- Use programming and art to connect businesses and people with existing gathering spaces and increase activity across the district.
- Ensure that the network of community gathering spaces are complementary, not competitive, by honing in on core purposes and functionality for each space and planning events accordingly.
- Improve the feeling of safety in the district through improved lighting, increased activity, and better visibility.
- Develop mechanisms for better maintenance of existing spaces through partnerships with community organizations and businesses.
- Fill gaps in the current network by creating areas for families and seniors and places for rest and gathering along the street.
- Connect the district to the existing parks and plazas with clear signs and wayfinding.



B. DISTRICT-WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

Influencing Development

Boston is growing, and Bowdoin Geneva will likely grow with it. New development is not only likely but desirable if it is done in an inclusive way that foregrounds the needs of current residents. At the same time, low-income communities in cities across the country, including Boston, are facing increased pressures of displacement. Understandably, fear around displacement in turn affects how current residents perceive new development in their neighborhoods. Long histories of exclusionary planning have disproportionately impacted low-income communities of color and this legacy further stokes this apprehension.

We believe new development and displacement need not be connected—that new development in Bowdoin Geneva should bring benefits to existing residents without making the neighborhood less of their place in the process. The fulfillment of this goal begins with an inclusionary decision-making process that empowers community members to influence future development in the neighborhood to ensure that these benefits are realized.

Development in the neighborhood currently happens in an ad hoc manner and is largely driven by private landowners and developers. Community advocacy around projects is often fragmented, leading to limited leverage over the ultimate shape of new uses in the neighborhood. While there are many factors contributing to this fragmentation, including difficult social dynamics, the absence of a governing body or gatekeeper able to represent residents and influence development at the city level is one major factor.

Individual members of Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets participate in public meetings regarding development, but the organization has not recently taken an official public stance for or against any project. Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets now has the opportunity to restructure the organization to allow for more concrete organizing and advocacy around development. Focusing on specific visionary projects with community support can further concentrate the organization's and the community's leverage to push for beneficial development while demonstrating how appropriate development can serve a vision for the neighborhood's future.

As the sole business service provider in the district and a key community organization with a board increasingly representative of the neighborhood's primarily Black and Latino residents, Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets should be more integrated in commercial and residential development processes affecting the district. Integrating the voices of this population must occur to ensure that future decision-making around development is inclusive and ultimately in line with residents' own hopes for their home. The following recommendations lay out first steps in this process.

1. Develop organizational process for taking stances on development



Key Partners: Boston Planning and Development Agency

The Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets board should vote internally for or against newly proposed developments and publicly communicate and advocate for changes to plans accordingly. To facilitate this, the organization should also request that the City of Boston notify it of new development requests for proposals on city-owned properties. This can be done through property.boston.gov.

2. Host public forums on development to gain community input



Key Partners: Meeting House Hill Civic Association, Greater Bowdoin Geneva Neighborhood Association, Bowdoin Geneva Alliance, Other Local Civic Associations

Resident and business groups in the district, including Meeting House Hill Civic Association, the Greater Bowdoin Geneva Neighborhood Association, the Bowdoin Geneva Alliance, and other nearby civic organizations, should host joint public forums to gain input from diverse and underrepresented stakeholders regarding newly proposed developments. Forums could 1) increase Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets' role in advocating for development, 2) create a venue for collaboration, and 3) build consensus that can be leveraged to strengthen the entire community's influence over development decisions.

3. Create a set of development guidelines for the district in collaboration with other community groups



Key Partners: Local Community Organizations, Residents

If Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets takes on a role shaping development in the district, it needs a vision and guidelines for the type of development that it (and the larger community) want. Due to the general trend of increased density in Boston, future development in the district may involve breaking from the current character. Development guidelines provide an opportunity to anticipate and shape increased density, in addition to helping Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets influence development by signaling to developers what types of projects the organization will support. The guidelines will also help prevent undesirable business types or development configurations (e.g., street-facing parking lots).

The guidelines provided here are examples of general best practices which have informed our specific development recommendations in the report. However, these guidelines are not comprehensive. We recommend that Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets create its own guidelines in collaboration with other community groups, potentially using these as a starting point.



Endeavor Capital-owned parcel at the entrance to Geneva Cliffs

Sample Development Guidelines

Future development in the area should strive to meet the following criteria:

1. Mixed-use development (residential and commercial) that responds to the context of the relevant cluster

Mixed-use development provides both the commercial spaces needed for a successful commercial district and meets housing demand. Examples of how a mixed-use guideline can be adapted in each cluster of the district are:

- Geneva Gateway: Mixed-used housing and a commercial ground floor on Geneva Avenue to complement the cluster's existing residential character
- Central Bowdoin: Mixed-used upper-story housing or office space with commercial ground floor to complement the service center of the district
- On sites adjacent to neighborhood gateways, increased density and new civic and community gathering spaces could mark these as significant entrances.

2. Ground-floor retail

Ground-floor retail leads to more activity and foot traffic in the district, bringing an increased sense of safety, vibrancy, and more options for the community to fill gaps in the business mix.

Example Guideline: Emphasize Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets' preference for ground-floor retail throughout the district. This signals to developers the type of businesses and ground-floor uses that the organization and other community stakeholders will strongly support.

3. Appropriate balance in new development between ground-floor space for small businesses and larger businesses

Bowdoin Geneva has a significant number of small vacant storefronts which, due to their size and rent levels, are unique opportunities for the mostly Black and Latino community to launch new businesses and build wealth. Commercial spaces in new development could strike an appropriate balance between providing new, small, ground-floor commercial spaces, which may compete with filling existing vacancies, and larger spaces that might draw businesses not currently represented in the district's mix.

When new development includes large commercial spaces, small existing businesses may be given priority to expand into those spaces if they are in a position to do so. More often larger, new ground-floor spaces and vacancies may be more appropriate for larger businesses that have not previously operated in the district, especially if they expand employment opportunities and plug holes in the existing business mix.

If a substantial number of existing small businesses are ready for expansion in the district, development guidelines could request that in new, larger developments, a portion of ground-floor space be reserved for them. When large spaces are filled by new businesses from outside the surrounding area, development guidelines could advocate for certain “good business commitments,” such as local hiring preferences. Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets could also potentially advocate for a first option for pre-existing businesses at a redevelopment site to lease space in the project upon its completion, therefore ensuring these businesses are not displaced in the redevelopment process.

4. Specific design elements for buildings

Guidelines for specific design elements can create a sense of activity and cohesion throughout the district, strengthening the district’s sense of place.

Example Guideline:

- Incorporate a community-facing use on the ground floor.
- Ensure windows on the ground-floor meet certain transparency requirements.
- Create clear site lines (e.g., entrances at the sidewalk edge) for ground-floor space.
- Use alternatives to roll-down grates for security (e.g., alarm systems, safety glass, video cameras).
- Build to lot lines to fill out blocks and ensure street activity.

5. Parking, service, and loading guidelines for new development

Thoughtful integration of parking and loading in new development helps alleviate traffic and street congestion while also enhancing pedestrian safety.

Example Guideline:

- State preference for parking behind building to provide a more active street edge.
- Consider how new development would impact service and loading so as not to disrupt traffic in the district or neighborhood.

6. Environmentally and economically sustainable design and development

New development in Bowdoin Geneva should be designed in a way that is future-oriented and builds stability in the community through buildings that are environmentally and economically sustainable. In fact, environmentally sustainable design becomes economically sustainable development, as over time these projects will save occupants and landlords money and ensure that buildings are durable enough to permit new uses over time.

Example Guidelines:

- Ensure that buildings are constructed with durable materials that will withstand the test of time and avoid negative health impacts on building occupants.

- Consider stormwater treatment on site wherever possible to reduce runoff and protect surrounding habitats and waterways.
- Ensure that buildings are built to the latest energy efficiency standards to reduce carbon emissions and save building occupants money on their energy bills.

7. Enhanced affordable housing preferences in new development

Boston is experiencing a housing affordability crisis and the current mayoral administration has made expanding the supply of affordable housing a priority. There is a common need for high-quality, well managed affordable housing across Boston’s neighborhoods. A community preference for enhanced affordable housing requirements in new development could also serve as a buffer against concerns of displacement.

A variety of guidelines could advocate for enhanced affordability, including a preference for all affordable units in new development and deeper affordability levels of those units. Another strategy is leveraging Boston’s Inclusionary Development Policy by signaling support for new development that goes beyond the affordable housing set aside requirements in the policy.

The Inclusionary Development Policy is currently triggered on any residential project of ten or more units that is either (a) financed by the city, (b) on property owned by the city, or (3) requires a zoning change. The development guidelines could advocate for lowering the minimum unit threshold for new mixed residential and commercial development that occurs in the district as a matter of informal policy. For example, the community could signal support for developments that fall outside the requirement (e.g., an eight-unit residential building with ground-floor retail) yet choose to adhere to the inclusionary development policy. It is likely that new development in the neighborhood will require zoning variances, which presents a leverage point for the community to push an expanded inclusionary zoning policy at the district level. The preference could apply to development within or abutting the district or in development close to the district that is likely to affect the area.

Media Strategy

A district-wide media strategy can help the community better control and uplift its own narrative. The assets of Bowdoin Geneva—among them cultural diversity, strong non-profit organizations, positive programs for youth, and district-wide festivals—are all important stories that go untold in media coverage of the district that often narrowly focuses on crime and violence.

Shaping public image and perceptions of the neighborhood can boost foot traffic to the neighborhood, spur interest in the area from city officials and funders, and improve residents' pride in their neighborhood.

Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets currently has an active social media presence and recently created an email newsletter to share happenings and news from the district. These activities are excellent starting points for a broader media strategy.

1. Build relationships with local media outlets and reporters



Key Partners: Media Outlets, Reporters, Local Non-Profits

Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets should form relationships with reporters through one-on-one conversations about happenings in the neighborhood. The organization can flag stories for the media, especially things media may be interested in but go underreported, and regularly send reporters leads and new information about the neighborhood. Particular news items to promote include:

- Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets milestones and events,
- Business openings,
- Events and activities from social service organizations,
- Positive activities with young people, and
- Other local events, such as festivals and performances.

The strategy can begin with local papers like the Dorchester Reporter or ethnic media outlets. Social service agencies with reach beyond the neighborhood, such as the Bowdoin Street Health Center, should also promote the district through their media connections.

A board member of Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets with media or public relations experience could lead or design the strategy.

2. Direct media attention to a priority project for the district



Key Partners: Media Outlets, Reporters

The initiation or completion of a priority project in the district presents the opportunity for Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets to advertise progress toward its district vision. Such projects could include the creation of a new development or filling commercial vacancies.



Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets newsletter

BUSINESSES

I. Organizational Capacity

Currently, Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets' capacity to reach the business goals identified earlier is constrained by the necessary intensity of one-on-one engagement with businesses. As a low-income community of color and of immigrants, the business community faces significant barriers to receiving services, including a diversity of languages, limited administrative capabilities, and fragmentation, all of which demands more support from Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets than might be required of peer organizations. In order to realize its vision, Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets will need to expand its capacity, organize the board to take active governance roles, refine power-building skills, and free up the executive director's time for broader-scale organizing work.

1. Identify experienced business owners, board members, and other community members with relevant experience to serve as mentors or advisors for businesses



Key Partners: Business Owners, Board Members

A mentorship program can free up the executive director's time for other work. Matching businesses to mentors will only be effective if there is trust and the benefits to businesses of this relationship are clearly communicated.

2. Identify gaps in expertise on the Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets board and recruit professionals to fill them



Key Partners: Local Professionals

Needs that have already been identified include legal services and business-related technology expertise.

3. Develop a training program for community members to volunteer to guide businesses through common city administrative processes



Key Partners: Community Members

Relevant administrative processes could include navigating permitting procedures, applying to technical assistance programs, and applying for loans. For example, Latino and Cape Verdean teenagers who work as Peer Leaders at St. Peter's Teen Center or administrative professionals from the district's social service organizations could be trained

as volunteers to fill out paperwork and engage with businesses.

4. Expand staff on a permanent basis



Key Partners: Local Colleges and Universities

Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets should identify funds to secure its current business outreach specialists as permanent staff of the organization (even if part time). In addition, the organization should create an internship position and advertise it to local universities, particularly business, communications, and planning-related departments. A partnership that provides a pipeline of culturally competent interns can both expand general capacity of the organization and provide specific expertise.

What is Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets Already Doing?

The organization recently hired two temporary, part-time business outreach specialists who live in Bowdoin Geneva, speak Spanish and Cape Verdean Creole, and know the local businesses. These specialists are creating an intake system to understand specific business needs.

II. Attracting New Businesses

In addition to influencing physical development as discussed above, enhanced advocacy and organizing could fill vacancies by attracting businesses that present the biggest opportunity to capture more spending in the district, namely new entertainment and restaurant businesses, and businesses that fill service gaps like banks or credit unions.

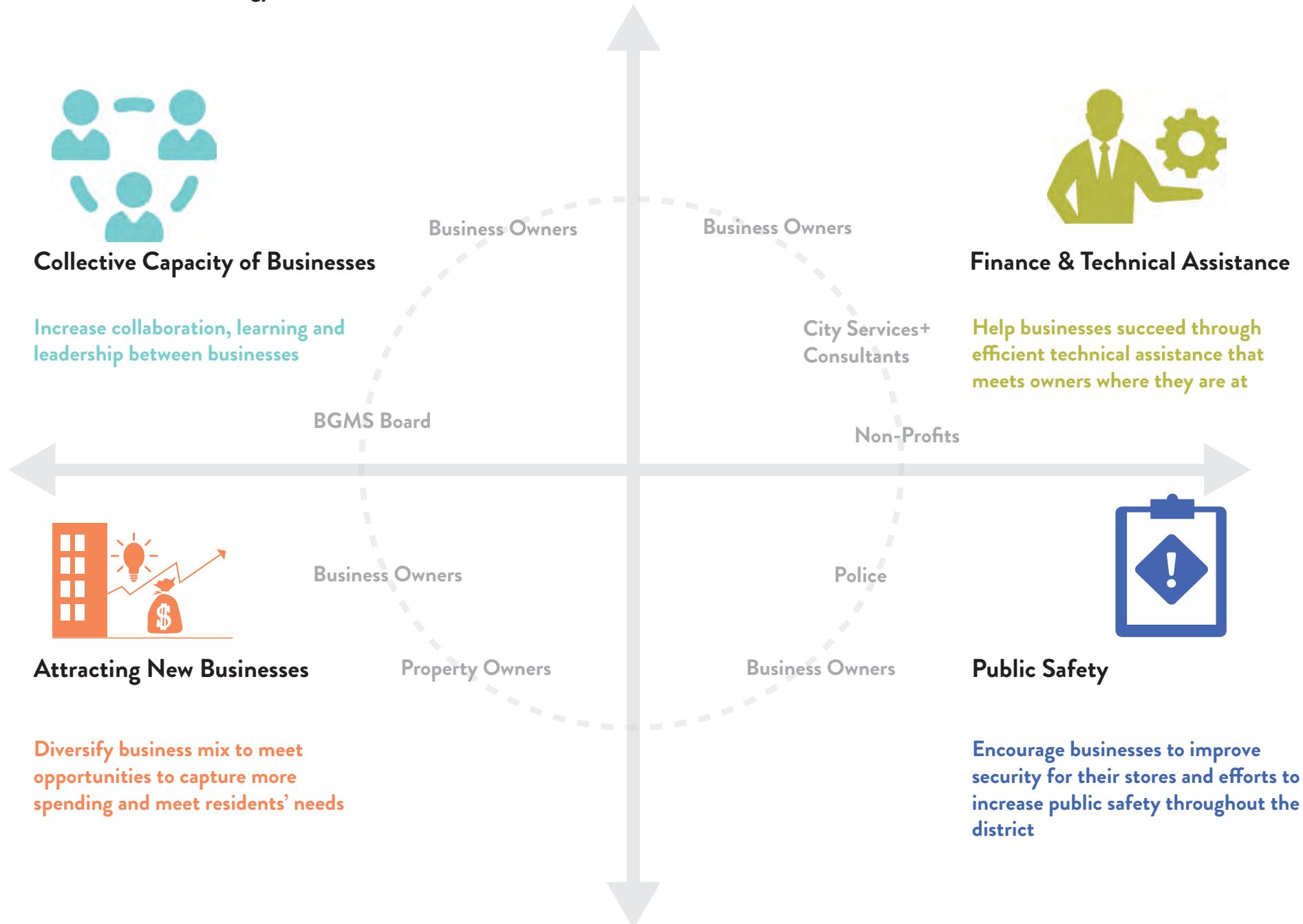
5. Expand the diversity of businesses through the development and deployment of a business recruitment package



Key Partners: Local Civic Organizations

A business recruitment package would provide a clear strategy for filling current and future vacancies. The package can market the district and guide interested businesses through the process of locating there with specific attention to entertainment, bars, and restaurants. The process of developing the recruitment package, led by Bowdoin Geneva

Business Goals and Strategy



Main Streets, could be carried out in collaboration with property owners, commercial real estate brokers, community development corporations, and other civic organizations. Property owners in particular have significant discretion in filling vacancies; strong relationships with them will be important to fill the identified gaps in the business mix.

6. Partner with the Boston Ujima Project and Commonwealth Kitchen to identify small-businesses with the potential to become tenants



Key Partners: Boston Ujima Project, Commonwealth Kitchen

The Boston Ujima Project organizes a network of mostly Dorchester- and Roxbury-based businesses owned by people of color and women. Commonwealth Kitchen is a food incubator program based in nearby Grove Hall that focuses on entrepreneurs impacted by racial, social, and economic inequality. Commonwealth acts as a pipeline for food truck businesses, some of which seek brick and mortar locations. Both Ujima and Commonwealth could help place new businesses in Bowdoin Geneva. Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets should also advocate on behalf of neighborhood food entrepreneurs to enter into the Commonwealth Kitchen Entrepreneurs program. There is natural alignment between Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets' goal of increasing local entrepreneurship and growth in the food sector with Commonwealth's mission.

III. Finance & Business Assistance

Business owners in Bowdoin Geneva are in need of targeted services to make their operations more efficient, attract customers, and improve financial management. Owners face barriers related to time, language, and administrative capabilities that make it difficult to access city and non-profit resources and services. Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets is facilitating access to some city services through one-on-one work with businesses. Most recently, it helped to close a \$10,000 no-interest Kiva loan to support start-up costs for a new business in the district. While the one-on-one approach is necessary given current conditions and has proven effective for some business owners, it constrains the executive director's capacity and limits the organization's impact. Moreover, city services are not generally marketed in a way that is accessible to business owners in this commercial district, especially those that do not speak English. Opportunities for businesses through the city need to be communicated more effectively to help facilitate Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets' service delivery.

The following recommendations aim to improve access to business assistance, create strategies for efficient service delivery that can meet businesses where they are (e.g., language-appropriate and on-site), and broaden Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets' reach and impact.

What is Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets Already Doing?

- Engaging six businesses with applications to loan products for general business expansion
- Working with one business to access credit to purchase its space
- Writing business plan projections on behalf of businesses for these applications
- Providing language translation for technical assistance applications from the city
- Collecting data on business needs through an intake check-list
- Scheduling appointments with contractors who can implement "ReStore" facade improvements

7. Hold on-site, collective, and scheduled technical assistance delivered strategically to specific sectors or geographic areas at once



Key Partners: Technical Assistance Providers, City of Boston, Local CDCs

Methods to increase the impact and scale of business assistance while allowing business owners to meet one another include:

- Establish pilots with multiple businesses at once in targeted clusters to build momentum with stakeholders and leverage that momentum to gain the interest of other business owners and support from the broader community. Pilots also make sense for programs that have a geographic impact. For example, facade renovations are most effective when done with all the businesses at an intersection.
- Hold regularly scheduled days and times for city consultants and CDC providers to visit businesses. For example, BGMS could create a "First of the Month TA Monday." This strategy can be deployed in rotating parts of the district to help reach more businesses in the Geneva Gateway and Bowdoin Gateway clusters, where Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets has fewer developed relationships.
- Host workshops led by city consultants with multiple businesses around specific topics, interests, or needs in specific sectors. For example, restaurants in the district must navigate similar regulatory processes, and multiple may need assistance with commercial kitchen equipment.

8. Connect businesses with technology services, legal service providers, and credit repair services



Key Partners: Technology Service Providers, Legal Service Providers, Credit Repair Services

Legal services often become necessary in the course of running a business, and credit repair services may be useful for small businesses relying on debt to finance their start. The Community Enterprise Project at the Transactional Law Clinic at Harvard Law School and the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice may provide relevant legal assistance.

Updating technology can lead to more efficiency and better management for small businesses. This includes computerized bookkeeping, credit card services, and inventory management. Technology services are not provided through the Boston Main Streets program. A strategy for fulfilling this gap should be developed. Tech Goes Home is one non-profit provider that can help to fill these gaps.

IV. Collective Capacity of Businesses

Many business owners know each other but do not engage in formal sharing of expertise or other activities that build collective capacity. Such capacity among businesses can benefit Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets' efforts to implement district-wide events, facilitate sharing of expertise between businesses, and serve as a unified advocate on the behalf of business owners.

Some businesses owners, including those represented on the Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets board, have operated their businesses for a long time in multiple locations and carry significant expertise and knowledge on business operations and management. Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets has fewer relationships with business owners on Geneva Avenue and at the intersection of Bowdoin Street and Hancock Street than in the central area of Bowdoin Street.

What is Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets Already Doing?

Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets currently holds bi-monthly networking meetings. Recently, the organization facilitated cross-business collaboration by creating a coupon for I-Own-It Boutique to be left at Restaurante Cesaria to promote cross patronage. The organization is also planning large-scale street events focused on the food and culture of the district.

9. Use bi-monthly business meetings as opportunities to encourage business owners to share expertise and learn from each other



Key Partners: Local Businesses, Property Owners

Identifying businesses that can host a meeting in the Geneva Gateway and Bowdoin Gateway clusters would help to integrate them into ongoing work and build on current capacity. Property owners should also be invited to business meetings as important stakeholders in filling vacancies.

10. Pilot small-scale and less time-intensive street events or festivals



Key Partners: Local Civic Organizations, Local Businesses

Such programming can provide a venue for businesses to showcase their products and services, potentially attract new customers, and collaboratively market the district as a Latino and Afro-diasporic destination. Less time intensive events could take advantage of Boston's new acoustic music regulation for outdoor music near a business.

11. Encourage cross patronage by expanding coupon program



Key Partners: Local Businesses

Building on the coupon program Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets has already piloted, the organization could expand through the creation of a specific cluster coupon.

12. Explore co-purchasing of goods and business-related services



Key Partners: Vendors, Local Businesses

Where co-purchasing leads to lower prices, collective buying of inputs for restaurants or equipment for barber shops could build collective capacity and produce cost-savings.

V. Public Safety

Given the current retail and convenience business mix and early evening closings, there is very little activity and foot traffic at night in Bowdoin Geneva. This lack of activity is cyclical—businesses close early due to public safety concerns, and sense of safety in the district diminishes when businesses close early. The resulting real and perceived public safety concerns contributes to the negative reputation of the neighborhood.

The district's physical environment also contributes to real and perceived public safety concerns: many storefronts are poorly maintained and lack transparent windows, the district's street lighting is inconsistent, and community spaces are rarely active.

What is already happening around public safety ?

Many business owners in the neighborhood know each other and are networked through a GroupMe app managed by the Boston Police Department and focused on reporting and addressing commercial break-ins. The BPD created a pilot program in Bowdoin Geneva that provides businesses with measures to prevent robberies and instructions on what to do in case of a robbery. The pilot consists of a document and one-on-one meetings with businesses. The BPD is also planning to create an accompanying instructional video and plans to expand the pilot to the entire city.

13. Empower business owners to play a more active role in public safety by implementing a phased, comprehensive business public safety toolkit



Key Partners: Boston Police Department, Boston Main Streets Foundation

Businesses have the potential to impact public safety in the district as a whole beyond just securing stores. As the main source of activity in the district, they have a shared responsibility for improving the sense of safety along the street.

Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets should serve as a convener for toolkit planning by inviting business owners and the BPD to the table. The BPD has already begun creating elements of a toolkit, and Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets role would be to expand the toolkit and help guide its implementation. The Boston Main Streets Foundation is a potential source of funding for the toolkit.

Phase 1

- Help businesses implement the robbery prevention and preservation guide created by the Boston Police Department.
- Improve window transparency.
- Coordinate training for businesses and customers on how to diffuse hostile interactions in and around storefronts.
- Provide contact cards for specific police department units.

Phase 2

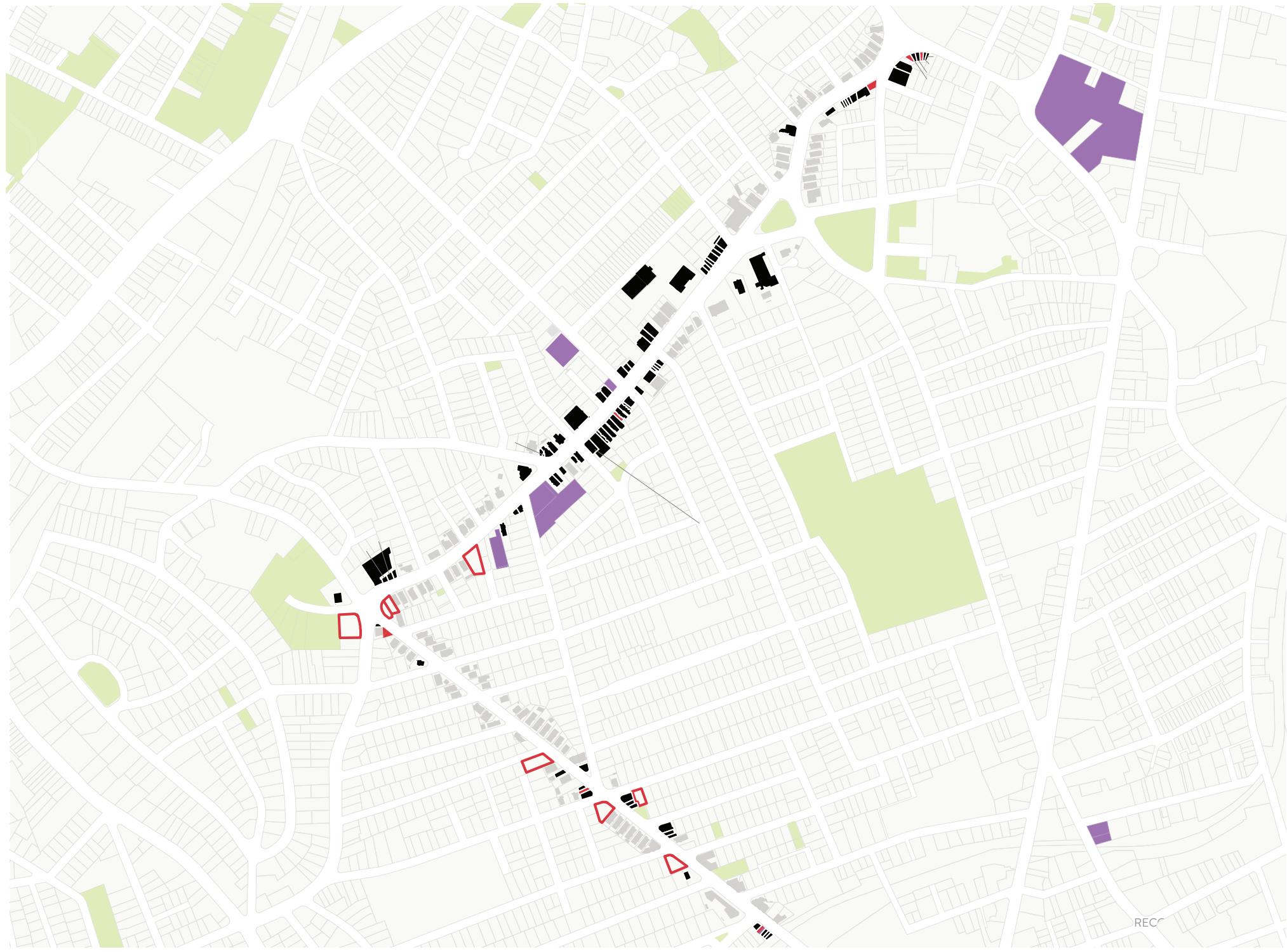
- Improve shop lay out to protect owners without compromising sense of welcome. Store layout and design principles are found in literature on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).

Phase 3

- Implement technological updates for safety (e.g., security cameras, moving from cash to credit) and alternatives to roll-down grates.

Implementation

	Short-Term	Medium	Long-Term
1. Identify partners to serve as mentors or advisors for businesses		X	
2. Identify gaps in expertise on the Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets board and recruit to fill them		X	
3. Develop a training program for volunteers to guide businesses through administrative processes		X	
4. Expand staff on a permanent basis			X
5. Expand business diversity through the development and deployment of a business recruitment package			X
6. Partner with Boston Ujima project and Commonwealth Kitchen to identify future tenants			X
7. Hold on-site, collective, and scheduled technical assistance to specific sectors or areas	X		
8. Connect businesses with technology services, legal service providers, credit repair services			X
9. Use bi-monthly business meetings to encourage business owners to share expertise	X		
10. Pilot small-scale and less time-intensive street events or festivals			X
11. Encourage cross patronage by expanding coupon program			X
12. Explore co-purchasing of goods and business-related services			X
13. Empower businesses to play an active role in public safety by creating a public safety toolkit			X



Many mobility proposals in this plan span the entire district to ensure one's ability to reach the district and move through it with ease. The mobility recommendations touch all modes of transport, including walking, biking, driving, and multiple forms of public transportation.

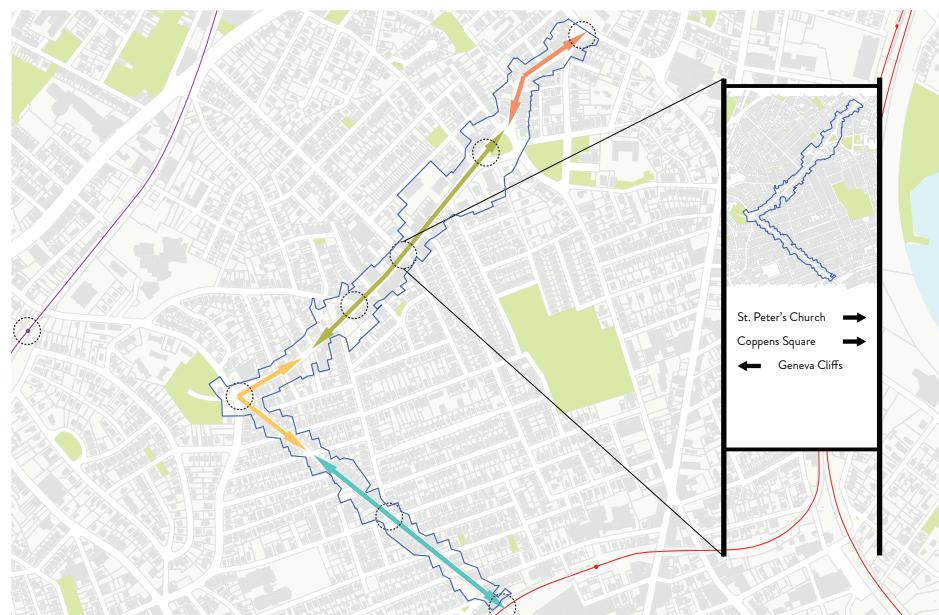
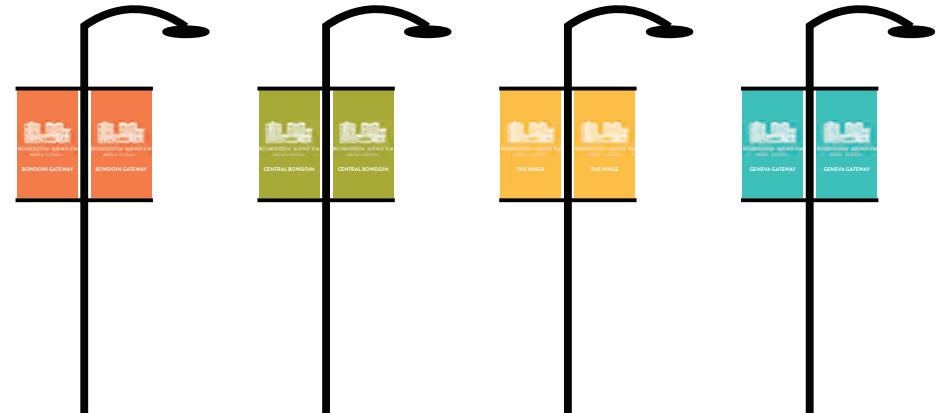
1. Tie the district together through wayfinding and consistent streetscape



Key Partners: City of Boston, Business Owners

Given that the Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets district is separated into distinct clusters by pockets of residential development, one of this plan's major goals is to connect the clusters together using consistent streetscape and wayfinding. Signage should be placed at key entry points to the district to orient and guide visitors to all parts of the district. Key locations identified for wayfinding signage include: the Fields Corner T stop, the intersection of Geneva Avenue and Topliff Street, the intersection of Geneva Avenue and Bowdoin Street, Coppens Square, and the intersection of Bowdoin Street and Hancock Street. Additionally, wayfinding signs should be placed at the Four Corners/Geneva stop on the Fairmount Line to encourage entry into the district, especially as service on the line increases in frequency. Streetlight banners should be added throughout the district to act as a branding element and wayfinding tool.

To tie the district together and bring uniformity to the streets, we also propose streetscape improvements throughout the district. The Boston Complete Streets Guidelines provide recommendations for how Main Streets can be designed to improve the pedestrian experience while accommodating a mix of uses. In accordance with the guidelines, we propose repaving all sidewalk furnishing zones with brick or some other paver to give a distinctive feel along all of Bowdoin Street and Geneva Avenue. Along all of Geneva and parts of Bowdoin, this strip will be 2.5 feet wide, but in parts of Central Bowdoin and in certain plazas, the width of the paved surface would increase to 4 to 5 feet, creating space usable by the public or businesses.



Potential wayfinding tools

2. Improve the bike network



short medium long

Key Partners: City of Boston, Hubway, Bowdoin Bike School

Currently, the bike network in Bowdoin Geneva is sparse, with sharrows running the length of Geneva Avenue and a single Hubway station in Central Bowdoin. Dorchester's wider bike network essentially circles the neighborhood rather than running through it. Given the narrow width of both Bowdoin Street and Geneva Avenue, upgrading to better accommodate bicycles is challenging to do without affecting drivers. However, the 40-foot street width along Bowdoin Street does allow for a single dedicated bike lane to be added, in the northbound lane from Geneva Avenue to Olney Street and in the southbound lane from Olney Street to Hancock Street. On the opposite side of the road from the dedicated bike lane, sharrows should be added to indicate that driving lanes should be shared by bikes and cars. Additional sharrows should be added along the entirety of Topliff Street, as it serves as a major cut-through for vehicles in the district, and along the entirety of Hancock Street, as it connects Bowdoin Gateway to the Savin Hill and Upham's Corner commercial districts.

