S+S Plan - Sample Talking Points

Sample S+S Public Comments and Talking Points

Overview

As you submit comments on the Roslindale Square Small Area Plan at public meetings or on the Planning Department's website, feel free to borrow these talking points or make them your own.

If interested, you can review more in-depth responses that include visual highlights from the plan itself.

And finally, if you want to engage in a conversation about any of the plan's proposals, our friends from Perci have set up a handy online discussion forum.

Sample public comment (submit here)

I'd like to submit my overall support for the draft Roslindale Squares Small Area Plan.

This is a strong plan with a lot to like. It lays out an exciting vision for Roslindale Square, with more housing and mixed-use development, safer streets and intersections, and more vibrant and green public spaces.

There are areas that could be strengthened. In particular, I'd like to see far more of the area's residential fabric rezoned to allow for more housing. We are facing a dire regional housing shortage, and thickening up our neighborhoods should be everyone's responsibility, not just those who happen to live along main streets.

However, this plan is ambitious and laudable, and it makes me excited for the future of my neighborhood.

Sample talking points

These talking points follow the same sequence as the Plan's chapters.

Land Use & Design Framework | What I like

1. I love "Community Vision 2," which acknowledges the broad support for upzoning and housing growth in the commercial core AND the residential areas.
2. The images of 6-7 story buildings in the heart of Roslindale look great! They will allow us to welcome many more Rozzidents, help address our city's dire housing shortage, and provide a steady stream of customers to our local businesses.
3. The Squares + Streets zoning districts promote better use of public areas and open space, such as wider sidewalks, greenery, plazas, and outdoor seating.
4. The redesigned connection between South St. and Corinth St. looks great. Much safer for pedestrians, and it'll encourage more active use of that space.
5. I'm glad the Planning Department is open to rezoning areas for multifamily housing outside of the commercial core and major corridors – such as Robert, Firth and Florence - but I'd prefer to see it throughout the neighborhood.

Housing & Real Estate | What I Like

1. We should start a public process to decide what to do with the Taft Hill municipal parking lot. This proposal only calls for public discussion, not development. We should at least consider other ideas for this public resource. The Planning Department knows about parking loss concerns and won't proceed without a temporary parking solution.
2. Purchasing and improving existing affordable housing, such as triple deckers, is a good idea.

Small Business | What I Like

1. I like that the plan promotes a flexible entertainment space for film screenings and events.

2. Assisting business owners with exploring coop models (which was how the Village Market came to be) is a good idea for promoting commercial stability.
3. I support the idea of researching whether zoning can effectively support small businesses by limiting store size.
4. We need to track commercial vacancies to ensure that new zoning policies are working.

Arts & Culture | What I Like

1. I support the "location-specific entertainment license" if it streamlines the approval process for hosting events in public spaces. Right now, organizing public events is hard and complicated, requiring multiple licenses and permits from different City departments with varying responsiveness.

Transportation & Public Realm | What I Like

1. I support restoring two-way Washington Street allows for: increased pedestrian safety, expanded open space, a new bus stop, and shared Poplar Street. This would enable more regular Poplar Street closures, better activating public space and driving business.
2. I love that the plan prioritizes shade and cooling in the Square to mitigate urban heat. Street trees are a great long-term solution for shade, but we need shade now. The plan should consider implementing modern shade structures in the public realm.
3. I like that the plan calls for new investments in our parks. Adams Park needs a children's play area. Healy and Fallon need better pathways, seating, and shade. And Fallon needs a water fountain!

S+S - What I Like

S+S Plan | What I Like

There's a lot to like in the Roslindale Square Small Area Plan, and this document lists the positive reactions from one pro-housing Rozzident. It includes visual highlights from the plan itself to make it easier to follow along. The sections of this document follow the same sequence as the Plan.

If you want to engage in a conversation about any of the plan's proposals, our friends from Perci have set up a handy online discussion forum.

Land Use & Design Framework | What I like

1. **I love "Community Vision 2" in the Emerging Land Use Visions section. The Planning Department acknowledges the sizable constituency for significant upzoning and housing growth in Roslindale. And not just in the commercial core, but throughout the residential fabric as well.**

EMERGING LAND USE VISIONS

During the community engagement process, two different views for the future of Roslindale Square growth and land uses emerged. These two visions informed the development of recommendations related to land use and design guidelines, in particular.

COMMUNITY VISION 1

This vision focuses on the main commercial core of roslindale square. Moderate growth (maximum 4 stories) was envisioned for existing mixed-use and commercial areas, highlighted in red on the map.

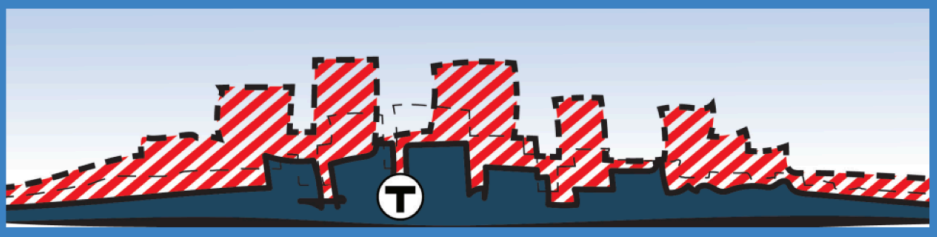
Some of the major concerns shared from community members who supported this vision include: maintaining sunlight on Adams Park and avoiding negative wind/shadow impacts on narrow streets, preserving the low-scale 'village feel' of the Square, and supporting existing small business by requiring active ground floors.

