



In a successful shopping district people are drawn down a continuous corridor of shops, curious to find what might be on the next block. People desire to shop in a district both because it offers a mix of goods and services they want and because it has an appealing atmosphere. In Hyde/Jackson Square (HJS) people often do not walk the length of the shopping district, but rather use it for visits to one store. This is exacerbated by the fact that the district faces the challenge of residential areas that create “breaks” in the storefronts. Even though the fundamental lay-out of HJS cannot be changed, there are many actions that Hyde/Jackson Square Main Streets (HJSMS) can take in order to develop a continuous corridor.

In order to help local businesses thrive, HJSMS needs to extend beyond attracting customers to an individual store or location; it should maximize the shopping experience of the district as a whole. These recommendations focus on upgrading the quality of the streetscape and increasing shopping activity.

### Recommendation: Improve Pedestrian Streetscape Experience

The streetscape is the most visible and most influential district asset. In order to create continuity in, around and between the district’s two squares, HJSMS must enhance the existing streetscape to connect Hyde and Jackson Squares. Through improvements within blocks and at intersections, pedestrians will have a better sense of the entire district. Maintaining consistency of cleanliness, street furniture (e.g., benches, lighting, trash cans, etc.), and landscaping (e.g., trees and gardens)

further reinforces the continuity. HJSMS should monitor the maintenance of these physical assets as well as advocate for physical improvements within the public realm.

### Strategy: Increase Landscaping and Street Furniture

One of HJS’s most obvious attributes is its vivid colors. Within the somewhat staid city of Boston, HJS showcases a vibrant side of the city. Visiting surrounding commercial districts reinforces the uniqueness of HJS’s flavor and color. HJSMS should use this attribute to reinforce the identity of the neighborhood, both for those who live and work there, and for those who visit.

Another important rationale for landscaping and street furniture improvements is HJSMS’s low visibility in the neighborhood. Such projects, if carefully organized, can be of great benefit to the organization by drawing greater visibility to HJSMS.

#### Description

Improvements in the landscaping and street furniture can be achieved through three main activities: flowerbox installation, trash can painting and new district signage and lighting. HJSMS has already built capacity for district landscape improvements with the planting of trees and the addition of bricks in tree wells. The organization can capitalize on this capacity through additional areas outlined below. Each activity helps build continuity and district cohesion through streetscape unification.

- Flowerbox Installation: This project serves to enhance HJS’s existing vibrancy by installing brightly colored flowerboxes, particularly on residential buildings and drab commercial



Vibrant and unique facades and signage capture the interest of shoppers



Colorful storefront



Colorful flowerboxes

#### Volunteer and Event Process for Flowerboxes

The flowerbox program starts with a collaborative outreach process to businesses and residents in order to solicit interest in the flowerboxes. Donations of flowers, paint and other materials can be solicited from local businesses as a type of sponsorship. The program may be organized as a fundraiser for a youth group, with HJSMS as the lead organizer. Residents and businesses would sign-up a month in advance to purchase the boxes. Volunteers would take a Saturday to decorate the boxes and plant flowers in a highly visible location such as Mozart Park. Volunteers would then deliver the flowerboxes to the recipients and help with installation.



Unique lighting fixtures



Existing trash cans and an example of a painted trash can

sites. Flowerboxes also bring visibility to HJSMS as the sponsor organization of the activity and facilitate partnership building by involving a diverse group of actors.

- **Trash Can Painting:** Trash cans are another opportunity to add color and vibrancy to the district. There is currently an effort by the Hyde/Jackson Business Association (HJBA) to install new trash cans. These trash cans will then be maintained by district business owners. HJSMS can capitalize on this new investment by helping to select appropriate trash cans for painting. The organization of such an effort can occur in a similar fashion to the installation of flowerboxes, and is another way to promote the uniquely vibrant and colorful district.
- **District Lighting and Signage:** Lighting and signage are crucial elements in defining a district. Centre Street needs more appropriate lighting fixtures; lighting that is attractive and designed to illuminate the way for pedestrians. The existing lighting consists of poles with overhanging lights which are more suited to highways. Lighting closer to the street fosters an intimate atmosphere while adding an opportunity to create a unique, but continuous district.

Recently, HJSMS concluded a signage campaign on Centre Street. While colorful, the text on the signs is not consonant with the principles laid out in this plan's vision of "Two Squares, One Place." The district as a whole is not highlighted, but separated into Hyde Square, Jackson Square, and the nebulous Jamaica Plain. While it is understandable that HJSMS may not want to reinvest in these assets immediately after installation, the Project



Team strongly advocates for the district's unity of place—whether Centre Street, Hyde/Jackson Main Streets, or another district name—in district signage.

#### Partners and Resources

HJSMS must take an organizing role to mobilize residents, business employees, and business owners in favor of the above actions. Some actions will be harder to build support around than others and HJSMS should focus on prioritizing projects with the ultimate goal of building capacity with the completion of each new project.

Potential partners include the City of Boston, developers, residents and the HJBA. HJSMS should advocate for funds for planning and implementation through Boston Main Streets and the Department of Public Works. Potential financial resources include the City of Boston's Small Changes Grants, other City improvement grants, the Hyde Square/Jackson Square Community Benefits Trust Fund, Inc., as well as funds from the HJBA, new developers, and corporate sponsors.