There is currently little support for bicycle infrastructure in Bowdoin Geneva. We have heard from community members that they see little use for bike lanes on Bowdoin Street and Geneva Avenue and that they might contribute to already heavy congestion. Additionally, some community members contend that existing bike riders in the neighborhood will not use the bicycle lanes, even if installed. Despite these concerns, we believe that it would be prudent to add bicycle lanes in the district. Robust bicycle infrastructure encourages current and potential riders to feel ownership over the street. Bicycle lanes benefit existing bicycle commuters, who have not had a safe travel path down Bowdoin Street in the past. They invite residents who have not taken alternative modes of transit to consider riding bicycles as a more economical and now safe mode of transit in the district. Finally, bicycle lanes assist in traffic calming, requiring vehicles to pay closer attention to, and share the road with, others using the street. To ensure the bicycle lanes work as hoped, we propose piloting the Bowdoin Street bicycle lane for a limited time to assess its success before making a decision on the installation of a permanent lane.

To complement the addition of bike lanes, bike racks should also be added to accommodate and encourage bike usage in the district. Bike racks should be installed at parks and major clusters of businesses, including Ronan Park; Geneva Cliffs; Coppens Square; Bowdoin Street at Hancock, Hamilton, and Olney Streets; and Geneva Avenue at Topliff Street. Finally, for those who do not own bikes, we propose the addition of Hubway bike sharing stops at the Fields Corner T stop, Four Corners/Geneva commuter rail stop, and the intersection of Bowdoin and Hancock Streets. Hubway operates 185 bike docking stations throughout Metro Boston, making it an easy way to access bikes in the city. The company also features a program through the Boston Public Health Commission which offers low-income city residents a \$5 annual membership, guaranteeing unlimited hour-long rides.



3. Improve bus stops



Key Partners: Boston Transportation Department, MBTA

The commercial district features 26 MBTA bus stops, but none of the stops feature any shelter or seating area for riders. We propose the addition of bus shelters with seating at key locations throughout the district, in particular where sidewalks have been extended to create additional space needed for a shelter. At additional bus stops, in particular along Geneva Avenue where the sidewalks are too narrow to accommodate a full shelter, benches will be provided. Narrower shelters would be used in busy intersections with high pedestrian or transit-rider traffic that cannot accommodate a full bench.

4. Implement parking management scheme

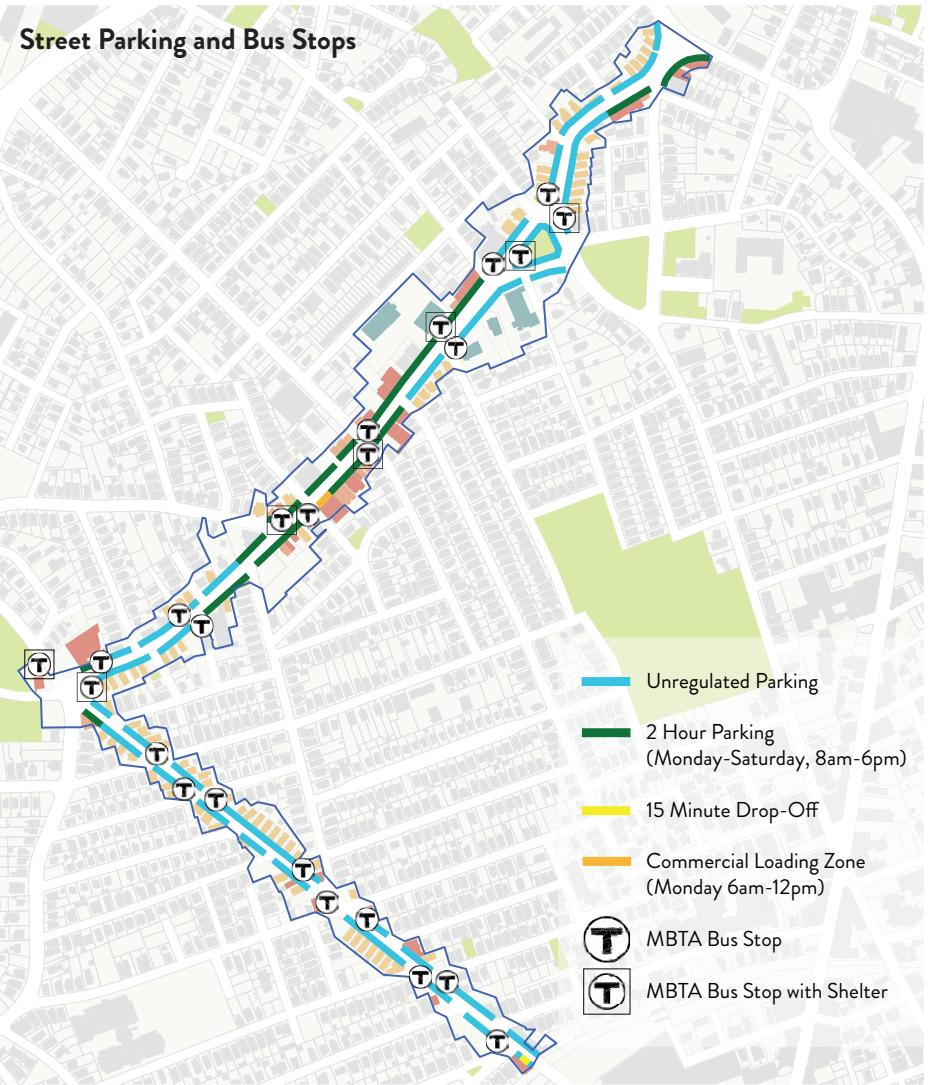


Key Partners: Boston Transportation Department

One of the areas of greatest concern among business owners in the district is the perception of limited parking. Indeed, in certain sections of the commercial district, parking spaces are regularly fully occupied, particularly in front of businesses. However, space is constrained in the district, and especially so in those same areas. Accordingly, creation of new parking areas proves challenging and necessitates working with existing parking.

Greater regulation of parking can help increase the availability of parking in the district while maintaining a similar number of parking spaces. We propose adding unmetered, two-hour parking along Bowdoin and Geneva in locations with a high density of businesses. In no place along the street would regulated parking be placed in front of a 100% residential structure.

The two-hour parking regulation would ensure turnover of spaces in the commercial areas, providing greater availability for shoppers and visitors to the district. Residential side streets along Bowdoin Geneva are not restricted to resident parking permit holders, so visitors to the district who require parking longer than two hours, including shop owners and employees, are able to utilize these unregulated streets. Two-hour regulated parking will increase the availability of parking throughout the commercial district. It may also have the added effect of reducing congestion by taking drivers looking for parking off the road more quickly.



Implementation

Short-Term Medium-Term Long-Term

1. Tie the district together through wayfinding and consistent streetscape

X

X

2. Improve the bike network

X

3. Improve bus stops

X

4. Implement parking management scheme

X





COMMUNITY GATHERING SPACE

1. Implement wayfinding to Ronan Park

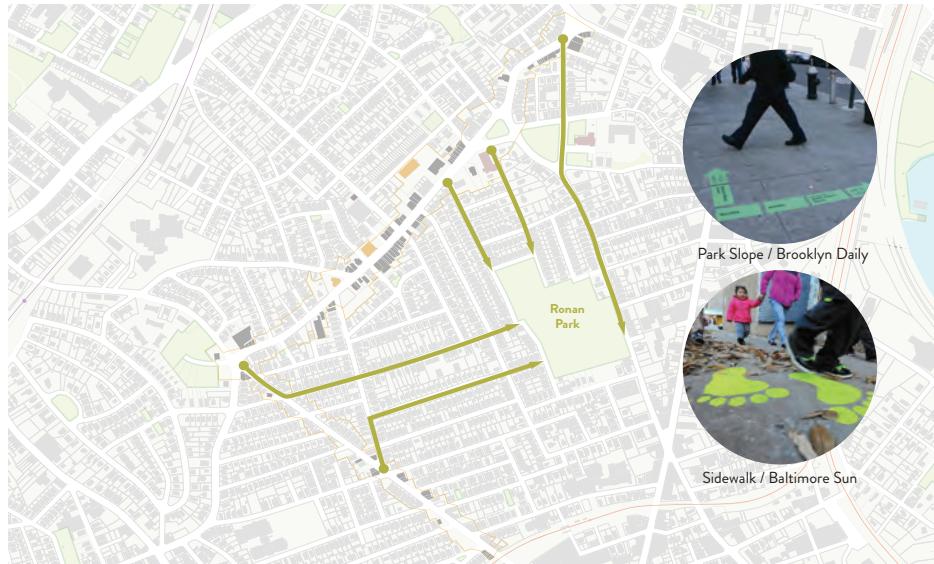
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Key Partners: Boston Department of Parks and Recreation, Boston Transportation Department, Friends of Ronan Park

One of the major community gathering spaces in Bowdoin Geneva is Ronan Park. Despite its size and beauty, the park is very disconnected from the commercial district, in part due to the hills one must climb to get there and the inability to see the park from anywhere in the district. Some residents noted they did not even know the park existed.

Wayfinding that directs people to Ronan Park can help to increase activity in the park and connect it to the commercial district. In the short-term, painted emblems on the sidewalk along major routes to the park from each cluster can lead people there. In the long-term, in conjunction with sidewalk replacement projects, permanent pavers embedded in the sidewalk can create an attractive path leading to the anchor green space of the district.



Wayfinding to Ronan Park

2. Expand street tree network

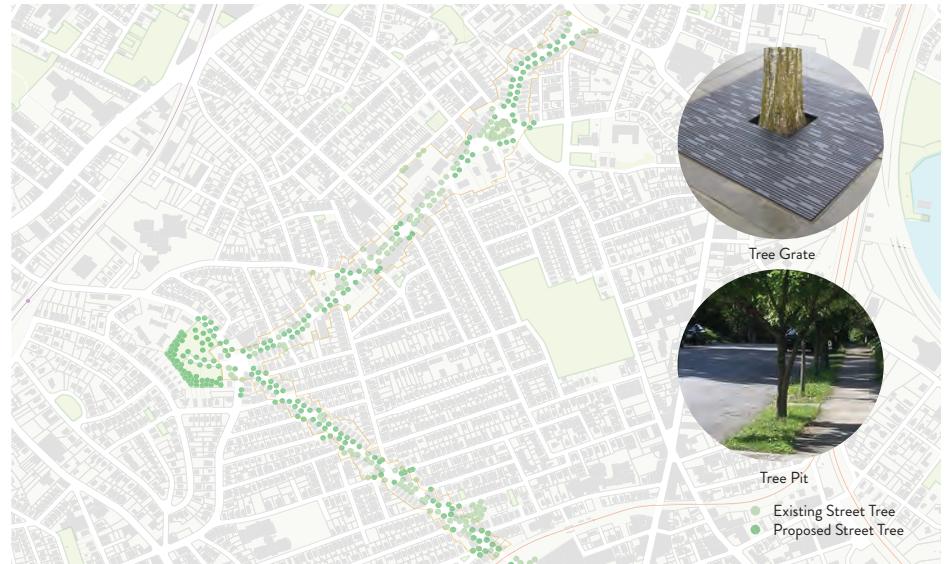
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Key Partners: Boston Department of Parks and Recreation, Local Residents, Boston Transportation Department

Bowdoin Geneva already has many trees along its main streets, but gaps remain across the district. The addition of street trees not only creates a more pleasant streetscape; they also add shade during the summer and can make the district feel more cohesive. Where tree pits already exist, these small gaps should be filled. In other areas, particularly from the intersection of Bowdoin Street and Geneva Avenue toward Fields Corner, there are almost no street trees—new rows of trees should be planted. In some cases, the addition of street trees is not possible due to narrow sidewalks. In those cases, residents of the adjacent houses should be encouraged to take advantage of the city's program to provide free trees in front yards and maintain those trees for two years.

Street tree care along the district should also be addressed: many tree roots are uncovered, endangering the health of the trees and possibly leading to their death. The street tree root wells should be covered to protect the roots and increase the walkable area of the sidewalk. Nearby business owners and homeowners should also be encouraged to become stewards of their nearby trees.



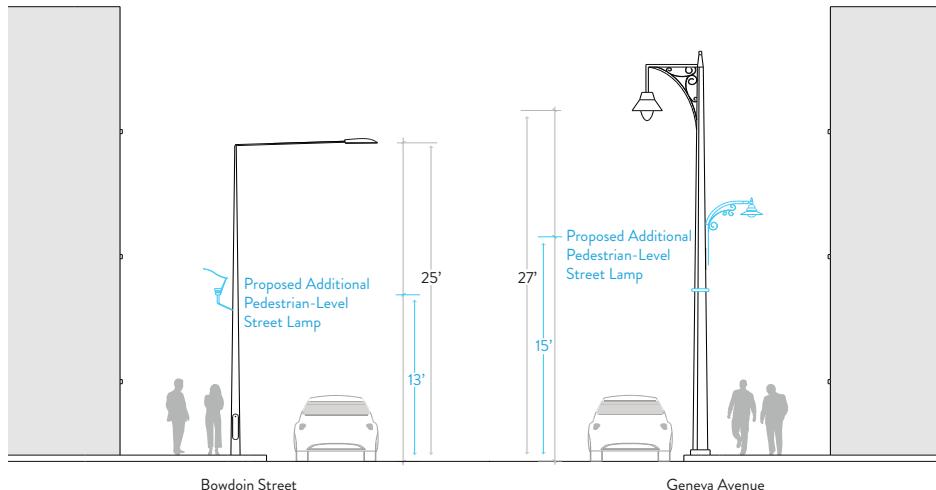
Proposed Bowdoin Geneva street tree network

3. Increase sidewalk-level lighting



Key Partners: Boston Transportation Department

Street lighting across the district currently serves to light the street but not necessarily the sidewalk. It therefore does not enhance the feeling of safety for pedestrians at night. Where possible, the addition of lower-level lights onto existing street light poles would require little new infrastructure. Where the design of the current street lights do not facilitate this, new, more human-scale lighting should be added. This strategy should be coupled with encouraging businesses to light the street through more transparent store windows and later hours or the addition of lights to their storefronts.



Pedestrian-level street lamp recommendation

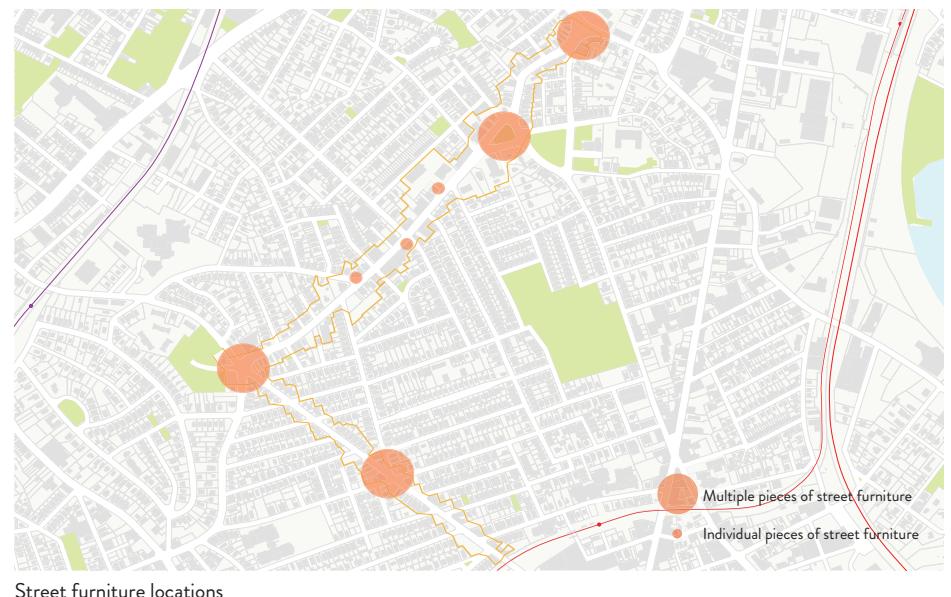
4. Install an extensive, cohesive street furniture network



Key Partners: Boston Transportation Department

Street furniture is an important part of an active sidewalk. Benches and seating allow for small gathering places, spots for momentary rest for families and the elderly, and areas to wait for transportation. Additionally, certain types of trash cans help maintain street cleanliness. A street furniture strategy for the main streets district should:

- Utilize the Boston's Complete Streets guidelines for type of street furniture and placement relative to the curb and other sidewalk features.
- Focus new street furniture at key locations—gateways, heavily used bus stops, and school bus stops.
- Create a street furniture zone on sidewalks with sufficient width (for example, in Central Bowdoin). This zone can be paved with bricks or paving stones to differentiate it from the rest of the sidewalk and include benches, trash cans, street trees, and planters. It can also serve as patio space for restaurants or display space for retail stores, bringing commercial activity onto the sidewalk and supporting businesses through the use of public space.
- Replace existing trash cans (and expand the current network) with covered bins to ensure trash doesn't overflow or isn't blown into the street by the wind. Boston Complete Streets guidelines call for solar-powered Big Belly trash cans; the district can advocate for their installation as part of a larger city rollout.



Street furniture locations

5. Expand programming in public open space



Key Partners: City of Boston, Business Owners

Events and programs help activate public spaces, build community, and strengthen businesses by bringing residents and visitors to the commercial district. Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets can partner with business owners, community institutions, and residents to plan events that use community spaces in the district to connect residents with their neighbors and businesses in Bowdoin Geneva. For example, Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets should lead a charge to revive the Bowdoin Geneva Multicultural Festival and ensure the continuation of community concerts currently hosted at the Community Hub.

Throughout this report, we have identified a wide variety of possible programs and events utilizing different types of space in the district. Small plaza space, like the proposed plaza in Bowdoin Gateway, could be used for small events planned by or connected to the adjacent businesses or simply as a passive space to sit with friends and eat. Major open spaces with good visibility, such as Coppens Square or Geneva Cliffs, should be used for major community events like the Multicultural Festival or a district-wide block party. Medium-sized spaces with good vehicle access, such as the St. Peter's Teen Center parking lot, can be used for markets or resource fairs.



6. Create business grate mural painting program and invest in public art



Key Partners: Local Business Owners, Local Artists, Local Youth

Many businesses currently use roll-down grates to close their shops due to security concerns, but this lack of transparency on the street can make the district feel less safe and active. Although these metal shutters would ideally be removed in the long-term, in the interim a mural painting program can affordably add additional art to the community while making these grates appear more active and inviting. Such a program can involve local business owners, artists, and youth to realize a design and its ultimate implementation, creating an opportunity for community collaboration.

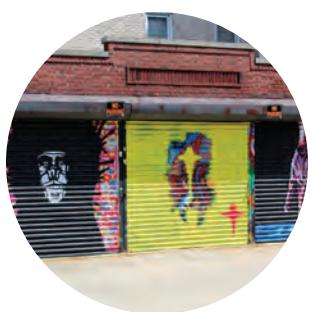
Such a strategy can be used in other spaces and in other media to enliven public space and further express the district's identities. Bowdoin Geneva has been a neighborhood of immigrants for many years, and the district's art should be updated to reflect the identities of current residents. New public art additions and updates to existing art should be made with community input on the art's subject matter.



Harlem World
by Wajimacallit



Welling Court
by Garrett Ziegler



Welling Court
by Wally Gobetz

Implementation	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
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1. Implement wayfinding to Ronan Park

x

x

2. Expand street tree network

x

3. Increase sidewalk-level lighting

x

4. Install an extensive, cohesive street furniture network

x

5. Expand programming in public open space

x

x

x

6. Create business grate mural painting program and invest in public art

x



Ronan Park



Geneva Cliffs

C. CLUSTER RECOMMENDATIONS



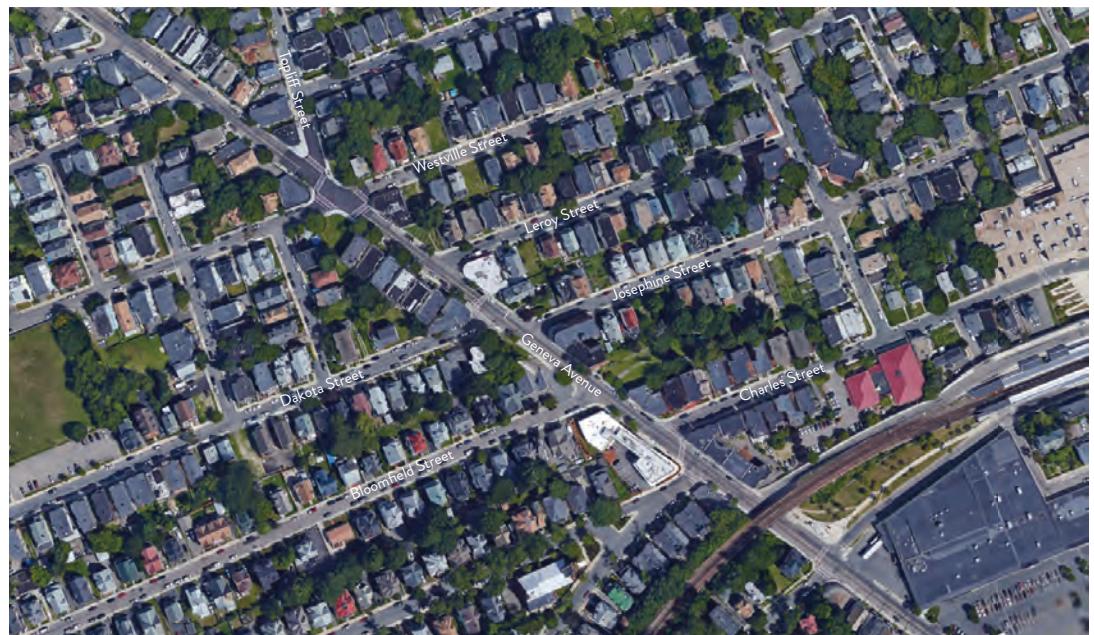
GENEVA GATEWAY



Current Conditions

The Geneva Gateway cluster serves as the southern entrance to the Bowdoin Geneva district. Businesses in this cluster are interspersed with residential buildings and small green spaces, providing a good mix of uses in the area. This cluster is unique in that it has a higher proportion of food businesses compared to the rest of the district, providing an opportunity to further develop a food-based identity. Just over half of the 14 businesses in this cluster (57 percent) are ethnic food sector-related and most are owned or operated by Spanish speakers. There are four small grocery stores or bodegas, four small take-out restaurants, and at least one new Cape Verdean take-out restaurant opening soon.

The Geneva cluster is a key gateway to the Bowdoin Geneva district due to its proximity to the MBTA Red Line. The trestle for the Fields Corner T station on the Red Line passes over the entrance to the Geneva Gateway cluster and leads right to its first few storefronts. The T station serves as a hub of transit activity and is expected to attract future development to the cluster. For this reason, Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets, residents, and stakeholders should determine how they would like to guide future development on publicly and privately owned vacant lots in this area.



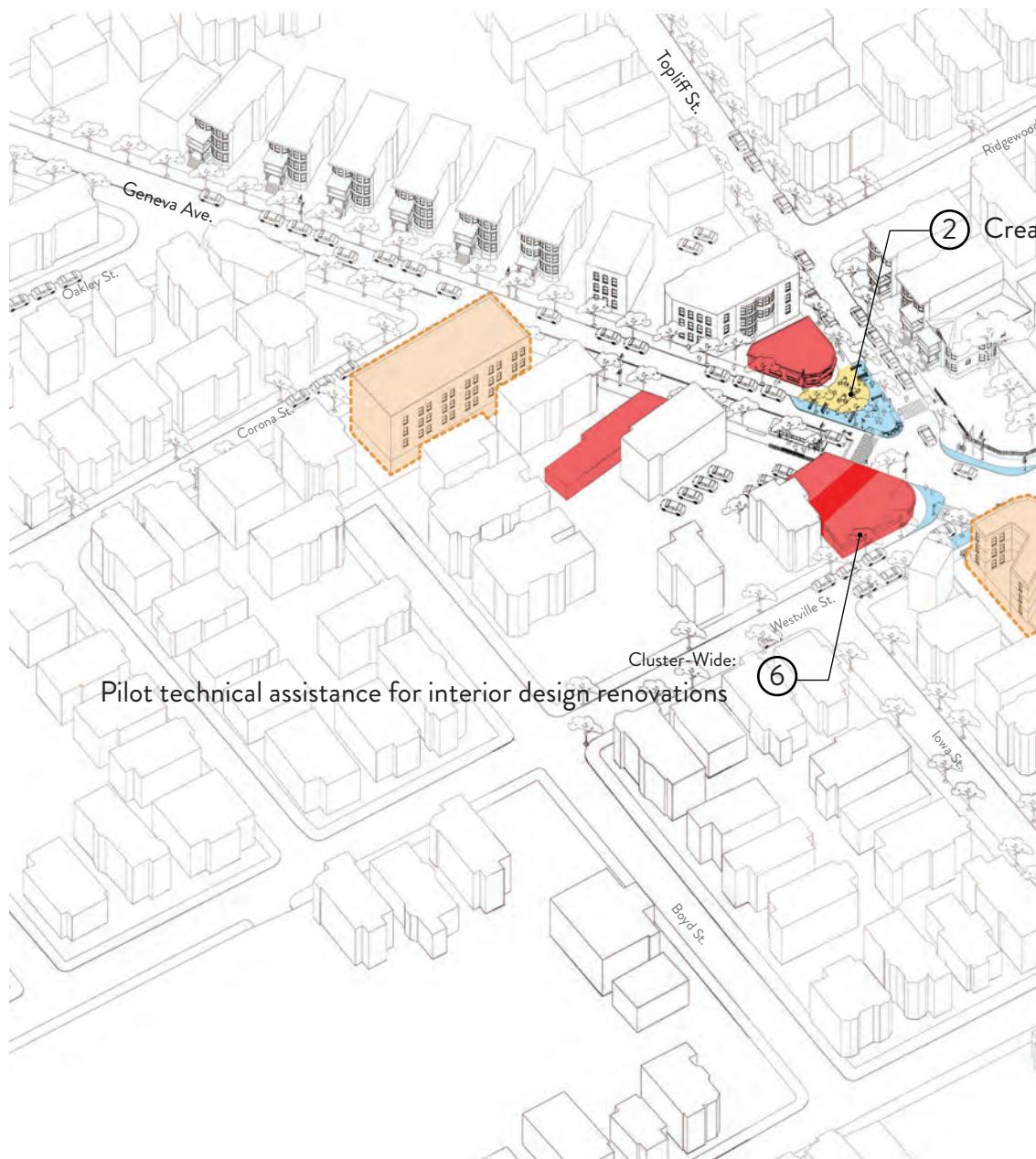
Aerial view of Geneva Gateway cluster

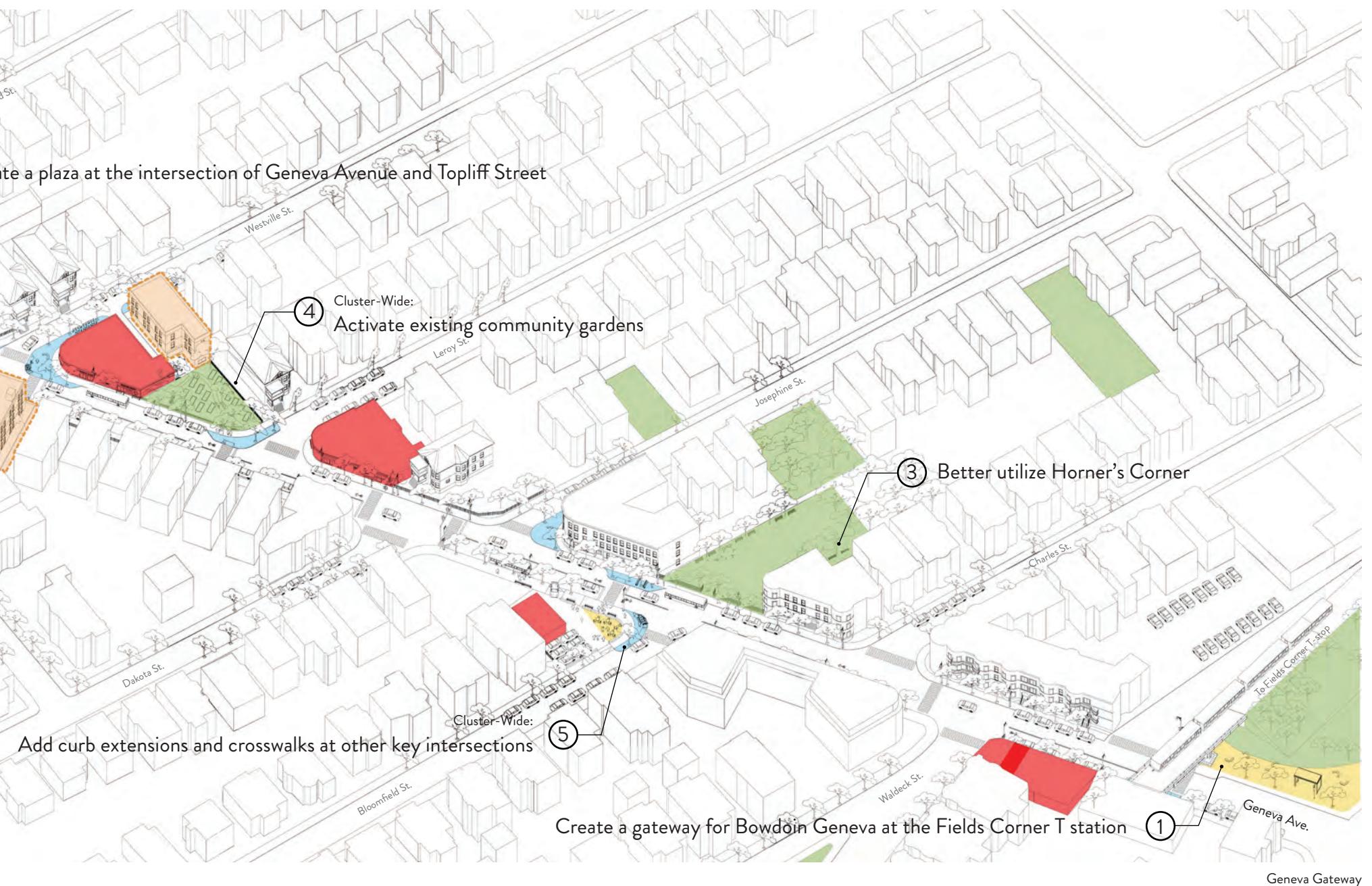
Goals and Vision

Based on the existing mixed residential and commercial characteristic of the Geneva Gateway cluster, access to transit, and the concentration of food and grocery services, the Geneva Gateway cluster can be developed as a welcoming food hub for residents and a food destination for visitors to the area. Through a series of small interventions at key intersections, the creation of inviting public gathering spaces, and measures to reduce pedestrian-vehicular conflicts, the cluster can evolve into a bustling, pedestrian-friendly entrance to the Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets district. An important feature of this vision is leveraging the transit activity around the Fields Corner T station to attract people headed to different parts of Bowdoin Geneva and Fields Corner into the cluster.

The goals for the development of Geneva Gateway include:

- Highlighting this cluster as a gateway and entrance to the Bowdoin Geneva district;
- Developing an identity for the Geneva Gateway cluster as a food hub for residents and a food destination for visitors;
- Increasing walkability and general foot-traffic in the area by creating inviting public gathering spaces that help create a lively, welcoming neighborhood character for the cluster and encourage people to stay in the district longer;
- Activating and integrating small-pocket community gathering spaces along the Geneva Avenue corridor; and
- Supporting small businesses through joint promotions and food-related activities and store improvements, including facade updates, interior design, and business-specific technical assistance.





1. Create a gateway for Bowdoin Geneva at the Fields Corner T station

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short medium long

Key Partners: MBTA, Boston Public Works, Boston Transportation Department, MBTA Art Programs, BR+AC+E, Hubway, MassDOT, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, VietAID

Phase 1

The trestle passing over Geneva Avenue adjacent to the Fields Corner T station provides a key location for creating a welcoming gateway to the Bowdoin Geneva district. By decorating and enlivening the MBTA train trestle and underpass area at Geneva Avenue and Charles Street with public art, the area can be developed as a prominent entrance to the commercial district. Signage to clearly mark Bowdoin Geneva should be installed. Another important element of developing a distinct character for Bowdoin Geneva will be to invest in public art that captures the diversity of the surrounding community. Some art already exists around the T trestle, which should be updated with community involvement and expanded using art programs offered by the MBTA. A map of Bowdoin Geneva should also be added to help with wayfinding. The use of the green space adjacent to the trestle can also be encouraged by building on past programming efforts led by organizations like BR+A+CE.

Phase 2

In addition to public art and signage marking the T trestle as the entrance to the district, other physical improvements will be key to making this space welcoming and comfortable, including:

- Activating the wide pavement space beneath the trestle and adjacent green space by investing in street furniture for people waiting for transit;
- Using streetscaping underneath the trestle and unique textures and paving style to mark a visually distinct physical identity for the cluster;
- Adding a Hubway station to make bike access to and from the district easier;
- Creating a curb extension underneath the trestle to widen the sidewalk, mark an entrance to the district, and allow people to cross from the T station to the stores located immediately north of the trestle more quickly and safely.