COMMUNITY VISION 2

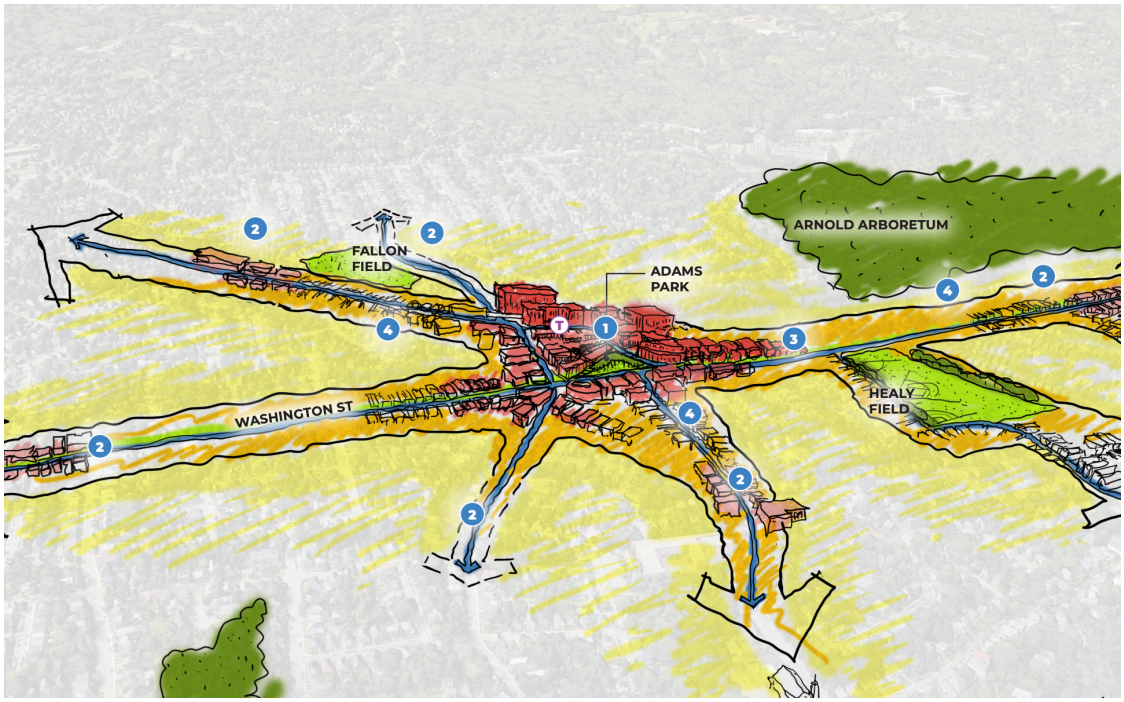
This land use vision maximizes housing growth opportunities across the entire study area, including all of the residential fabric highlighted in yellow on the map.

The goals of community members who support this vision include: affirming existing residential character while encouraging infill development, promoting higher density in the core of Roslindale Square to support a vibrant business district, and promoting more active ground floors on connecting streets such as Belgrade, Cummins, and Washington Street.

Community Vision 1: This vision centers moderate growth around the exisiting commercial core in Roslindale Square.



Community Vision 2: This vision maximizes growth across the whole study area in Roslindale Square.



2. **The Planning Department has envisioned 6-7 story buildings in the heart of the Square, and they look fantastic. They will also activate our local businesses with hundreds of new patrons who can travel by foot to visit their favorite local shops and services.**

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

INTERSECTION AT ALEXANDER THE GREAT PARK ON BELGRADE AVE

A POSSIBLE FUTURE FOR ROSLINDALE SQUARE

Current Conditions:

3. **An underrated aspect of these new zoning districts is that they encourage more thoughtful use of the spaces not occupied by buildings. Wider sidewalks, more greenery and permeable surfaces,**

plazas and outdoor seating areas. We will see more of this stuff as parcels redevelop under this new zoning regime.

3. **Encourage outdoor amenity spaces** such as outdoor seating areas, plazas, balconies, terraces, through-block, or courtyards to deliver high-quality housing and an interplay between the public realm and private living spaces.

4. **Utilize zoning dimensional requirements,** such as yard requirements and permeable area of lot, to support the expansion of sidewalks and placement of street trees along the public realm.

An example of Outdoor Amenity Space at Evergreen Eatery and Cafe in Jamaica Plain, which uses a large setback to create public-facing outdoor seating.

4. **Creating a Through Block on Taft Court between South St. and Corinth Street is a very interesting concept. This area is currently a free-for-all, with no driving lines, some cars using it as a thru street from Corinth, and others illegally turning into it from South St. It's very pedestrian unfriendly, especially for people with kids or with mobility issues trying to access the Village Market from the South St. side. The through block would be a huge improvement.**

COMMUNITY AND COMMERCIAL CORE

THROUGH BLOCK ON TAFT CT, BETWEEN SOUTH ST AND CORINTH ST

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NEW PUBLIC AMENITY SPACES

In the central block bounded by Poplar Street, South Street, and Corinth Street, development should consider meeting their Outdoor Amenity Space and Lot Coverage requirements by dedicating space to the creation of publicly accessible through-block connections, especially between Corinth Street and South Street and between Poplar Street and Taft Hill Court.