Timeline: Short to Long-term

#### Strategy: Create Buffers

Traffic and other pedestrian unfriendly uses diminish the pedestrian experience. There are three potential changes that HJSMS should encourage to buffer pedestrians and to create a more pleasant street wall: Bromley-Heath residential project buffer, parking lot buffers, and residential buffers.

#### Description

- Bromley-Heath Residential Project Buffer: The fencing surrounding the Bromley-Heath residential project detracts greatly from the district's cohe-

Figure 1: Existing parking lot at 7-Eleven



Figure 2: Proposed parking lot buffer at 7-Eleven



Parking lot buffers and bump-outs improve the pedestrian experience

Figure 3: Proposed mixed-use development



Mixed Use □ □

sion. While there are already landscaping efforts on the grounds of the Bromley-Heath residential project which are visible from the sidewalk, the amount of fencing along the sidewalk and on the grounds undermines the project's beautification efforts. HJSMS should advocate for the removal of the fencing and its replacement with waist-high shrubbery. More colorful landscaping and buffering can connect to landscaping at other points in the district.

- **Parking Lot Buffers:** Parking lot uses break the continuity of the pedestrian experience. There are three major parking lots in HJS: Hi-Lo, JP Plaza, and 7-Eleven. In order to enhance the pedestrian experience, HJSMS should partner with the property owners of Hi-Lo, JP Plaza, and 7-Eleven to install green buffers that beautify the street wall and contribute to the district landscaping effort. The small planting area already in existence at JP Plaza can be used as a starting point.
- **Residential Buffers:** The residential nature of the district creates pedestrian dead zones. By advocating for residents to continue the landscaping efforts, residential areas can be used as connections between businesses and draw people through the district.

#### Partners and Resources

Bromley-Heath residential project management, the owners of Hi-Lo, JP Plaza and 7-Eleven, and district residents must all partner to facilitate pedestrian buffer connections. Potential financial resources include the City of Boston's Small Changes Grant, other City improvement grants and the Hyde Square/Jackson Square Community Benefits Trust Fund, Inc.

Timeline: Medium to Long-term



## Strategy: Add Sidewalk Bump-Outs and Crosswalks

Sidewalk space is at a premium in HJS; there is little room for pedestrians to pass one another and even less space for customers to window shop. HJSMS should advocate for the addition of sidewalk bump-outs to increase sidewalk space. The additional sidewalk area will allow for additional trees and benches, of which there are currently few.

Crosswalk improvements create distinct pedestrian pathways and unique intersections, which help pedestrians to easily navigate the district. Using brick or brick-like materials will foster visual continuity between the streets and the sidewalk. The combination of sidewalk bump-outs and crosswalk improvements will also have the benefit of being traffic calming measures.

### Description

By adding sidewalk space and distinct crosswalks, the district will be more pedestrian friendly and will encourage shoppers to visit the entire district, and not just single stores.

### Partners and Resources

HJSMS must take an organizing role to mobilize residents, employers and businesses in favor of what could be a contentious issue. Potential partners include the City of Boston, developers, residents and the Hyde/Jackson Business Association. HJSMS should also advocate for funds for planning and implementation through Boston Main Streets and the Department of Public Works.

Timeline: Long-term

Figure 4: Existing section of Centre Street



Figure 5: Proposed section of Centre Street

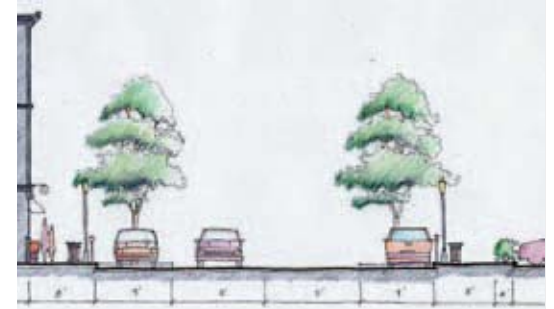


Figure 6: Existing plan of Centre Street

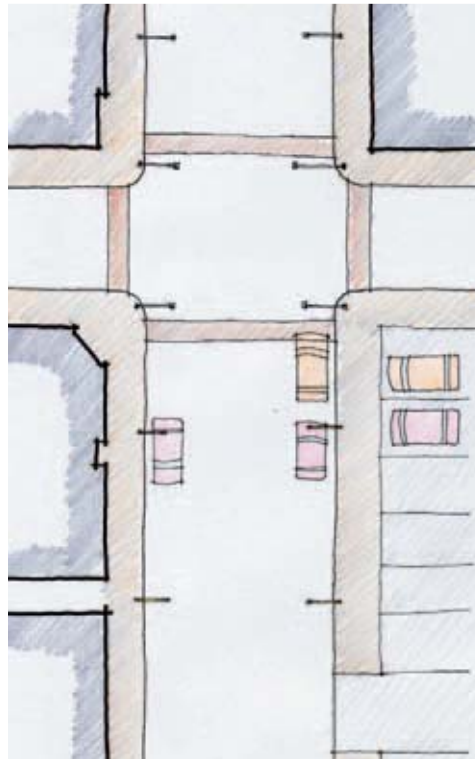
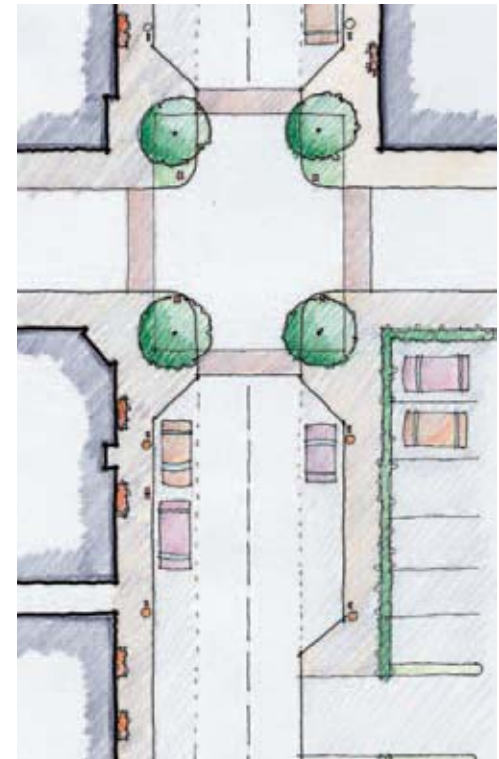