Existing condition of T trestle on Geneva Avenue



West Toronto trestle painting

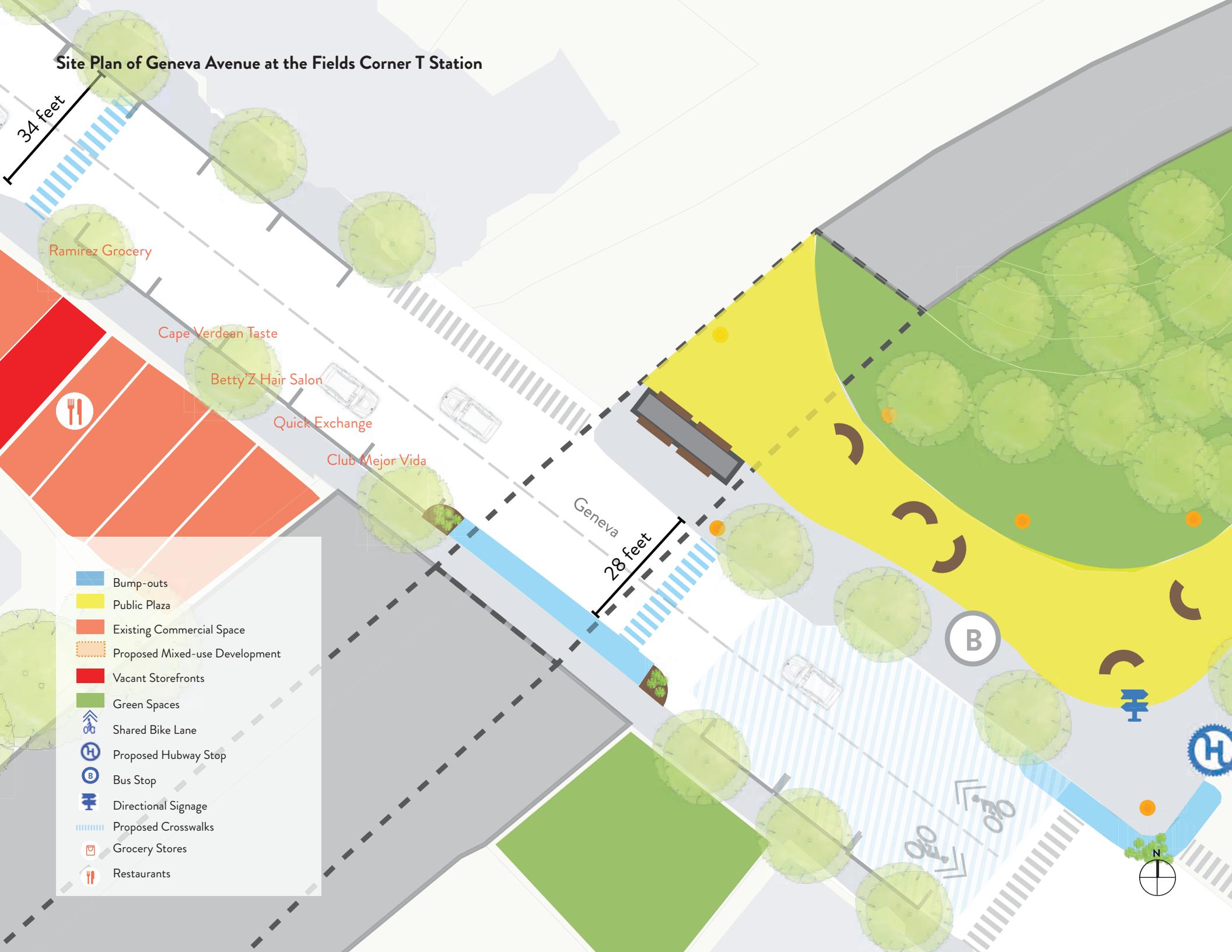


Harlem-125th Street station /
Metropolitan Transportation Authority Arts & Design



Gateway for Bowdoin Geneva at Fields Corner T trestle

Site Plan of Geneva Avenue at the Fields Corner T Station



2. Create a plaza at the intersection of Geneva Avenue and Topliff Street

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short medium long

Key Partners: Boston Transportation Department, Boston Public Works Department, Boston Planning & Development Agency, Boston Public Improvement Commission, Papa Rino's Pizza, Sobrino Meat Market, VietAID

The Geneva / Topliff intersection is a key location in the Bowdoin Geneva district, both as a potential destination and as a connection between Geneva Avenue and Bowdoin Street. It currently hosts food businesses such as Papa Rino's Pizza, Sobrino Meat Market, and Neville's Bakery. With a few interventions, the intersection can be developed as a food destination, drawing people to the newly created plaza and directing them deeper into the district. Strategic additions of street furniture, trees, and planters will help create a pleasant public space outside Papa Rino's Pizza and Sobrino Meat Market. These outdoor spaces will allow restaurant customers to spill out into the plaza. Seating can also be added on Westville Street adjacent to the Sobrino Meat Market to serve a possible new development in the currently vacant lot. A larger vacant lot, on the corner of Geneva and Westville, can also function as a key addition to the Geneva Plaza once developed according to guidelines Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets establishes with residents and area stakeholders.



Existing condition of intersection of Geneva Avenue and Topliff Street





This process could play out over three phases:

Phase 1

This first phase will involve installing wayfinding signs in front of Papa Rino's Pizza and at the intersection of Geneva Avenue and Westville Street to direct people up Topliff Street as a shortcut to Bowdoin Street. Shorter crosswalks added at Topliff and Westville will make the crossings safer for pedestrians.

Phase 2

The second phase will consist of adding temporary street furniture on the sidewalks outside Papa Rino's Pizza and adding sharrows to Topliff Street to connect Geneva Avenue with Bowdoin Street through the bike network. This addition builds on existing sharrows on Geneva Avenue, the Hubway station on Bowdoin Street, and the proposed Hubway station at the Fields Corner T station.

Phase 3

The final phase of development of the plaza will involve extensive curb extensions at key points in the intersection, wider spaces for pedestrians, and permanent street furniture to create community gathering spaces. Curb bump-outs create more space in front of storefronts for public gathering spaces and narrow the road width at key locations to create shorter and safer crosswalks.



Analysis of existing traffic flow at intersection of Geneva and Topliff



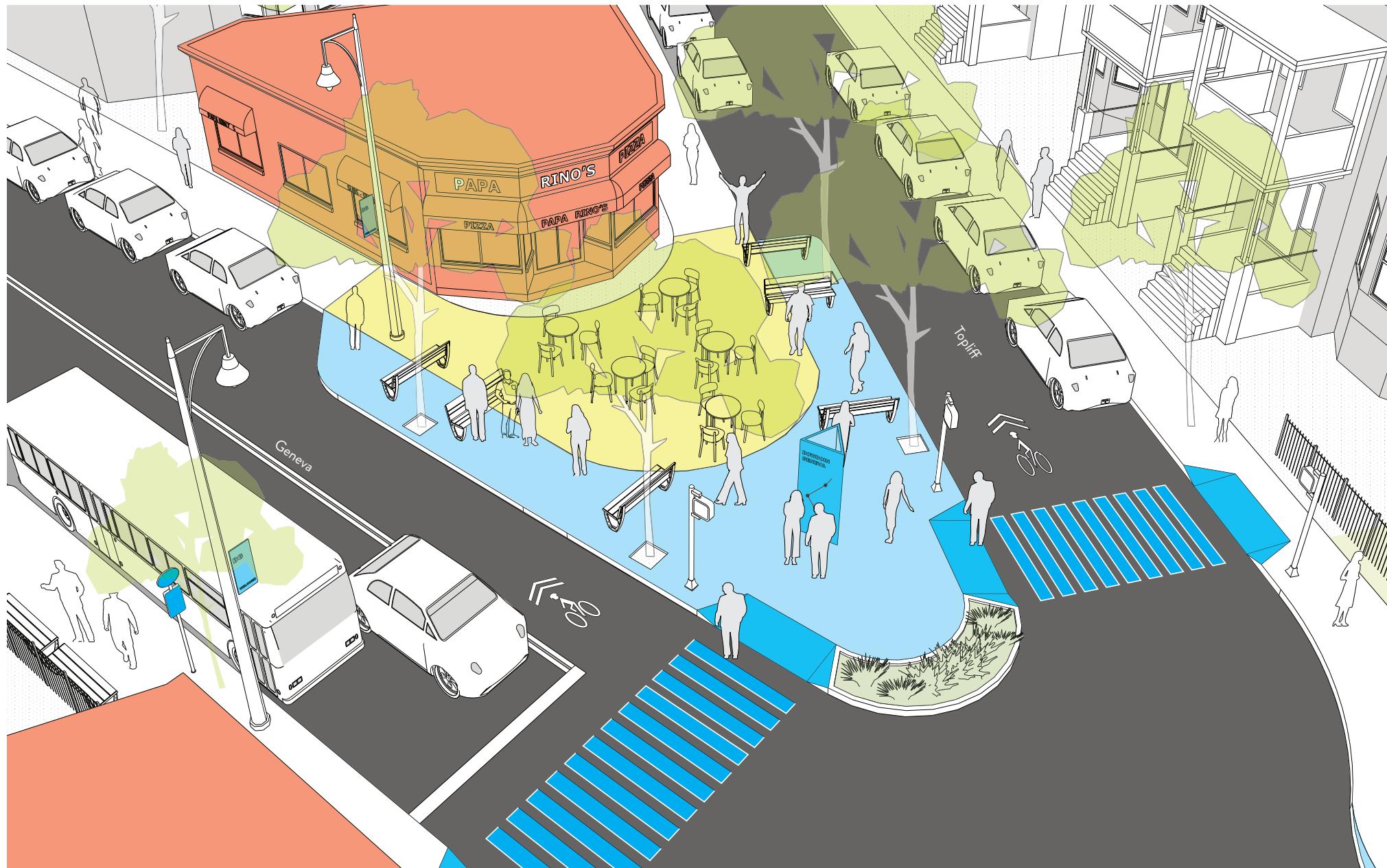
Public plaza in Philadelphia /
NACTO Urban Street Design Guide



Public plaza /
NACTO Urban Street Design Guide



Potential mixed-use development



Proposed plaza at the intersection of Geneva Avenue and Topliff Street

3. Better utilize Horner's Corner

CG



Key Partners: Fields Corner CDC, Seniors Groups

Horner's Corner is a pocket park located on Geneva Avenue and owned by Fields Corner CDC that is currently gated and locked. Additional activities in this space could benefit both residents and visitors, but public safety must be taken into account if the park is opened for programmed activities. If programmed in coordination with the residents surrounding the park, activities in Horner's Corner could boost foot traffic and add additional vibrancy to the intersection of Geneva and Bloomfield. Stakeholders also noted it could be an asset simply as a quiet greenspace if utilized by residents of nearby multifamily buildings, especially the elderly, young families, and children in nearby school programs. Programming would require multi-partner coordination but could bring great benefits to the Geneva Gateway cluster.

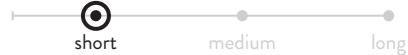


Existing condition of Horner's Corner



4. Activate existing community gardens

CG



Key Partners: Garden Trustees, New Lot Owner, VietAID

The Geneva Gateway includes several small but well distributed garden lots that can become spaces for additional community gathering and garden-related programming. These include two plots on Josephine Street and another on Geneva Avenue adjacent to Neville's Bakery. Activating these community gardens involves coordination with the owners of these lots to allow more open access to the gardens and engagement with the community to take greater ownership of the gardens for their upkeep and maintenance.

The trustees of the gardens expressed a desire to engage more community members in leadership around management and upkeep of these garden spaces for the community. Historically, the trustees and the Bowdoin Geneva Health Center have stepped up to coordinate the management of these gardens when leadership from the community has been lacking. This moment presents a unique opportunity for Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets and community members to integrate these gardens into the commercial fabric of the district and may present one of the more easily achievable interventions within the Geneva Gateway cluster.

The 3,000-square-foot corner parcel on Geneva Avenue adjacent to Neville's Bakery is currently being considered for redevelopment as an agricultural site promoting community open space and local food security. Part of this site should also be opened to the public (as a small plaza at the corner) so that it can similarly serve as a community gathering space.



Existing condition of 424-428A Geneva Avenue



Proposal for activating the existing community garden

5. Add curb extensions and crosswalks at other key intersections

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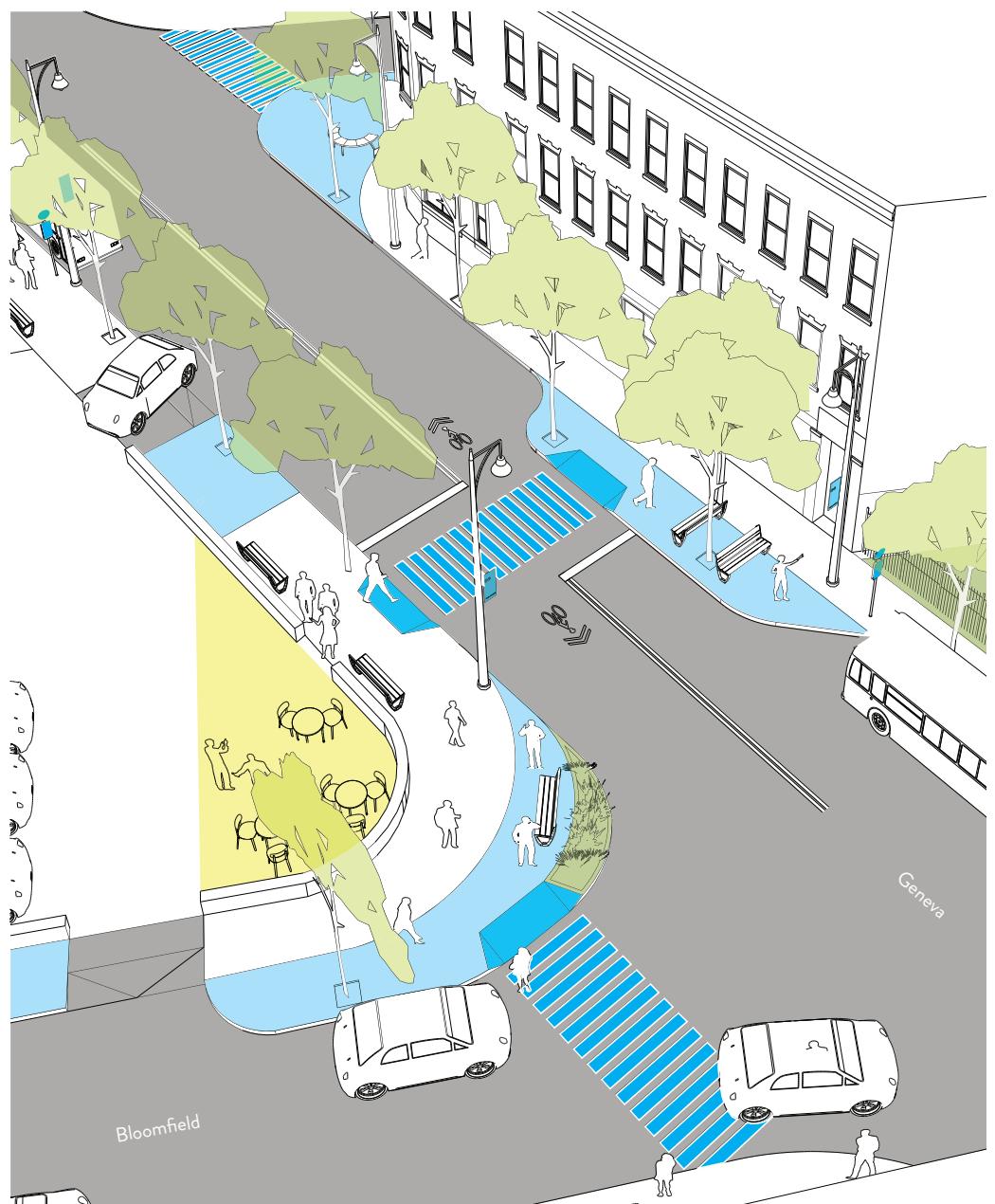
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Key Partners: MBTA, Boston Public Works, Boston Transportation Department, MassDOT

We suggest curb extensions at the key intersections along Geneva Avenue with Bloomfield, Leroy, Dakota, and Josephine Streets. These extensions are crucial to the pedestrian experience of the district, can help reduce pedestrian-vehicular conflicts by making crosswalks shorter and slowing down traffic, and should be explored in the Bowdoin Geneva transportation study underway by the Boston Transportation Department.

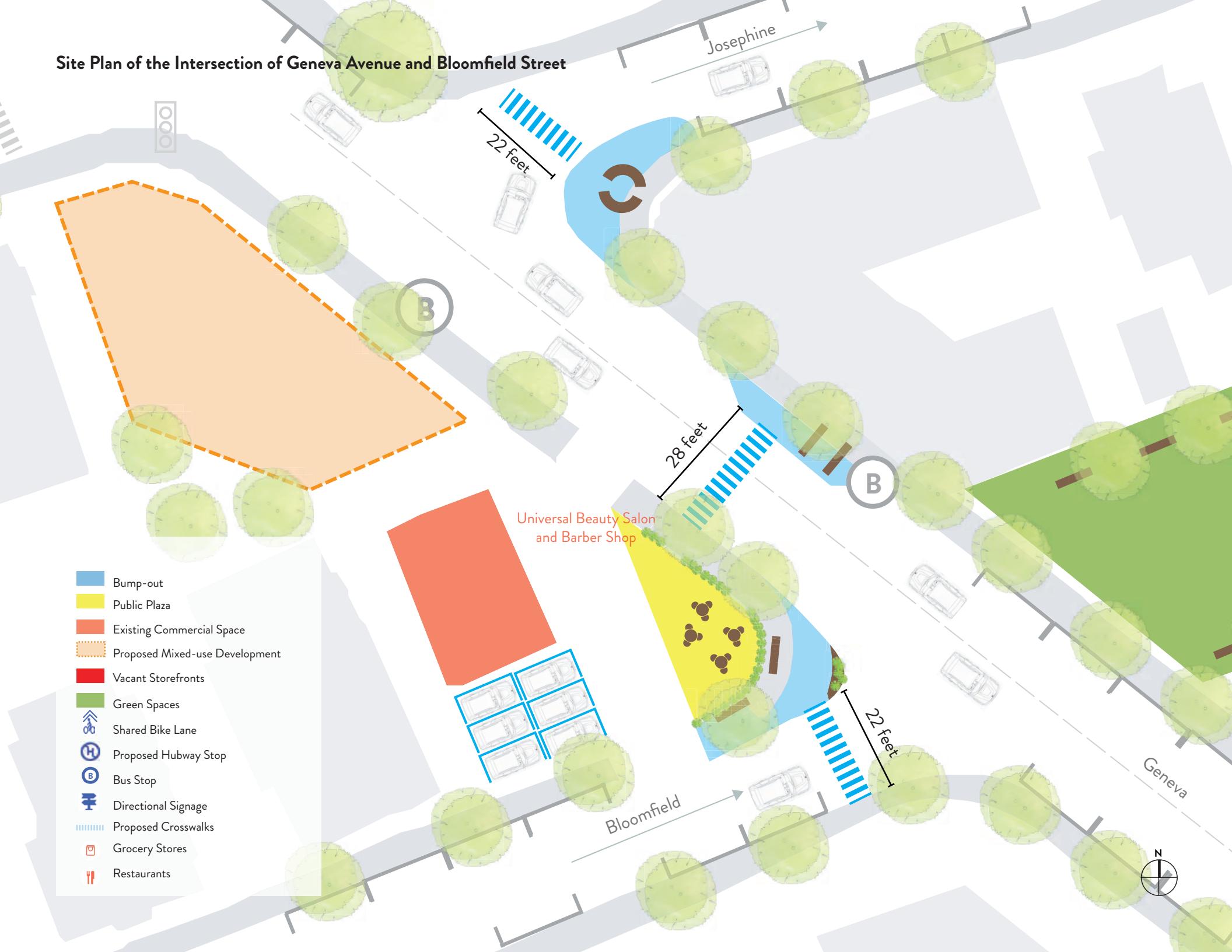


Existing condition at intersection of Geneva and Bloomfield



Curb extension at intersection of Geneva and Bloomfield

Site Plan of the Intersection of Geneva Avenue and Bloomfield Street



6. Pilot technical assistance for interior design renovations

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Key Partners: City of Boston Main Streets, Chris Moynihan & Retail Vision

Given Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets' challenge with limited capacity, we believe that creating technical assistance pilot projects in specific clusters will improve efficiency of service delivery. By targeting a select group of businesses for pilots, the organization will also expand its reach to include business owners that it does not currently partner with.

Half of all businesses surveyed in the Geneva Gateway cluster identified interior design as a desired area for technical assistance. Based on a comprehensive business inventory, we know that 56% of all commercial storefronts in this cluster are less than 1,000 square feet in size, and we believe that interior design decisions that maximize space can help make operations more efficient and improve customer experiences. Given that the City of Boston has already contracted consultants with relevant expertise and these services would be free of charge to Main Streets districts, we recommend an interior design pilot project in the Geneva Gateway cluster. While this pilot is relatively low hanging fruit, it may be necessary to bring on a Spanish-speaking consultant to ensure effective communication and engagement with relevant businesses.



Existing storefronts on Geneva Avenue



106 / RECOMMENDATIONS



57 percent of businesses in the Gateway Geneva cluster are in the food sector.

Establishing technical assistance pilots with businesses in the same sector may increase impact and efficiency

Geneva Gateway Plan



Geneva Gateway Implementation

	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Create a Gateway for Bowdoin Geneva the Fields Corner T stop	x		x
Create a plaza at the intersection of Geneva Avenue and Topliff Street	x	x	x
Better utilize Horner's Corner	x		
Activate existing community gardens		x	
Add curb extensions and crosswalks at other key intersections			x
Pilot technical assistance for Interior design renovations		x	

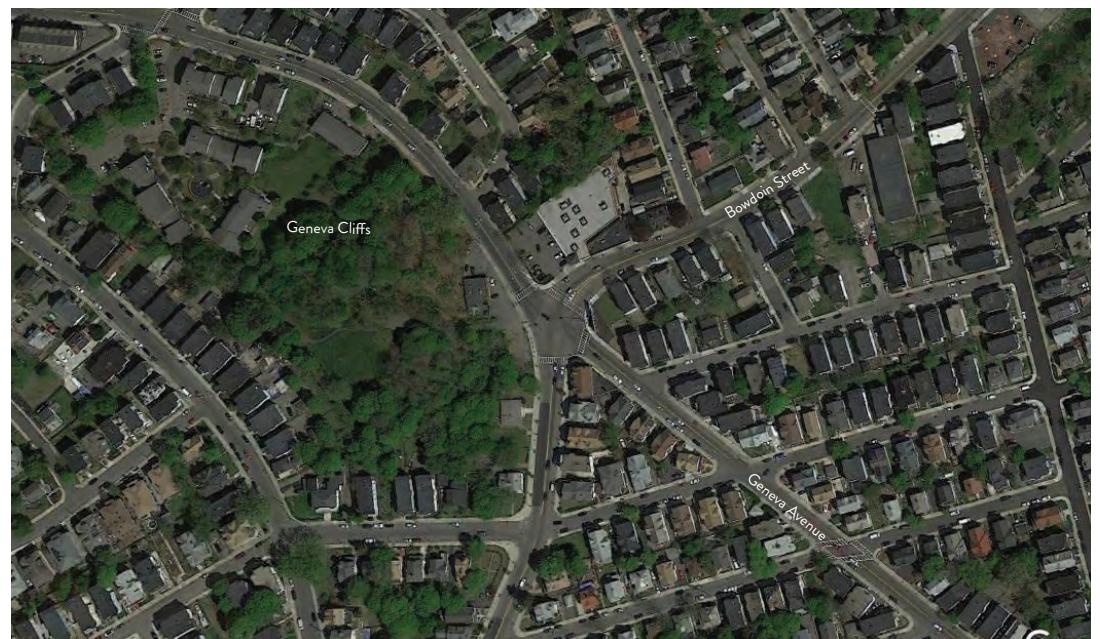


THE HINGE



Current Conditions

The intersection of Bowdoin Street and Geneva Avenue serves as a major crossroads in the district. Many of the uses in the cluster are currently car-oriented. The wide, fast-moving roadways, a Walgreen's and a convenience store that cater to passing drivers, and two large billboards that aim to catch their eyes dominate the area. Multiple vacant lots and vacant storefronts make the area feel relatively inactive and unwelcoming to people walking through. The cluster includes a major gathering space for the district in the Geneva Cliffs Urban Wild, but the lack of clear signage and poor sightlines into the park make it feel disconnected from the surrounding businesses. Although the intersection forms the hub of the two main streets of the commercial district, it does little to unite them beyond providing a street connection.



Aerial view of the Hinge cluster

Goals and Vision

Building upon the major opportunity of parkland located directly next to the intersection that binds Bowdoin Geneva into one district, recommendations for this cluster aim to make it both a literal and figurative connector for the neighborhood. The Hinge is where the whole community comes to congregate.

This occurs indoors and out: improvements to Geneva Cliffs and a new plaza where it meets the intersection open the possibility of hosting major community festivals, markets, concerts, and family reunions. A new community center at the entrance to the Cliffs provides additional, highly desired space for community meetings, trainings, local performances, and programming for families and seniors. A redesigned intersection provides new plaza space, a more active feel, and safer passage for pedestrians. Future development on the vacant or underused lots in the intersection provide new mixed-use buildings with commercial spaces housing entertainment businesses (e.g., a coffee shop, a bar and grill, a dance studio) that capitalize on the current market gap in the district and additional housing to address Boston's affordability crisis.

The Hinge is where Bowdoin Geneva residents come to celebrate and build community.



The billboard site



Wide crossing at Bowdoin Street



Computer Solutions for All store at the intersection



Geneva Cliffs



Eversource parcel



Inside Geneva Cliffs



Axonometric view of the cluster showing the proposals

I. Geneva Cliffs Park & Plaza

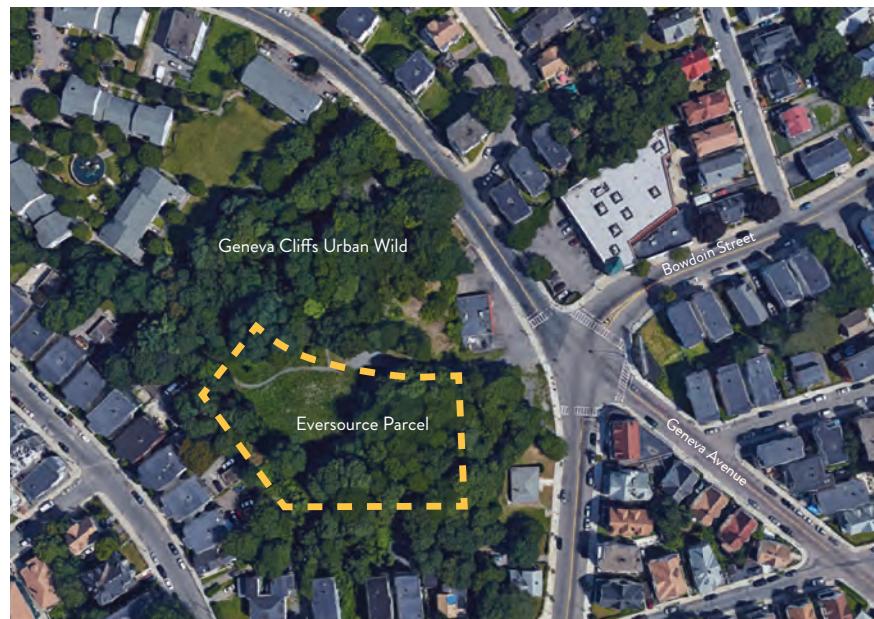
1. Secure Eversource parcel as parkland



CG

Key Partners: Local Elected Officials, Boston Department of Parks and Recreation, Friends of Geneva Cliffs

The Geneva Cliffs site is currently made up of two parcels: the urban wild, owned by the Boston Conservation Commission, and a green space owned by the utility Eversource, which is currently managed by the city as part of the park. Securing the Eversource parcel as official parkland is crucial to the future of the park and the surrounding area—it makes up a significant portion of the existing park and includes the space most conducive to community events. Before any significant physical improvements can be made to the site, this formal transfer must occur. Eversource has suggested a land swap with the city as a means for acquisition. Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets and the wider community should strongly advocate for such acquisition.



Aerial view showing the Eversource parcel

2. Change of Geneva Cliffs' Urban Wild designation



CG

Key Partners: Boston Department of Parks and Recreation, Friends of Geneva Cliffs, Boston Conservation Commission

Geneva Cliffs' designation as an urban wild presents barriers to many possible uses of the site—concerts, for example—as a way of preserving its “natural” character. This designation also means the Cliffs fall outside the maintenance responsibilities of the Boston Department of Parks and Recreation and constrains access to funds for the Cliffs’ operations. A redesignation of Geneva Cliffs (and of the Eversource parcel once acquired) as traditional parkland will open additional pathways to funding, better facilitate uses of the site desired by residents, and improve park maintenance.

The character of Geneva Cliffs naturally facilitates more active, intensive uses on the Eversource parcel. As an alternative to changing the whole Geneva Cliffs’ designation, the Eversource parcel, once acquired, could be administered as traditional parkland while the wild character of the original Cliffs area is maintained. This may, however, limit possible funding and maintenance sources for the Cliffs.



Street art to create a gathering place



Street furniture

3. Create public plaza at the entrance to Geneva Cliffs

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Key Partners: Boston Department of Parks and Recreation, Friends of Geneva Cliffs, Boston Transportation Department, Adjacent Property Owners, Sustainability Guild

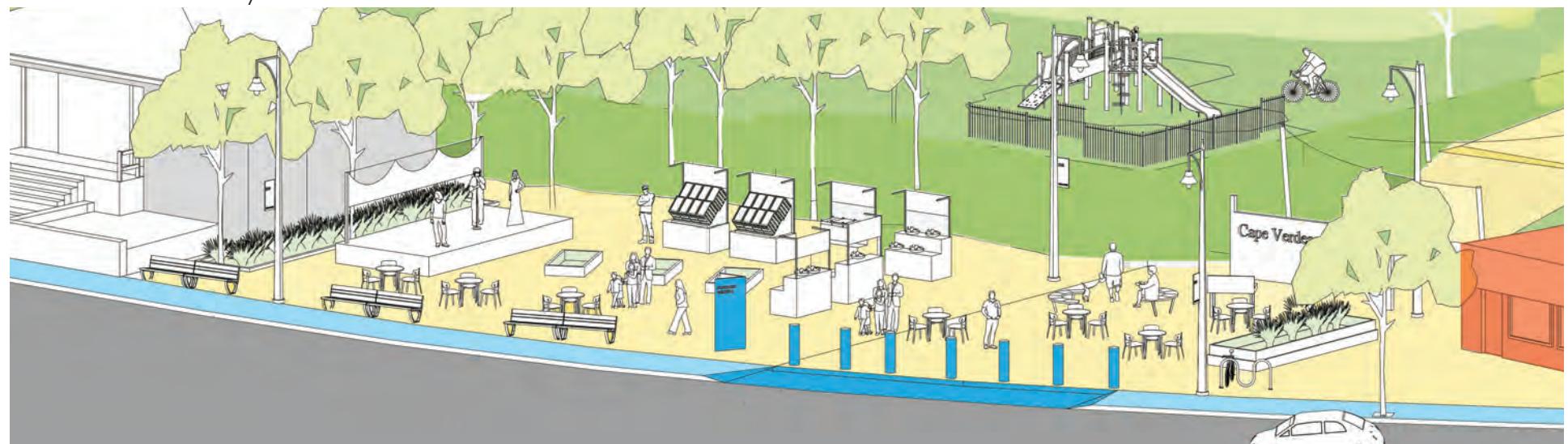
The street that currently leads from the Bowdoin Street / Geneva Avenue intersection into Geneva Cliffs provides an effective but very poorly marked entrance to the park. The creation of a public plaza adjacent to the intersection can not only provide an additional space for public events; it will further integrate the park into the life of the intersection and the wider district. This work should proceed in multiple phases:

Phase 1

Initially, improved lighting along the street into the park can serve as a wayfinding tool and means of better articulating the park entrance. Furthermore, creative or distinct painting or other treatment of the pavement of the road will further mark this space as the entrance to the park and a space for public congregation.

Phase 2

This temporary designation of the plaza can, in the long term, become permanent. Public space generated from the development of the two adjacent parcels (read further for discussion) can also be integrated with the roadway to create a large plaza that can play host to community festivals, markets, and relocated activities from the current Community Hub.



The space can be activated with temporary activities like a farmer's market or a music performance.

Use of moveable furniture, granite blocks, and planters can allow for congregation while still maintaining car access to the Cliffs when necessary. Bringing the city's Wicked Free WiFi program to the plaza could further encourage its use. The installation of an arch similar to the one marking another entrance to Geneva Cliffs can further articulate the entrance to the park. The creation of the plaza overall presents a major opportunity to create iconic piece of public art that represents the district, possibly in painting design or through other installations, at a crucial intersection.

4. Selectively clear underbrush and trees and regrade entrance to Geneva Cliffs

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CG

Key Partners: Boston Department of Parks and Recreation, Friends of Geneva Cliffs

Poor sight lines into Geneva Cliffs along the street leading into the park from the Bowdoin Street / Geneva Avenue intersection not only makes it feel disconnected from the district; these barriers present safety concerns to community members. Removing some trees, particularly to the south of the access road, and regrading that portion of the site to create a more gradual grade change into the park can open up view corridors, provide more visibility, allow the activity of the intersection and the park to join together, and create a more continuous space for community events between the plaza and the park. The capital budget of the Urban Wild program currently has funds that could be put toward such an intervention.

5. Add infrastructure to the park to support community uses

CG



Key Partners: Boston Department of Parks and Recreation, Friends of Geneva Cliffs

The Geneva Cliffs Urban Wild and the adjacent Eversource parcel currently include almost no infrastructure to support community events and use of the park. If the designation of the Cliffs is changed to traditional parkland and the Eversource parcel is acquired as official parkland, infrastructure should be added to the site to facilitate more frequent use and accommodate activities that formerly occurred at the Community Hub in Central Bowdoin. Most crucially, the site does not currently have water or power hook-ups, making any event extremely difficult to put on here. Adding lighting along the access road and in the park itself will further increase the possibilities and help to improve the sense of safety in the park.

That more fundamental infrastructure, as well as amenities like picnic tables, benches, sheds, grills, and possibly a stage, would be best situated in the open space at the top of the access road which, through clearing and grading, will become significantly more visible from the intersection. This more passive infrastructure might be further paired with the addition of sports facilities, such as goals for a small soccer field.

In the ultimate vision, the plaza, road, and clearing will work as a continuous network of public open space for more intensive, active uses, while the current Urban Wild will remain a more “natural” space. This network will improve the feeling of safety and activity in the park while also drawing more people from the intersection into the park.

6. Relocate Home Depot Playground to the Geneva Cliffs Park and Plaza

CG



Key Partners: Boston Department of Parks and Recreation, Friends of Geneva Cliffs

The current Home Depot Playground at 151 Bowdoin Street, referred to as the tot lot, often goes unused because of safety concerns. The play equipment is set back from the street and relatively isolated from other activity in the district, making it an uninviting place to play. Moving the playground to the reconfigured entrance of Geneva Cliffs, alongside the entrance road above the plaza, will provide more visibility and connection with complementary uses, like the park, plaza, and the proposed community center (more on that below). The current site of the playground could then be sold for residential development to match the character of the surrounding properties, and funds from the sale can be used to support the playground’s reconstruction and expansion at Geneva Cliffs.



View of Home Depot Playground

7. Plant additional trees on the southeastern portion of the park to buffer residential areas

CG



Key Partners: Boston Department of Parks and Recreation, Friends of Geneva Cliffs

With more intensive uses of the park will come additional noise. Currently, the southeastern edge of the park is quite open to the residences just beyond the fence marking the edge of the parkland. Planting additional trees along that edge can help to buffer park activities from the residences.