Current Conditions:

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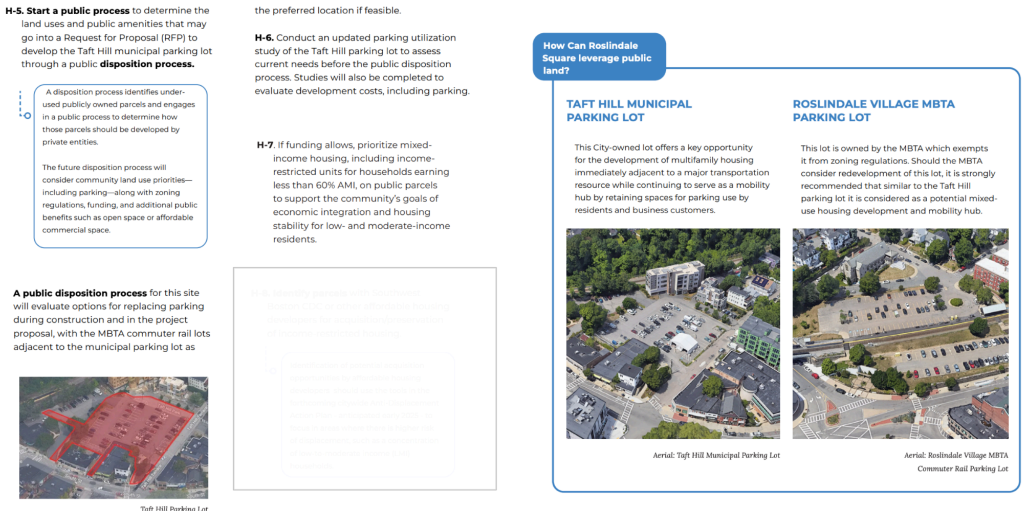
5. **I'm excited that the Planning Department is considering allowing for more multifamily housing on important streets like Robert, Firth and Florence. While I'd much rather see small multifamily zoning extend throughout the neighborhood's residential fabric, this at least suggests an openness to rezoning areas outside of the commercial core and major corridors of Washington, Belgrade, and Cummins.**

. Allow for multifamily residential uses along key corridors on Washington Street, Belgrade Avenue, Robert Street, Cummins Highway, Firth Road, and Florence Street that are near major public community resources for future residents, including commercial clusters, the MBTA Commuter Rail Station, MBTA bus service, and public parks, to deliver high-quality housing and affordable units.

Housing & Real Estate | What I Like

1. **Starting the public process to determine what to do with the Taft Hill municipal parking lot. This is a third rail issue, but this proposal isn't saying to put the development out to bid – it's just calling for a public process to determine whether and what to put in an RFP. Can't we all talk about this?**
    a. It'd be a waste not to at least consider other visions for extracting more benefit out of this public resource.
    b. The Planning Department has made it clear that they're fully aware of parking loss concerns, and that they wouldn't proceed with an RFP before having a solid temporary parking arrangement.



2. Prioritizing the acquisition of older, naturally-occurring affordable housing is a good move. I can see this being implemented to purchase and spruce up triple decker rentals for the benefit of their tenants.

H-8. Identify parcels with Southwest Boston CDC or other affordable housing developers for acquisition/preservation of income-restricted housing.

Identification of potential acquisition opportunities by affordable housing developers should use the tools in the forthcoming citywide Anti-Displacement Action Plan - anticipated early 2025 - to focus in areas where there is higher risk of displacement, such as a concentration of low-to-moderate income (LMI) households.

Small Business | What I like

1. **I like that the plan is encouraging the exploration of a flexible entertainment space that could be used for film screenings and other**

   events.
2. **It's important to promote commercial stability, and one promising pathway is to assist business owners with exploring coop models. Notably, both the Village Market and Rozzie Bound started as cooperatives, with the latter still operating as one today!**

SUPPORT EXISTING AND LONG-TERM BUSINESS SUCCESS IN THE SQUARE

SB-3. Engage with Roslindale business owners to provide Technical Assistance (TA) for establishing co-ownership models of commercial spaces, which would contribute to long-term commercial district stability.

A cooperative model of ownership is what led to the establishment of the Village Market on Corinth Street - this history serves as a model for how cooperatives and other models of co-ownership can generate shared wealth, stability, and preservation of the local business environment.

Village Market on Corinth Street

3. **It's a good idea to research whether it would make sense to limit store size and/or types through zoning in order to support small businesses. I don't know if such policies would actually be effective, but it's worth finding out!**

SB-5. Research and report on the effectiveness of policies that limit store size and/or types of stores at a citywide scale to support small, independently-owned business districts like Roslindale Square.

- This study should evaluate the impact of limiting store size and types of stores on the price and type of goods and services that may be affected, as some chains may provide cheaper prices that are more affordable to lower income households.
- The study should also account for impacts on types of businesses that need larger footprints (fitness and dance studios, sit-down restaurants, etc.)

4. **Systematically tracking commercial vacancies is a no-brainer. We need tools to monitor if our land use policies are having the intended effect. While not as much of a concern in Roslindale, many urban centers have zoned for too much ground floor commercial, leading to a glut of expensive-to-build yet underutilized retail space.**

SB-6. Develop citywide tracking mechanism for commercial vacancies. Complement with a program that supports existing or start-up businesses in filling vacant commercial spaces, addressing a major source of concern for the vitality of the business sector in Roslindale Square.