Figure 7: Proposed plan of Centre Street



Proposed crosswalk and sidewalk improvements create a pleasant and safe shopping environment



Mozart Park

Adding more pushcart businesses can enliven streetlife

Kamloops, British Columbia

Sidewalk sales draw activity

### Recommendation: Develop Businesses and Resident Micro-Businesses

Many vibrant business districts around the world thrive due to the blurred line between public space and private business space. A district need not consider its total retail square footage in buildings as its only space for business. Public markets and open-air areas have proven effective retailing strategies that not only expand opportunities for small businesses, but provide invaluable community assets that draw people to the district.

### Strategy: Introduce Pushcarts and Informal Markets

Pushcart vendors, as well as informal markets, such as sidewalk sales, can fill the many breaks along Centre Street. By filling these gaps the street life will create a continuous flow of retail businesses. These types of businesses enhance the vibrant atmosphere on the street and encourage people to slow down, thereby enhancing overall retail activity.

#### Description

- Pushcart Vendors: Centre Street is already home to a number of pushcart vendors that promote a vibrant street life. Many other communities, such as Boston's Dudley Square, have successfully used pushcart vendors to spur street vitality. These pushcarts are unique micro-enterprise business developments that encourage street life while providing entrepreneurship opportunities for the vendors.
- Sidewalk Sales: While pushcart vendors tend to draw outside visitors to the district, a sidewalk

sale is primarily aimed towards local residents. A sidewalk sale establishes Centre Street as the center of the neighborhood, or the living room of the community. This kind of informal activity makes the neighborhood feel like a friendly and personal space that residents will regularly frequent.

A sidewalk sale would occur on a Saturday or Sunday and may require the street to be blocked to traffic. Mailers with registration forms are mailed to all households within a quarter mile radius of the neighborhood, and participants are assigned to a street plot. The organizers may charge a fee for a street plot to raise funds or recoup costs for the program.

#### Partners and Resources

In order to promote pushcart vendors HJSMS should lead the program, but they should also draw support from community arts groups and possibly the Hyde/Jackson Business Association. Funding needs should be limited since any costs will be borne by vendors.

HJSMS could also facilitate these activities by working with the City to acquire additional permits and recruiting businesses to utilize these permits. They would also coordinate the location of vendors to enhance connectivity throughout the district.

For sidewalk sales, HJSMS should organize publicity and obtain city permits to block the streets. HJSMS could find a community partner to coordinate this event. The sidewalk sale funds itself through registration fees.

Timeline: Long-term

### Strategy: Create Neighborhood Sale Days

Coordinated sale days would draw customers to the district and encourage patronage of multiple stores. It would also be an easy first step in building trust and cooperation among the businesses of Centre Street.

#### Description

Neighborhood sale days are a popular tool among Main Streets districts and other coordinated commercial organizations. Malls in particular have long utilized designated sales days as a source of retail traffic. Besides potentially spurring increased foot traffic, neighborhood sale days would increase the perceived unity among district businesses to the outside. In addition, it would also help facilitate links between the district's storeowners.

HJSMS should recruit businesses to join the coordinated sale day campaign. These initial businesses would mutually decide on an appropriate date for such a sale. HJSMS and the businesses would then promote the sale through window signage and media campaigns. The success of the initial sale day could then be used to recruit additional businesses.

#### Partners and Resources

HJSMS would provide the initial impetus by recruiting interested businesses. These stores could then join HJSMS in recruiting additional participants. The Hyde/Jackson Business Association would be a key initial partner to facilitate meetings and participation, as well as to share the costs and time of creating this program. This program re-

quires legwork, and lots of coordination, but does not require a large amount of fiscal capital.

Timeline: Short to Medium-term

### Strategy: Coordinate Customer Comment Cards

A participatory mechanism for shoppers (e.g., customer comment cards) enables businesses to gain better insight into consumer demand for products. This information can help improve sales and product mix. Comment cards also enhance consumer participation in the business community and can help create awareness of HJSMS.

