



BROADWAY CORRIDOR ACTION PLAN

Chelsea, Massachusetts

June 2014

A collaborative effort between the City of Chelsea, The Neighborhood Developers, and residents, businesses, and others that care about the future of the Broadway Corridor. The Broadway Corridor Action Plan was funded through a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development's CDBG program.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Broadway Corridor Action Plan is the result of a eight-month community process during which nearly 160 Chelsea residents and stakeholders attended public meetings to share their visions for the neighborhood. Thank you to all of the participants for your time and thoughtfulness.

The action-planning process was initiated and led through a partnership between the City of Chelsea and The Neighborhood Developers, as well as a Steering Committee comprised of community organizations, businesses, property owners, residents and other stakeholders. The Broadway Corridor Action Plan was funded through a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development's CDBG program. Additional support was provided by NeighborWorks America, and The Herman and Frieda L. Miller Foundation. Madden Planning Group provided significant professional planning and technical assistance throughout the process.

BROADWAY CORRIDOR ACTION PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

City and Grant Partners

Jay Ash, City Manager
Maggie Schmitt, Assistant Director of Planning & Development, City of Chelsea
Ricardo Sanchez, Housing Development Project Manager, City of Chelsea
Luis Prado, Director of Health & Human Services, City of Chelsea
Chief Brian Kyes, Chelsea Police Department
Captain David Batchelor, Chelsea Police Department
Sergeant John Noftle, Chelsea Police Department
Officer Sammy Mojica, Chelsea Police Department
Brian Hatleberg, Chelsea City Council
Ingrid Freire, Legislative Director & General Counsel, Office of State Senator Sal DiDomenico
Kathryn Madden, Madden Planning Group
Ann Houston, Executive Director, TND
Emily Loomis, Director of Real Estate Development, TND
Melissa Walsh, Director of Community Engagement, TND
Ronak Dave Okoye, Neighborhood Planner, TND

Community Partners

Captain Scott Peabody, Salvation Army
Catherine Maas, Resident
Dan Cortez, Manager of Community-Based Substance Abuse Initiatives, M.G.H.
Gladys Vega, Executive Director, Chelsea Collaborative
Jerry Sneirson, New Chelsea Realty
Joe Vinard, President & CEO, Chelsea Bank
John Kennard, Chelsea Arts Collaborative
Juan Gallego, Gallego Real Estate
Justin Brown, Hawthorne Realty
Kourou Pich, Co-Executive Director, HarborCOV
Lynn Peters, Co-Executive Director, HarborCOV
Nicole Spasiano, Resident
Price Taggart, Resident
Rebecca Allen, Director of Community Engagement, North Suffolk Mental Health
Reverend Sandra Whitley, People's AME Church
Rich Cuthie, Executive Director, Chelsea Chamber of Commerce
Roy Avellaneda, Weichert Realtors, Metropolitan Boston Real Estate

Saritin Rizzuto, AVP Community Relations & Business Development, Metro Credit Union
Tiffany Mota, Store Manager & Assistant Vice President, TD Bank
Vanessa Shannon, Interim Dean, Bunker Hill Community College
Yessenia Alfaro, Chelsea Collaborative

Many thanks to the additional residents and stakeholders that participated in the community planning meetings:

