

Improving Public Transportation and Avoiding Displacement: Resident Voices

T-Talks Series: Transportation, Displacement, & Solutions

James Jennings

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*Community Voices from the Fairmount Corridor Project:
Impressions and Ideas on Two Decades of Change (December 2019)*

Lisette DeSouza

Trina Jackson

Catalina Tang Yan

The Boston Foundation

- Review/analysis agency documents
- 23 Interviews
- 5 Focus Groups
- Analysis of census data

<https://sites.tufts.edu/jamesjennings/files/2020/01/reportsCommunityVoicesFairmoun2019.pdf>

Key Question

How can residents in Mattapan, and other Boston neighborhoods, enjoy the benefits of their struggles to improve transportation and other municipal services without triggering gentrification and displacement?

Why Important?

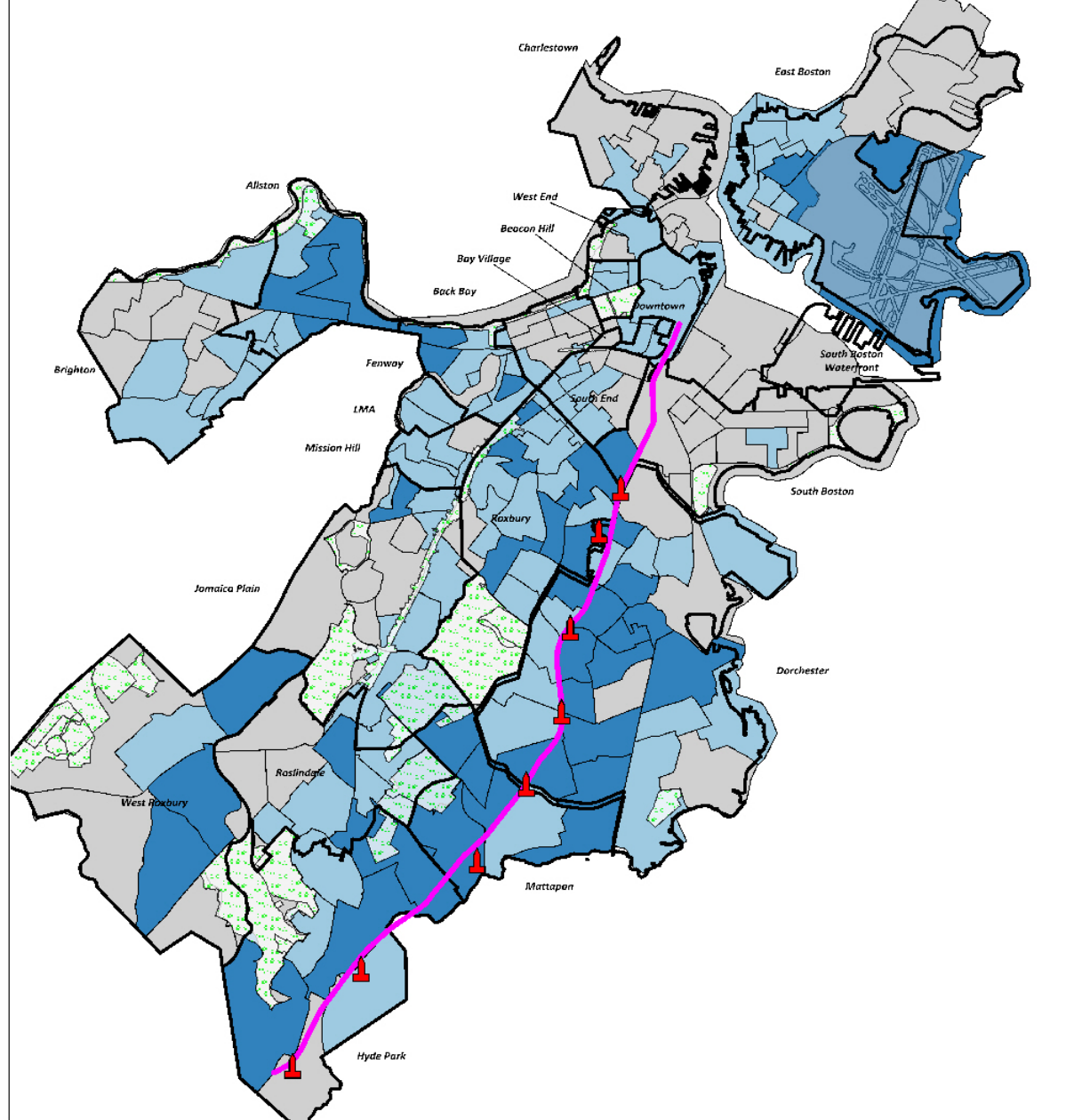
Strategic Plan for 2015-2018

“The growing attractiveness of the Fairmount/Indigo Line, with its proximity to downtown Boston, and the physical improvements we are making to housing, commercial districts and planned open spaces, lay the groundwork for our once under-invested communities to eventually become ‘hot’ real estate markets. In the past two years, there’s been an uptick in private speculators buying property and real estate agencies beginning to market specific sections of Dorchester, with new stations of the Fairmount/Indigo line being featured as an attribute.”

- “We always knew that our community was a diamond in the rough, and we struggled for years to refine it; now others, outside of our community, only see a diamond... I don’t want them to move out the people that have been here in this diamond in the rough. All of a sudden you want to shine it, polish it [up] and make it a great place... no, it’s always been like this.”

- “The affordability that we had... the fear is it’s gonna disappear with all the people buying over-million-dollar condos. We don’t know what to do to stop them because you cannot stop someone from selling their home [for] over a million dollars and you cannot prevent someone from buying with cash. Some people are making money. That’s the fear that we have about a lot of people who own houses. You get a certain age and you have to sell and move on. So it’s happening, but it’s the wrong way.”

- **And**,...from Fairlawn Apartments to....*SoMo Apartments*



Proportion of HH Paying 50% or More Income in Gross Rent

- Between 0 and a Fifth of all HH
- Between a Fifth and a Third of all HH