#### Description

While the sales gap analysis and business surveys revealed broad patterns of consumer demand and retention, there is no information regarding product offering or the overall shopping experience. For example, many of the bodegas, and even grocery stores, fail to carry a variety of goods that would appeal to a more affluent clientele or other non-Latino communities. The absence of a well-tailored product mix not only reduces sales from current customers, but also drives away customers who feel the district does not serve their needs.

A simple form on small index cards would be available in stores throughout the neighborhood, as well as in the HJSMS office. These cards would survey shoppers on four aspects:

- Missing products
- Possible product suggestions
- Common stores visited outside the district
- Shopper's home district

HJSMS would compile the data and distribute the results to participating stores in order to assist them in better serving the district and increasing sales. The program should also be promoted to residents as an example of how the district businesses and HJSMS are responding to their needs.

All customer comment cards could be entered into a raffle with the winner receiving a gift certificate to a participating store. This would provide an incentive for returning the forms.

#### Partners and Resources

HJSMS should partner with as many businesses as possible in order to get a broad cross-section of the district's products. While funds are needed to pay for the cost of printing, a nominal fee could be charged to businesses. Data entry could be done by HJSMS staff or community volunteers.

Timeline: Short-term





Some shopping districts consist largely of convenience retail; they are a place where residents can run errands close to home. Other shopping districts are a destination where people will come to shop because the district appeals to them. Hyde/Jackson Square (HJS) has the key assets needed to become a destination: it is a unique place filled with culture and character.

However, many people in the area do not know HJS by name and do not think of it as a single shopping district. While there are individual businesses that have a regional draw, the district as a whole has not yet accessed its own potential. Making HJS an appealing district that draws customers is a crucial objective.

The following recommendations outline the strategies to define HJS as a destination. First, Hyde/Jackson Square Main Streets (HJSMS) should improve the quality of the shopping experience with a good business mix. Second, the district's unique cultural character should be promoted through creative marketing and city-wide events. Finally, physical improvements to the district gateways and plazas should be implemented to draw people into the district.

### **Recommendation: Promote the District's Cultural Character**

HJS should be promoted based on its greatest assets: the wide range of colorful murals, ethnic restaurants, funky shops, and the cultural diversity which gives the district a unique draw.

With one of the highest concentrations of Latino businesses in Massachusetts, HJS is undoubtedly

Latino. However, labeling the district as "Latino" suggests that the district is defined by a single culture. Instead HJSMS should aim to highlight the distinct cultures of the district in a unifying way (from Puerto Rican to Dominican and Black to White).

### **Strategy: Design Promotional Materials**

#### **Objective**

Promotional materials for HJS should be designed with a consistent aesthetic that reflects the neighborhood's vibrant character. By creating a set of promotional materials HJSMS will be able to establish an identity for themselves in both the district and the City as a whole.

#### **Description**

Through a process that involves the entire community, a graphic design package should be created for use in the district's promotion materials.

In order to gain community buy-in, the design process should include:

#### **Logo Design Competition**

This would allow local artists to design the image that captures the neighborhood and would avoid the cost of a professional designer. A competition also offers many designs to choose from and generates publicity for the district and HJSMS. Offering a small cash prize would create an incentive for submissions.

#### **Focus Groups**

In order to solicit more substantial opinions and feedback than could be communicated in surveys, HJSMS should hold a number of informal focus groups to solicit the community's input.



*Fruitvale Village, Oakland, CA*

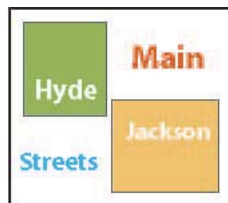
*District Del Sol, St. Paul, MN*

Cultural districts like Fruitvale and District del Sol reflect local identity and create a destination

# Centre North



Logos can help project the district image



## Partners and Resources

HJSMS should initiate the process and involve local arts organizations, such as Spontaneous Celebrations, in order to help with community outreach to artists. A resident professional designer should also provide advice during the process. The production of the materials would be an internal expense to HJSMS.

Timeline: Medium-term

## Strategy: Rename the District

### Objective

Currently, there is a lack of public recognition in the district name, “Hyde/Jackson Square.” This could be because the name is confusing, referring to two separate squares as if they were one. A publicly recognizable name is essential to being a destination district.

### Description

A name must be recognized by the community, and hence must be chosen by the community in the most public process possible. During the renaming campaign, information can be disseminated through signs in the windows of businesses, as well as through focus groups and community meetings. The new name should be one that identifies HJS as a unique place and capitalizes on the district’s vibrancy. Examples include: “Camino Mundial,” “The Latin Quarter,” or “Centre North.”

District Del Sol is an example of a successfully promoted district that dramatically increased its visibility by promoting its ethnic character.

### Partners and Resources

The broader the partnership of stakeholders and community, the more effective the process and

name will be. HJSMS should act as a catalyst for this process and work in partnership with other local community organizations. While this initiative will primarily require staff time, some minor expenses for the printing of publicity materials will be incurred. Funding for this could come from a partnership of community organizations.

Timeline: Short-term

## Strategy: Host Community Events

### Objective

Community events are one of the most powerful forms of creating a vibrant street life. Feria Mundial represents the type of event HJS should encourage. Although local businesses may not necessarily enjoy increased sales during such events, their value is in building longer term familiarity and positive feelings about the district that will bring customers back.