City Council President Matthew Frank; City Councilor Calvin Brown; City Councilor Clifford Cunningham; City Councilor Dan Cortell; Joe Foti, Department of Public Works Director, City of Chelsea; John DePriest, Department of Planning & Development Director, City of Chelsea; Ryan Lundergan, Planning & Project Manager, City of Chelsea; Carissa Adams, Winn Management; Marcelino Alarcon; Fausto Alvarado; Natividad Alvarado; Luis Anaya; Maria Arce; Maria Arevalo; Anne Auerbach, TND; Fatima Ayala; Fawn Bent; Yanira Bermudez; Sarah Bilman; Alberto Calvo, Stop & Compare; Jose Carranja; Ronald Chaves; Drima Chavez; Hieng Chhua; Mui Chhua; Alex Christmas; Dakeya Christmas; Blanca Cojulun; Thomas Cornu, Trinity Management; Samuel Costoredo; Melissa Dimond, Mass General Hospital/Healthy Chelsea; Mynor Duque; Judith Dyer; Terry Englen; Joe Englen; Meg English; Luz Alba Figueroa; Mackeddy Fils; Ron Fishman, Trinity Management; Francis Soto; Anibal Garcia; Judith Garcia; Maura Garrity; Sarah Gay, Chelsea Public Library; Steven Geddis; Ingrid Gomez; Marissa Guananja, TND; Flavio Guerra; Blanca Guzman; Isabel Hernandez; Yesenia Hernandez; Irene Hernandez; Jackson Hernandez; Sandra Hernandez; Jose Iraheta; Martha Ithier; Sufra Jabin; Juan Jugles; David Keene, TND; Enio Lopez; Erin Lunn; Joseph Mahoney; Shawn Mahoney; Carolyn Mahoney; Joaquin Marquez; Rosalba Martin; Carol Martinez, City of Chelsea; Sharlene McLean; Paula Mejia; Ana Lilian Mendez; Daniel Mojica; Denise Mojica; Farhiyo Omar; Milton Ortiz; Halima Osman; Jaime Fernando Pacas; Jose Pacas; Eliza Parad, Chelsea Collaborative; Tulio Penta; Jhonutun Perea; Elijah Plymesser, TND; Sandra Lizeth Ponce; Ruth Ponce; Jose Elias Portillo; Francisca Prudencia; Sylvia Ramirez, Chelsea Collaborative; Geovani Ramirez; Marianne Ramos; Nelson Restrepo; Isla Reyes; Kizzi Reyes; Esmeraldo Rivera; Matthew Robayna, TND; Blake Roberts, TND; Antonia Robles; Ruben Rodriguez, Starlight Ministries; Yani Rodriguez; Nancy Romero; Cynthia Romero; Rebecca Roseme Obounou; Paul Rustigian; Hortencia Sanchez; Reina Sanchez; Mike Sandoval; Celines Sanjuro, Winn Management; Mariczo Sautizo; Ruth Suazo; Socheath Toda; Farida Valentin; Ana Marina Vaquerano; David Armando Vaquerano; Dana Varzan Parker, Centro Latino; Juan Vega, Executive Director, Centro Latino; Bryce Vickmark; Melissa Vo, Fusion Foods; Joseph Waly; Deborah Washington; Henry Wilson; and Terry Wilson.

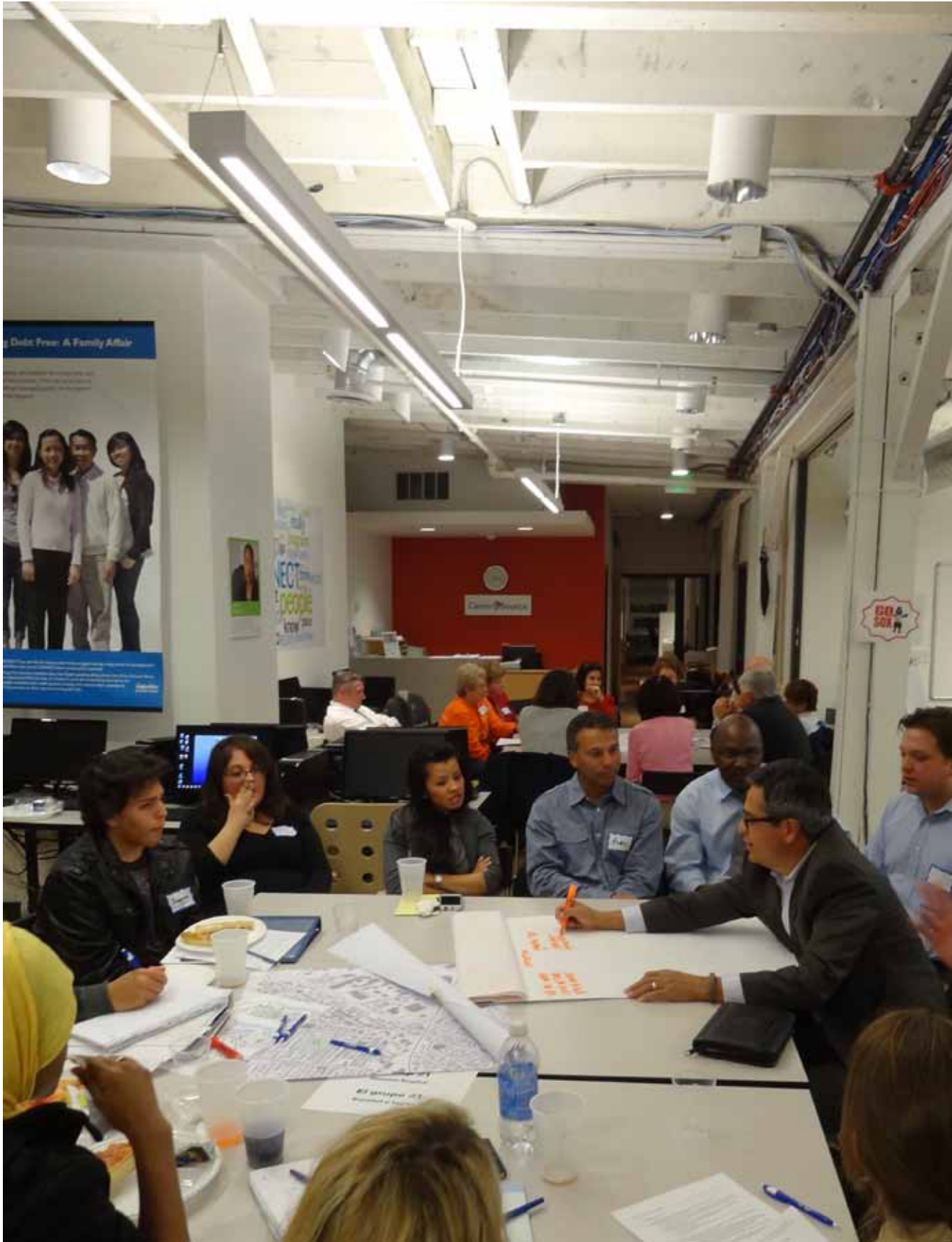
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments