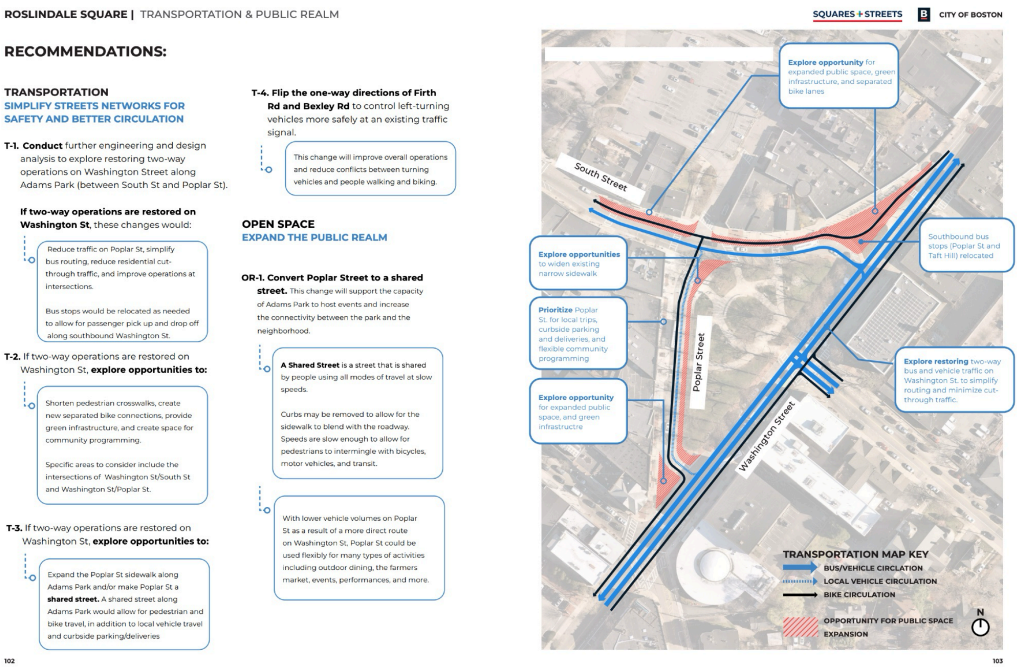
Arts & Culture | What I Like

1. **Assuming a "location-specific entertainment license" will streamline the long and burdensome process of gaining approval to host events in public spaces, then I support this.**
    a. As someone who recently helped organize a public event at Fallon Field, I've witnessed how such events can require up to a half dozen licenses and permits from different City departments with varying degrees of responsiveness and friendliness. It's a complicated and time-intensive process, and a big disincentive for would-be organizers.

Transportation & Public Realm | What I Like

1. **Restoring two-way Washington Street unlocks many possibilities: increased pedestrian safety for those crossing South Street, expanded open space at Adams Park, a new bus stop on Washington, and the conversion of Poplar into a shared street.**
    a. A shared Poplar Street would then be available for more regular closures during the Farmers Market and other events, better

activating our public space and driving more foot traffic to our businesses.



ROSLINDALE SQUARE | TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC REALM

SQUARES + STREETS | CITY OF BOSTON

RECOMMENDATIONS:

TRANSPORTATION
SIMPLIFY STREETS NETWORKS FOR SAFETY AND BETTER CIRCULATION

T-1. Conduct further engineering and design analysis to explore restoring two-way operations on Washington Street along Adams Park (between South St and Poplar St).

If two-way operations are restored on Washington St, these changes would:

Reduce traffic on Poplar St, simplify bus routing, reduce residential cut-through traffic, and improve operations at intersections.

Bus stops would be relocated as needed to allow for passenger pick up and drop off along southbound Washington St.

T-2. If two-way operations are restored on Washington St, **explore opportunities to:**

Shorten pedestrian crosswalks, create new separated bike connections, provide green infrastructure, and create space for community programming.

Specific areas to consider include the intersections of Washington St/South St and Washington St/Poplar St.

T-3. If two-way operations are restored on Washington St, **explore opportunities to:**

Expand the Poplar St sidewalk along Adams Park and/or make Poplar St a **shared street.** A shared street along Adams Park would allow for pedestrian and bike travel, in addition to local vehicle travel and curbside parking/deliveries

T-4. Flip the one-way directions of Firth Rd and Bexley Rd to control left-turning vehicles more safely at an existing traffic signal.

This change will improve overall operations and reduce conflicts between turning vehicles and people walking and biking.

OPEN SPACE
EXPAND THE PUBLIC REALM

OR-1. Convert Poplar Street to a shared street. This change will support the capacity of Adams Park to host events and increase the connectivity between the park and the neighborhood.

A Shared Street is a street that is shared by people using all modes of travel at slow speeds.

Curbs may be removed to allow for the sidewalk to blend with the roadway. Speeds are slow enough to allow for pedestrians to intermingle with bicycles, motor vehicles, and transit.

With lower vehicle volumes on Poplar St as a result of a more direct route on Washington St, Poplar St could be used flexibly for many types of activities including outdoor dining, the farmers market, events, performances, and more.

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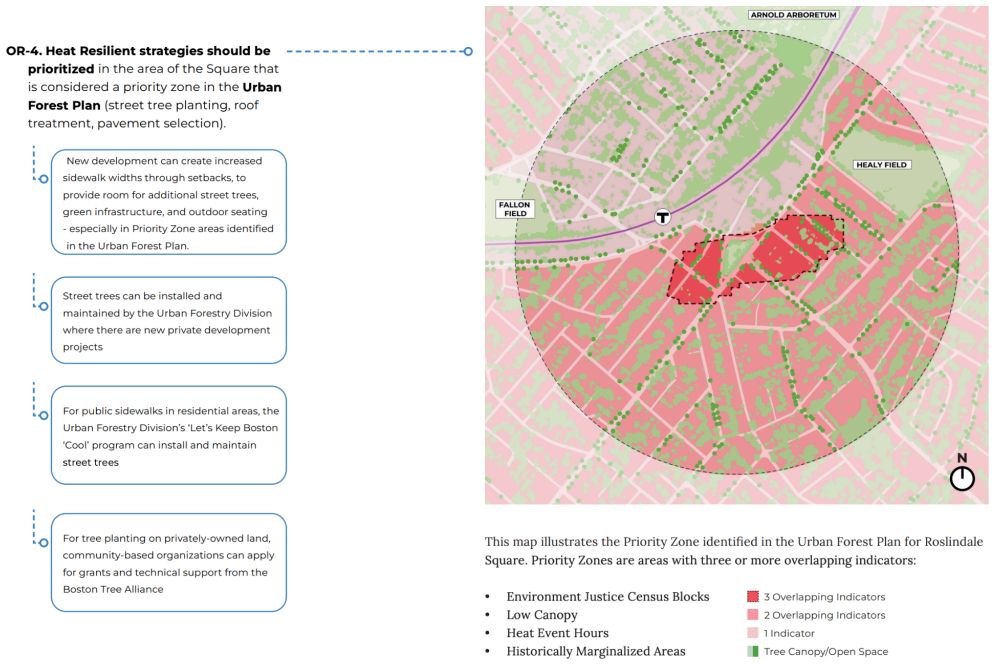
2. **Prioritizing shade and cooling in the Square to mitigate urban heat is key. Walking on Corinth Street in July can feel like living in an Easy-Bake Oven.**