### Description

Initiating events does not need to be time intensive or costly for HJSMS. HJSMS only needs to make contact with other organizations and promoters to advocate for more district events. Partnerships could facilitate new types of events in HJS with minimal resources from HJSMS.

Community-based cultural organizations, such as Zumix in East Boston, are often looking for a public setting for their events. HJSMS may attract these organizations and help them get events permitted for Mozart Park.

Wake Up the Earth Day has become a crowded event that fills Centre Street to the south. Their need for expansion provides an ideal opportunity to extend the event to HJS.



Local radio stations often host block parties in neighborhoods for self-promotion. While these events may specifically reach one constituency, they create a lively atmosphere in the district and may draw people to the district who are unfamiliar with HJS. This may, in turn, attract new customers.

Additional community events include music concerts or outdoor movies. The music events can be used as a way to showcase local musical talent, while the movies can provide a safe nighttime activity for families in the summer.

#### Partners and Resources

HJSMS would initiate relationships with potential partners and help facilitate the permitting. The partner organizations would manage the planning and financing of the events. Potential partners might include the Mayor's Office, organizations like Spontaneous Celebrations, local businesses like Video Underground, or local radio stations.

Timeline: Medium-term

The Jamaica Plain Feria Mundial attracts people from all over the region

**Table 1: Regional Competition**

Business type	Store/Venue	Location
Movie Theatres	AMC Theatres	Fenway
	The Coolidge	Coolidge Corner
	Loews/Sony Theatre	Copley Place
Bowling Alleys	The Milky Way	Centre Street
	Lucky Strike Lanes	Back Bay
Restaurants	Several	Centre South
		Coolidge Corner
		Egleston Square
Ice Cream Shop	JP Licks, Emack & Bolios	Centre South
Furniture Store	Rent-A-Center	HJS
	City Mattress and Furniture Outlet	Columbus Avenue
	Several stores	Brookline
Gym/Athletic Facilities	Curves	Franklin Park
	Fitness Unlimited, Fitcorp	Fenway

**Recommendation:  
Attract Desired Business Mix**

HJS can become a stronger destination by evolving toward a good balance of comparison and specialty retail along Centre Street, and identifying opportunities to recruit desired businesses to the new Jackson Square and Blessed Sacrament developments. The most important element of a successful business district is the selection of stores. There should be a mix that will provide customers with diverse and complementary goods and services.

Although there are currently few vacancies along Centre Street, recent history suggests that there is fairly frequent business turnover. As vacancies occur, HJSMS can work with property owners to recruit tenants that fit into the neighborhood’s plan. In addition, the new retail and commercial spaces proposed in the developments of Jackson Square, and potentially Blessed Sacrament, offer an opportunity for HJSMS to work with the developers to bring in desired tenants.

**Strategy: Identify Potential Businesses**

**Objective**

The sales gap analysis and stakeholder interviews, performed by the Project Team, and customer surveys, conducted by OKM Associates indicate a number of gaps in retail businesses. These businesses include family entertainment venues, sit-down restaurants, ice cream shops, bookstores, furniture stores, and a gym/athletic facility.

**Description**

**Family Entertainment Venue**

Despite the strong presence of families in the area, there are no movie theaters and few family entertainment options in either Jamaica Plain or Roxbury. In fact, the City of Boston as a whole is lacking in cinemas. The Milky Way Lounge & Lanes is the only entertainment venue on Centre Street, but does not specifically cater to families. Demand for family entertainment indicates that the Jackson Square Development would offer an ideal location for such a business. Because chain theatres require very large footprints, a small independent cinema would be the best fit. The Coolidge Corner Theatre and Brattle Theatre would be good models for HJS, hosting film festivals, events for families, as well as being available for rental for public or private events.

**Sit-Down Restaurants**

Perhaps HJS’s greatest strength is its strong cluster of restaurants offering a mix of ethnic food. However, the area would benefit from additional sit-down, family-style restaurants, as well as different types of ethnic food, such as Chinese, Thai, or Greek. In order to turn HJS into a destination, restaurants require the support of complementary businesses, and thus the restaurants would benefit from the addition of an entertainment venue.

**Ice Cream Shop**

Ice cream shops are another business type that is lacking from HJS. Although there are many ice cream shops in the Boston area, there are relatively few in Jamaica Plain. Locally based shops like Emack & Bolios or JP Licks would be preferable, but chains like Ben & Jerry’s and Baskin Robbins are also options.

### Bookstore

There is a significant demand for bookstores, with only one in the immediate Jamaica Plain area. HJSMS could advocate for a chain bookstore in the Jackson Square Development, or a smaller, locally based store on Centre Street. A Spanish language bookstore would be a particular asset to the neighborhood. Another potential model would be a bookstore/cafe to “double-up” on usage, similar to Trident Booksellers and Café on Newbury Street.

### Furniture Store

Many of the customer surveys indicate residents’ desire for additional furniture stores. While many exist around HJS, because furniture is considered “comparison retail,” the addition of more furniture stores may actually benefit existing stores. Furthermore, since customers expressed the need for both hardware and furniture, a store that offers both, such as Economy Hardware & Homeware, would be a great addition.