Executive Summary	1
1. Findings	7
2. Corridor-wide Strategies	19
3. Business District	25
4. Bellingham Square	31
5. Chelsea Square	35
6. 5th and Chestnut	39

Appendices (*bound separately*)

- A. Community Process
- B. Retail Analysis
- C. Implementation Matrix
- D. 10-Point Plan to Enhance Public Safety
- E. Housing Analysis



Many people came together to talk about their vision and the specific actions that would improve the Broadway Corridor.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

VISION STATEMENT

In the future, the residents of Chelsea will be proud to say that Broadway is their downtown center, a safe and welcoming place where people are drawn to the array of shops and creative cultural events, recognizing friends when they are there. Pedestrians will easily make their way along a comfortable environment of tree-lined streets and interesting storefronts. Crosswalks will be well marked. Bus stops will be dispersed to minimize congestion, and many will use the buses and the convenient Silver Line station to reach East Boston, the airport, and the South Boston Innovation District.

Retail and restaurant owners will benefit from increased foot traffic and greater combined purchasing power of residents, nearby employees, and visitors. Customers will be able to see into stores, while business owners will be better able to see out and survey the street. With trainings and other organized information, business owners will be able to successfully navigate permits and licenses, taxes, insurance, and loan requests to improve their stores. The stores will be known locally and in the region through a strong online presence, good reviews, and advertising in district promotions. With strong customer relations, nearby residents will feel that downtown is in fact their neighborhood center.

For others in the region, Broadway will become a destination and place to discover, where cultural events will compliment the local businesses and restaurants. Signage and wayfinding will make it easy to find one's way, whether arriving on foot, bicycle, automobile or transit. Through a dedicated sense