II. Intersection and Streetscape Redesign

8. Retime Traffic and Crossing Lights

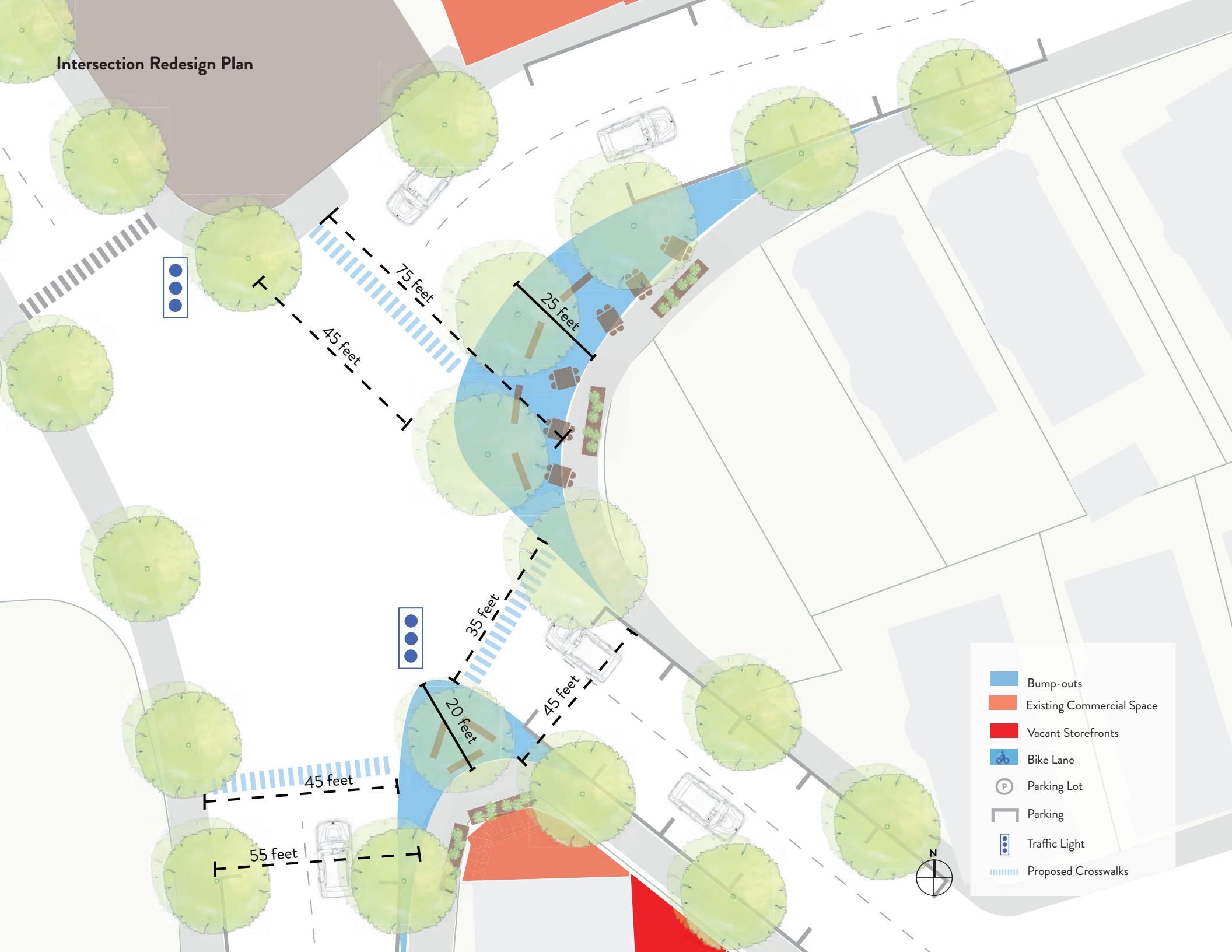
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Key Partners: Boston Transportation Department, Boston Planning and Development Agency, Boston Department of Public Works

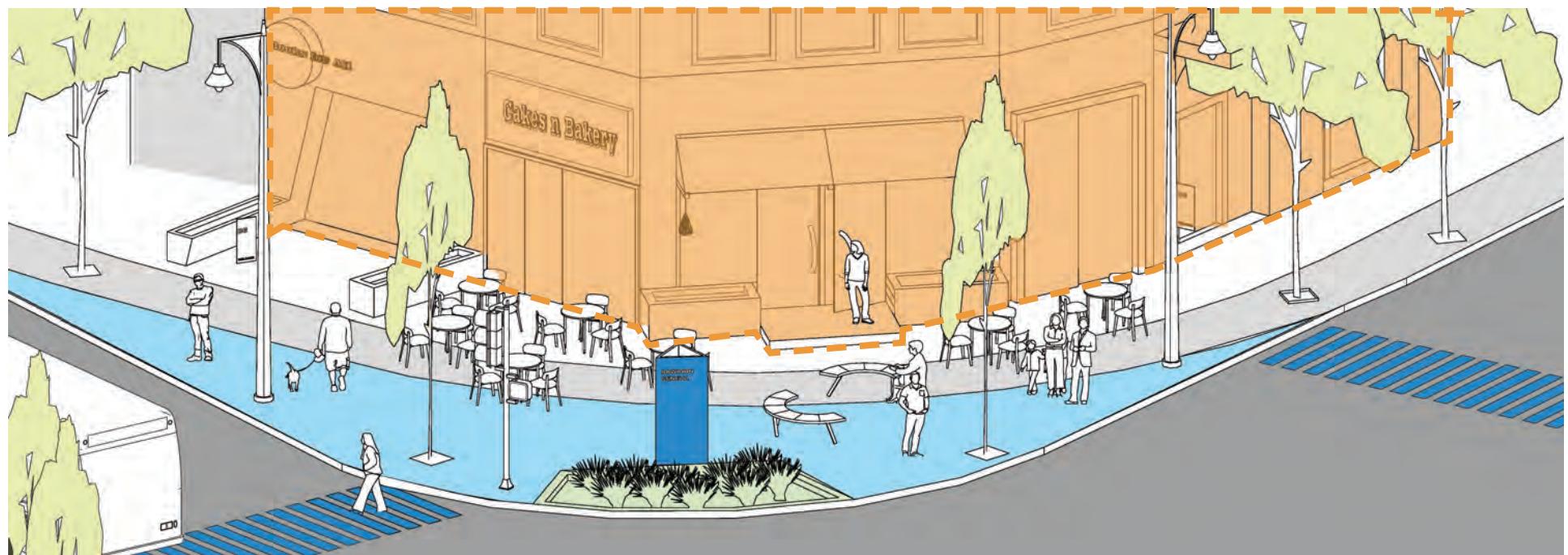
The Bowdoin Street / Geneva Avenue intersection is currently configured to facilitate the movement of cars through the district, with short crossing times for pedestrians and wide travel lanes. To increase safety for pedestrians, the traffic lights should be studied and retimed to give people more time to cross this intersection in all directions but most importantly across Bowdoin Street between the Walgreen’s parking lot and the billboard site. These are modest changes that will at least give pedestrians the appropriate amount of time to cross the street.

Intersection Redesign Plan





The new intersection design reduces the crossing distance and creates space for accommodating street furniture, making the intersection more safe.



View of the proposed bump-out

9. Create Sidewalk Bump-outs

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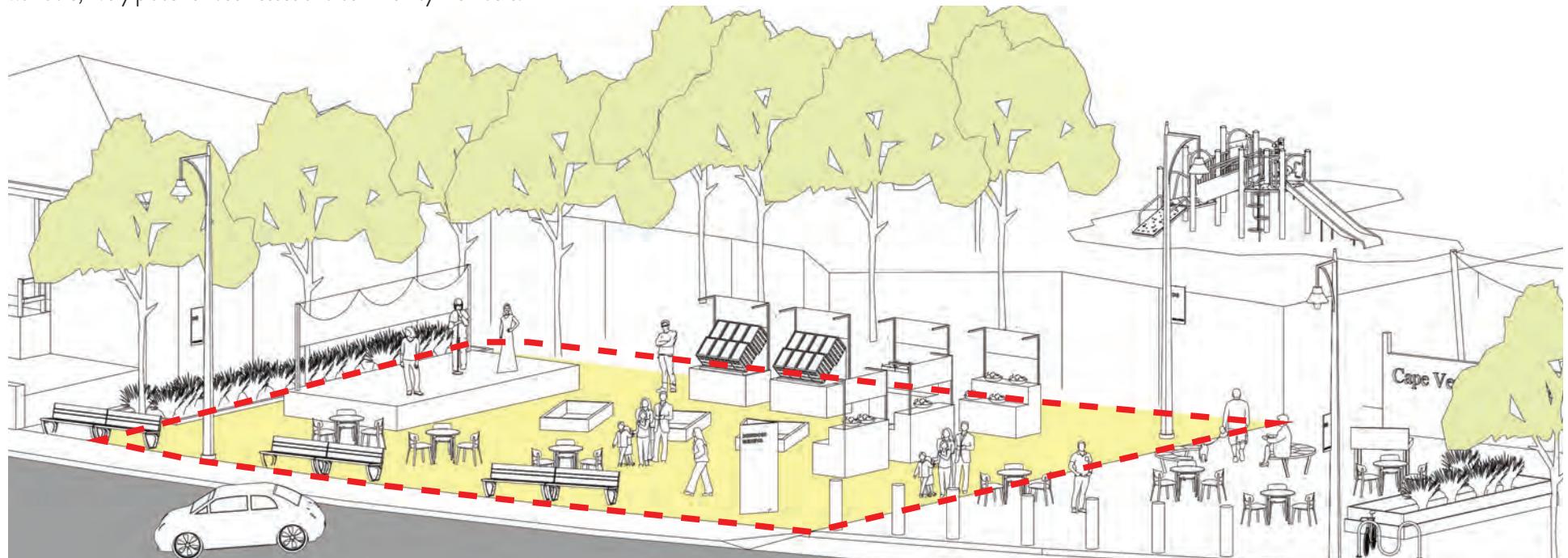
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Key Partners: Boston Transportation Department, Boston Planning and Development Agency, Boston Department of Public Works

The road space in this intersection should be constricted to maximize pedestrian space and reduce the length of crosswalks. One possible scenario involves the creation of sidewalk bump-outs on the southern edge of Bowdoin Street in front of the billboard site and across Geneva Avenue in front of the southern triangle. These new pedestrian plazas should be populated with street trees and benches to create active gathering spaces that respond to the adjacent business uses. The new plaza next to the billboard site could be activated and maintained by a business that would occupy the ground floor of new mixed-use development on the site.

Since these bump-outs will not change the function of the intersection, we expect there to be no impact on traffic. However, further studies should be done to understand the full effect of this kind of intervention. We also expect the amount of on-street parking spaces would remain the same but should be explicitly marked on the street. This particular redesign could be piloted using temporary pavement painting or planters to test the impact. Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets should push for a pedestrian focus during the Boston Transportation Department study of this intersection in order to create a more walkable, lively place for businesses and community members.



The Endeavor Capital site (marked in red) can be transformed for community activities.

III. Endeavor Capital Development Site (126 Bowdoin Street)

10. Work with owner to use vacant lot as temporary extension of proposed plaza

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Key Partners: Endeavor Capital, Boston Conservation Commission, Boston Department of Parks and Recreation, Friends of Geneva Cliffs

126 Bowdoin Street, one of the largest vacant sites in the commercial district, has been owned by Endeavor Capital since 2011 but sits empty and poorly maintained. With permission of the owner, the site could become a valuable extension to the short-term treatment of the Geneva Cliffs access road as a plaza. Following clean-up, the site could become the home of relocated Community Hub activities, markets, and other community events before the permanent plaza and the site itself are developed. While more activity in the area in the long-term will hopefully improve the sense of safety in the area, in the short-term this plaza space should be primarily geared to events, not general passive use. Programming and coordination with local police can ensure a sense of safety at these events until greater presence of people and a more active intersection can promote safer spaces.

11. Promote dense, mixed-use development that sensitively responds to the park and adds to Geneva Cliffs Plaza

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Key Partners: Endeavor Capital, Boston Conservation Commission, Boston Department of Parks and Recreation, Friends of Geneva Cliffs, Local CDCs, Local Elected Officials, Boston Planning and Development Authority

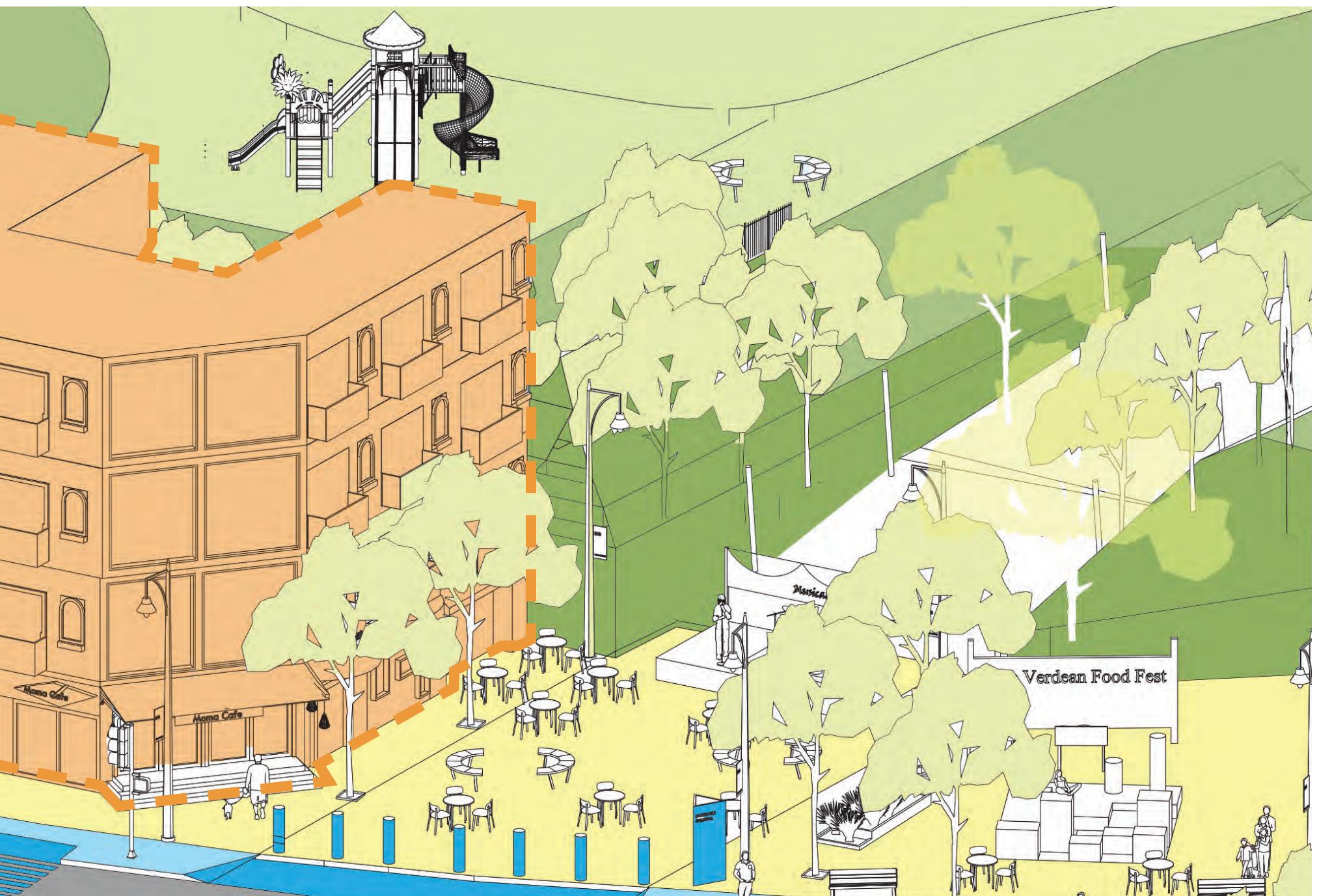
Ultimate development of this key parcel should be a goal, but strong community advocacy and clear requirements are needed to ensure a development proposal that both responds to the physical context and the needs and desires of the community.

Current zoning for the site greatly constrains the development possibilities, largely in undesirable ways. “Local Convenience” zoning only allows for a floor area ratio (FAR) of 1 and a maximum height of 40 feet, which would result in a level of density that is far lower than we recommend. It also prohibits many uses, including some entertainment uses that we found missing from the district in our market analysis. In addition to compliance with district-wide development guidelines, a successful development on this site would fulfill the following criteria:

- Transparent commercial ground floor that can attract a business to respond to entertainment demands in the district, help to maintain and program the plaza, and remain compatible with the park. Possible uses include a gym, a dance studio, an arcade, a small movie theater, or, if the community decides it is appropriate, a night club. While we have heard some support for the latter, many community members remain wary of this kind of night life for its association with past safety issues in the neighborhood.
- Multistory (2-3 additional stories) residential development above that responds to Boston’s affordability crisis and houses additional customers of the district
- Expansion of the plaza space into the development site in a cohesive manner
- Where the plaza ends, adjacency of the building to the street edge
- Any necessary service or parking entrances are situated on the southern edge of the site and/or behind/beneath the building.
- Connection of the residential portion of the development to the park facilitates park use but does not result into a quasi-privatization of the public parkland.
- Footprint siting to facilitate view corridors from the intersection into the park and vice versa
- Commercial space available to house business relocation for any businesses affected by other development in the intersection

Such current uses and characteristics would be impossible to achieve under the current zoning designation, inhibiting both the community benefits of such a development and possible profits for the developer. Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets should use the carrot of support for a possible variance for the developer to ensure these guidelines are met. This effort should be coordinated with the Boston Department of Parks and Recreation which, under Ordinance 7.4-11, has the authority to review development proposals adjacent to parkland. Together, Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets and Parks can ensure that the development of this key site benefits the community and enhances and expands upon existing public space while also providing benefits to the developer.





Proposed mixed-use development

If the current owner of the site is unwilling to work with Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets to achieve these goals for the parcel, the organization should coordinate with local CDCs, potentially VietAID or Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation, to acquire the site and pursue development in line with these principles.

IV. Star 50 Convenience Site (303-263 Geneva Avenue)

12. Include outdoor seating for the business as an expansion of the temporary plaza



Key Partners: Star 50 Convenience, Geneva Ave, LLC

The owner of Star 50 Convenience has expressed interest and plans to add a food business to his current store, and the parking lot of the store is currently quite large. Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets should encourage the owner to add outdoor seating in the warmer months that could serve as an extension of the interim plaza and seating for the food part of the business. Such an addition may also encourage the owner to become a steward of the plaza as a whole and ensure that the space is maintained.

13. Facilitate trash relocation and fence removal adjacent to Geneva Cliffs entrance



Key Partners: Star 50 Convenience, Geneva Ave, LLC, Boston Conservation Commission, Friends of Geneva Cliffs

Star 50 Convenience currently keeps its trash dumpster to the south of its building, adjacent to the entry to Geneva Cliffs. At times, this has led to trash spreading into the park. Furthermore, the business has fencing near the edge of its property that presents a less than welcome entrance to the park. Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets should work with Star 50 Convenience on the relocation of the dumpster and possible fence removal as a way to improve the entrance to the park.

14. Encourage the redevelopment of the parcel into a new Bowdoin Geneva Community Center



Key Partners: Star 50 Convenience, Geneva Ave, LLC, City of Boston, Boston Department of Parks and Recreation, Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets, Cape Verdean Business Association, Eastern Service Workers Association, Other Local Non-Profits

Throughout the community engagement process, the lack of indoor spaces in which families can gather was brought up time and again. While the district does support some other indoor





The Bowdoin Geneva Community Center can act as a gateway to the district.

spaces like the Teen Center, churches, and informal locales like barbershops and salons, these are currently not meeting all expressed needs of residents.

The development of a dedicated community center on the site of Star 50 Convenience would fulfill many needs and goals for the district, among them:

- Providing such a space for families to congregate,
- Creating a community landmark at a major entrance and intersection, and
- Adding facilities for Geneva Cliffs Park & Plaza.

This two-story building can anchor the intersection with a unique design, providing the lynchpin, along with the park itself, to the improved integration of Geneva Avenue and Bowdoin Street. Limiting the height to two stories will ensure that views from the most unique locations within Geneva Cliffs are maintained. The site's visibility from up Bowdoin Street and down Geneva Avenue further facilitates this, as would activities to draw people from across the district, possibly including:

- Community meetings,
- Performances,
- Art shows,
- Trainings and classes, including a possible fabrication lab, and
- Events for seniors and day care space for small children.

While these activities would ideally take place on the first floor, utilizing the plaza, park, and relocated tot lot as part of its activities, the second floor might include space for offices of local non-profits and social service organizations that currently occupy valuable ground floor space in the commercial district that could be opened up to new businesses. Space for Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets, Eastern Service Workers Association, and the Cape Verdean Business Association might be best suited for this space, as would meeting space for organizations like the Freres Reunis Orient of Boston, Alcoholics Anonymous, and churches in Central Bowdoin that use their storefronts infrequently. This second floor space might also serve as incubator space for small local businesses.

The center would likely require significant public investment to realize. Whether an existing organization, the city itself through the Department of Parks and Recreation, or a new non-profit organization would be best tasked with managing the center is unclear, though the project is ultimately a highly collaborative one that would require the coordination of many parties, private and public.

This plan, of course, is predicated on the willingness of the current property owner, Geneva Ave, LLC, to sell the property and will imply the relocation of Star 50 Convenience, which currently holds a lease on the building through 2025. Given the project's long time frame, Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets should work with Star 50 Convenience and the possible developer of the Endeavor Capital site to facilitate the business's successful move within the neighborhood.

15. If Community Center proves infeasible, ensure any future development on the site meets community needs and responds to unique location B CG

[\$\$]



Key Partners: Star 50 Convenience, Geneva Ave, LLC, City of Boston, Boston Department of Parks and Recreation, Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets, Local CDCs

The creation of a community center is an ambitious endeavor. If for whatever reason it is not realized, or if alternative development proposals by Geneva Ave, LLC or another owner arise before it can be realized, Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets should strongly advocate for a mixed-use development that responds appropriately to Geneva Cliffs Park & Plaza.

As with the Endeavor Capital site, current zoning constrains possible uses in possibly detrimental ways. A similar set of development criteria in line with the overall district development guidelines should guide the community's approach to such development. The possibility of support for a variance and approval by the Department of Parks and Recreation should be used as leverage to achieve community goals for the district.

Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets might also seek to encourage such beneficial development in conjunction with a support strategy for the relocation of Star 50 Convenience. Ultimately this parcel along with the Endeavor Capital site are crucial to the future of the intersection and the viability of Geneva Cliffs Park & Plaza as a true community gathering space. Accordingly, we encourage strong oversight of the development process.

VI. Billboard Site & Adjacent Vacant Parcel (131 Bowdoin Street & 137/137A Bowdoin Street)

16. Acquire billboard site and/or secure billboards' use for community purpose as temporary wayfinding or art landmark M CG

[\$\$]



Key Partners: Clear Channel, Local Elected Officials, MassDOT, Local CDCs

The location of two very large billboards on one of the key parcels of the Bowdoin Street / Geneva Avenue intersection is undesirable for a number of reasons: not only does it solidify the area's orientation to cars passing by rather than to individuals living in and walking through the district; it reinforces the lack of activity in the area with its passive use and arguably negatively impacts surrounding property values. Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets should explore the acquisition of this site from the owner Clear Channel in conjunction with a community development corporation or another developer. If the owner is unwilling to sell, a more political approach to acquisition could be taken.

Such billboards require yearly permit approval from MassDOT; a community push to deny such permits in conjunction with elected officials could lead to the billboard business no longer being viable on the site. A legal strategy could also be taken: the state supreme judicial and superior courts have jurisdiction to order the removal or abatement of outdoor advertising if the court classifies the billboards as a nuisance.

Once acquired, the billboards can be used as a canvas for wayfinding in the district or a major temporary landmark art piece that welcomes people into Bowdoin Geneva. A rotating series of pieces on the site could become not only a place of pride and a creative use in the district but an attractor of additional visiting customers. Other creative reuses of billboards should also be explored.

17. Encourage consolidation of the billboard site and the adjacent vacant parcel and development as a mixed-use development



B CG

Key Partners: Clear Channel, Local Elected Officials, MassDOT, Local CDCs, Vacant Parcel Owner

While the size and shape of the billboard and vacant parcels individually present challenges to development, the two sites, if aggregated, present a promising site for new mixed-use development.

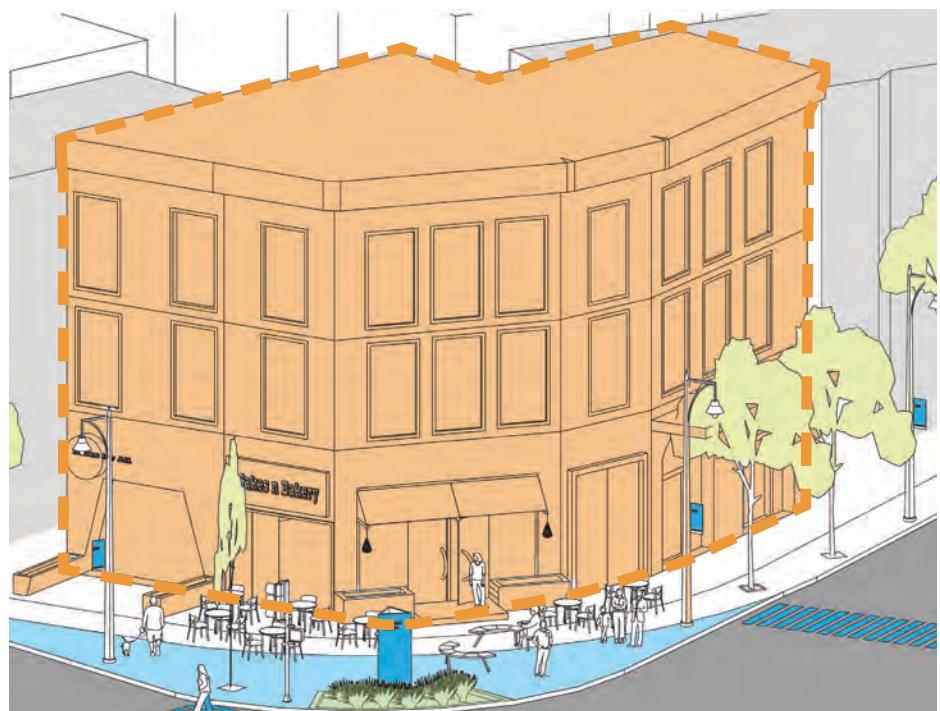
Such a development would provide ground-floor commercial space that could capture resident spending on entertainment currently happening outside the district and form a fruitful connection to the adjacent proposed plaza. The commercial space would be particularly well-suited to a café/bakery or bar and grill—two business types residents have voiced a desire for. Such businesses could make use of the plaza for outdoor seating, help maintain and program the space, and increase activity in the area later into the night as music venues or spaces to watch a sports game. The plaza, in conjunction with one of these businesses, would be a particularly good space to take advantage of the city's Acoustic on Main program.

The vacant parcel adjacent to the billboard site is currently owned by the homeowner of 2 Levant Street, also next to the billboard site. While the owner's plans for the parcel are not yet known, Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets should encourage its acquisition, along with the billboard site, by a single developer, possibly a local CDC like VietAID or Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation.

The addition of two to three floors of residential units on top of the commercial ground floor can further help address Boston's affordability crisis and house new customers for the district, thereby bringing additional activity to the intersection.



Using the billboard as a site for community art



Proposed mixed-use development after consolidating the parcels



Two vacant storefronts along Geneva Avenue can attract new businesses.

VII. Vacant Storefronts (121 Bowdoin Street)

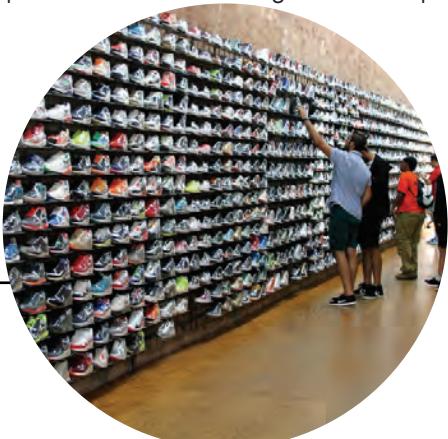
18. Arrange for interim use of the vacant spaces to bring more activity to the area

B CG



Key Partners: Property Owner, Boston Public Library, Arts Organizations, Artists, Entrepreneurs

Two adjacent storefronts currently sit vacant just to the south of the intersection on Geneva Avenue. While long-term occupancy by new tenants should be pursued immediately, these storefronts can become active contributors to the business district in the short term through interim uses. These can function as displays (the storefront windows can become space for an art installation geared toward pedestrians) or house more active tenants.



Sneaker Store



Flower Store

Possibilities include temporary rehearsal or residency space for local artists or co-working space for local businesspeople. A more ambitious temporary use might involve a partnership with the Boston Public Library or a local university to pilot a small, storefront library in the district.

19. Support property owner in securing new tenants that bring retail diversity to the neighborhood and cater to local residents

B



Key Partners: Property Owner, Boston Public Library, Arts Organizations, Artists, Entrepreneurs

Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets should assist the property owner of the two vacant storefronts to secure new tenants. This may include recruitment of particular businesses or matching between entrepreneurs looking for space and the owner. The two storefronts are too small to accommodate many business types; accordingly, the owner may consider combining the spaces into one.

Business types that may be well-suited to the location and the size of the storefronts (or combined storefront) include a retail soccer store that appeals to the young people in the neighborhood, a consignment shop, a garden/flower store, or a sneaker/T-shirt store. These spaces could also potentially serve as small incubator spaces for new businesses.

VIII. Other Partnerships and Programming

20. Leverage presence of Walgreen's for community events and sponsorship

B CG



Key Partners: Walgreen's

The location of a major corporate business like Walgreen's in this intersection presents the opportunity for support from the business's corporate offices for community events and improvements. Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets should engage Walgreen's as a community stakeholder and encourage it to financially support these recommendations (from which it would benefit) through financial sponsorship, possibly drawing on Walgreen's Foundation funding.

The Hinge Plan



The Hinge Implementation

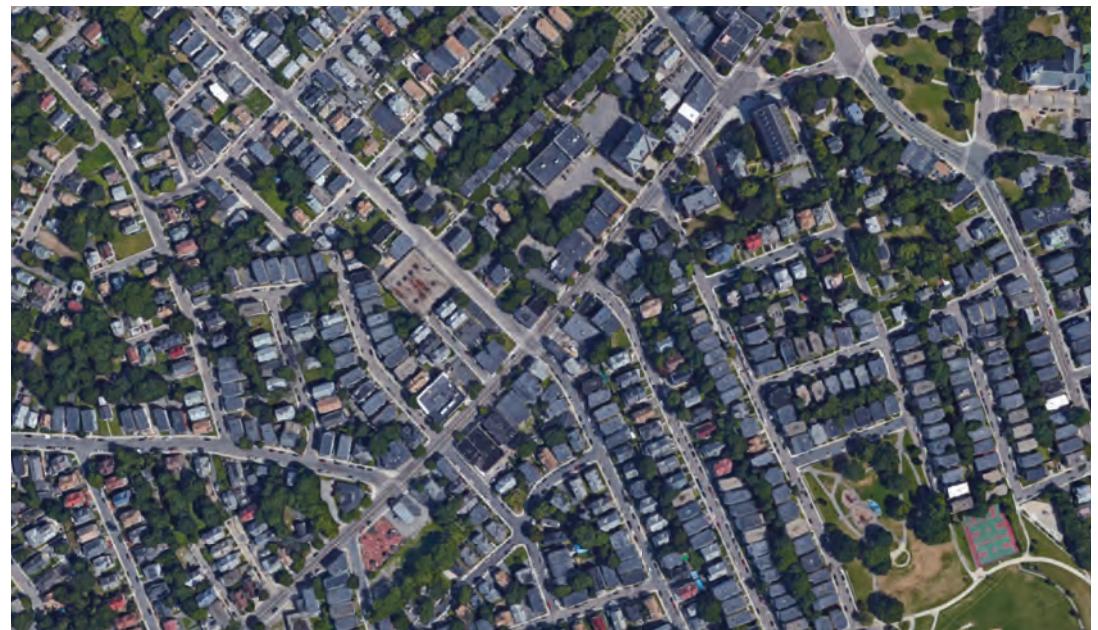
	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Secure Eversource parcel as parkland			x	Promote dense, mixed-use development that sensitively responds to the park and adds to Geneva Cliffs plaza		x
Change Geneva Cliffs' urban wild designation	x			Include outdoor seating for the business as an expansion of the temporary plaza		x
Create public plaza at the Entrance to Geneva Cliffs	x	x		Facilitate trash relocation and fence removal adjacent to Geneva Cliffs entrance		x
Selectively clear underbrush and trees and regrade entrance to Geneva Cliffs		x		Encourage the redevelopment of the parcel into a new Bowdoin Geneva Community Center		x
Add infrastructure to the park to support community uses		x		Acquire billboard site and/or secure billboard's use for community purpose		x
Relocate Home Depot playground to the Geneva Cliffs park and plaza			x	Encourage consolidation of the billboard site and adjacent vacant parcel as mixed-use development		x
Plant additional trees on the south-eastern portion of the park			x	Arrange for interim use of the vacant spaces	x	
Retime traffic and crossing lights	x			Support property owner in securing new tenants that bring retail diversity to the neighborhood		x
Create sidewalk bump-outs			x	Leverage presence of Walgreen's for community events and sponsorship		x
Work with owner to use vacant lot as temporary extension of proposed plaza	x					



CENTRAL BOWDOIN

Current Conditions

The central portion of Bowdoin Street, from Coppins Square in the north to Tebroc Street in the south, currently serves as the principal hub of activity for the district. The cluster is anchored by the Bowdoin Street Health Center, which brings significant foot traffic to the area during business hours. A lively strip of commercial storefronts, including businesses like the Cape Verdean landmark Restaurante Cesaria, new arrival Pollo Centro, local grocery store America's Food Basket, barber shops, hair salons, and retail establishments surround the health center for two to three blocks on either side. The sidewalks bustle with pedestrians walking from one destination to the next or waiting for the 17 bus to come. At various times of day, the street is congested, most notably during school pick-up. Despite the constant daytime activity in the area, vacant and underutilized storefronts create noticeable gaps along the street and commercial activity dies off quickly in the early evening, with very little going on after 8pm. The largest public space in the area, Coppins Square, is largely uninviting and underutilized.