- One Third or More of All HH

Resident Struggles and Victories

- Redeveloping vacant lots
- Reinforcing arts and culture
- Enhancing walkability and mobility
- Insisting on long term transportation improvements and station improvements
- Increasing access to transportation
- Expanding restaurant offerings
- Improving buildings frontage
- Expanding, and accessing public space
- Involving youth
- Working with elderly residents
- Enhancing pedestrian safety
- Strengthening community connections to stations
- Expanding urban gardening
- Prioritizing economic development and access to jobs
- Building coalitions and collaborative work across neighborhoods

9 Proposed Strategies for Preventing Gentrification and Displacement

- Support discussions for establishing “Transit-Oriented Development Special Protection Zones”
- Work with elderly homeowners to ensure their housing security
- Help to support development or expansion of neighborhood businesses
- Expand opportunities for youth to connect directly to economic development initiatives
- Support the development of community land trusts to enhance housing security for long-time residents along the Fairmount Corridor
- Increase opportunities for public education activities
- Expand resources for implementing cross-neighborhood collaborative strategies and programs

- Expand the use of Arts to organize youth, and support artists who live and have worked in the Community

but (!):

- *Who or what processes are determining a vision for arts and placemaking, and how will such vision(s) be pursued?*
- *Who, or what sectors are not part of such visioning and why not?*
- *How will decision-making about the funding and implementation of arts and placemaking initiatives be made?*
- *How will proposed arts and placemaking initiatives impacting current and resident-based artists and community-based arts?*

➤ Increase and expand resources for “Community-Centered” Organizing

- *Involving residents as the movers and decision makers about visions for the neighborhood.*
- *Organizing in order to influence policies and the narratives driving them, but also to build a sense of community among residents.*
- *Emphasizing a strong equity orientation as “glue” to develop a sense of unity among different community interests, where all voices are heard and are integral to decision making.*
- *Guaranteeing space for new groups to participate in public discourses about the nature and resolution of problems.*
- *Incorporating popular education, broadly defined*