### Gym/Athletic Facility

Although there are several gym/athletic facilities in nearby Fenway, Back Bay, and Roxbury, only one exists in Jamaica Plain. A franchise fitness club like Boston Sports Club would be appropriate for the Jackson Square Development if the plan for a community health center is not implemented.

### Partners and Resources

HJSMS should work with other local community organizations, as well as the developers of the new Jackson Square and Blessed Sacrament developments, in order to identify potential locations for these business types. In addition, HJSMS could conduct additional surveys in order to refine and

gauge interest in these businesses. While no funding is necessary to implement the identification of businesses, it will require staff time. In order to minimize strain on HJSMS’s resources, partnerships with other local community organizations are crucial to implementation.

Timeline: Short-term

### Strategy: Prepare and Distribute Business Recruitment Package

#### Objective

A business recruitment package is an effective way to market and attract businesses to the district. With 40,000 to 60,000 square feet of new retail space expected in the Jackson Square and Blessed Sacrament developments, HJSMS can play a key role as a matchmaker of businesses with property owners.

#### Description

HJSMS could use the business recruitment package as a means to stimulate interest in neighborhood sites, as well as reach out to “preferred” tenants. It can also be distributed to property owners, business associations and any other organization involved in business development or technical assistance, who may use it either in their own recruitment efforts or for information about the HJS marketplace.

A business recruitment package contains:

- A demographic summary of the neighborhood, focusing on statistics typically of interest to retailers
- A map illustrating the ground floor uses in the district, designating the type of retail and including names of retailers

Footprint of parcels to be developed at Jackson Square



This map, used by the City of San Jose, CA to recruit retailers, indicates the square footage of available spaces and existing retailers by type and name as well

“The neighborhood has a lot of potential because it has an interesting mix of people. The problem is that...Very few stores actually have customers from all ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds.”

- Representative, HJS Community Organization

- A package of relevant newspaper clippings and any other materials that capture the current activity and future vision of the neighborhood
- An inventory of buildings and retail space

If possible, it would be useful to include the information from the package on the website. It should also be supported by a neighborhood tour for potential retailers and a record keeping system of prospective businesses.

#### Partners and Resources

While full-time outreach and brokering are not part of HJSMS's mission or capabilities, contacting a few tenants per month and putting the interested ones in contact with local property owners and developers would be an excellent way for HJSMS to stay involved with tenant recruitment. The packages could also be distributed to community partners like JPND, Hyde/Jackson Business Association, and Urban Edge.

Timeline: Medium-term

#### Strategy: Develop and Maintain Lease Expiration Timeline for Potential Properties

##### Objective

HJSMS will have the opportunity to improve the business mix if they are prepared for storefront turnover. By anticipating vacancies HJSMS can work with property owners to recruit appropriate businesses and ensure that vacancies do not remain vacant for extended periods of time.

##### Description

HJSMS has the advantage of access to property and business owners, as well as the ability to

collect critical information in a timely manner. Although the vacancy rate on Centre Street is quite low at present, historical evidence suggests that turnover does occur every few years. HJSMS can position itself to work with property owners to recruit new businesses that match the vision for the district, maintain a desirable retail mix, and work towards developing HJS into a strong destination.

One mechanism through which to prepare for business turnover is a lease expiration timeline. There are several steps in implementing such a tool:

- Approach business and property owners to collect information on lease periods
- Develop a simple spreadsheet or database that lists all properties on Centre Street (and new developments, as they happen) and corresponding lease periods
- Consult file on a regular basis to identify properties with leases that expire in the near-term (every 18-24 months)
- Reach agreements in which businesses contact HJSMS immediately upon knowing that they will be vacating a location
- Develop standardized tasks to complete at defined time intervals as leases near expiration, such as analyzing square footage and location, identifying desired potential tenants, initiating discussions with property owner regarding transition, and contacting potential new businesses

#### Partners and Resources

HJSMS should partner with key groups, such as Hyde/Jackson Business Association, Centre Street property owners and Centre Street business owners in order to facilitate the collection and use of this information. While this activity does not

require any financial resources, it does require staff time and capacity.

Timeline: Medium-term

**Recommendation:  
Redesign District Gateways & Plazas**

Gateways to a business district define the destination and welcome the visitor to a place, while plazas provide much needed open space for recreation and community gathering. The design of the HJS gateway should reflect the character of the place, with an artistic feel, vibrant colors and a cross-ethnic flavor. In particular, it should welcome pedestrians arriving by public transit and calm traffic entering the district.

Similarly, Mozart Park and the Blessed Sacrament Church are essential elements of the HJS street life. However, they do not currently fill their potential to serve as a “living room” for the community because both cut off the green space from the street with iron fences along the sidewalks. A redesign of the entrance to Mozart Park and the Blessed Sacrament Church would allow for social activity that draws people to the district.