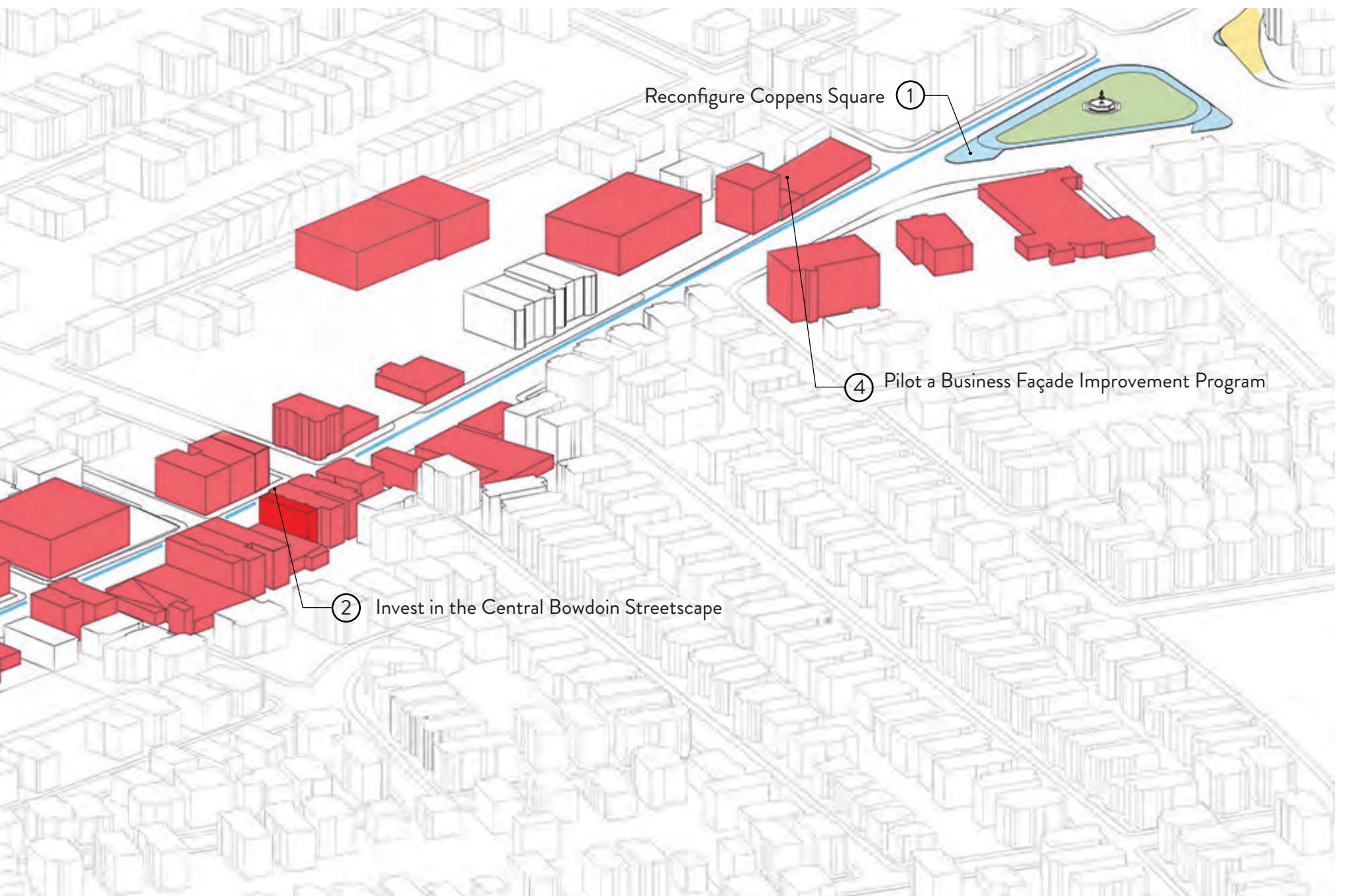
Aerial view of Central Bowdoin cluster

Goals and Vision

The main vision behind the recommendations for this cluster is to fill in the gaps of activity to reinforce and improve Central Bowdoin's role as the heart of Bowdoin Geneva and the center of services and everyday activities. Our approach is multifaceted, involving activating underutilized public and private spaces, improving the pedestrian experience, and upgrading the building stock. Our plan involves enhancing community gathering spaces at key nodes in the cluster, including Coppens Square; bringing business activity onto the street through the addition of street furniture; and using parking lots, like one at St. Peter's Teen Center, for community events.

Central Bowdoin is where Bowdoin Geneva residents and visitors alike come daily for everyday activity and special occasions.





1. Reconfigure Coppens Square

B M CG

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short medium long

Key Partners: Friends of Coppens Square, Boston Transportation Department, Boston Department of Public Works, St. Peter's Church, A Better Block

Coppens Square is the main open space in the cluster, just north of many of the businesses in the district and directly across from St. Peter's Church. The small park contains benches, trees, and a fountain that has not worked in many years. The Friends of Coppens Square organization has proposed a plan to revitalize the park and bring the fountain back to working order, but funding has not yet been secured for this project. In its current condition, the square is surrounded by two-way traffic on all sides and has only three crosswalks connecting it to the surrounding blocks.

Our proposal would extend the footprint of Coppens Square to create a more pedestrian-friendly path to and around the park. The southwestern edge of the park would be extended and would wrap around to the Bowdoin Street extension. Crosswalks from the extension would be added to both the eastern and western sides of Bowdoin Street extension, shortening the existing crosswalks and placing them more in line with a pedestrian's desired path. The Bowdoin Street extension would become a one-way street (northbound traffic only) and would feature on-street parking on the eastern side and a dedicated bike lane between the parking and driving lanes. Additional angled parking could be added on the western side of the street as well for an increase of four spaces. On the northern side of the park, a curb bump-out and crosswalk would be added across Adams Street at Bowdoin Street.

The extension of the square's footprint could be implemented on a temporary basis, using moveable planters, or it could be made permanent through raised paving. Using moveable planters would provide flexibility to modify the footprint of the park and close off the Bowdoin Street extension temporarily for special events. Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets could use the closed-off street to host spring or summer merchant festivals to promote the businesses in the district. Additionally, St. Peter's Church or other community organizations could host block parties, festivals, crafts fairs, or outdoor music as community-building events in this space.

To initiate a reconfiguration of the park footprint and changes to the traffic pattern, Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets could partner with A Better Block, an organization which installs temporary furniture to reconfigure street and sidewalk patterns as a means to create advocacy around long-term transportation capital planning. If the reconfiguration proves to be popular, the temporary and inexpensive implementation can be converted by the city into a permanent and more expensive reconfiguration of the park's footprint.

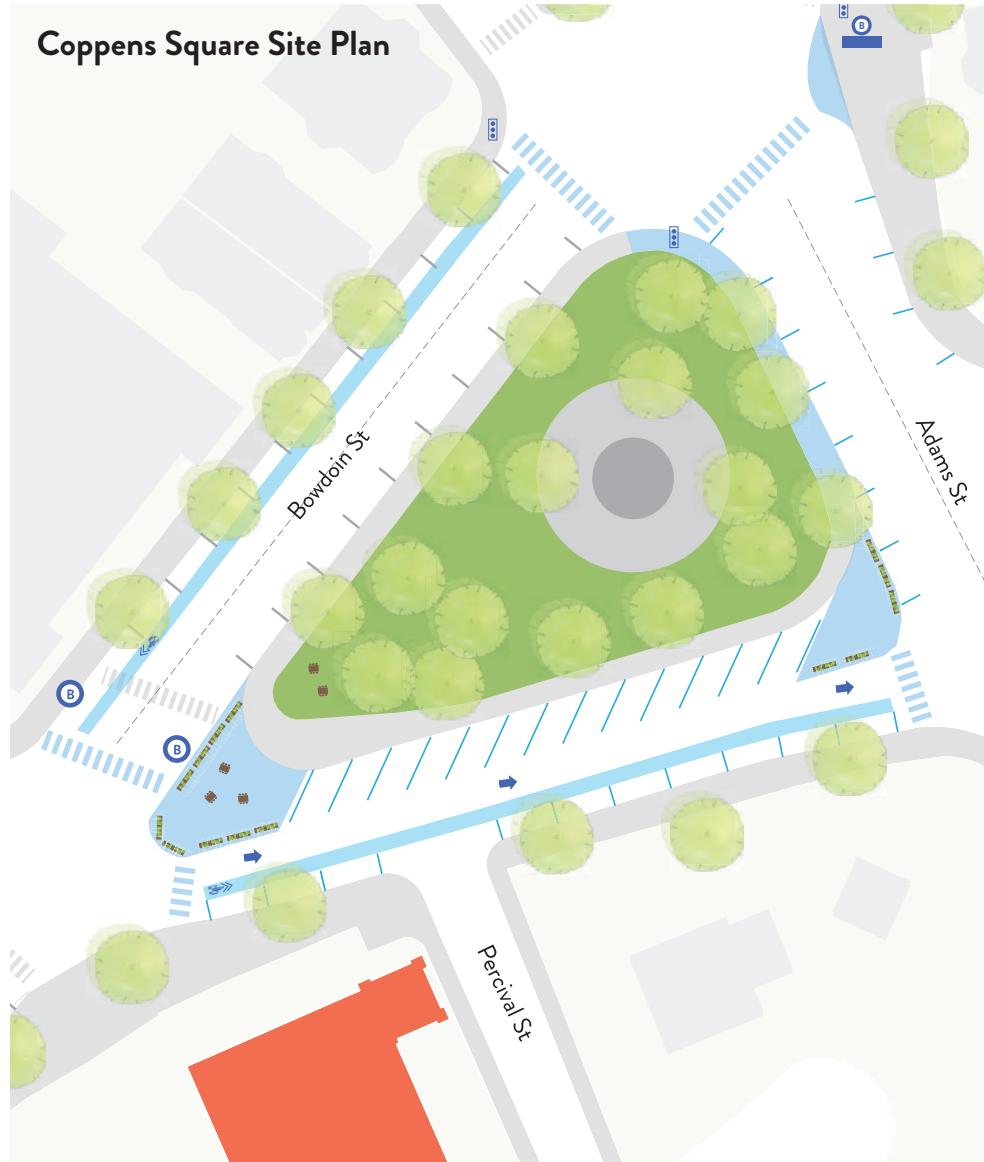


Aerial view of Coppens Square



Coppens Square redesign

Coppens Square Site Plan



Closed-Off Coppens Square Site Plan



Bump-out

Existing Commercial Space

Green Spaces

Bike Lane

Existing Parking

Proposed Parking

Bus Stop

Bus Stop Shelter

Traffic Light

Proposed Crosswalks

2. Invest in the Central Bowdoin streetscape

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Key Partners: Local Businesses, Boston Transportation Department, Boston Department of Public Works, Boston Main Streets

Central Bowdoin sports a higher density of businesses, more steady pedestrian traffic, and wider sidewalks than the rest of the district. It also has the most congested streets and most heavily utilized parking.

District-wide streetscape improvements would be particularly noticeable in this cluster. The sidewalks on the northbound side of Bowdoin Street between Norton and Draper Streets range from 12 to 15 feet, so a pedestrian zone of travel of 8 feet could be maintained throughout these blocks. Between the pedestrian zone and on-street parking, 4.5 to 5.5 feet of the sidewalk could be paved with brick or another variety of permeable paver to delineate a distinctive furnishing zone. This furnishing zone could be used by businesses—in particularly restaurants and cafés—to place outdoor furniture.

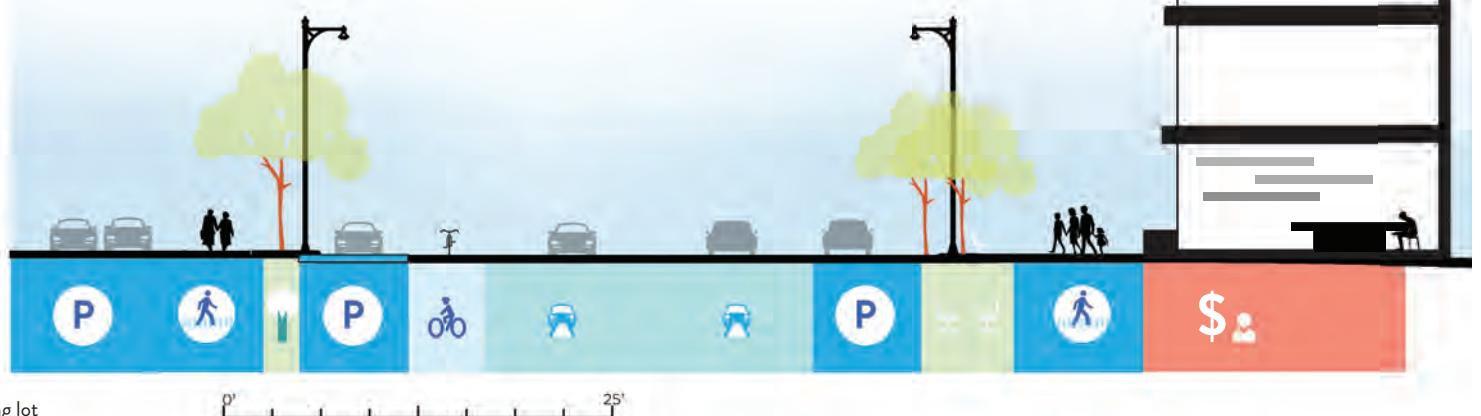
Additionally, bump-outs should be placed along this stretch of Bowdoin Street at key intersections in order to slow car traffic and create shorter distances for pedestrian crossings, including a key mid-block bump out and crosswalk at the Bowdoin Street Health Center. Crosswalks should be added at key intersections where none currently exist. A bus shelter would also be added on the southeast corner of the intersection of Bowdoin Street and Hamilton Street.



Bowdoin Street at Norton Street



Street section of Bowdoin at the Health Center parking lot



Central Bowdoin Site Plan



3. Add seating and bus shelters at Olney Street & Bowdoin Street

M CG



Key Partners: MBTA, Boston Department of Public Works

A large, paved plaza currently sits unoccupied at the intersection of Olney Street and Bowdoin Street. Given the heavily-trafficked nature of the intersection and the existing MBTA and school bus stops, we propose the installation of a bus shelter. Additionally, street furniture would be added to both sides of the intersection to create a more formalized gathering space in this part of the district. This intersection will also benefit from the district-wide goal of filling gaps in the street tree network.

4. Activate underutilized parking lots

B M



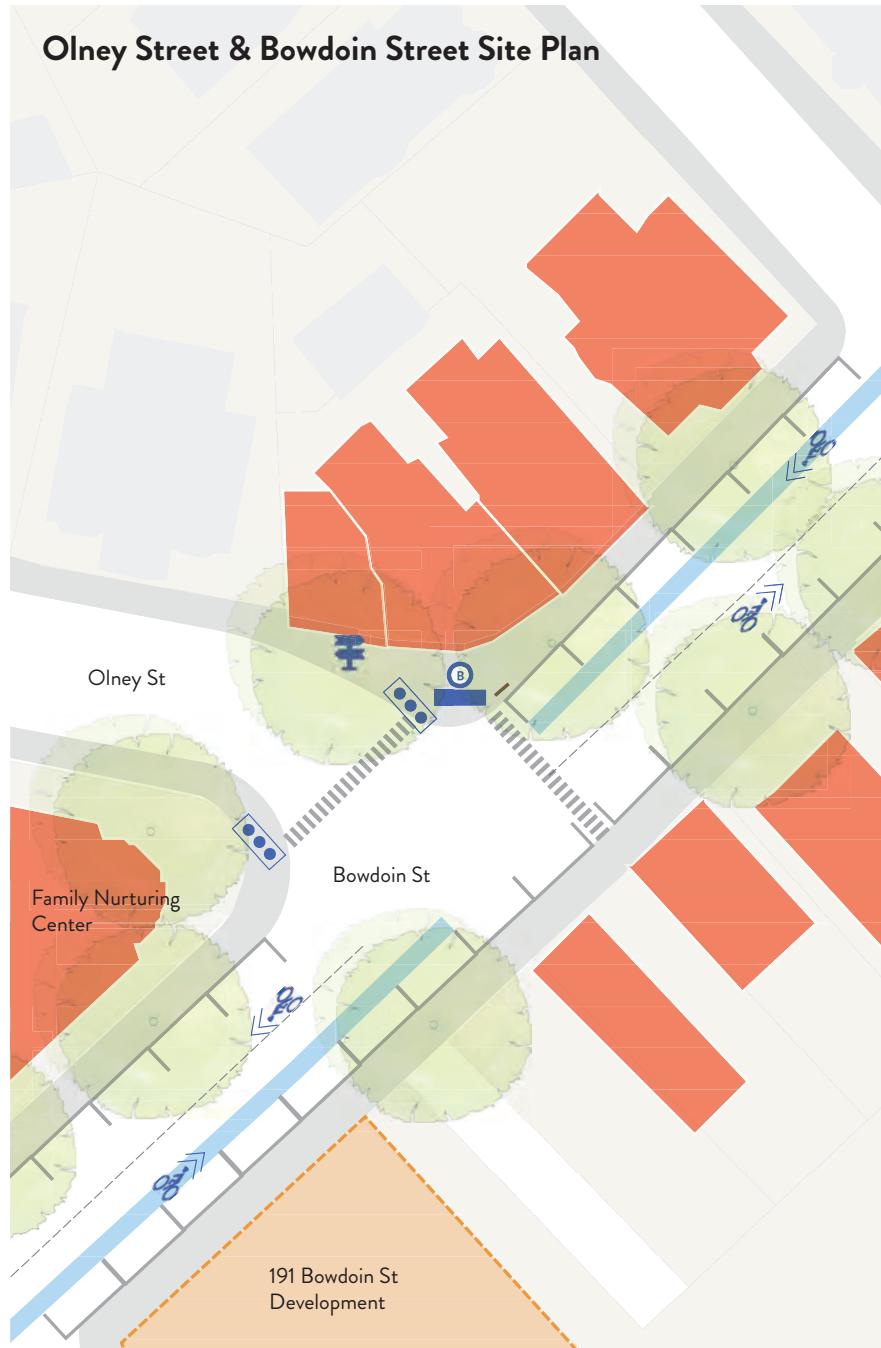
Key Partners: St. Peter's Teen Center, Bowdoin Street Health Center, Community Groups

Throughout the district, green space and open space are limited; this is especially true in the Central Bowdoin cluster. Limited space makes undertaking the community building events residents desire quite challenging. To facilitate more community-building events, we propose using parking lots throughout the cluster as public spaces.

In particular, the parking lots at the Bowdoin Street Health Center and the St. Peter's Teen Center are ideal candidates for community building events. At the Health Center, the parking lot could be used for exercise classes as part of the center's programming in the early morning or evening hours when the Health Center is closed and the parking lot unused. At the Teen Center, the parking lot could be used for youth-centered events, such as basketball tournaments or outdoor movie nights.

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| | Bump-out |
| | Existing Commercial Space |
| | Green Spaces |
| | Proposed Bike Lane |
| | Parking |
| | Bus Stop Shelter |
| | Traffic Light |
| | Directional Signage |
| | Shared Bike Lane |

Olney Street & Bowdoin Street Site Plan



5. Activate underused storefronts

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Key Partners: Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets, Local Community Groups, Local Businesses

Four storefronts in the cluster are occupied by small churches or other community groups that use the spaces during very limited hours and therefore do not contribute to a lively streetscape. Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets should work with these organizations to arrange for use of their spaces during off-hours, especially during weekday business hours and Saturdays, to host community events or pop-up businesses. The spaces, since they are currently used mostly for congregations, may be appropriate as community performance space for local artists or musicians. The spaces may also be appropriate settings for small food businesses from the neighborhood to set up temporary shops and increase their exposure to the community or for the establishment of a local bank branch.

As a long-term strategy, these organizations may consider moving their locations to upper-levels of mixed-use buildings, providing additional street-level space for new commercial businesses that have a greater need for pedestrian exposure. One opportunity exists in the Hinge cluster, where a community center with second floor office and community space is proposed. Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets should engage these businesses to understand their requirements for space and facilitate transitions to new spaces in the district should they appropriately serve the needs of these organizations. Doing so could provide beneficial opportunities for new commercial activity in the cluster.

6. Pilot a business planning technical assistance program

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Key Partners: Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets, City of Boston Main Streets, Local Businesses

In response to business owners' desire for assistance with business planning, we propose to pilot a technical assistance program with the businesses in this cluster. The City of Boston Main Streets organization has technical assistance professionals on retainer to assist Main Streets groups in the provision of business planning services. Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets should work with the city to contract a TA provider for the businesses in this cluster.



Underused storefronts



Focus groups with business owners

7. Pilot a business façade improvement program



Key Partners: Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets, ReStore, City of Boston Main Streets, Local Businesses

Business owners in this cluster also identified a strong desire for assistance with upgrading their storefronts. The City of Boston Main Streets organization also contracts with professionals who can provide design services for the purpose of storefront improvements. Furthermore, the city provides some capital assistance through its ReStore storefront improvement program to assist property owners with making upgrades to their buildings.

We propose to pilot façade improvements with the commercial building located at the intersection of Bowdoin and Quincy Streets, home to businesses including Jerk, Bobby's Fish Market, and Copley Food Mart. The proposed façade improvements will emphasize transparent storefronts and maximize glazing. The ReStore program also focuses on new storefront doors, signage, exterior lighting, removal of roll-down grates, and installation of awnings. Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets could seek the city's commitment to a larger than typical grant if the entire block is improved and use this as an incentive to get businesses and property owners on board with the program.

This site also presents an opportunity for redevelopment in the long run, though we do not propose this as part of this plan. Should redevelopment take place on this site, Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets should ensure that any plans are consistent with development guidelines mentioned earlier in this plan. This includes the retention of existing ground-floor commercial space and the addition of two to three floors of residential units on top of the commercial ground floor to help address Boston's affordability crisis and house new customers for the district.

8. Work with VietAID and commercial tenant on programs at 191 Bowdoin Street



Key Partners: Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets, VietAID, Bowdoin Street Health Center, Dorchester Community Food Co-op

VietAID, a local non-profit community development corporation, recently obtained the necessary zoning approvals to redevelop the site at 191 Bowdoin Street. The proposed project includes 41 affordable apartments and over 6,000 square feet of commercial space. As of the zoning approval, the expected tenant for the commercial space is Dorchester Community Food Co-op, a local grocery store controlled by its member-owners.

Assuming the Co-op occupies this site, we recommend it take several steps to contribute to a vibrant Main Streets district. The Co-op currently has a relationship with the Bowdoin Street Health Center, and we recommend that the relationship be deepened through conducting nutrition education programs in the Co-op's proposed kitchen, providing healthy cooking classes, and providing food shopping education to neighborhood residents, particularly patients of the Health Center who have been recommended certain diets by their doctor. The Refresh Project, co-developed by the Broad Community Connections Main Streets organization in New Orleans, is an example of how such health and nutrition programming can be combined with the creation of a grocery store. Additionally, the Co-op could organize or sponsor a Taste of Bowdoin Geneva event in conjunction with Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets to feature both brick-and-mortar and mobile local food merchants.

If the Co-op does not become the tenant of this commercial space, we recommend that Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets and VietAID cooperate to identify some food-based tenant for the space. The space could even be subdivided into smaller spaces to accommodate start-up food enterprises or feature one prominent food enterprise with smaller vendors surrounding it. One successful model to consider is Maverick Marketplace in East Boston, which features a central location for a restaurant and bar, but also features small retail spaces for nascent businesses.

9. Adjust the zoning boundary between Topliff & Tebroc Streets

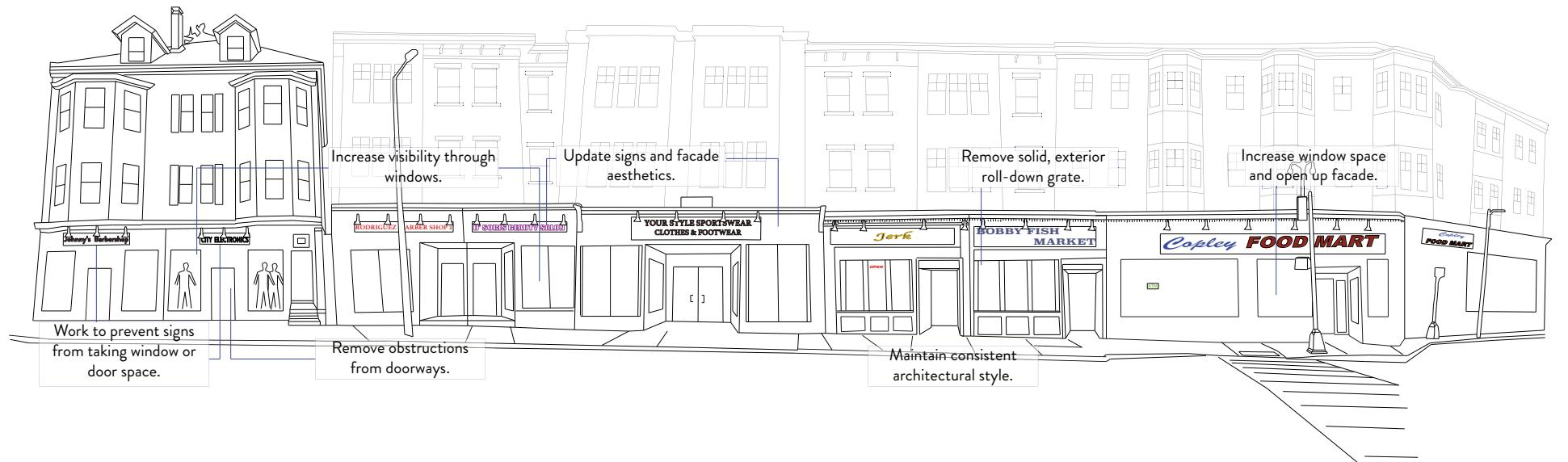


Key Partners: City of Boston, Boston Planning & Development Agency, Local residents and businesses

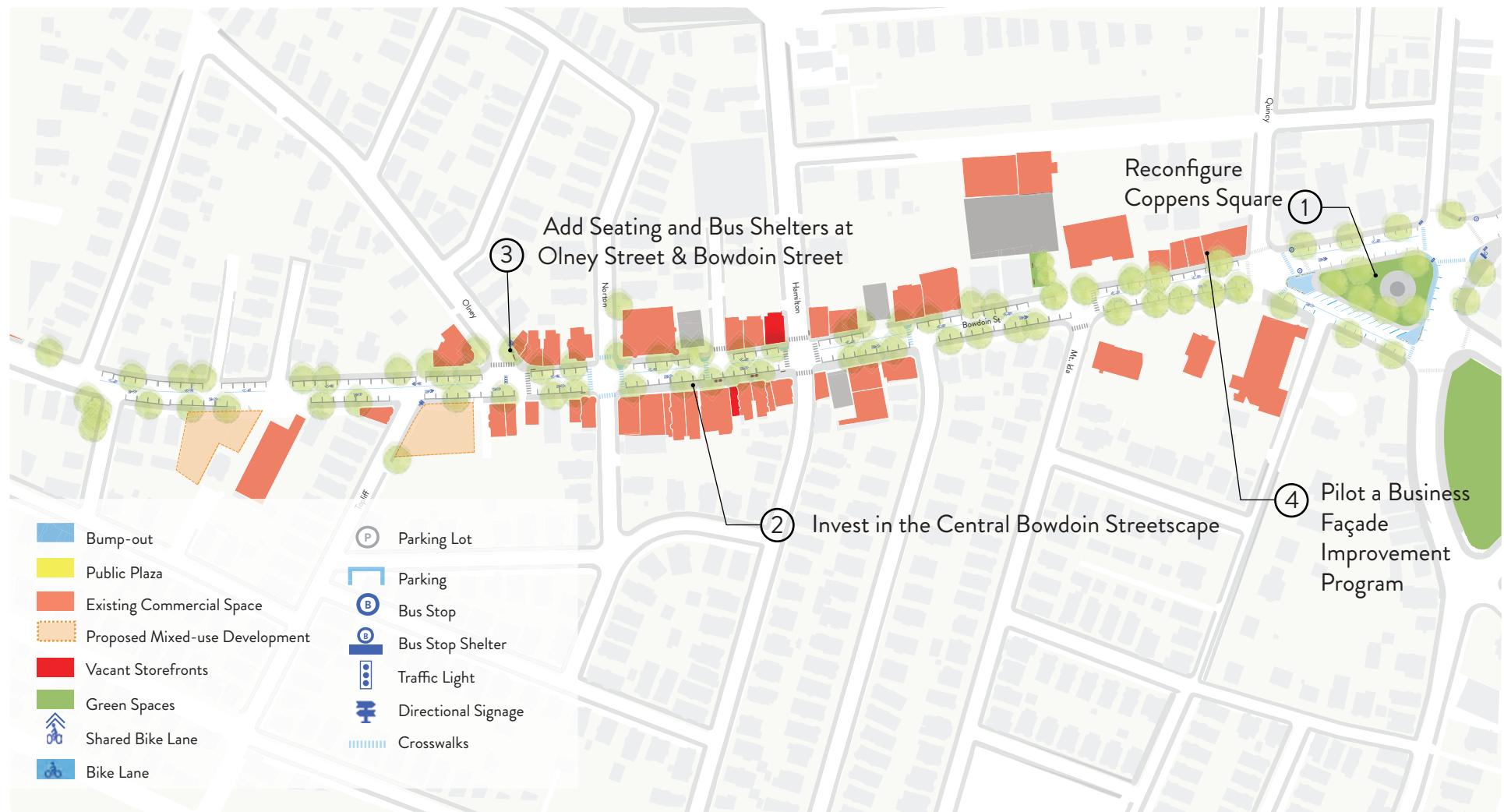
The city's zoning policy in Bowdoin Geneva is fragmented, with areas dominated by commercial space designated Local Convenience and residential areas zoned Three-Family Residential. This code drives the location of business clusters throughout the district. At the southern end of Central Bowdoin a series of vacant parcels (171-175 Bowdoin Street) sit in the Three-Family Residential zoning district but abut commercial buildings and the Local Convenience district. We recommend that the city extend the Local Convenience district southward a few parcels to incorporate the vacant parcels. This will help bridge the distance between the Central Bowdoin and the Hinge clusters while providing additional storefront commercial space for businesses looking to locate in the district.

Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets may also consider advocating for a change of the area's Local Convenience zoning to a more permissive zoning designation, such as Neighborhood Shopping or Community Commercial. These zoning classifications more readily allow for entertainment and cultural uses, restaurants, and general retail, as well as greater density. The Neighborhood Shopping zoning designation additionally allows multi-family dwelling structures by right in the upper stories, which matches the existing typology of buildings in the commercial district. However, any wholesale change to the zoning classification of the district should be supported by greater community input.

Façade Improvement Pilot



Central Bowdoin Site Plan



Central Bowdoin Implementation

	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Reconfigure Coppens Square	X		X
Invest in the Central Bowdoin streetscape	X		X
Add seating & bus shelters at Olney Street/Bowdoin Street		X	
Activate underutilized parking lots	X		
Activate underused storefronts	X		
Pilot a business technical Assistance program		X	
Pilot a business façade Improvement program		X	
Work with VietAID and commercial tenant on programs at 191 Bowdoin Street		X	
Adjust the zoning boundary between Topliff & Tebroc Streets		X	

BOWDOIN GATEWAY: CONNECTIVITY



BOWDOIN GATEWAY

Current Conditions

The intersection of Bowdoin Street and Hancock Street at the far north of the district is currently unsafe for all users.

The fast movement of cars through the intersection, wide pedestrian crossings, and poor sightlines force pedestrians into dangerous, rushed crossings. This poor pedestrian experience likely discourages foot traffic for businesses, and the lack of a community gathering space in the area provides no respite. A collection of islands in the center of the intersection creates at least five different paths through the intersection, making the navigation of the intersection confusing for drivers. The location of street parking further limits visibility. For businesses, parking availability is a barrier to increased customer traffic due to unclear regulations and lack of time limits on the few available spots.

The intersection also presents major opportunities and unique traits. The Savin Hill T stop is less than 15 minutes away on foot. The intersection is also ideally positioned between two major corridors of activity in Dorchester: Columbia Road to the west and Dorchester Avenue to the east. Two small, vacant storefronts (650 square feet) and one larger, 1,000-square-foot, vacant, mixed-used building at the corner of Bowdoin Street and Winter Street present opportunities for new businesses.

Finally, Dot Block, a mixed-use development proposal that recently won approval for development, will be built less than two blocks away. With a proposed 362 residential units, 450 parking spaces, and 37,000 gross square feet of retail occupying over 4 acres, Dot Block will significantly affect the character of its surrounding area, including the intersection of Bowdoin and Hancock.

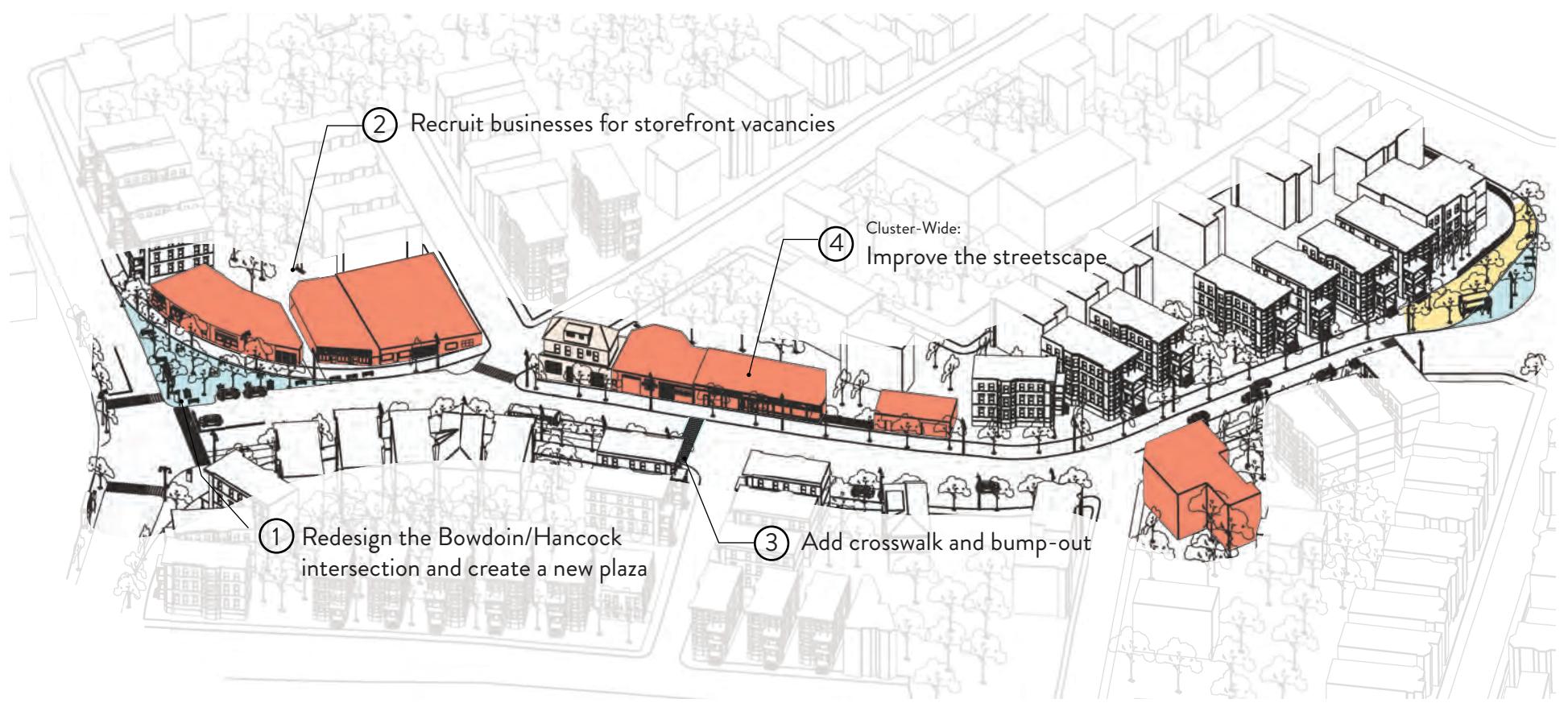


Aerial view of Upper Bowdoin cluster

Goals and Vision

Our recommendations for Bowdoin Gateway focus on the potential to create an effective and inviting entrance to Bowdoin Geneva at the intersection of Bowdoin and Hancock, to better serve the current users (businesses and pedestrians) of the intersection, and to create linkages to Dorchester Avenue, Columbia Road, and Dot Block. The signature recommendation to achieve these goals is a significant redesign of the intersection. A reconfigured intersection would improve pedestrian traffic and parking for current businesses, slow car traffic, help attract and retain future desirable business types, and improve the pedestrian experience.