a. That said, the Plan appears to pay relatively little attention to shade structures along streets and sidewalks, instead heavily favoring street trees. Street trees are a great long-term solution, but not as great in the short-to-medium term. They take a long time to provide adequate shade, and need a lot of upkeep. But we need the shade now. There are a number of efforts across the US to quickly implement modern shade structures in the public realm. Let's not give this intervention short shrift.



3. **Adding a children's play area to Adams Park is a great idea. Investing in pathways, seating, and shade at Healy and Fallon would be good investments, too. One addition I'd make: give Fallon a water fountain!**
    a. Fallon has two basketball courts, a hockey rink, a tennis court, a playground with a splash pad, and a baseball field that doubles as a dog park. And yet it lacks a water fountain? A fountain is important beyond just convenience for those who forgot to bring a water bottle – it's a health and safety issue. The playground has essentially no shade outside of the splash pad area, and on hot summer days, it is easy to dehydrate quickly. There have been a

number of occasions where I've had to call my kids' playtime short due to a lack of water on hand.

OR-5. Compile alternative funding sources for park improvements requested by the community. Requested potential improvements include the following:

Adams Park: Children's play area

Healy Field: Investment in the stands and pavilion, pathway network, additional seating, picnic tables, and shade structures

Fallon Field: Additional seating, picnic tables, shade structures

Potential funding sources for these improvements are in Appendix VII: Public Park Funding Opportunities

1.

S+S Plan - What I Dislike

S+S Plan | What I Dislike

No plan's perfect.

In the previous post, I shared how the Small Area Plan's vision for Roslindale Square offers a lot to be excited about for those who want more housing, business dynamism and walkability in our neighborhood.

But in a 120-page plan with something like 50 proposals – there were bound to be areas where our visions misaligned. So for what it's worth, I'm sharing those below.

Before diving in, I'll add my usual disclaimer that these takes are not informed by a long career in urban planning or design. Wherever you notice any errors or wrong assumptions, please let me know.

Land Use & Design Framework

1. **My biggest disappointment is the Plan's refusal to rezone most residential areas to allow for the next increment of housing density.**
    a. Context
        i. Most residential streets around the Square will not be rezoned under the Squares + Streets initiative. Instead, they'll be addressed with more modest zoning initiatives like Neighborhood Housing.

ii.

WHAT ABOUT THE RESIDENTIAL FABRIC AROUND THE SQUARE?

The majority of side streets surrounding the Square contain predominantly one-, two- and three-unit homes, interspersed with small multi-unit buildings.

Future residential zoning reform initiatives will consider how to allow appropriate small-scale multi-unit residential development in these areas to deliver needed housing, particularly where there are existing patterns of three-unit and multi-unit residential uses. It will also advance zoning that allows for ADUs, or accessory dwelling units, to be built within or alongside existing homes.

Wherever there is new development in these areas, that development should affirm the design and scale of these areas or deliver needed affordability.

b. Comments
    i. I appreciate that the Planning Department is trying to strike a balance between the two competing community visions for land use. But I strongly disagree with lowering our ambitions for residential street rezoning. Boston is short of tens of thousands of homes, and lower density areas are the best, most equitable places to target more housing.
    ii. This is a big miss, and I encourage the Planning Department to revisit the idea of rezoning residential areas in the final S+S Plan for Roslindale Square.
    iii. There are two main problems with leaving residential rezoning up to the Neighborhood Housing Initiative.
        1. First, its timeline doesn't match the urgency of the moment. Currently, only large properties (60' wide or more) have a target timeline of "2025." Most parcels in Roslindale and throughout the city won't be affected by this first phase. Presumably, medium and smaller

residential properties won't be rezoned until 2026 or later. We need to do more, and we need it faster.

2. Second, its scope is extremely modest. The plan notes that any future residential rezoning will "reflect existing built patterns" and "affirm existing scale," i.e. bring existing buildings into conformance with zoning rather than bumping up to the next increment of density.
    a. This means that in areas that currently allow triple deckers, they're only going to allow for small apartments. And in areas that currently only allow single-family and two-family homes, they'll allow for adding a single ADU, and maybe legalize the triple decker.
    b. This means that in areas that currently allow triple deckers, they're probably only going to allow for small apartments. And in areas that currently only allow single-family and two-family homes, they'll probably allow a single ADU, and maybe legalize the triple decker.
    c. While re-legalizing the triple decker is good, that just brings us back to where our things stood in 1924. It's a retroactive approach.

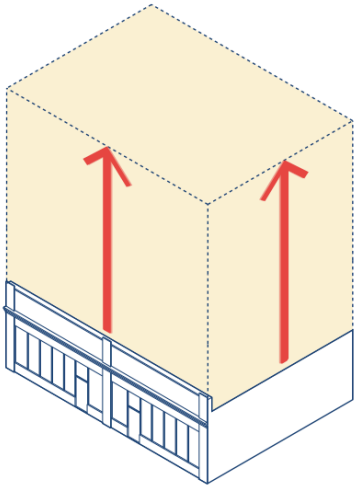
iv. We need a *proactive* approach to thicken up everywhere throughout the city, and especially in our lower density, high demand residential areas. A few hundred ADUs isn't going to cut it.

v. Rather than this slow, piecemeal, incremental approach to rezoning, let's follow the example of peer cities like Minneapolis, Portland, and Austin, and implement broad citywide residential rezoning to allow homes up to 4 stories with up to 10 units (or something like that) *anywhere*.