Hyde Square (left) and Jackson Square (right) current gateways

Figure 1: Existing Plan of Jackson Square

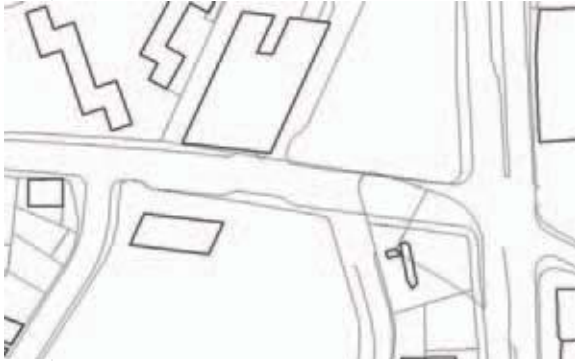
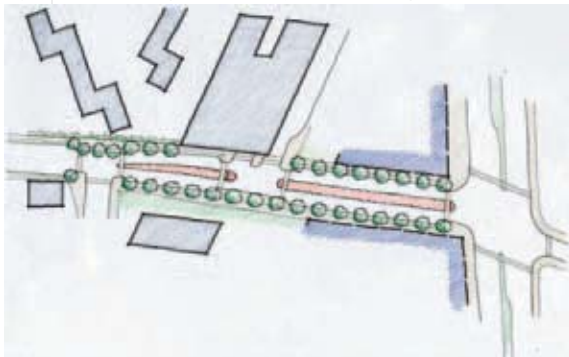


Figure 2: Plan of Proposed Gateway at Jackson Square



## Strategy: Incorporate Gateway at Jackson Square

### Description

When entering HJS through Jackson Square the walking experience is dominated by the sheer mass the of Bromley-Heath residential project and the high volume of traffic. With Columbus Avenue as a major thoroughfare to downtown Boston, thousands of motorists pass each day with no visual clue that the shopping district is around the corner. A new physical design would announce HJS in a way that suggests that it is a destination to visit.

The Jackson Square Development will introduce 40,000 square feet of mixed-use space at the edge of the district which the HJS business district does not currently include; therefore, the Project Team recommends that the Hyde/Jackson Square Main Streets (HJMS) boundaries be extended to incorporate the intersection of Centre Street and Columbus Avenue. To incorporate the intersection of Centre Street and Columbus Avenue and redefine this district gateway, HJSMS should include the following elements:

- A ten foot wide landscaped median on Centre Street at the Columbus Avenue intersection, with an artistic sign
- Bump-outs to narrow out the highway character of the Centre Street and Columbus Avenue intersection
- Enhanced crosswalks and entrances from the Jackson Square MBTA Station
- Replacement of highway lighting with pedestrian light posts
- Replacement of highway-like traffic lights with

city-scale traffic lights

- Incorporation of gateway signage into development
- Extension of the median/entrance to Columbus Avenue
- Installation of a crosswalk across Columbus Avenue

### Partners and Resources

It is more cost effective to incorporate good gateway improvements into the development of Jackson Square than it will be to make future changes. HJSMS should work with developers to ensure that a strong gateway is designed from the outset.

Timeline: Short-term



Figure 3: View of Existing Jackson Square



Landscaped median

Figure 4: View of Proposed Jackson Square Gateway



Figure 5: Plan of Proposed Gateway at Hyde Square



Figure 6: Plan of Existing Gateway at Hyde Square



## Strategy: Redesign Gateway at Hyde Square

### Description

Hyde Square is a natural landmark along Centre Street that creates a more natural gateway than where the district officially ends at the South Huntington Avenue intersection. This intersection is dominated by the 7-Eleven store, which leaves little room for attention to be drawn elsewhere. HJSMS can work to enhance this important gateway with signage and landscaping, thereby capitalizing on an opportunity to connect Hyde and Jackson Squares. Redesigning the gateway at Hyde Square would include the following elements:

- Landscaping at the traffic circle in order to create a welcoming gateway, with a prominent district sign
- Defined parking areas
- Streamlined traffic patterns
- Addition of a Center Street median
- Commissioned mural on MSPCA wall

### Partners and Resources

The Hyde Square Task Force, the City of Boston, adjacent businesses, and residents could all be involved in redefining Hyde Square. HJSMS can pursue funds from the Hyde/Jackson Square Community Benefits Trust Fund, Inc. and the City.

Timeline: Long-term

Example of Entrance Sign

Figure 7: View of Existing Hyde Square Gateway



Figure 8: View of Proposed Hyde Square Gateway





Figure 9: Plan of Proposed Plaza at Mozart Park



Figure 10: Existing Plan of Mozart Park



## Strategy: Expand Mozart Park Plaza

### Objective

Mozart Park is already an active center for the community with vibrant murals that reflect the community's character. However, the playground cuts off visibility of the park from the street, and there are significant dead spots, or under-used spaces that need to be repaired in order to connect to the fabric of the neighborhood.

### Description

In order to create an attractive and welcoming place for residents and customers alike, HJSMS should advocate for the reactivation of Mozart Park. A number of key elements include:

- Removal of fencing to extend park to street
- Redesigning portions to remove dead spots
- Encouraging pushcarts
- Adding chess/checker tables

### Partners and Resources

HJSMS must work on the redesign with community groups, residents, business owners and property owners in order to gain community support. Potential financial resources include the City of Boston's Small Changes Grant, other City improvement grants and the Hyde Square/Jackson Square Community Benefits Trust Fund, Inc.