The sketches accompanying these recommendations represent one of multiple ways to achieve the goals of making a more functional intersection. The same goals—recapturing public space in a way that can be used by pedestrians, traffic calming, and articulating the district entrance—could be achieved through other configurations.



Bowdoin Gateway

1. Redesign the Bowdoin / Hancock intersection and create a new plaza

M CG



Key Partners: Boston Transportation Department, Boston Neighborhood Slow Streets

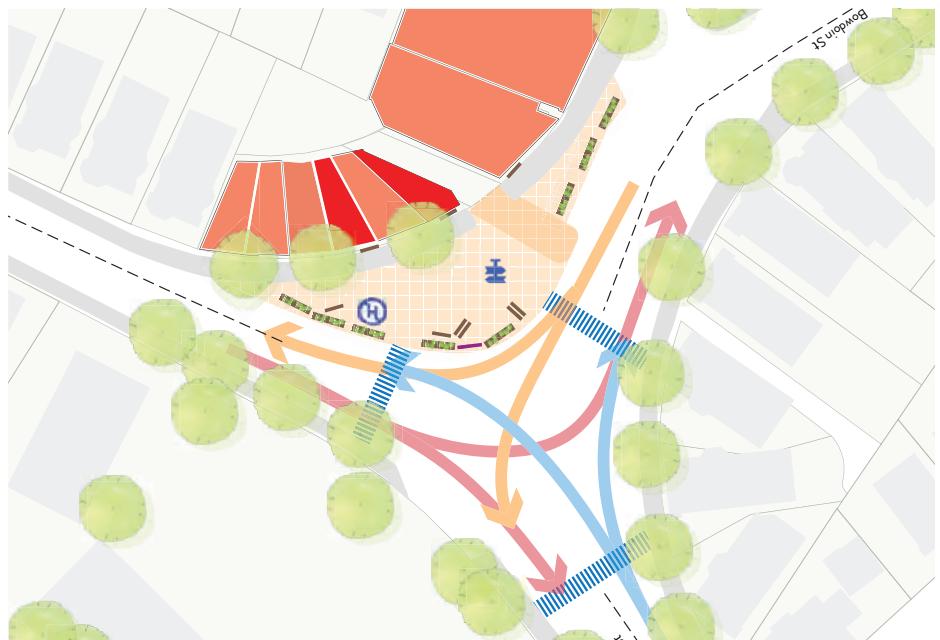
An intersection redesign, such as the one proposed below, is a significant undertaking requiring inter-agency coordination and funding through the city's capital budget. We suggest a phased approach to increase the feasibility of the project and retain impact in case more expensive, later phases of the proposal are not implemented.

Phase 1: Temporary, Low-Cost Measures

The first phase of the redesign relies on a series of low-cost, small-scale, temporary interventions that can collectively change the way this intersection works. First, the wide traffic lanes should be narrowed by painting pavement and placing planters alongside the current pavement islands. This is a common and cost-effective way of slowing traffic and priming an intersection for a subsequent, larger intervention. Two Bowdoin Geneva entrance signs and wayfinding plaques should be installed to better articulate this intersection as an entrance to the neighborhood. Completing this first phase before the completion of Dot Block could be a critical way to attract recent arrivals as new customers.

Phase 2: Community Plaza and Parking Management

In the second phase of intersection redesign, the traffic islands should be removed and a large temporary plaza added in front of the commercial buildings at the corner of Hancock Street and Bowdoin Street using paint and planters. The plaza serves to create a more inviting entrance to the neighborhood and provide additional community gathering space. Future businesses would benefit from the ability to spill outdoors and utilize the plaza's street furniture. The replacement of a multiple-way yield sign with a three-way stop sign would further improve the intersection's traffic pattern. The addition of a sidewalk bump-out would also protect eight parking spots alongside the plaza.



Site plan of the Bowdoin / Hancock intersection



Phase 3: Permanent Plaza

Once funding is secured, the plaza should be made permanent. This would involve replacing the temporary plaza with a paved, raised area and more street furniture. A raised plaza would also allow street trees to be planted, providing shade for the outdoor seating area.

Temporary plaza in Burlington, VT



2. Recruit businesses for storefront vacancies



Key Partners: Property Owners

A redesigned intersection will likely increase foot traffic, and a new plaza would allow for spill-out space that could benefit future businesses. There are currently two small vacant storefronts (about 650 square feet) at the intersection of Bowdoin and Hancock. A third, larger, vacant mixed-use storefront (1,000 square feet) sits slightly south of the intersection at Bowdoin and Winter. In the smaller vacant spaces, a coffee shop or small food business could capture additional resident dollars currently being spent outside the district and fill a gap in the cluster's business mix. Community members have regularly mentioned the need for these two types of businesses, and both could be successful at this location. The larger vacancy could house an entertainment business also recommended by community members and our market analysis.



3. Add crosswalk and bump-out at Bowdoin Street / Tovar Street intersection



Key Partners: Boston Department of Transportation

In order to facilitate easier access to the commercial businesses concentrated along the east side of Bowdoin Street, we suggest the creation of a new corner bump-out and crosswalk next to Tovar Street. Currently, there are no opportunities to cross Bowdoin Street between Coppens Square and Hancock Street. Designating an official crosswalk can prevent the dangerous crossings currently happening. A raised crosswalk, while more expensive, could also serve as a traffic calming measure. This project is not predicated on or linked to other suggested projects, so it could be pursued immediately and independently from other projects in this area.

4. Improve the streetscape



Key Partners: Boston Department of Parks and Recreation

In order to create a welcoming atmosphere at the new plaza and along Bowdoin Street, additional streetscape improvements are needed. Between the Bowdoin/Hancock intersection and Coppens Square, there are currently very few street trees. The street tree network should be filled in along these blocks.

5. Promote mixed-use development through zoning changes or variance petitions



Key Partners: Boston Planning and Development Authority

As noted elsewhere in this plan, the current Local Convenience zoning along parts of Bowdoin Street constrains possible uses and building heights in ways possibly counter to the goals of the community and this plan. Using a set of development criteria will help the community advocate for certain development goals, such as increasing access to housing and promoting denser, mixed-use development along the commercial district.

Currently, the commercial buildings in Bowdoin Gateway area are all one-story-high, and the buildings fill most or all of their lots. Under current zoning, these buildings would not be permitted to build a second story. Looking forward, zoning variances or up-zoning to a more permissive zoning designation, such as the Community Commercial sub-district, would allow these buildings to add second or third floors but would still restrict the uses in ways that may not be desirable for community members. Landowners interested in redeveloping these parcels could advocate for zoning variances or zoning changes to allow for more use types and denser development.

6. Add bump-out and bus shelter and move crosswalk at Bowdoin Street and Adams Street



Key Partners: Boston Department of Transportation, Boston Department of Public Works, MBTA

Where Bowdoin Street curves going southbound towards Adam Street, drivers are prevented from seeing crossing pedestrians. Moving the existing sidewalk north mitigates these problematic sight lines by making pedestrians more visible and signaling for cars to slow down sooner. A bump-out further allows the narrowing of the sidewalk and the creation of a mini-plaza with street furniture and a bus shelter.



Bowdoin Gateway Implementation

Short-Term Medium-Term Long-Term

Redesign the Bowdoin Street/
Hancock Street intersection and
create a new plaza

x

Recruit businesses for
Storefront vacancies

x

Add crosswalk & bump-out at Tovar
Street/Bowdoin Street intersection

x

Improve the streetscape

x

Promote mixed-use development
through zoning changes or variance
petitions

x

Add bump-out and bus shelter and
move crosswalk at
Bowdoin Street/Adams Street

x





IMPLEMENTATION

V. IMPLEMENTATION

This section of the report is intended to help guide the implementation of the proposed projects in Bowdoin Geneva. It is divided into three parts. First, it describes **general principles** for how to approach project implementation. Next, it lists **priority projects** from the *Recommendations* section that we consider most important for the commercial district to reach its full potential. Finally, it identifies **both project specific and flexible funding sources** that are appropriate for many of the identified projects.

A. Implementation Principles

The proposed projects in this plan are informed by the local community and designed to strengthen the vitality of the commercial district for current and future businesses, residents, and visitors.

We believe the following principles are key to an effective and sustainable approach to initiatives and projects for a commercial district like Bowdoin Geneva.

1. **Comprehensive:** To strengthen the district, a cross-sector, multi-pronged, community-driven effort is necessary. Well planned and continuous community initiatives can build organizational and stakeholder capacity and create lasting change in the neighborhood.
2. **Incremental:** While maintaining a comprehensive approach, it is crucial to first focus on small projects and bring change one step at a time. Short-term “wins” create positive momentum and inspire a sense of possibility. Completing early projects will also build support to tackle more time and resource intensive projects. Completing projects also increases the capacity of the implementers themselves, as they slowly scale up to larger undertakings.
3. **Strategic Partnerships:** There are many non-profit organizations, private organizations, and city agencies with resources and expertise available to strengthen the capacity of Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets. Forging technical, financial, or development partnerships with other organizations is a critical step for a Main Streets organization to implement the projects proposed in this plan for the commercial district.
4. **Community-Driven:** As the local Main Streets organization, Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets is equipped to convene commercial district stakeholders in order to fully understand and appreciate the assets and gaps in the district. Inclusive local leadership through the organization and through partnerships fosters community ownership, empowerment, and commitment.
5. **Action-Oriented:** Every task must be assessed to determine if it is furthering the main goal—creating a strong and healthy commercial district for all stakeholders.

6. **Quality:** Maintaining existing assets and creating quality throughout all activities should be a primary goal. What quality means varies by project, and could include thoughtful storefront improvements, well planned and executed special events, and forward-thinking and capital intensive redevelopment of intersections.
7. **Embracing Change:** Neighborhoods inevitably change with time. At times change is incremental and less visible; at others change happens rapidly and is very visible. Anticipating, adapting to, and shaping change of any type is a core ingredient to the success of a commercial district.

Partnerships: The Backbone of Implementation

While this plan purposely includes projects that Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets can implement on its own, the majority will require partnerships. Each project in the *Recommendations* section lists the appropriate partner. From city agencies to nearby community development corporations and other civic groups, partners bring significant financial resources, expertise, and implementation capacity. These partners also stand to significantly benefit from a strong and healthy commercial district. Partnerships, especially those among multiple organizations, work best when there are accountability structures in place. A working group of key representatives from each partner is a simple and effective accountability structure. The board of Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets should also be involved in an accountability structure.

B. Priority Projects

This section identifies priority projects by cluster and theme. From the comprehensive list of projects outlined in the previous *Recommendations* section, we have distilled those projects which are critical to the vision of each cluster and to achieving the goals of each theme. For further information and details on each project, refer to the complete descriptions in the *Recommendations* section.

District Wide

Businesses B

The vision for this theme is to enhance the capacity of Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets and provide tools to empower local businesses in the district. The major recommendations are as follows:

1. Identify funds to secure the organization's "business outreach specialists" as permanent staff (even if part time).
2. Develop a training program for community members to volunteer to guide businesses through administrative processes. This could include permitting procedures, applying to technical assistance programs, and applying to loans.
3. Vote internally for or against newly proposed development and publicly communicate and advocate accordingly.
4. Support expanding the diversity of businesses in the identified gaps (entertainment, bars, restaurants, and a bank or credit union) through developing and deploying a business recruitment package to fill current and future vacancies. The process of developing the recruitment package could be done in collaboration with property owners and other civic organizations.
5. Hold on-site, collective, and scheduled technical assistance.
6. Deploy common technical assistance services like "ReStore" facade improvements and interior design in targeted pilot areas of the district to build momentum with multiple stakeholders.

Mobility M

The vision for this theme is to create a district that better accommodates all modes of transportation, especially by increasing pedestrian safety. To that end, the top recommendations are as follows:

1. Redesign key intersections, creating sidewalk extensions and installing new crosswalks to create a safer pedestrian experience throughout the district.
2. Encourage alternative modes of transit to mitigate the pressures of vehicular traffic by improving bicycle infrastructure and bus stops.
3. Create consistent streetscapes and wayfinding to connect the clusters and create

continuity along the district.

4. Advocate for more parking management along the heavily commercial areas of Bowdoin Street through time limits on street parking and the establishment of loading times in front of select businesses.

Though these are capital intensive projects and have a longer time-frame, it's imperative that Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets start conversations with the Boston Transportation Department as soon as possible. A study of Bowdoin Street and Geneva Avenue is listed in the capital budget for the next fiscal year and presents a major opportunity.

Community Gathering Spaces CG

The vision for community gathering spaces is to increase a sense of activity and public safety in the commercial district. To that end, the priority projects under this theme are:

1. Expand the network of street furniture to make sure that pedestrians have spaces to sit and enjoy the commercial district.
2. Increase pedestrian-level lighting in public spaces.
3. Expand programming in open spaces in a systematic way across the district. Coordinated events and programming in the district will require the cohesive effort of many community partners working together to activate spaces appropriately, both indoor and outdoor, according to the constraints of the spaces themselves and the needs of the community.

Clusters

Geneva Gateway

The priority projects for Geneva Gateway are focused on enhancing existing spaces so that they connect people to the district through wayfinding and better accommodating indoor and outdoor community gathering spaces (including restaurants) for residents. These priority projects are:

1. Improve the train trestle near the Fields Corner T station on Geneva Avenue with decorative physical improvements and signage. This improvement demarcates the southern entrance to the Bowdoin Geneva commercial district.
2. Create Geneva Plaza, a small open space with seating and wayfinding adjacent to a local restaurant, as well as street improvements at the intersection of Geneva Avenue and Topliff Street.
3. Open and program Horner's Corner as a vital green space within a larger network of community gardens and open spaces in this cluster.

The Hinge

Given its central location, open space assets, and potential for improvements and development, the Hinge could serve as the primary space for large community gatherings in the neighborhood. To achieve these aims, the priority projects are:

1. Make Geneva Cliffs more welcoming and usable for the community through added infrastructure and the creation of a plaza entrance. Geneva Cliffs is not only an anchor for this cluster; it's an anchor green space for the district and a huge community asset.
2. Implement an intersection redesign to increase pedestrian safety and add public space. The city's ongoing study of the area can be leveraged in this regard.
3. Promote dense, mixed-use development on the Endeavor Capital-owned parcel that sensitively responds to the park and adds to Geneva Cliffs Plaza. Development at this key intersection and in this key vacant lot location will support the vision for this cluster. Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets should be involved in articulating a community vision for development and work to ensure that the city and relevant developers adopt a community-responsive plan.

Central Bowdoin

In the Central Bowdoin cluster, creating an attractive streetscape is the highest priority and will have the largest impact on the commercial district. Though streetscape improvements will be conducted district-wide, the Central Bowdoin cluster has the largest concentration of businesses and the most pedestrian activity. The priority projects are:

1. Fill in the street tree network.
2. Improve streetscape design by installing street furniture, creating bus shelters at the intersections of Bowdoin and Hamilton Streets and Bowdoin and Olney Streets, creating a paved furnishings zone, and encouraging business owners to use the furnishings zone for outdoor seating area for their customers.
3. Create bump-outs along Bowdoin Street and new crosswalks at the intersection of Bowdoin and Norton Streets to vastly improve the pedestrian experience.

Bowdoin Gateway

The Bowdoin Gateway cluster has the potential to serve as an inviting entrance to Bowdoin Geneva and to create stronger connections to Dorchester Avenue, Columbia Road, and the new Dot Block development. In order to achieve this vision, the priority projects in the Bowdoin Gateway cluster are:

1. Redesign the Bowdoin / Hancock intersection. Currently, the intersection is unsafe and confusing for drivers and pedestrians alike. A new three-way traffic pattern would make it safer and easier for residents and visitors to enter the district.
2. Create a plaza in front of the businesses at this intersection. The new plaza will serve as additional public gathering space and spill-out space for the abutting businesses, which would likely enjoy additional patronage as a result of these improvements.

C. Implementation Resources

This section provides a list of funding strategies and specific funding sources that Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets and its partners should consider when implementing projects.

I. Fundraising

Many Main Streets organizations supplement their annual operating budget by fundraising. For example, West Roxbury Main Streets has an annual event called “Taste of West Roxbury” that brings in additional funds through sponsorships and ticket sales. Neighborhood organizations are asked to support the event financially in exchange for advertisement and inclusion in event documents. West Roxbury Main Streets also sells tickets for various dinner events to neighborhood residents. This district-wide restaurant night out is a fairly common fundraising model for Main Streets organizations. Other common fundraisers include community sponsorships, large raffles, and outdoor market events.

II. External Funding

In order to complete the projects laid out in this report, Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets should engage in partnerships and identify external sources of funding. The funding partners identified in the next section are just a sample of private, local, and state funding opportunities whose goals align with the projects included in this report.

External funding for physical improvements

Commonwealth Places



Commonwealth Places Project: Beyond Walls in Lynn, MA

Source: Patronicity

MassDevelopment, the state’s economic development and finance agency, has partnered with Patronicity, a crowd-granting site, to create “Commonwealth Places.” This innovative community funding program leverages a community’s fundraising efforts and a sponsor’s matching grant to support local planning projects. Residents identify a project they would like funded which is then submitted to Patronicity, who evaluate the project and provide presentation and fundraising support. Projects that meet their projected fundraising goal receive a dollar for dollar matching grant from MassDevelopment. MassDevelopment describes the types of projects it will support as those that “activate a new or underused public or community space, and the program will give preference to permanent physical

projects.” MassDevelopment also prefers projects specifically designed to benefit low-income communities. Several Main Streets organizations across the state have already used Commonwealth Places grants to fund district signage, new trash cans, public art, and tree lighting. This funding source would be ideal for financing projects that are widely supported by the community since an online crowdsourced campaign is the primary funding mechanism.

Team Better Block M CG

Team Better Block (TBB) uses temporary street interventions to implement physical change at the neighborhood level by replacing the traditional planning process with community action. During a Better Block demonstration, TBB collaborates with local residents, stakeholders, and volunteers to build street furniture, outdoor seating, landscaping, or temporary bike lanes; fill vacant storefronts with community entrepreneurs; and use local art and programming to create a walkable and livable block. A short term event (usually over a weekend) allows the community to envision what the area could be like with minor improvements. A TBB event could build excitement for and demonstrate the potential for one of the proposed intersection redesigns in this plan, such as closing the street alongside Coppens Square.

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Temporary Art & M CG Temporary Community / Youth Mural Program

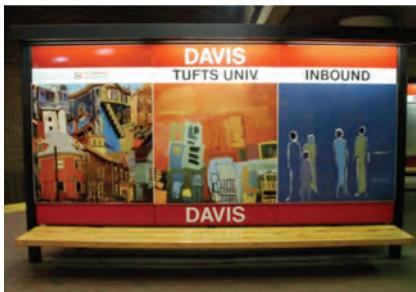
The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority’s (MBTA) Temporary Art & Temporary Community / Youth Mural Program allows community organizations to place or create public art at approved MBTA locations. Projects must involve the community and youth and may not be made by an individual artist alone. The temporary art and temporary murals requirements ensure that the projects “honor and [give] voice to the local community; [contribute] positively to a sense of place; and [engage] the people over time.” Organizations or groups can apply or an artist may apply on behalf of a group. Applicants must fund their projects but the MBTA may provide materials or work force support when it will ensure the longevity and overall safety of the project. Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets could partner with youth from the St. Peter’s Teen Center to use this program around the Geneva Gateway cluster at the Fields Corner T station and train trestle.

MBTA Integral Art Program M CG

MBTA's Integral Art Program explores the possibility of placing public art as part of any new construction of MBTA properties or renovations. MBTA typically undertakes this process early in their projects, identifying artists through public requests. Once approved, the project receives funding.

MBTA Community Partnership Art Program (CPAP) M CG

MBTA's Community Partnership Art Program allows for public artwork for existing MBTA stations that serves as a bridge between their Temporary Art / Youth Mural Program and their Integral Art Program. Artists, community organizations, or youth that are involved are paid.



MBTA Art Project in Somerville
Source: MBTA



MBTA Art Project in Lynn
Source: Boston Magazine

New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA): Funding for Public Art CG

NEFA's mission is to build connections among artists, arts organizations, and funders, powering the arts to energize communities in New England, the nation, and the world. NEFA's Creative City Program, Fund for the Arts Grants, and other programming supports the creation of public art that reflects local communities by helping with funding, networking, and other opportunities.

Fund for the Arts Grants

Fund for the Arts is a NEFA grant for non-profit organizations looking to create art projects at specific sites. Funding supports finding an artist and implementing the project.

Creative City Program and Grants

NEFA's Creative City Program supports the creation of public art. Individual artists or artistic groups apply to create a project that incorporates public participation in the project's selection and presentation. Community-based non-profit organizations and artists can apply together for the Creative City Community Partner Grant.

The Edward Ingersoll Browne Fund CG

The Edward Ingersoll Browne Fund, through the City of Boston, offers funds to projects that transform spaces in Boston and affect a maximum number of residents by improving existing facilities or encouraging the development of additional durable amenities in highly visible areas. The funds are also evaluated to ensure that there is a maintenance agreement with abutting properties and/or local organizations.

ReStore B

The City of Boston's ReStore Program provides small businesses matching grants and free design assistance for storefront façade restoration and improvement, focusing on exterior finishes, repair and replacement of storefront windows and/or doors, new signage, lighting for the building and signs, removal of solid roll-down grates, and installation of awnings. This program requires the removal of roll-down grates. ReStore employs a dedicated design services unit, which includes architects and graphic designers. The program also assists with design review and approval at the city's landmark and historic commissions.

Transportation for America (T4A) M CG

Transportation for America is a nationwide advocacy group that works to promote locally-led transportation infrastructure development and improvement through federal, state, and local political action. It also offers guidance and information to local communities on transportation infrastructure development. T4A has specific interests in placemaking and integrating arts into transportation infrastructure. The organization has offered grants to communities to improve placemaking and transportation through the arts, which may be available and applicable to projects undertaken in the Bowdoin Geneva district.

External Funding For Various Projects

Boston Main Streets Foundation B

The Boston Main Streets Foundation "seeks to develop long-term strategies to increase the economic power and resources of neighborhood commercial districts while pursuing initiatives that build knowledge and capacity for Main Streets programs and the businesses they serve." The foundation provides flexible grant funding to Boston Main Streets districts.

Boston Foundation B

As Greater Boston's largest community foundation, the Boston Foundation (TBF) devotes its resources to building and sustaining a vital, prosperous city and region, where justice and opportunity are extended to everyone. TBF seeks to broaden participation, foster collaboration and heal racial, ethnic, and community divisions. In 2016, the organization disbursed roughly \$100 million in grants. Its funding priorities include: workforce development through early child care, vocational training and credentialing, support of inner-city entrepreneurs with a focus on women and underrepresented minorities, and equitable support for neighborhoods politically and through investment in affordable housing development.

Hyams Foundation B CG

The Hyams Foundation is a private, independent foundation with a mission of increasing economic, racial, and social justice and power within low-income communities in Boston and Chelsea, Massachusetts. It disburses \$5.5 million in grants annually. Its funding priorities are based on community-identified issues through civic engagement and grassroots activism and leadership with a focus on racial justice. It has used program-related investments to help revitalize low-income neighborhoods, spur the creation of affordable housing, address specific housing needs such as those created by the mortgage foreclosure crisis, and transit-oriented development.

Henderson Fund CG

The George B. Henderson Fund was created in 1964 for art that can be seen from public spaces and makes the city beautiful. It is a grant for capital improvements that is devoted to improving the physical appearance of Boston and preserving local cultural or historical assets. This fund can be used for parks, city streets, buildings, monuments, and architectural and sculptural works that promote neighborhood identity. Priority is given to projects that are more permanent in nature and can create a longer effect on the image of the neighborhood.



Source: The Henderson Foundation

Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation B

Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation (DBEDC) works to create and sustain economic development opportunities for businesses and individuals. DBEDC is also a community development financial institution and provides loans between \$1,000 to \$250,000 to small businesses in Dorchester, Roxbury, Mattapan, and Hyde Park. The loans are for one to five years, with no prepayment penalty and a 3% loan closing fee. They also provide free technical assistance as part of the program.

Fields Corner Community Development Corporation B

Fields Corner Community Development Corporation is a non-profit organization that works in the Fields Corner and Bowdoin Geneva areas of Dorchester. It has worked in these communities for almost 30 years. It develops and manages multi-family housing (over 200 units) for low-income residents, including seniors on limited, fixed incomes. Their properties in Bowdoin Geneva include the brownstones near the Fields Corner T station, Ditson Street Senior Housing (reopening in May 2017), and Horner's Corner, a private pocket park on Geneva Avenue. While their main focus is still on housing, in recent years they have branched into broader community-based work and sought ways to support the communities they serve through other social service and career-oriented initiatives.

Boston Department of Neighborhood Services Mini-Grants CG

Each year Boston's "Love Your Block" program opens a competitive mini-grant application for projects focused on specific areas of Boston. During years when neighborhoods in Dorchester are eligible, these grants could be used for a variety of project types and sizes at the block level. Previous grant winners include a road park, community garden, and a community center. The winning projects are typically one-time, small-scale, community-oriented projects that help activate a given area.

Coca-Cola / Keep America Beautiful Public Space Recycling Grant Program CG

Keep America Beautiful is a national nonprofit organization established in 1953 that supports community-based initiatives seeking to beautify and sustain local environments. They work to end littering, improve recycling, and beautify America's communities. The Coca-Cola / Keep America Beautiful Public Space Recycling Grant Program provides recycling bins in order to promote easier public access to recycling. The grants they award are actual bins delivered at no cost to the recipients. They are offered on a competitive basis and applicants can specify how many bins they would like and their preferred bin styles. They prioritize applications that demonstrate need for recycling bins or lack of resources to otherwise place bins; those that show they will increase recycling as a result of placing the bins; and other criteria demonstrating an implementation plan, a plan to track the quantity of recyclables, and ways the applicant may choose to invest in additional bins. Broad Community Connections, a Main Streets organization in New Orleans, applied and received this grant.

A photograph of a Gothic-style stone archway with intricate carvings, set against a warm-toned background.

AFTERWORD

The plan laid out in this report reflects four months of engagement, interviews, surveys, research, brainstorming, and refinement. It does not pretend to be a comprehensive vision for the future of Bowdoin Geneva nor a full accounting of all the possibilities and barriers to realizing a stronger, healthier commercial district. It is one account composed of many perspectives—from community members, business owners, city officials, and ourselves, the graduate students who worked to bring it together. Despite its inevitable flaws, born of limited time and resources and the inability to turn over every single rock, we hope that you find this vision compelling. As we said earlier, the true test of this plan is whether it is implemented, in whole or in part.

Certain aspects of the plan must occur before other pieces can move forward, but the vast majority can happen piecemeal. The full vision presented here is expansive, almost intimidatingly so. That's an indication of both the many individuals involved in its creation and the many individuals and organizations that will need to be involved in its realization. Though we created this plan at the behest of Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets, we always conceived of it as something for the wider community, just as the organization sees itself as a conduit for community visions.

So we hope these ideas are not owned by any one organization or one set of individuals, but are taken up by all who find them worthy of action in a coordinated, collaborative process. Undoubtedly, elements of this plan will be rejected; we hope that process creates

value by stirring debate to determine alternative, constructive approaches. We also hope those ideas that are adopted provide a rallying point for a cohesive vision and community building that connects the neighborhood and demands the kind of investment that Bowdoin Geneva deserves.

We are deeply grateful to this community for welcoming us, challenging us, and working with us to create this plan together. Thank you,

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Esther Kim
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APPENDIX



Appendix A: Detailed Methodologies

- Economic Analysis
- Physical Analysis
- Other Community Engagement

Appendix B: Business Inventory**Appendix C: Business Survey Results****Appendix D: Implementation Resources**

- Resources for Bank Recruitment
- Summary List of Recommendations

Appendix E: Outreach

- Meeting Documents

APPENDIX A: DETAILED METHODOLOGIES

I. Economic Analysis

Business Inventory

In January and February 2017, the planning team conducted a physical inventory of all of the stores in the Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets District through repeated visits. We noted store names, addresses, vacancies, business types, store hours, and notable qualitative information (e.g., recently completed facade renovations). This information was updated through further fieldwork to record business closures and openings in the district.

To analyze the business mix of the district, we assigned a North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code based on standardized categories to each business in the inventory. Then, we cross-referenced data from the City of Boston Assessor's Office with our list of businesses to determine the approximate square footage of each commercial space. To develop estimates of sales per square foot, we related the square footage of each business to reported sales data found in consumer research reports from ReferenceUSA. This enabled us to deduce approximate sales for the businesses throughout the commercial district.

We then compared the Bowdoin Geneva commercial district to other Main Streets commercial districts in Dorchester to determine significant factors that might differentiate Bowdoin Geneva and to note whether and how Bowdoin Geneva competes with or complements nearby districts. We also investigated where commercial buildings were spatially distributed throughout each district and found the total square footage of commercial and mixed-use space within each Main Streets district. This comparative approach helped us understand the existing business conditions in Bowdoin Geneva and how the conditions compare to other area Main Streets.

Bowdoin Geneva is surrounded by five Main Streets districts: Fields Corner, Four Corners, Greater Ashmont, Grove Hall, and Upham's Corner. We assessed walking distance between all of the Main Street districts in Dorchester. We also assembled business inventories for these five districts by combining information obtained from the Main Streets organizations, field visits, online business databases, and Google Maps. The business inventories from neighboring districts allowed us to compare Bowdoin Geneva's business mix with nearby districts' business mixes and better understand gaps and potential opportunities in the commercial corridor. For example, though our spending analysis identified the "Food and Beverage" business category as a major spending gap, the neighboring business inventories showed that these sectors are not necessarily an area of opportunity because of the large America's Food Basket in nearby Fields Corner.

Market Analysis

To conduct the market analysis, we relied upon the trade areas that were defined by business owners through the business survey. This indicated most customers come from within three to ten blocks of the district. Using those geographic boundaries, we used demographic data from the federal American Community Survey (2011-2015) to determine the aggregate income for the area. We then estimated total spending in important product categories (such as groceries, clothing, and entertainment) by comparing the area aggregate income to average spending patterns for households making the area median income from the federal Consumer Expenditure Survey. Once we determined estimated spending in specific product categories, we related these product categories to the different business categories (the same as those used in the business inventory above). By comparing the potential spending by business category to the estimated sales determined through the business inventory, we were able to identify spending gaps where money spent on purchases in particular categories is greater than current sales in Bowdoin Geneva. As this analysis relied on estimates for spending and sales, the analysis is valuable for identifying large gaps, not exact numbers.

Business Survey

Students from MIT and youth Peer Leaders from the St. Peter's Teen Center conducted the 2017 Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets Business Survey over two weeks in March 2017. The planning team and youth were trained on how to conduct the survey, including introducing and describing the purpose of the survey to business owners, properly administering the survey instrument, and following up with non-respondents. After the survey was completed, the Peer Leaders also received training on how to interpret the survey results.

The questions in the survey instrument were drawn from a variety of previous Main Streets business surveys and from surveys created by academics to interview small businesses outside Main Streets contexts.

The survey instrument was translated into Spanish. Peer Leaders from the Teen Center conducted verbal translations in cases when business owners spoke only Cape Verdean Creole. One respondent completed the survey with Vietnamese translation by a MIT student.

Each business in the district was contacted at least twice during the survey period; many were visited four times. In cases when owners were repeatedly unavailable, managers involved in business operations completed the survey or paper copies of the survey were left with employees for the owner to complete on their own. Each business owner also received a "one-pager" (in English and Spanish) describing the purpose of the survey. Following completion, the planning team entered survey data into an online version of

the survey to collate all results, and data were analyzed using spreadsheet software and statistical programs.

A total of 31 business owners representing 33 businesses in the district completed the survey for a response rate of 47 percent.

Response

	Eligible Businesses (a)	Number Completed Surveys (b)	Percent Completed (a/b)
Bowdoin Street	53	23	43.4%
Geneva Avenue	17	10	58.8%
Total	70	33	47.1%

Business Survey - English



2017 BUSINESS SURVEY

Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets (BGMS) is working with a class of MIT graduate students to create a commercial district plan for Bowdoin Geneva. This survey collects information needed to understand the strengths and opportunities among businesses in the district. **The survey is completely voluntary.**

Please help us in this effort by completing this business survey. Estimated figures are acceptable. All information will remain strictly confidential – published data will include only aggregate information. Your help in completing this survey is greatly appreciated!

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about our work, please contact:

Anh Nguyen (617) 436-9980

Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets, Executive Director

Reed Jordan (651) 336-9212

MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning, Student

A. BUSINESS OPERATIONS

1. What is your name and the names of any other owners? _____

2. What is the name of your business? _____

3. In what year was your business established? _____

4. How long has your business been at this address? _____

5. Why did you locate your business in this business district? **Check the two most important factors.**

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Availability of space | <input type="checkbox"/> Transit accessibility | <input type="checkbox"/> Related business nearby |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cost of space | <input type="checkbox"/> Grew up in the area | <input type="checkbox"/> Business services nearby |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood appearance | <input type="checkbox"/> Close to my home | <input type="checkbox"/> Foot Traffic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Established shopping area | <input type="checkbox"/> Business environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____ |

6. How much space does your business occupy? _____ square feet 7. How many employees do you have? _____

8. What are your business's hours? _____ 7a. How many are full-time? _____

9. Do you rent or own your space? RENT OWN

9a. If RENT: How much is your monthly rent? _____

9b. Has your rent increased significantly in the last 1-3 years? YES NO

9c. If YES: By how much? _____

9d. Do you have a lease agreement for your space? YES NO

If YES: 9e. How long is your lease?

- | | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Month-to-month | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 year-3 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 5-10 years | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 year | <input type="checkbox"/> 4-5 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 10+ years | |

9f. When does your lease expire? _____

9g. Do you plan to renew your lease when it expires? YES NO UNSURE

9h. If NO: Why? _____

10. What plans do you have to grow or improve your business in the next 3 years?

For example, lease additional space, hire additional employees, expand products, improve store signage/facade, improve interior space, expand store hours.

11. What obstacles do you expect your business to face in achieving those goals? _____

12. Which of the following areas for specialized training or technical assistance would help you grow your business or overcome those obstacles? **Check up to three.**

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Building/facade renovation | <input type="checkbox"/> Purchasing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Management services | <input type="checkbox"/> Interior design | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Web site/e-commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Window displays | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other computer uses | <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing | |

13. Where do you get business advice or assistance? _____

B. CUSTOMERS AND SALES

14. To the best of your knowledge, do the majority of your customers come in:

- | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Daily or several times a week | <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly | <input type="checkbox"/> Do not know |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly or every other week | <input type="checkbox"/> Couple times a year | |

15. To the best of your knowledge, do the majority of your customers come from:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Within 3-4 blocks (immediate area) | <input type="checkbox"/> 8-10 blocks ($\frac{1}{4}$ mile to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile) | <input type="checkbox"/> Different parts of Boston |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other parts of Dorchester | | <input type="checkbox"/> Do not know |

16. What are your busiest days of the week and times of day? **Mark all that apply.**

	M	T	W	Tr	F	Sat	Sun
Morning (until 12pm)							
Afternoon (12pm-5pm)							
Evening (5pm-8pm)							
Late Night (8pm on)							

17. To the best of your knowledge, which race or ethnicity makes up the largest share of your customers? _____

17a. Which is the second largest? _____

18. Can you please estimate your total annual sales for 2016? \$_____

19. Over the past three years, how have your annual sales changed?

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increased | <input type="checkbox"/> Decreased | <input type="checkbox"/> Stayed the same | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|

20. How do you market your business? **Mark all that apply.**

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I don't market my business | <input type="checkbox"/> Ethnic media | <input type="checkbox"/> Signage/Flyers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> Social media | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> City newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> Yelp / GrubHub / Seamless | |

C. RELATIONSHIPS WITH BGMS AND OTHER BUSINESSES

21. Before this interview, were you aware of the Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets program? YES NO

If YES: 21a. How did you learn about or come into contact with the program? _____

21b. Have you worked with Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets on any project or activity? YES NO

21c. If YES: Please describe. _____

22. What is your relationship with other business owners in the neighborhood? **Check all that apply.**

- | |
|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I do joint marketing or promotion with other business owners. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I work with them on neighborhood events or festivals. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> We share business advice. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> We are friends or acquaintances but do not work together. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

D: BUSINESS AND COMMERCIAL DISTRICT PRIORITIES/PERCEPTION OF DISTRICT

23. How would you rate each of the following aspects of the Bowdoin Geneva business district?

	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor	Not Sure
Selection of goods and services	<input type="radio"/>				
Quality of goods and services	<input type="radio"/>				
Costs of goods and services	<input type="radio"/>				
Customer services	<input type="radio"/>				
Store hours	<input type="radio"/>				
Sales/Promotions/Marketing Events	<input type="radio"/>				
Attractiveness of storefronts	<input type="radio"/>				
Amount of parking	<input type="radio"/>				
Location of parking	<input type="radio"/>				
Cleanliness of public spaces	<input type="radio"/>				
Attractiveness of public spaces	<input type="radio"/>				
Public Safety	<input type="radio"/>				
Traffic	<input type="radio"/>				
Other _____	<input type="radio"/>				

24. Please rank the 3 most important improvements that should be made to the Bowdoin Geneva commercial district to encourage people to visit and shop here more often. 1 = most important, 2 = second most important, 3 = third most important

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cleaner public spaces | <input type="checkbox"/> More attractive public spaces | <input type="checkbox"/> Better lighting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More police presence | <input type="checkbox"/> Better public signs | <input type="checkbox"/> New types of stores |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improved pedestrian traffic/safety | <input type="checkbox"/> Special events | <input type="checkbox"/> Joint business district marketing efforts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More sales and promotions | <input type="checkbox"/> Street improvements | <input type="checkbox"/> Improved public safety |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More attractive storefronts | <input type="checkbox"/> Better store window displays | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Better located parking | <input type="checkbox"/> More parking | |

E: PERSONAL/DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

25. Do you live in Bowdoin Geneva? YES NO 25a. If NO: Where do you live (neighborhood)? _____

26. What is your age? _____

27. Do you identify as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish?

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Salvadoran | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Honduran | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Dominican | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Puerto Rican | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Guatemalan | |

28. Of the following, do you identify as:

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African American | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian | <input type="checkbox"/> White |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cape Verdean | <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese | <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaska Native |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Haitian | <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese | <input type="checkbox"/> Middle Eastern or North African |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jamaican | <input type="checkbox"/> Filipino | <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian Indian | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Korean | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

29. What is your contact information?

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

Business Website: _____

30. Do you have any other ideas or suggestions about how to attract more people to Bowdoin Geneva, improve the business district, or expand activity in the business district?

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE SURVEY

SURVEYOR USE ONLY: Gender? MALE FEMALE



Dear Bowdoin Geneva business owner:

Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets (BGMS) is currently partnering with graduate students in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) on a community engagement and analysis process to develop a commercial district revitalization plan for Bowdoin Geneva. To gather information for this plan, MIT students and teens from the neighborhood are **surveying business owners like yourself between Friday, March 3rd and Friday, March 10th.**

The information you provide will help shape a vision for the Bowdoin Geneva commercial district and inform the strategies that BGMS will use to support you and other business owners. The MIT students will present the results of the surveys, along with information gathered through interviews, focus groups, maps, and economic analyses in a community meeting later this spring. You and all other business owners will be invited to participate in further planning for this district.

If you did not speak with a student, we stopped by your business but you were either away or unavailable. We would like to return to your business to do the survey with you or, if that's not possible, to pick up a completed copy of the survey. If the owner of your business is frequently away from the store, we would like to speak by phone at his or her convenience. Please call _____ at the following number to schedule a convenient time when we can return, pick-up the survey, or set-up a phone call: _____. We look forward to hearing from you! Translation will be available.

This survey, and the other forms of analysis noted above, are an early step in a larger planning process that will be built upon and respond to the observations and visions of residents, business owners, and other local stakeholders. We welcome your feedback and your ideas throughout this process; please do not hesitate to reach out. All survey information and other communication will be kept confidential unless otherwise discussed.

Thank you very much for your time and contribution to creating a vision for this business district.

If you have any questions regarding the surveys, please contact Reed Jordan by email at reedj@mit.edu or by phone at (617) 336-9212.

If you have any questions regarding Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets, please contact Executive Director Anh Nguyen at director@bowdoingenavams.org or (617) 436-9980.

Business Survey - Spanish



ENCUESTA DE NEGOCIOS 2017

Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets (BGMS) está trabajando con un grupo de estudiantes de maestría de MIT en la creación de un Plan para el Distrito Comercial de Bowdoin Geneva. Esta encuesta recoge información necesaria para entender las fortalezas y oportunidades entre los negocios del distrito. **Su participación en esta encuesta es completamente voluntaria.**

Le pedimos el favor apoye este esfuerzo mediante su respuesta a esta encuesta. Cifras aproximadas son aceptadas. Toda la información se mantendrá confidencial - sólo se publicarán datos agregados, no individuales. Le agradecemos su disposición y el tiempo dedicado a completar esta encuesta!

Si tiene preguntas o quisiera saber más sobre nuestro trabajo, por favor contacte a:

Anh Nguyen (617) 436-9980

Directora Ejecutiva Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets

Jonathan Tarleton (706)254-6256

Estudiante, Departamento de Estudios Urbanos y Planificación, MIT

A. OPERACIÓN DEL NEGOCIO

1. ¿Cuál es su nombre y el de otros dueños del negocio? _____

2. ¿Cuál es el nombre de su negocio? _____

3. ¿En qué año fue fundado/establecido su negocio? _____

4. ¿Hacia cuánto se encuentra su negocio en esta dirección? _____

5. ¿Por qué decidió ubicarse en este distrito de negocios? **Seleccione los dos factores más importantes.**

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disponibilidad del espacio | <input type="checkbox"/> Accesibilidad a transporte público | <input type="checkbox"/> Cercanía a negocios similares |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Costo del espacio | <input type="checkbox"/> Crecí en esta área | <input type="checkbox"/> Cercanía a servicios de negocios |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apariencia del barrio | <input type="checkbox"/> Está cerca a mi hogar | <input type="checkbox"/> Tráfico peatonal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Área de compras establecida | <input type="checkbox"/> Ambiente de negocios | <input type="checkbox"/> Otros (por favor especifique) _____ |

6. ¿Cuánto espacio ocupa su negocio? _____ pies cuadrados (sq. ft.) 7. ¿Cuántos empleados tiene? _____

8. ¿Cuáles son sus horarios de atención? _____ 7a. ¿Cuántos trabajan tiempo completo? _____

7b. ¿Cuántos trabajan menos de tiempo completo? _____

9. ¿Usted renta/alquila o es dueño/a del espacio? RENTA/ALQUILA ES DUEÑO/A

9a. Si usted RENTA/ALQUILA: ¿Cuánto paga mensualmente? _____

9b. ¿En los últimos 1-3 años, ha aumentado su renta/alquiler significativamente? SI NO

9c. En caso de responder SI: ¿En cuanto ha aumentado? _____

9d. ¿Tiene usted un contrato de alquiler/arriendo por su espacio? SI NO

En caso de responder SI. 9e. ¿Cuál es la duración de ese contrato? (Seleccione)

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|--|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mes a mes | <input type="checkbox"/> Entre 1 y 3 años | <input type="checkbox"/> Entre 5 y 10 años | <input type="checkbox"/> No se |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 año | <input type="checkbox"/> Entre 4 y 5 años | <input type="checkbox"/> 10 años o más | |

9f. ¿Cuando vence su contrato? _____

9g. ¿Planea renovar su contrato cuando este termine? SI NO NO ESTOY SEGURO/A

9h. En caso de responder NO: ¿Por qué? _____

10. ¿Qué planes tiene para hacer crecer o mejorar su negocio en los próximos 3 años?

Por ejemplo: conseguir más espacio, contratar más empleados, aumentar el horario de atención, mejorar la apariencia del local tanto afuera como adentro.

11. ¿Qué obstáculos espera que su negocio afronte para lograr esos objetivos? _____

12. ¿Cuáles de las siguientes áreas de capacitación especializada o asistencia técnica le ayudarían a crecer su negocio o a superar esos obstáculos? **Seleccione máximo tres (3).**

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Planeación de Negocio | <input type="checkbox"/> Renovación del edificio/fachada | <input type="checkbox"/> Compras |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Servicios de gerencia | <input type="checkbox"/> Diseño interior | <input type="checkbox"/> Otro (especifique) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sitio web/ comercio electrónico | <input type="checkbox"/> Escaparates y vitrinas | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Otros usos de computadores | <input type="checkbox"/> Mercadeo | |

13. ¿De donde obtiene consejos de negocios o asistencia? _____

B. CLIENTES Y VENTAS

14. De lo que ha observado ¿Cada cuánto tiene clientes?

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diariamente o varias veces por semana | <input type="checkbox"/> Semanalmente o cada dos semanas | <input type="checkbox"/> Un par de veces al año |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Mensualmente | <input type="checkbox"/> No se |

15. ¿De acuerdo a lo que usted conoce, de dónde vienen sus clientes?

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Menos de 3-4 cuadras (área inmediata) | <input type="checkbox"/> 8-10 cuadras (1/4 milla a 1/2 milla) | <input type="checkbox"/> Distintas partes de Boston |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> De otras partes de Dorchester | <input type="checkbox"/> No se |

16. ¿Qué y en qué momento del día tiene más clientes? **Por favor marque todos los que apliquen.**

	Lun.	Mar.	Mier.	Jue.	Vie.	Sab.	Dom.
Mañana (antes de las 12pm)							
Tarde (12pm-5pm)							
Noche (5pm-8pm)							
Tarde en la noche (8pm en adelante)							

17. De acuerdo a lo que usted conoce, ¿Con qué raza o etnicidad se identifican la mayoría de sus clientes? _____

17a. ¿Cuál es la segunda más común? _____

18. Podría usted estimar el valor total de las ventas para el 2016? \$ _____

19. ¿Cómo han cambiado las ventas anuales en los últimos 3 años?

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aumentado | <input type="checkbox"/> Decrecido | <input type="checkbox"/> Se han mantenido | <input type="checkbox"/> No estoy seguro/a |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|--|

20. ¿Cómo promociona su negocio? **Seleccione todas las opciones que apliquen.**

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No hago ningún tipo de publicidad | <input type="checkbox"/> Medios étnicos | <input type="checkbox"/> Avisos/Volantes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Periódico local | <input type="checkbox"/> Redes sociales | <input type="checkbox"/> Otro: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Periódico de la ciudad | <input type="checkbox"/> Yelp / GrubHub / Seamless | |

C. RELACIÓN CON BGMS Y OTROS NEGOCIOS

21. Antes de esta entrevista, había escuchado sobre el programa Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets? SI NO

Si la respuesta fue positiva: 21a. Cómo se enteró del program?

21b. Ha usted trabajado con Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets en algún proyecto o actividad? SI NO

21c. Si responde positivamente: Por Favor describa este proyecto o actividad

22. ¿Cuál es su relación con otros dueños de negocios en su distrito? **Seleccione todas las respuestas que apliquen.**

- | |
|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hago marketing o promociones conjuntas con otros dueños de negocios. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trabajo con otros dueños de negocios en eventos o festivales de la comunidad. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Compartimos consejos de negocios. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Somos amigos o conocidos pero no trabajamos juntos. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Otro _____ |

D: PRIORIDADES DEL DISTRITO COMERCIAL Y DE NEGOCIO / PERCEPCIÓN DE DISTRITO

23. ¿Cómo calificaría los siguientes aspectos del distrito comercial de Bowdoin Geneva?

Aspecto	Muy Bueno	Bueno	Malo	Muy Malo	Inseguro
Oferta de bienes y servicios	<input type="radio"/>				
Calidad de bienes y servicios	<input type="radio"/>				
Precios	<input type="radio"/>				
Atención a clientes	<input type="radio"/>				
Horario de las tiendas	<input type="radio"/>				
Promociones y eventos	<input type="radio"/>				
Diseño de las fachadas en tiendas y bodegas	<input type="radio"/>				
Oferta de estacionamiento	<input type="radio"/>				
Ubicación de los lugares para estacionarse	<input type="radio"/>				
Diseño de los espacios públicos	<input type="radio"/>				
Limpieza de los espacios públicos	<input type="radio"/>				
Seguridad	<input type="radio"/>				
Tráfico	<input type="radio"/>				
Otro _____	<input type="radio"/>				

24. Favor de seleccionar los tres mejoramientos más importantes que deben ser implementados en el distrito comercial de Bowdoin Geneva para animar a la gente para que visiten y compren aquí de manera más seguida.

1=lo más importante, 2=el segundo más importante, 3=el tercero más importante

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Espacios públicos más limpios | <input type="checkbox"/> Estacionarse más cercano | <input type="checkbox"/> Mayor iluminación |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mayor presencia de la policía | <input type="checkbox"/> Espacios públicos más atractivos | <input type="checkbox"/> Mayor oferta en tiendas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mejor seguridad para el peatón | <input type="checkbox"/> Mejores señalamiento | <input type="checkbox"/> Publicidad relacionada con otras empresas en el distrito comercial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Más ofertas y promociones | <input type="checkbox"/> Mejoramientos callejeros | <input type="checkbox"/> Mejora de la seguridad pública |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eventos especiales | <input type="checkbox"/> Aparadores atractivos | <input type="checkbox"/> Otro (especifique) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fachadas más atractivas | <input type="checkbox"/> Más lugares para estacionarse | |

E: INFORMACIÓN DEMOGRÁFICA/PERSONAL

25. Usted vive en Bowdoin Geneva? SI NO

25a. Si no vive ahí: Donde vive (distrito)? _____

26. Cuántos años tiene usted? _____

27. Usted se identifica como Hispano, Latino, o Español?

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Sí, Salvadoreño(a) | <input type="checkbox"/> Si, Otro _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sí, Hondureño(a) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sí, Dominicano(a) | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefiero no responder |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sí, Puertorriqueño(a) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sí, Guatemalteco(a) | |

28. Con cuál de las siguientes opciones se identifica más?:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Afro-Americano | <input type="checkbox"/> Asiático | <input type="checkbox"/> Blanco |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cape Verdeano(a) | <input type="checkbox"/> Chino | <input type="checkbox"/> Indio Americano o Nativo de Alaska |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Haitiano(a) | <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamita | <input type="checkbox"/> Del Medio Este o del Norte de África |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jamaiquino(a) | <input type="checkbox"/> Filipino(a) | <input type="checkbox"/> Nativo Hawaiano or Islano pacífico |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Otro _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Indo-Asiático | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefiero no responder |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Koreano (a) | <input type="checkbox"/> Otro _____ |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Otro _____ | |

29. Cual es su información de contacto?

Número de teléfono: _____

Email: _____

Página web de su negocio: _____

30. ¿Qué otras ideas o sugerencias imagina usted, para atraer más personas a Bowdoin Geneva. Cómo podemos mejorar el distrito de negocios, o expandir la actividad económica en el distrito?

MUCHÍSIMAS GRACIAS POR COMPARTIR SU VALIOSA EXPERIENCIA,
Y POR EL TIEMPO DEDICADO A COMPLETAR EL CUESTIONARIO.

Solo uso de topógrafos: ¿Género? Hombre / Mujer



Estimado propietario de Bowdoin Geneva:

Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets (BGMS) y el Departamento de Planeación Urbana (DUSP) del Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) han iniciado una colaboración para revitalizar el distrito comercial de Bowdoin Geneva. Esta colaboración busca desarrollar un proyecto que entienda las necesidades locales y refuerce el sentido de comunidad. Para lograr estos objetivos, el equipo necesita su valiosa participación en las encuestas que estudiantes de MIT y otros voluntarios realizarán **desde el viernes 3 de marzo hasta el viernes 10 de marzo**.

La información que usted comparta ayudará a desarrollar una visión para el distrito comercial de Bowdoin Geneva, e informará las estrategias de apoyo de BGMS para su comercio y los demás comercios. Más adelante, a finales de la primavera, los estudiantes de MIT organizarán una reunión comunitaria para compartir los resultados de las encuestas y la información obtenida en otras formas de análisis como entrevistas, grupos de estudio, mapeos, y análisis económicos. Agradeceremos muchísimo su presencia en esta reunión y su participación en la planeación del distrito comercial.

Si aún no ha sido encuestado, se debe a que nuestra visita ocurrió durante un horario poco conveniente para usted. Como es muy importante contar con su opinión, queremos volver en un momento más adecuado ya sea para realizarle la encuesta o a recoger la encuesta después de que usted la responda por su parte. Si el propietario de este negocio no visita el comercio regularmente, podemos atenderlo por teléfono.

Para programar una visita o la recolección de una encuesta, por favor llame al

Nombre: _____ Número de Teléfono: _____

Esta encuesta y otras formas de análisis son el inicio de todo un proceso de planeación. Este proceso responderá y se desarrollará en base las opiniones y visiones de los residentes, propietarios de comercios, y otros actores locales. Agradeceremos nos comparta sus comentarios y/o ideas durante cualquier etapa del proceso. Toda la información que provea será anónima y confidencial, a menos que usted decida algo distinto.

¡Muchas gracias por compartir su tiempo y su experiencia! Su contribución será parte de la visión para del distrito comercial de Bowdoin Geneva.

Para cualquier duda respecto a las encuestas, por favor contacte a Jonathan Tarleton por correo electrónico jtar@mit.edu o por teléfono (706) 254-6256.

Para cualquier duda respecto a Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets, por favor contacte a Executive Director Anh Nguyen, por correo electrónico director@bowdoingenams.org o por teléfono (617) 436-9980.

II. Physical Analysis

During the first phase of this project, we conducted extensive research and observation of the existing physical conditions of Bowdoin Geneva, including land use, zoning, buildings, natural systems, streets, and sidewalks within the district. The purpose of this research was to understand the assets and strengths that currently exist and to identify gaps that need to be filled. In order to thoroughly analyze the physical environment, the planning team gathered relevant data from a variety of resources and developed in-depth maps of the physical environment, in addition to using information learned from interviews with neighborhood stakeholders, surveys with business owners, focus groups with residents, and extended direct observation in the district.

Zoning

Zoning is the legal framework that controls development in the district. We mapped zoning subdistricts throughout Dorchester and in Bowdoin Geneva specifically to assess whether and how zoning contributes to the spatial distribution of commercial uses in the district. The analysis also informed how the spatial distribution of businesses in Bowdoin Geneva differs compared to nearby commercial districts in Dorchester. This analysis showed that zoning sub-districts are underlying reasons for spatial clustering of businesses in the commercial district. Zoning also influences and limits the proportion of commercial and mixed use space.

Source: City of Boston, Zoning district and sub-district boundary data, updated December 2016, accessed spring 2017

Building Conditions and Upcoming Development

We assessed building conditions and building types through direct observation. Window transparency, which connects a business to the public realm, was a major factor in assessing building conditions. To measure the degree of transparency, we grouped storefronts in the district into three categories: transparent, partially blocked (excessive signage or tinted windows), and fully blocked (using roll down grates). To evaluate building types, we created a framework that identified four types of buildings in Bowdoin Geneva: residential triple-deckers, mixed-use triple-deckers, one-story commercial buildings, and four-five story civic buildings. We estimated the dimensions of these building types and diagrammed their varying relationships with the street. Finally, we researched proposals for new development filed with the Boston Planning and Development Agency to understand how the conditions of buildings in the district might change in the future, given current plans.

Source: Boston Planning & Development Agency website, accessed spring 2017

Streetscape + Public Realm: Landmarks and Art

We conducted an inventory of landmarks and art along Bowdoin Geneva to create an initial image of how the district presents itself to visitors using direct observation and photographs. We categorized each landmark or work of public art into the following

categories: public art (including murals and sculpture), monuments, churches and signage. The condition or repair of the landmarks and art was noted through direct observation as well.

Streetscape + Public Realm: Open Space

We assessed whether and how residents and visitors use open space in Bowdoin Geneva primarily by gathering resident perspectives through interviews, focus groups, and at the community meetings. We also calculated the amount of green space accessible in Dorchester as a whole and compared that number to other neighborhoods in Boston. Through direct observation, we noted the condition of open spaces in the district, focusing on whether the space was fenced in or blocked, the maintenance of the space, and the clarity of signage that referred to the open space.

Source: City of Boston, Open Space map data, accessed spring 2017

Streetscape + Public Realm: Intersections and Entrances

Using photographs and a sidewalk evaluation checklist tool created by the planning team, we assessed the presence and location of street furniture, such as benches or picnic tables, the type and length of crossing signals, the material and conditions of the sidewalks, the presence and conditions of street trees, the presence and conditions of streetlights, and the overall maintenance of the streetscape. We also mapped the existing street trees and streetlights using the City of Boston's map data.

Through direct observation and stakeholder interviews, five key intersections were identified as major entrances to the district. Residents also highlighted these intersections as areas of pedestrian/vehicular conflict. To further evaluate the conditions of these intersections and better understand pedestrian and traffic movement, we measured the width of the roadways at certain points along Bowdoin Street and Geneva Ave and illustrated street cross-sections to show the spatial distribution of traffic lanes, sidewalks, street furniture zones, and buildings at these points.

Source: City of Boston, Streetlight locations and Trees map data, accessed spring 2017

Mobility: Getting to and getting around Bowdoin Geneva

Through direct observation and feedback from resident interviews and focus groups, the planning team learned that periods of significant car congestion, or speeding during less congested times, negatively impact the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists. To help evaluate walking in the district, we mapped the hilly terrain of the district and the locations and elevations of clusters of commercial activity in the district using GIS data. In addition, we used GIS files from the City of Boston to map and evaluate the width of the sidewalks throughout the district.

To evaluate biking in the district, we used direct observation and GIS files from the City of Boston to map bike lanes and determine the type of bike infrastructure provided by the city (separated bike lanes or "sharrows"), and we used data from Hubway to map the locations of Hubway stations.

To evaluate public transit in the district, we reviewed MBTA service maps and schedules. We also used GIS to determine the distances between MBTA subway stops and the district. We used information from stakeholder interviews as well as direct observation to describe the consistency and reliability of public transit service.

To evaluate driving and parking in the district, we used information from stakeholder interviews and direct observation to define the main issues concerning this mode of transportation. We conducted a parking inventory of all current surface parking lots, on-street parking, and bus stops in the district through direct observation to determine parking locations, capacity, and regulations or restrictions.

Source: City of Boston; Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority, accessed spring 2017

Comparison to Other Main Street Districts

The planning team evaluated Bowdoin Geneva in comparison to other Main Streets district in Dorchester by mapping each Main Streets district in the neighborhood and using Google Maps walking directions to determine how far apart they were on foot. We then used the assessor's database to determine how many of the buildings were zoned as commercial uses and residential uses in each district, and how much square footage of space that represented. Finally, we mapped the distribution of the commercial space within each district to compare Bowdoin Geneva's commercial clusters to other neighboring Main Streets.

Source: City of Boston, Assessor's Department 2016, accessed spring 2017

III. Other Community Engagement

Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholder interviews were designed to learn about Bowdoin Geneva from various members of the community before developing any proposals for the commercial district. We ensure that we spoke to representatives of different groups, including residents, business owners, non-profit leaders, and city officials. Questions were geared towards understanding individuals' involvement in the community, their preferences for present and future development, and their experience with other organizations operating in Bowdoin Geneva.

All interviews included a set of general questions for all interviewees followed by a series of specific, tailored questions. General questions focused on: roles in the community, experience with Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets, perception of public places in the neighborhood and landmarks, quality of city services in the area, desired changes in the neighborhood, and goals for the neighborhood in the next five years.

For business owners, specific questions included details about how long they had been running a business in the neighborhood, why they chose to locate there, their clientele, expansion plans, ownership and tenancy, and difficulties they face as business owners.

For non-profit leaders and city officials, questions focused on understanding the organization's or agency's vision, work, communities served, key partnerships in the community, and perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of Bowdoin Geneva.

For residents, questions sought to gather information on how individuals' felt about Bowdoin Geneva, major assets of and concerns for the neighborhood, which businesses people frequented, which services they found lacking, and what improvements they would like to see.

Students divided into pairs and reached out to 46 stakeholders for interviews, ultimately completing 28. Takeaways from these interviews were then synthesized to inform the priorities and goals for the planning process and, ultimately, the plan's recommendations.

Focus Groups

Focus group discussions aimed to collect residents' perspectives and experiences of the Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets district in a semi-formal group discussion setting. While the planning team originally hoped to conduct a customer survey to estimate market demand, focus group discussions were chosen instead due to time constraints and their ability to reveal a more in-depth picture of certain customer experiences with fewer participants.

The focus groups were initially held to understand the residents needs and preferences as customers of the commercial district. The answers and interactions with the residents helped us understand the daily routines and cultural practices of different communities in the neighborhood. Key thematic areas discussed with the participants were:

- Overall impression of the commercial district
- Shopping patterns and behaviors in the commercial district
- Preferred shopping locations for different goods and services
- Special customer needs and gaps unmet by businesses in the commercial district
- Opportunities for improvement in commercial characteristics of the district
- Opportunities for improvement in physical characteristics of the district
- Entertainment businesses visited outside the district
- Safety concerns
- Pedestrian experience

Because Bowdoin Geneva is home to a diverse range of ethnic groups and a large immigrant population, the focus groups were an important means of reaching the diverse voices in the neighborhood and make the planning process more inclusive. They covered a gap in community outreach not previously fulfilled by other data collection exercises, such as the stakeholder interviews and business survey. Since the discussions became a key medium for engaging neighborhood residents prior to the community workshop, the scope was expanded beyond collecting data on shopping behaviors and preferences to include discussions on safety perceptions within the district and feedback physical space improvements.

Effort was made to seek out representation from each of the major ethnic groups in the neighborhood when recruiting participants for the discussions. Additionally, we ensured that varying age groups, from teenagers to the elderly, were represented to capture the range of experiences through which the district is accessed and perceived by local residents. Accordingly, the spectrum of the focus group participants ranged from Cape Verdean teenagers to working Vietnamese mothers, young Spanish employees, and senior citizens residing in the district. The focus group discussions did, however, undersample the Spanish-speaking community; discussions with Spanish speakers were held informally in nail salons and barbershops, not in a formal group setting.

The participants for the focus groups were recruited with the help of Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets and community members who invited other residents to group discussions. This approach led to some non-resident participants, including Vietnamese employees of a local salon who presented their experience of the commercial district from this perspective.

Focus Group Details:

March 12, 2017

Participants: 5; Cape Verdean church members

Language: English

Location: St. Peter's Teen Center

March 24, 2017

Participants: 5; Vietnamese community members

Language: Vietnamese

Location: Lee's Nail Salon

March 26, 2017

Participants: 7; Cape Verdean community members

Language: English, Cape Verdean Creole

Location: Family Nurturing Center

March 28, 2017

Participants: 10; Teenagers at the St. Peter's Teen Center

Language: English

Location: St. Peter's Teen Center

APPENDIX B: BUSINESS INVENTORY

Address	Business Name	Use/General Type
411 Bowdoin Street	Ackers Vending Services (AVS)	Financial, Real Estate, and Professional Services
397 Geneva Avenue	African Best Braids	Personal Services
221 Bowdoin Street	America's Food Basket	Food & Beverage
427 Bowdoin Street	Attorney Artemisa Monteiro	Financial, Real Estate, and Professional Services
214A Bowdoin Street	Bendiciones Wireless	Retail
483 Geneva Avenue	Betty'z Hair Salon	Personal Services
312 Bowdoin Street	Bobby Fish Market	Food & Beverage
423 Bowdoin Street	Botanica Papa Boco de Haiti	Religious Organization
230 Bowdoin Street	Bowdoin Street Health Center	Health & Social Services
213 Bowdoin Street	Brothers Wine and Spirit	Food & Beverage
420 Geneva Avenue	Cellular Paging of JP	Retail
395 Bowdoin Street	Central Convenience 3	Convenience Store
387 Bowdoin Street	CFS (Consumer Financial Services) Realty	Financial, Real Estate, and Professional Services
201 Bowdoin Street	Chung Wah Chinese Food	Restaurants & Bars
298 Bowdoin Street	City Electronics	Retail
487 Geneva Avenue	Club Mejor Vida	Health & Social Services
222 Bowdoin Street	College Bound Dorchester	Health & Social Services
309 Bowdoin Street	Compass	Health & Social Services
290 Bowdoin Street	Compass School	Health & Social Services
316 Bowdoin Street	Copley Food Market	Convenience Store
425 Bowdoin Street	Corner Shoppe Market	Convenience Store
237 Bowdoin Street	Cruz Market	Convenience Store
268 Bowdoin Street	CVC Unido	Financial, Real Estate, and Professional Services
304 Bowdoin Street	D' Soris Beauty Salon	Personal Services
243 Bowdoin Street	D'Amigos Barber Shop	Personal Services
183 Bowdoin Street	Depina's Unisex Salon	Personal Services
255 Bowdoin Street	Dollar Tree	Retail
413 Bowdoin Street	Domenyck's Unisex Hair Salon	Personal Services
247 Bowdoin Street	Eastern Service Workers Association	Health & Social Services
189 Bowdoin Street	Elier Barbershop	Personal Services
491 Quincy Street	Embarque El Patron Gomez	Financial, Real Estate, and Professional Services
385 Bowdoin Street	Empire Fashions	Retail
200 Bowdoin Street	Family Nurting Center of Massachussets	Health & Social Services

Address	Business Name	Use/General Type
401 Bowdoin Street	Fine Line Auto Repair	Automotive Services
10 Parish Street	First Parish Dorchester	Religious Organization
209 Bowdoin Street	Freres Reunis Orient of Boston	Entertainment & Recreation
252 Bowdoin Street	Fwresh Barber Shop & Beauty Salon	Personal Services
227A Bowdoin Street	G Cleaners	Personal Services
385 Geneva Avenue	Geneva Grocery	Food & Beverage
403 Geneva Avenue	Geneva Maytag Laundromat	Personal Services
248A Bowdoin Street	Genius Planet Computer Repair	Personal Services
187 Bowdoin Street	Grupo Alcoholicos Anonimos Renacimiento	Health & Social Services
261 Bowdoin Street	Hardware Leal Supply	Retail
243C Bowdoin Street	Hawa's African Hair Braiding	Personal Services
113/117 Hamilton Street	Igrejia Adventista do 7dia Caboverdiana	Religious Organization
243A Bowdoin Street	Imagenes Beauty Salon	Personal Services
310 Bowdoin Street	Jerk Restaurant	Restaurants & Bars
296 Bowdoin Street	Johnny's Barber Shop	Personal Services
229 Bowdoin Street	Landmark Coin-Op Laundry	Personal Services
263 Bowdoin Street	Lee's Nails	Personal Services
382, 384, 386 Bowdoin S	Manny's Coin-Op Laundrette	Personal Services
389 Bowdoin Street	Marieliz's Nails & Design	Personal Services
212 Bowdoin Street	Metro PCS	Retail
421 Bowdoin Street	Metro PCS	Retail
432 Geneva Avenue	Minina's Café	Restaurants & Bars
233 Bowdoin Street	Mooney Cleaners	Personal Services
333 Geneva Avenue	Mt Pisgah No 2 Spiritual Baptist Church Inc	Religious Organization
205 Bowdoin Street	Mythos Pizza	Restaurants & Bars
240A Bowdoin Street	National Sports Clothing Store	Retail
422 Geneva Avenue	Neville's Bakery and Restaurant	Restaurants & Bars
429 Bowdoin Street	New Sinai House of Prayer	Religious Organization
260 Bowdoin Street	One Family Diner	Restaurants & Bars
427 Bowdoin Street	One Good Credit	Financial, Real Estate, and Professional Services
214 Bowdoin Street	Onyx Beauty Salon	Personal Services
394 Geneva Avenue	Papa Rino's Pizza	Restaurants & Bars
218 Bowdoin Street	Peguero's Market	Convenience Store

Address	Business Name	Use/General Type
250 Bowdoin Street	People Choice Unisex	Personal Services
267 Bowdoin Street	Pete's Pizza	Restaurants & Bars
225/223 Bowdoin Street	Pollo Centro	Restaurants & Bars
315 Geneva Avenue	Previous: Community Convenience Store	Vacant
317 Geneva Avenue	Previous: Strictly Business	Vacant
485A Geneva Avenue	Quick Exchange Inc.	Financial, Real Estate, and Professional Services
481 Geneva Avenue	Ramirez Grocery	Convenience Store
266 Bowdoin Street	Restaurante Cesaria	Restaurants & Bars
302 Bowdoin Street	Rodriguez Barbershop	Personal Services
314 Bowdoin Street	Rogers Pest Control	Financial, Real Estate, and Professional Services
430 Geneva Avenue	Rosa Supermarket	Food & Beverage
383 Bowdoin Street	Safi Express African Hair Braiding & Supply	Personal Services
315 Bowdoin Street	Saint Peter Parish	Religious Organization
436 Geneva Avenue	Salon Universal	Personal Services
197 Bowdoin Street	Salvation Christian Center	Religious Organization
311 Geneva Avenue	SFA Solutions	Personal Services
401 Geneva Avenue	Shuttered property	Vacant
482B Geneva Avenue	Shuttered property	Vacant, Under Development
416 Geneva Avenue	Sobrino Meat Market	Food & Beverage
303 Geneva Avenue	Star 50 Convenience	Convenience Store
265 Bowdoin Street	Tea House of the Almighty	Personal Services
148 Bowdoin Street	Tropical Island Restaurant	Restaurants & Bars
144 Bowdoin Street	Twenty-One Plus	Retail
451 Geneva Avenue	Universal Beauty Salon and Barber Shop	Personal Services
242 Bowdoin Street	Universal Church of God in Christ Ministry	Religious Organization
379 Bowdoin Street	Unknown / No Signage	Automotive Services
235 Bowdoin Street	Vacant	Vacant
251 Bowdoin Street	Vacant	Vacant
407 Bowdoin Street	Vacant	Vacant
419 Bowdoin Street	Vacant	Vacant
482A Geneva Avenue	Vacant	Vacant
181 Bowdoin Street	Vacant	Vacant, Under Development
123 Hamilton Street	Vacant	Vacant, Under Development

Address	Business Name	Use/General Type
246 Bowdoin Street	Vacant	Vacant, Under Development
191/195 Bowdoin Street	Vacant Lot (VietAid, Mixed Use Site)	Vacant, Under Development
130 Bowdoin Street	Walgreens	Retail
142 Bowdoin Street	Wonderful Barbershop	Personal Services
306 & 308 Bowdoin Street	Your Style Sports Wear	Retail

APPENDIX C: BUSINESS SURVEY RESULTS

2017 Business Survey

A summary of the findings from the **2017 Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets Business Survey** is presented here. Due to promises of confidentiality, this document provides summary results and does not provide information that may identify any single business. We also note cases where too few respondents answered the question to provide meaningful results.