2. The Design Guidelines are a bit too prescriptive, and I generally disagree with enforcing subjective aesthetic preferences.

Example 1: Creative sensitivity

a. Context
    i. The Design Guidelines call for creative sensitivity toward sites that are "culturally, historically, or architecturally significant…New development that is adjacent to these sites must demonstrate sensitivity and creative responsiveness in their massing, facade composition, and material palette. Redevelopment of or additions to these sites should try to maintain significant character defining features through adaptive reuse rather than demolition."



4. CREATIVE SENSITIVITY

Roslindale contains a number of sites that are culturally, historically, or architecturally significant, such as those inventoried by the Massachusetts Historic Commission. See the next page for a map of currently inventoried historic structures and areas in Roslindale Square.

b. Comments
    i. First, is it necessarily a good thing to mandate this kind of creative sensitivity? I lived in India for a couple of years, and at least where I spent my time, it was common to see *very* old structures next door to brand new ones. The new

buildings usually paid no mind to the facade composition or material palette of their elder neighbors. It took me some time to get used to this juxtaposition of old and new – mainly because I come from the land of design buffer zones. But once it became familiar, I came to like it a lot. Now, you may strongly dislike this lack of creative sensitivity, and that's totally fine. The point is that your preference, like mine, is subjective. It's not, as far as I know, some universal principle of design, and so we shouldn't be using regulations to enforce it.

ii. Second and more important, I can just see the costs ballooning for any development that dares to build next to a "significant site." Except in rare instances, I don't see how saddling developments with these aesthetic requirements is worth the tradeoff of fewer, more expensive homes and commercial spaces.

Example 2: Relationship to context

1. Context
    a. The Design Guidelines call for breaking up the massing of new buildings with upper story setbacks to ensure adequate air flow, sunlight, and comfort.

Upper story stepbacks on the second floor of a Poplar Street storefront

RELATIONSHIP TO CONTEXT

Compose massing and building orientation in consideration of wind impacts and access to light and air at street level.Building massing should relate to the conditions of outdoor amenity spaces to prioritize sunlight, pedestrian comfort, and air at street level.

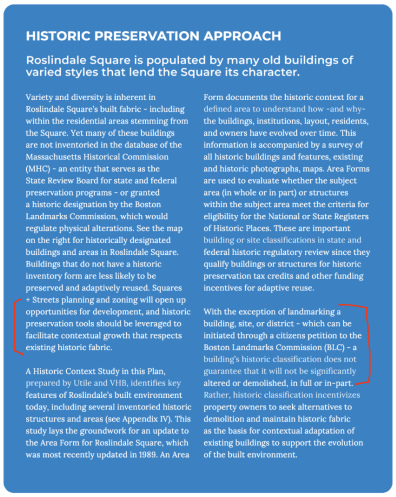
2. Comments
    a. Upper story stepbacks seem like a sensible design tweak, but they come with real drawbacks. They meaningfully increase the cost of construction and building maintenance, they increase the building's embodied carbon

and operational carbon emissions, and they reduce a building's occupiable space (and hence restrict housing supply). They also under-deliver on their purported benefits, especially for small- and midsize buildings. The end result is inefficient, and often less attractive, urban design.

b. Wind tunneling, as I understand it, is only a real concern for buildings above 20 stories, and can be addressed through other means like street trees and ground-level spacing, which the Squares + Streets zoning districts already address.
c. While upper-story setbacks do increase solar access, this may actually be counterproductive in a warming world where shade is valuable. As I noted in my comments about prioritizing shade, we have *too little* of it on our main streets. In Rozzie Square, I think the relief that a building's shadow would provide on hot summer days would outweigh the downside of a shorter window of daily sunlight.
d. I should also note that the Squares + Streets zoning districts address the issue of solar access by requiring deeper ground-level setbacks than what current zoning allows.
e. The argument that upper story setbacks break up "visual bulk" is suspect. It's also just a made up concept, and there doesn't seem to be any material evidence indicating that bulk is actually a negative in urban environments. Indeed, most of the urban environment is made up of simple boxes.
f. As with the notion of creative sensitivity toward significant structures, I don't have a problem with upper-story setbacks per se. But I do have a problem with using regulation to enforce aesthetic preferences.

3. **Having seen many examples of historic preservation weaponized to prevent housing redevelopment, I'm concerned about the planned inventory of Roslindale's "potentially historic" structures and how that might be used to delay or block worthwhile redevelopments.**
    a. Context

i. The Plan notes that the Boston Landmarks Commission will take 2-3 years to complete an update of Roslindale's Area Form.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION APPROACH

Roslindale Square is populated by many old buildings of varied styles that lend the Square its character.

Variety and diversity is inherent in Roslindale Square's built fabric - including within the residential areas stemming from the Square. Yet many of these buildings are not inventoried in the database of the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) - an entity that serves as the State Review Board for state and federal preservation programs - or granted a historic designation by the Boston Landmarks Commission, which would regulate physical alterations. See the map on the right for historically designated buildings and areas in Roslindale Square. Buildings that do not have a historic inventory form are less likely to be preserved and adaptively reused. Squares + Streets planning and zoning will open up opportunities for development, and historic preservation tools should be leveraged to facilitate contextual growth that respects existing historic fabric.