Timeline: Long-term





Dead Spot in Mozart Park

Figure 11: View of Mozart Park Plaza with more pushcarts



Figure 12: Existing Plan of Blessed Sacrament Church

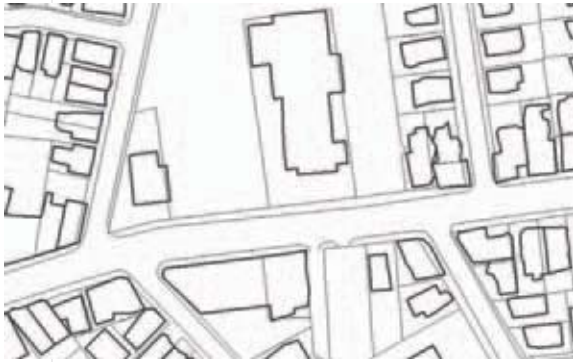
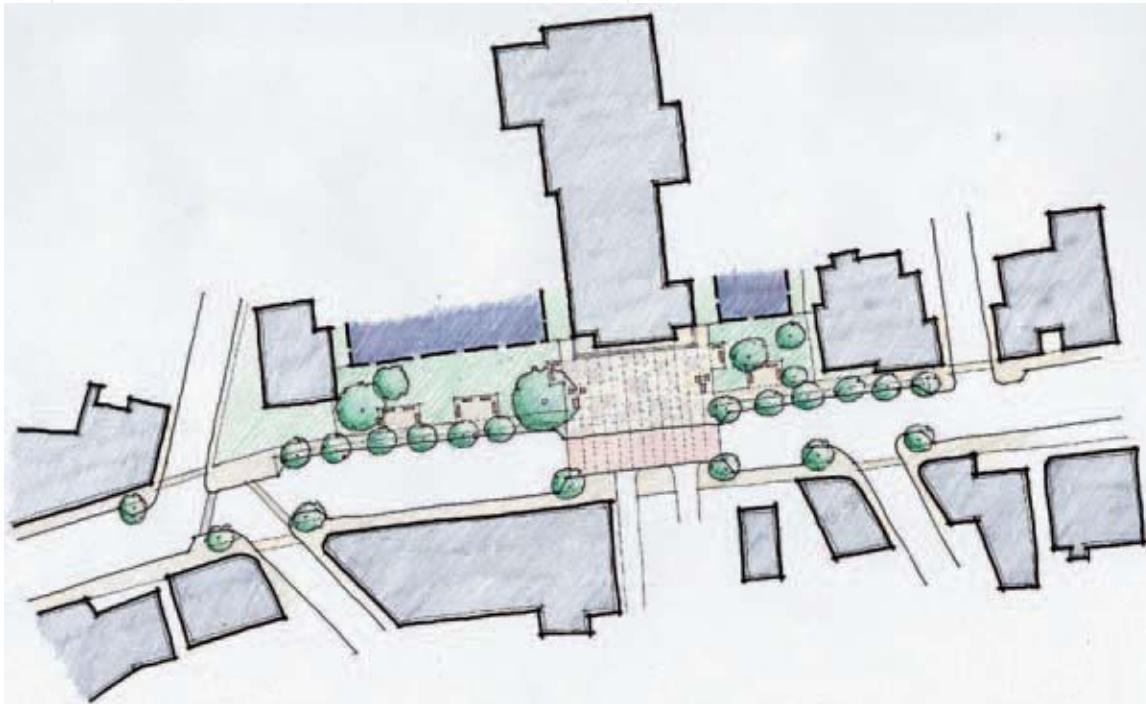


Figure 13: Plan of Proposed Blessed Sacrament Church Plaza



## Strategy: Create Blessed Sacrament Church Plaza

### Objective

The community in Jamaica Plain is losing a cornerstone public institution and place with the closing of the Blessed Sacrament Church. Because the Church is such a physical centerpiece of HJS, it is crucial to the district's identity that it continues to feel this way. Even if the interior of the Church becomes a private space, the plaza in front could be redesigned to serve as an active space. HJSMS should advocate for a plaza design that encourages social activity.

### Description

Stakeholder interviews, media coverage, and community meetings must all inform the recommendations regarding the Blessed Sacrament Church. HJSMS should advocate for a plaza at the Blessed Sacrament Church that creates new civic space for the district and encourages public interaction. Potential uses include outdoor dining, street vending, and chess/checkers tables.

The street in front of the Church can be closed during events to allow the plaza to extend out to the street, creating a beautiful space for events. The plaza might also be designed to create space for pushcarts.

A number of recommended elements include:

- New building setback in line with Church façade
- Removal of fencing to create usable green space
- Addition of small paved areas with benches
- Repaving the plaza to make it more pedestrian-friendly, using materials like brick pavers (i.e. pavers that allow for water absorption)
- Repaving portions of the street in front of Church
- Addition of bump-outs to extend the plaza and define parking
- Addition of chess/checker tables
- Addition of paved area to allow outdoor seating for restaurants and cafés



### Partners and Resources

While the selection of the redevelopment proposal is not open to the public process, neighborhood activism could have an impact on the ultimate decision of outdoor space. HJSMS should continue to stay involved in the process and inform the business community of the process. Potential financial resources include the City of Boston's Small Changes Grant, other City improvement grants and the Hyde Square/Jackson Square Community Benefits Trust Fund, Inc.

Timeline: Long-term

Figure 14: View of Existing Entrance to Blessed Sacrament Church



Figure 15: View of Proposed Blessed Sacrament Church Plaza