A: Business Operations

1. In what year was your business established? _____
2. How long has your business been at this address? _____

- **8 of 31 (26%) of businesses have been around for more than 10 years**
- **15 of 31 business owners (48%) established their business within the last 5 years.**
- **7 of 31 (23%) were established within the last year.**

3. Why did you locate your business in this business district? Check the two most important factors.

- Availability of space
- Cost of space
- Neighborhood appearance
- Established shopping area
- Transit accessibility
- Grew up in the area
- Close to my home
- Business environment
- Related business nearby
- Business services nearby
- Foot traffic
- Other (specify)_____

The top five most commonly listed items were: Availability of space (11 businesses), cost of space (6 businesses), business environment (5 businesses), transit accessibility (4 businesses), foot traffic (4 businesses), and close to my home (4 businesses).

6. How much space does your business occupy? _____ square feet

Too few respondents were able to answer this question. For information on existing business square footage, please see the Existing Conditions section for an average square footage estimate derived from data provided by the City of Boston.

7. How many employees do you have?

Mean: 6.8 Median: 4

Note: The full-time number includes barbershops who “rent” their chairs to employees.

- 7a. How many are full-time?

Mean: 4.3 Median: 2.5

- 7b. How many are part-time?

Mean: 2.8 Median: 1.0

9. Do you rent or own your space? Rent Own

81% Rent 19% Own

- 9a. If RENT: How much is your monthly rent? _____

\$1.94/square foot**

**square footage derived from assessor's data

- 9b. Has your rent increased significantly in the last 1-3 years? YES NO

9c. If YES: By how much? _____

57% said rent increased. Average increase was 17¢ per square foot.

- 9d. Do you have a lease agreement for your space? YES NO

100% of businesses that rent have a lease.

- If YES: 9e. How long is your lease?

- Month-to-month
- 1 year
- 1 year-3 years
- 4-5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10+ years
- Don't know

67% of renters have leases of 4-5 years or longer.

29% of renters have leases of 1 year or 1-3 years.

1 business had a month-to-month lease.

- 9f. When does your lease expire? _____

Note: Only 17 of 31 business owners completed this question.

2017: 4 businesses

2018: 2 businesses

2019: 1 businesses
2020-2022: 5 businesses
2024-2030: 4 businesses
2031+: 1 business

9g. Do you plan to renew your lease when it expires? YES NO UNSURE

9h. if NO: Why? _____

63% of businesses said YES and 37% said NO or UNSURE. The two businesses that said NO both wanted to buy their space when their lease ends. The six businesses that said UNSURE generally wanted to expand, purchase their space, and were very likely to renew or indicated some other intention to stay in the neighborhood.

10. What plans do you have to grow or improve your business in the next 3 years?

_____ For example, lease additional space, hire additional employees, expand products, improve store signage/facade, improve interior space, expand store hours

Nearly every business owner surveyed identified a plan to grow or improve their business, most commonly general plans for expanding the business, improving customers relations, beginning or expanding marketing, or making facade improvements.

11. What obstacles do you expect your business to face in achieving those goals?

Note: Only 18 of the 31 businesses owners surveyed responded to this question.

Generally cited barriers to meeting business goals include access to credit and capital, difficulty expanding customer base and increasing product selection, and concerns about parking and public safety.

12. Which of the following areas for specialized training or technical assistance would help you grow your business or overcome those obstacles? Check up to three

- Business planning
- Management services
- Web site/e-commerce
- Other computer uses
- Building/facade renovation
- Interior design
- Window displays
- Marketing
- Purchasing
- Other (specify) _____

The most commonly identified items were: business planning (11 businesses), building/façade renovation (10 businesses), interior design (8), marketing (6), window displays (6).

13. Where do you get business advice or assistance? _____

About 60% of businesses identified family/friends, “none,” or themselves as the primary source for assistance. Larger businesses associated with corporations tend to receive advice from business associations or internal corporate assistance. Only one non-corporate business received contracted professional service.

B: Customers and Sales

14. To the best of your knowledge, do the majority of your customers come in:

- Daily or several times a week - **47% of businesses**
- Weekly or every other week - **33% of businesses**
- Monthly - **10% of businesses**
- Couple times a year - **7% of businesses**
- Do not know - **1% of businesses**

15. To the best of your knowledge, do the majority of your customers come from:

- Within 3-4 blocks (immediate area) - **25% of businesses**
- 8-10 blocks ($\frac{1}{4}$ mile to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile) - **25% of businesses**
- Other parts of Dorchester - **21% of businesses**
- Different parts of Boston - **14% of businesses**
- Do not know - **14% of businesses**

16. What are your busiest days of the week and times of day? Mark all that apply

	M	T	W	Tr	F	Sat	Sun
Morning (until 12pm)							
Afternoon (12pm-5pm)							
Evening (5pm-8pm)							
Late Night (8pm on)							



This graphic indicates that the busiest time in the commercial district is the weekend, particularly Saturdays. There is very little activity after 8pm across the district. On Bowdoin Street, there's a steep drop in business activity after 5pm. Geneva Avenue stays active into the early evening, then falls off after 8pm.

17. To the best of your knowledge, which race or ethnicity makes up the largest share of your customers? _____

17a. Which is the second largest? _____

About a third of businesses (9) identified Latinos as their primary customers, a third identified Cape Verdean (8), and a third African American (8). The remaining businesses (2) said their customer base was too diverse to identify a single group that makes up the largest share. It is possible that some respondents who identified African Americans as their primary businesses were referring to Cape Verdeans and vice-versa. In general, many businesses are not serving just a single group. What is clear is that Cape Verdean, African American, and Latino customers combined make up the majority of the customer base in the district.

18. Can you please estimate your total annual sales for 2016? \$_____

Not enough businesses complete this question to provide a reliable summary estimate. This may indicate a need for better sales tracking systems.

19. Over the past three years, how have your annual sales changed?

Increased - **48% of businesses**

Decreased - **10% of businesses**

Stayed the same - **31% of businesses**

Not sure - **10% of businesses**

20. How do you market your business? Mark all that apply

I don't market my business - **23% of businesses**

Local newspaper - **0% of businesses**

City newspaper - **0% of businesses**

Ethnic media - **0% of businesses**

Social media - **55% of businesses**

Yelp / GrubHub / Seamless - **13% of businesses**

Signage/Flyers - **29% of businesses**

Other: "Word of mouth" - **13% of businesses**

C: Relationships with BGMS and Other Businesses

21. Before this interview, were you aware of the Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets program?

Yes No

63% of businesses were aware of Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets. 37% were not aware of Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets before the interview.

IF YES: 21a. How did you learn about or come into contact with the program? _____

21b. Have you worked with Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets on any project or activity? YES NO

21c. If YES: Please describe. _____

In general, very few businesses had significant engagement with Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets before the survey if they were not currently or previously members of the organization's board. Some businesses had received drop-in assistance and a few business owners had attended meetings hosted by Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets.

22. What is your relationship with other business owners in the neighborhood? Check all that apply.

- I do joint marketing or promotion with other business owners
- I work with them on neighborhood events or festivals.
- We share business advice.
- We are friends or acquaintances but do not work together.
- Other _____
- **No business reported doing joint marketing or promotion.**
- **Over 50% of owners reported being friends or acquaintances with other business owners.**
- **Only 3 business owners reported sharing business advice.**

D: Business and Commercial District Priorities/Perception of District

23. How would you rate each of the following aspects of the Bowdoin Geneva business district? (Very Good, Good,, Poor, Very Poor, Not sure)

- Selection of goods and services
- Quality of goods and services
- Costs of goods and services
- Customer services
- Store hours
- Sales/Promotions/Marketing Events
- Attractiveness of storefronts
- Amount of parking
- Location of parking
- Cleanliness of public spaces
- Attractiveness of public spaces
- Public Safety
- Traffic
- Other _____

	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor	Not Sure
Selection of goods and services	14.8%	66.7%	11.1%	3.7%	3.7%
Quality of goods and services	3.7%	85.2%	7.4%	0.0%	3.7%
Costs of goods and services	11.1%	63.0%	14.8%	3.7%	7.4%
Customer services	11.1%	66.7%	14.8%	0.0%	7.4%
Store hours	22.2%	63.0%	0.0%	3.7%	11.1%
Sales/Promotions/Marketing Events	3.6%	25.0%	50.0%	10.7%	10.7%
Attractiveness of store fronts	3.7%	44.4%	33.3%	18.5%	0.0%
Amount of parking	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%	46.4%	3.6%
Location of parking	10.3%	31.0%	20.7%	37.9%	0.0%
Cleanliness of public spaces	3.6%	46.4%	39.3%	3.6%	7.1%
Attractive of public spaces	0.0%	59.3%	33.3%	3.7%	3.7%
Public safety	0.0%	39.3%	42.9%	17.9%	0.0%
Traffic	0.0%	50.0%	32.1%	17.9%	0.0%

24. Please rank the 3 most important improvements that should be made to the Bowdoin Geneva commercial district to encourage people to visit and shop here more often.

1=most important, 2=second most important, 3=third most important

- Cleaner public spaces
- More police presence:
- Improved pedestrian traffic/safety
- More sales and promotions
- More attractive storefronts
- Better located parking
- More attractive public spaces
- Better public signs

- Special events
- Street improvements
- Better store window displays
- More parking
- Better lighting
- New types of stores
- Joint business district marketing efforts
- Improved public safety
- Other (specify) _____

Most frequently chosen improvements, including those entered by the respondents, include:

- Safety / more police (5 businesses)
- Special events / small business festivals (4 businesses)
- Joint marketing (2)
- Perception / Reputation (2)
- Area newspaper
- More engaged people
- Business support
- Storefront fix-up
- Bring in new stores / change
- Affordability

E: Personal/Demographic Information

25. Do you live in Bowdoin Geneva? YES NO

25a. If NO: Where do you live (neighborhood)? _____

71% of owners live outside Bowdoin Geneva but 55% live in Dorchester.

27. Do you identify as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish?

- No
- Yes, Honduran
- Yes, Puerto Rican
- Yes, Salvadoran
- Yes, Dominican
- Yes, Guatemalan
- Yes, Other _____
- Prefer not to answer

28. Of the following, do you identify as:

- Black or African American
 - Cape Verdean
 - Haitian

- Jamaican
 - Other _____
 - Asian
 - Chinese
 - Vietnamese
 - Filipino
 - Asian Indian
 - Korean
 - Other _____
 - White
 - American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Middle Eastern or North African
 - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
 - Prefer not to answer
 - Other _____
-
- **45% of respondents identified as Latino; of those, 85% were Dominican (only two Latino respondents were not).**
 - **Of those who didn't identify as Latino, 60% identified as Black or African American. 50% of those identified as Cape Verdean.**
 - **No one said they were exclusively Black or African American—there was always an ethnicity or nationality attached.**
 - **Latino-owned businesses are not just present on Geneva Avenue, the center of the Latino community in the district. Only half of Latinos surveyed were business owners on Geneva Avenue.**

APPENDIX D: IMPLEMENTATION RESOURCES

Resources for Bank Recruitment

Throughout the planning process, residents and stakeholders expressed the desire for a bank in Bowdoin Geneva to provide basic services to the community. There are city and state resources specifically focused on banking in underserved communities. Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets could draw on these resources in their advocacy and possible recruitment of a bank to the commercial district.

Massachusetts Community & Banking Council

The Massachusetts Community & Banking Council (MCBC) is a forum of financial institutions and community organizations where members share information that helps financial institutions better fulfill requirements of the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA). The CRA requires financial institutions to serve all communities with banking and lending services, especially low- and moderate-income communities. One of the council's goals is to use the forum as a way to identify communities that are underserved by basic banking and lending and encourage financial institutions with CRA requirements to fill those gaps.

Linked Deposits Program

If Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets decides to advocate for more banking services in the community, the city's Linked Deposits Program could be a useful tool. It is a program that requires any bank holding city deposits to meet certain benchmarks of providing financial services and lending in all communities, including low- and moderate-income communities that may be otherwise underserved. Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets may be able to use data collected through this process to evaluate whether the area's Linked Deposit banks and financial institutions are sufficiently investing in and providing financial services to the community.

Each year, a "Linked Deposit Banking Report to the Mayor" provides information on mortgage lending rates to communities based on information the banks submit under Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) and Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) requirements. The Community Reinvestment Act works to ensure banking services go to all members of a community in ways that are financially sound for both the communities and the banking institutions. The Home Mortgage Disclosure Act requires financial institutions to record and publicly disclose information about mortgage applications they receive, including demographic information of applicants as well as the decisions on those applications in order to monitor for possible discrimination. The report to the mayor profiles banks according to their lending and contributions to community development.

Recommendation	Cluster	Theme	Cost Estimate	Timeline	Key Partners
Develop organizational process for taking stances on development	District-Wide	Influencing Development	\$	Short-term	Boston Planning and Development Agency
Host public forums on development to gain community input	District-Wide	Influencing Development	\$	Medium-term	Meeting House Hill Civic Association, Greater Bowdoin Geneva Neighborhood Association, Bowdoin Geneva Alliance, Other Local Civic Associations
Create a set of development guidelines for the district in collaboration with other community groups	District-Wide	Influencing Development	\$	Medium-term	Local community organizations, Residents
Build relationships with local media outlets and reporters	District-Wide	Media	\$	Short-term	Media outlets, Reporters, Local non-profits
Direct media attention to a priority project for the district	District-Wide	Media	\$	Medium-term	Media outlets, Reporters
Identify experienced business owners, board members, and other community members with relevant experience to serve as mentors or advisors for businesses	District-Wide	Businesses	\$	Short-term	Business owners, BGMS board members
Identify gaps in expertise on the Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets board and recruit professionals from across Dorchester to fill them	District-Wide	Businesses	\$	Medium-term	Local professionals
Develop a training program for community members to volunteer to guide businesses through common city administrative processes	District-Wide	Businesses	\$	Medium-term	Community members with relevant expertise
Expand staff on a permanent basis	District-Wide	Businesses	\$\$	Long-term	Local colleges and universities
Expand the diversity of businesses through the development and deployment of a business recruitment package	District-Wide	Businesses	\$\$	Long-term	Local civic organizations
Partner with the Boston Ujima Project and Commonwealth Kitchen to identify small-businesses with the potential to become tenants	District-Wide	Businesses	\$	Long-term	Boston Ujima Project, Commonwealth Kitchen
Hold on-site, collective, and scheduled technical assistance delivered strategically to specific sectors or geographic areas at once	District-Wide	Businesses	\$	Short-term	Technical assistance providers, City of Boston, Local CDCs
Connect businesses with technology services, legal service providers, and credit repair services	District-Wide	Businesses	\$\$	Medium-term	Technology service providers, Legal service providers, Credit repair services
Use bi-monthly business meetings as opportunities to encourage business owners to share expertise and learn from each other	District-Wide	Businesses	\$	Short-term	Local businesses, Property owners
Pilot small-scale and less time-intensive street events or festivals	District-Wide	Businesses	\$\$	Medium-term	Local civic organizations, Local businesses
Encourage cross patronage by expanding coupon program	District-Wide	Businesses	\$	Medium-term	Local businesses
Explore co-purchasing of goods and business-related services	District-Wide	Businesses	\$	Long-term	Vendors, Local businesses
Empower business owners to play a more active role in public safety by implementing a phased comprehensive business public safety toolkit	District-Wide	Businesses	\$\$	Long-term	Boston Police Department, Boston Main Streets Foundation
Tie the district together through wayfinding and consistent streetscape	District-Wide	Mobility	\$-\$ \$\$	Short-term, Long-term	City of Boston, Business owners

Improve the bike network	District-Wide	Mobility	\$\$	Medium-term	City of Boston, Hubway, Bowdoin Bike School
Improve bus stops	District-Wide	Mobility	\$\$\$	Medium-term	Boston Transportation Department, MBTA
Implement parking management scheme	District-Wide	Mobility	\$	Short-term	Boston Transportation Department
Implement wayfinding to Ronan Park	District-Wide	Community Gathering Spaces	\$\$, \$\$\$	Short-term, Long-term	Boston Department of Parks and Recreation, Boston Transportation Department, Friends of Ronan Park
Expand street tree network	District-Wide	Community Gathering Spaces	\$\$	Medium-term	Boston Department of Parks and Recreation, Local residents, Boston Transportation Department
Increase sidewalk-level lighting	District-Wide	Community Gathering Spaces	\$\$	Medium-term	Boston Transportation Department
Install an extensive, cohesive street furniture network	District-Wide	Community Gathering Spaces	\$\$\$	Medium-term	Boston Transportation Department
Expand programming in public open space	District-Wide	Community Gathering Spaces	\$\$, \$\$	Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term	Local business owners, Local organizations, Local artists
Create business grate mural painting program and invest in public art	District-Wide	Community Gathering Spaces	\$	Short-term	Local business owners, Local artists, Local youth
Pilot technical assistance for interior design renovations	Geneva Gateway	Businesses	\$\$	Medium-term	City of Boston Main Streets, Chris Moynihan, Retail Visions
Create a gateway for Bowdoin Geneva at the Fields Corner T Station	Geneva Gateway	Mobility, Community Gathering Spaces	\$\$, \$\$\$	Short-term, Long-term	MBTA, Boston Public Works Department, Boston Transportation Department, MBTA Art Programs, BR+AC+E, Hubway, MassDOT, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, VietAID
Create a plaza at the intersection of Geneva Avenue and Topliff Street	Geneva Gateway	Mobility, Community Gathering Spaces	\$\$, \$\$	Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term	Boston Transportation Department, Boston Public Works Department, Boston Planning & Development Agency, Boston Public Improvement Commission, Papa Rino's Pizza, Sobrino Meat Market, VietAID
Add curb extensions and crosswalks at other key intersections	Geneva Gateway	Mobility, Community Gathering Spaces	\$\$\$	Long-term	MBTA, Boston Public Works Department, Boston Transportation Department, MassDOT
Better utilize Horner's Corner	Geneva Gateway	Community Gathering Spaces	\$	Short-term	Fields Corner CDC, Senior groups

Activate existing community gardens	Geneva Gateway	Community Gathering Spaces	\$\$	Medium-term	Garden trustees, New lot owner, VietAID
Support property owner in securing new tenants that bring retail diversity to the neighborhood and caters to local residents	The Hinge	Businesses	\$	Medium-term	Property owner, Boston Public Library, Arts organizations, Artists, Entrepreneurs
Leverage presence of Walgreen's for community events and sponsorship	The Hinge	Businesses, Community Gathering Spaces	\$	Medium-term	Walgreens
Arrange for interim use of the vacant spaces to bring more activity to the area	The Hinge	Businesses, Community Gathering Spaces	\$	Short-term	Property owner, Boston Public Library, Arts organizations, Artists, Entrepreneurs
Encourage consolidation of the billboard site and the adjacent vacant parcel and development as a mixed-use development	The Hinge	Businesses, Community Gathering Spaces	\$\$\$	Long-term	Clear Channel, Local elected officials, MassDOT, Local CDCs, Vacant parcel owner
If the Community Center proves infeasible, ensure any future development on the site meets community needs and responds to unique location	The Hinge	Businesses, Community Gathering Spaces	\$\$\$	Long-term	Star 50 Convenience, Geneva Ave., LLC, City of Boston, Boston Department of Parks and Recreation, BGMS, Local CDCs
Facilitate trash relocation and fence removal adjacent to Geneva Cliffs entrance	The Hinge	Businesses, Community Gathering Spaces	S	Short-term	Star 50 Convenience, Geneva Ave., LLC, Boston Conservation Commission, Friends of Geneva Cliffs
Include outdoor seating for the business as an expansion of the temporary plaza	The Hinge	Businesses, Community Gathering Spaces	\$	Medium-term	Star 50 Convenience, Geneva Ave., LLC
Work with owner to use vacant lot as temporary extension of proposed plaza	The Hinge	Businesses, Community Gathering Spaces	\$\$	Short-term	Endeavor Capital, Boston Conservation Commission, Boston Department of Parks and Recreation, Friends of Geneva Cliffs
Promote dense, mixed-use development that sensitively responds to the park and adds to Geneva Cliffs Plaza	The Hinge	Businesses, Community Gathering Spaces	\$\$\$	Short-term	Endeavor Capital, Boston Conservation Commission, Boston Department of Parks and Recreation, Friends of Geneva Cliffs, Local CDCs, Local elected officials, Boston Planning and Development Agency
Retime traffic and crossing lights	The Hinge	Mobility	\$	Short-term	Boston Transportation Department, Boston Planning and Development Agency, Boston Department of Public Works

Create sidewalk bump-outs	The Hinge	Mobility, Community Gathering Spaces	\$, \$\$\$	Long-term	Boston Transportation Department, Boston Planning and Development Agency, Boston Department of Public Works
Acquire billboard site and/or secure billboards' use for community purpose as temporary wayfinding or art landmark	The Hinge	Mobility, Community Gathering Spaces	\$\$\$	Medium-term	Clear Channel, Local elected officials, MassDOT, Local CDCs
Secure Eversource parcel as parkland	The Hinge	Community Gathering Spaces	\$\$\$	Medium-term	Local elected officials, Boston Department of Parks and Recreation, Friends of Geneva Cliffs
Change Geneva Cliffs' Urban Wild designation	The Hinge	Community Gathering Spaces	\$	Short-term	Boston Department of Parks and Recreation, Friends of Geneva Cliffs, Boston Conservation Commission
Create public plaza at the entrance to Geneva Cliffs	The Hinge	Community Gathering Spaces	\$, \$\$	Short-term, Medium-term	Boston Department of Parks and Recreation, Friends of Geneva Cliffs, Boston Transportation Department, Adjacent property owners, Sustainability Guild
Selectively clear underbrush and trees and regrade entrance to Geneva Cliffs	The Hinge	Community Gathering Spaces	\$\$	Medium-term	Boston Department of Parks and Recreation, Friends of Geneva Cliffs
Add infrastructure to the park to support community uses	The Hinge	Community Gathering Spaces	\$\$	Medium-term	Boston Department of Parks and Recreation, Friends of Geneva Cliffs
Relocate Home Depot playground to the Geneva Cliffs Park and Plaza	The Hinge	Community Gathering Spaces	\$-\$	Long-term	Boston Department of Parks and Recreation, Friends of Geneva Cliffs
Plant additional trees on the southeastern portion of the park to buffer residential areas	The Hinge	Community Gathering Spaces	\$\$	Long-term	Boston Department of Parks and Recreation, Friends of Geneva Cliffs
Encourage the redevelopment of the parcel into a new Bowdoin Geneva Community Center	The Hinge	Community Gathering Spaces	\$\$\$	Long-term	Star 50 Convenience, Geneva Ave, LLC, City of Boston, Boston Department of Parks and Recreation, Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets, Cape Verdean Business Association, Eastern Service Workers Association, Other local non-profits
Pilot a business planning technical assistance program	Central Bowdoin	Businesses	\$	Short-term	BGMS, City of Boston Main Streets, Local businesses
Pilot a business façade improvement program	Central Bowdoin	Businesses	\$\$	Medium-term	BGMS, ReStore, City of Boston Main Streets, Local businesses

Work with VietAID and commercial tenant on programs at 191 Bowdoin Street	Central Bowdoin	Businesses	\$\$	Medium-term	BGMS, VietAID, Bowdoin Street Health Center, Dorchester Community Food Co-op
Adjust the zoning boundary between Topliff & Tebroc Streets	Central Bowdoin	Businesses	\$	Medium-term	City of Boston, Boston Planning and Development Agency, Local residents and businesses
Activate underutilized parking lots	Central Bowdoin	Businesses, Community Gathering Spaces	\$	Short-term	St. Peter's Teen Center, Bowdoin Street Health Center, Community groups
Activate underused storefronts	Central Bowdoin	Businesses, Community Gathering Spaces	\$-\$	Short-term	BGMS, Local community groups, Local businesses
Add seating and bus shelters at Olney Street & Bowdoin Street	Central Bowdoin	Mobility, Community Gathering Spaces	\$\$	Medium-term	MBTA, Boston Department of Public Works
Reconfigure Coppens Square	Central Bowdoin	Businesses, Mobility, Community Gathering Spaces	\$\$, \$\$\$	Short-term, Long-term	Friends of Coppens Square, Boston Transportation Department, Boston Department of Public Works, St. Peter's Church, A Better Block
Invest in the Central Bowdoin streetscape	Central Bowdoin	Businesses, Mobility, Community Gathering Spaces	\$\$\$	Short-term, Long-term	Local businesses, Boston Transportation Department, Boston Department of Public Works, Boston Main Streets
Recruit businesses for storefront vacancies	Bowdoin Gateway	Businesses	\$	Short-term	Property owners
Promote mixed-use development through zoning changes or variance petitions	Bowdoin Gateway	Businesses	\$	Long-term	Boston PLanning and Development Agency
Add crosswalk and bump-out at Bowdoin Street / Tovar Street intersection	Bowdoin Gateway	Mobility	\$\$	Short-term	Boston Transportation Department
Improve the streetscape	Bowdoin Gateway	Mobility	\$\$	Medium-term	Boston Department of Parks and Recreation
Add bump-out and bus shelter and move crosswalk at Bowdoin Street and Adams Street	Bowdoin Gateway	Mobility	\$\$	Short-term	Boston Transportation Department, Boston Public Works Department, MBTA
Redesign the Bowdoin / Hancock intersection and Create a new plaza	Bowdoin Gateway	Mobility, Community Gathering Spaces	\$\$\$	Long-term	Boston Transportation Department, Boston Neighborhood Slow Streets

APPENDIX E: OUTREACH

Community Meeting Flyer



English



Cape Verdean Creole



Spanish

Workshop Materials



English flyer



Cape Verdean Creole flyer



Spanish flyer

Agendas for Community Meeting and Workshop



**BOWDOIN GENEVA MAIN STREETS
COMMUNITY MEETING**
Wednesday, April 5, 2017

WHO ARE WE?
We are 16 Master of City Planning students at MIT's Department of Urban Studies and Planning. We've partnered with Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets to develop a Commercial District Plan that reflects your vision and goals for the neighborhood.

AGENDA

- 10:30 AM - Guests Arrive / Sign-in
- 10:40 AM - Introduction - Anh, Paolo, and Miguel
- 10:45 AM - Presentation - MIT Students
- 11:30 AM - Community Feedback
- 12:10 PM - Wrap up / Closing Words - Anh

MORE TO SAY?

Sign up for interviews and focus groups ! | Join us at our next meeting in early May ! | Email us at bgmainstreets@mit.edu

Agenda for Morning Meeting



**BOWDOIN GENEVA MAIN STREETS
COMMUNITY MEETING**
Wednesday, April 5, 2017

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AGENDA

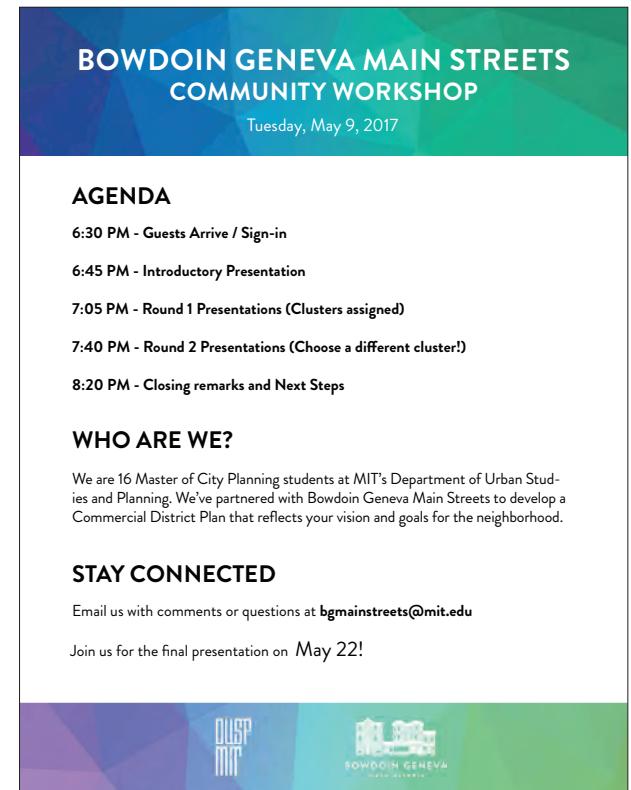
- 6:30 PM - Guests Arrive / Sign-in
- 6:40 PM - Introduction - Anh, Paolo, and Miguel
- 6:45 PM - Presentation - MIT Students
- 7:30 PM - Community Feedback
- 8:10 PM - Wrap up / Closing Words - Anh

MORE TO SAY?

Sign up for interviews and focus groups ! | Join us at our next meeting in early May ! | Email us at bgmainstreets@mit.edu

Agenda for Evening Meeting



**BOWDOIN GENEVA MAIN STREETS
COMMUNITY WORKSHOP**
Tuesday, May 9, 2017

AGENDA

- 6:30 PM - Guests Arrive / Sign-in
- 6:45 PM - Introductory Presentation
- 7:05 PM - Round 1 Presentations (Clusters assigned)
- 7:40 PM - Round 2 Presentations (Choose a different cluster!)
- 8:20 PM - Closing remarks and Next Steps

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STAY CONNECTED

Email us with comments or questions at bgmainstreets@mit.edu
Join us for the final presentation on May 22!

Agenda for Community Workshop

Final Presentation Flyer



English



Cape Verdean Creole



Spanish

THE PLANNING TEAM



Laura Delgado is from Brookline, MA. She is a doctoral student in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning who researches community-based organizations, the provision of social services, housing policy, and processes of neighborhood change.



Tatianna Echevarria is from the South Bronx, NYC, where she began her work on community development as a community organizer. She also has experience in foundation programming and wants to continue leveraging resources to empower low wealth communities of color.



Meg Hess-Homeier is originally from Missoula, Montana, but has been in Philadelphia and New York City for the past ten years managing education programs, primarily after school programs.



Reed Jordan is from Minneapolis, Minnesota, and has a background in federal housing and community development policy.



DeeDee Kim is from Atlanta, Georgia, and has a background in graphic and web design. She is interested in urban design and data visualization to influence planning policies.



Esther Kim is from Los Angeles, CA, where she worked in organizing and advocacy for low income immigrant communities. She hopes to continue working towards immigrant justice through planning and design.



Danya Littlefield grew up in Maryland but most recently lived in Vermont and Maine. Her background is in energy efficiency and environmental education.



Daniel Mascoop is from Roslindale, MA, and has a background in civil engineering with a focus on transportation.



Mary Anne Ocampo is a Lecturer in Urban Design in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at MIT. She practices as an urban designer and Principal at Sasaki Associates, a multidisciplinary firm with an integrated planning and design philosophy.



Soumya Pasumarty is from Mumbai, India. She is interested in implementation planning, learning how to create enabling infrastructures for grassroots problem solvers, and is a classical dancer and musician.



Matthew Robayna is from Miami, FL, but is currently a Dorchester, MA resident. Matt's background is in affordable housing development and finance.



Annie Ryan is from the San Francisco Bay Area. Prior to studying at MIT she worked as a planner focusing on Specific Plans in suburban settings that integrated multi-modal streetscape strategies into implementable development standards.



Karl F. Seidman is an economic development consultant and Senior Lecturer at MIT's Department of Urban Studies and Planning. His MIT courses have completed over ten Main Street revitalization plans.



Ayesha Shahid is from Rawalpindi, Pakistan. Her background is in international development, and she is interested in how better planning can help improve accessibility.



Riddhi Shah is from Mumbai, India. Prior to studying at MIT she worked with a conservation firm and an urban research institute documenting the history of architecture in India since 1947.



Evan Spetrini is from Weymouth, MA. His background is in political science and economics, and he is interested in creative communities, the arts, and their role in urban design, neighborhood development, and social change.



Jonathan Tarleton grew up in Athens, Georgia, but most recently called Brooklyn home. In addition to his current focus on housing policy and racial justice, he's worked in journalism, law, and international development.



Tia Vice is originally from Moncks Corner, SC, and has experience in the non-profit, local government, and political sectors. She completed prior academic studies in Spanish and Latin American Studies.



Jessica Wolff is from Connecticut but spent several years living in Senegal before returning to graduate school. Her background is in international development, local community economic development, and entrepreneurship programming.



Zhekun (Chester) Xiong is from Beijing, China. He is an architect and is interested in experimenting with data-led solutions and spatial strategy to promote civic engagement in the planning and design process.