A Historic Context Study in this Plan, prepared by Utile and VHB, identifies key features of Roslindale's built environment today, including several inventoried historic structures and areas (see Appendix IV). This study lays the groundwork for an update to the Area Form for Roslindale Square, which was most recently updated in 1989. An Area Form documents the historic context for a defined area to understand how -and why- the buildings, institutions, layout, residents, and owners have evolved over time. This information is accompanied by a survey of all historic buildings and features, existing and historic photographs, maps. Area Forms are used to evaluate whether the subject area (in whole or in part) or structures within the subject area meet the criteria for eligibility for the National or State Registers of Historic Places. These are important building or site classifications in state and federal historic regulatory review since they qualify buildings or structures for historic preservation tax credits and other funding incentives for adaptive reuse.

With the exception of landmarking a building, site, or district - which can be initiated through a citizens petition to the Boston Landmarks Commission (BLC) - a building's historic classification does not guarantee that it will not be significantly altered or demolished, in full or in-part. Rather, historic classification incentivizes property owners to seek alternatives to demolition and maintain historic fabric as the basis for contextual adaptation of existing buildings to support the evolution of the built environment.

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RECOMMENDATION:

LD-3. COMPLETE AN AREA FORM UPDATE - INCLUDING AN UPDATED INVENTORY OF POTENTIALLY HISTORIC STRUCTURES - FOR THE ROSLINDALE SQUARE AREA TO FILE WITH THE MASSACHUSETTS HISTORIC COMMISSION (MHC).

The completion of this work by the Boston Landmarks Commission will take 2-3 years and will be funded by a combination of MHC grant funding and annual operating funds from BLC.

Above: Historic Building Inventory map
Left: Roslindale Congregational Church

Cobleigh Block

Roslindale Baptist Church

The Substation

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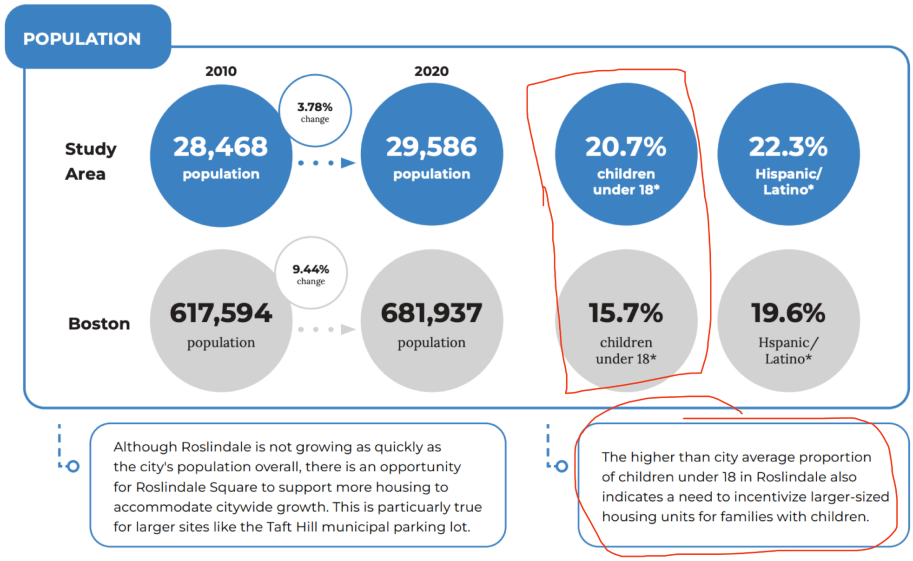
b. Comments
    i. I suspect we'll see an uptick in citizens' petitions to landmark buildings in the Square to the Boston Landmarks Commission in order to block redevelopment of older buildings, or to at least make doing so prohibitively expensive.
    ii. [Most preservation is bad.]

Housing & Real Estate

1. **I don't believe that requesting a higher proportion of 2+ bedroom Inclusionary Zoning units in new residential developments will keep more families in Roslindale.**
    a. Context
        i. The Planning Department's study of neighborhood demographics found that Roslindale is home to a higher percentage of children than the city average. They concluded from this that we should incentivize the construction of larger units (i.e. 2+ bedrooms) to house

more families with children.



H-2. Request a higher proportion of 2+ bedroom **Inclusionary Zoning** units to be provided in new residential development.

Inclusionary Zoning requires that at least 17% of residential square footage in new residential developments with 7 or more units are dedicated to income-restricted housing at an average of 60% Area Median Income (AMI). An additional 3% are reserved for voucher holders, who typically earn less than 50% AMI.

ii.

b. Comments
    i. My interest in housing started with a desire to slow the steady exodus of families with children from the city. I care deeply about strengthening Roslindale's reputation as a family-friendly neighborhood.
    ii. That said, I fear that "requesting" (is the request a de facto requirement?) residential developments to set aside more large units for inclusionary zoning may backfire.
        1. For those who are unfamiliar with Boston's Inclusionary Development Policy: As of October 1,

2024, all new mid-to-large housing developments are required to income-restrict ~20% of their units. It's a tax on residential developments.

    a. I've spoken with multiple Boston-based residential developers who are looking to build outside the city because they find it very challenging to make new projects here financially feasible under the new IDP requirement.
    b. It's notable that Boston, unlike many other cities with significant inclusionary zoning requirements, does not offer any incentives like density bonuses or tax abatements. Even San Francisco, an infamously difficult city to build anything in, recently rolled back its inclusionary zoning requirement to from 22% to 15% in order to spur more building.

2. Setting aside more of the largest/most valuable units for income-restriction increases the tax on residential development.
3. While the set-asides may result in some new affordable 2+ bedroom units, it will come at the cost of broader affordability. This is because making projects more expensive results in fewer developments getting built, and those that are built will charge more for the market rate units in order to offset that cost.

iii. Also, is prioritizing more 2+ bedroom units actually what's called for here? Yes, we have a higher proportion of children relative to the rest of the city. But that's at least partly due to the fact that we also have a larger proportion of 2+ bedroom units relative to the rest of the city.

iv. Instead of making a challenging requirement even more so, the Planning Department should adjust this proposal to maintain consistency with the existing Inclusionary Development Policy for income-restricted units types to be proportional to the project as a whole.

Small Business

1. **In consideration of the other demands placed on real estate developments to support local businesses, asking them to make additional donations to business support organizations is excessive**
    a. Context
        i. Developments that go through the Article 80 development review process (the threshold is 15+ homes, or 20,000+ Square Feet) will be asked to donate to local business support organizations.

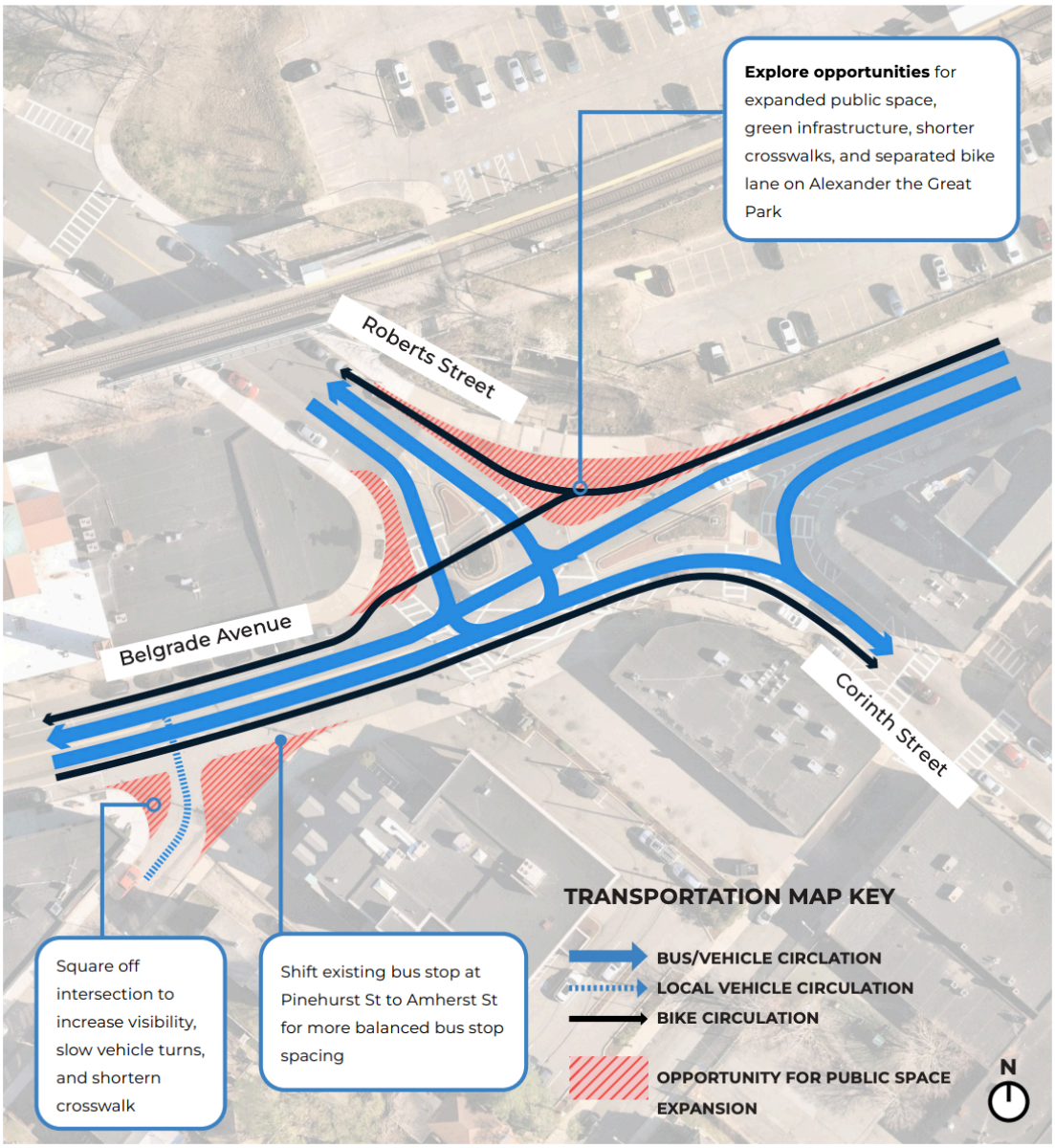
    b. Comments
        i. Taken in isolation, this proposal seems sensible. But larger developments will already support local businesses by building out the ground floor active use spaces required for Squares + Streets districts S3 and above. Also, the City's upcoming anti-displacement plan will require at least 6 months advanced notice of any displacement, and is contemplating requiring developers to provide financial assistance for displaced businesses.
        ii. Under the proposed revisions to the Article 80 development review process, projects would be subject to a standardized formula-based public benefit contribution.
        iii. Support for local businesses should be funded in a predictable manner through the City's operating budget rather than on an ad-hoc basis dependent on future development.

Transportation & Public Realm

1. **I fully agree with improving the Belgrade/Robert/Corinth intersection, though parts of the proposed design seem overly complicated.**

   The Plan proposes an overhaul of the dangerous and confusing intersection at Belgrade Ave., Robert St., and Corinth St.

BELGRADE AVE/ROBERT ST/CORINTH STREET PROPOSED CONCEPT



Might a simpler design work? For instance, could we remove the island in the middle of Robert St. and increase the bump outs even more? Could we also remove the island at Belgrade and Corinth, extend the bump outs, and remove the slip lanes which are a pedestrian (and building) hazard?