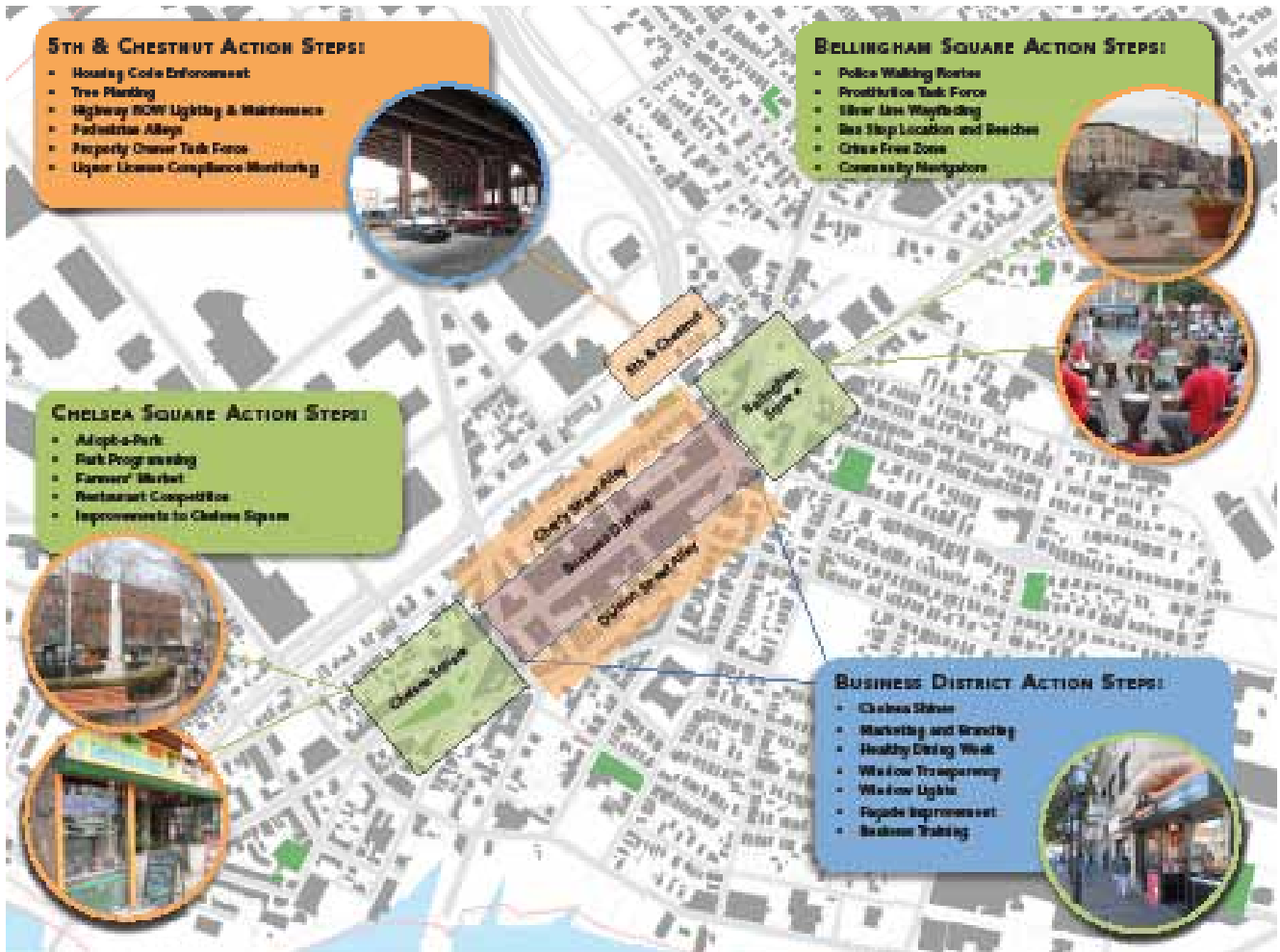
of collaborative leadership, confidence in downtown Chelsea will bring new investment into existing and new structures. The housing stock will be improved with a mix of affordable and market rate choices, in both renovated and new structures. By creating a downtown that works for the existing residents, Chelsea will find that Broadway will become an interesting destination for others.

ASSETS

The Broadway Corridor is a busy downtown area, with historic architecture, a comfortable scale, and a close knit community. The main shopping district is a destination for the 22,000 residents who live within a nine-minute walk, including many families and a wide diversity of people. The retail mix includes many locally owned shops and ethnic restaurants, and almost no vacancies. Downtown is easily accessed by several bus routes and will be served by the new Silver Line.

The Corridor has some grand commercial buildings that contribute to the historic districts.





The action steps are focused in the heart of downtown Chelsea.

NEED

The Broadway Corridor has the potential to better serve existing residents and nearby employees. The lack of public and private investment over the years shows, and both sectors are looking for a greater sense of shared purpose before committing funds. Like too many downtowns, no one really manages the district operations and appearance or sets standards for better business practices. Some portion of the housing stock on upper floors and side streets could be improved, and safety is a concern for many. The historic pattern of street intersections leads to congestion, conflicts, and uncertainty for both drivers and pedestrians. Bus operations overwhelm some areas and accommodations are

needed to respond to the planned Silver Line bus rapid transit and gateway, estimated to both be open in late 2016.

STUDY AREA

The Broadway Action Plan addresses the downtown area from Cary Avenue to Williams Street, and from the U.S. Route 1 elevated highway to the edge of the Shurtleff-Bellingham neighborhood. With the intent of coordinating with recent planning initiatives, parts of this district intersect with the adjacent Box District, the edge of the Addison-Orange Neighborhood, upper Broadway, Cary Square, and the Silver Line alignment. This report supports actions recommended in those plans and also recognizes the influence of the waterfront and other nearby areas.

PROCESS

With a commitment to community engagement, the plan involved many members of the community over the course of a nine-month process. The Neighborhood Developers led the work in partnership with the City of Chelsea. Over 450 community voices were engaged throughout the process; including 158 people who participated in community planning meetings and Steering Committee meetings; 250 individuals completed surveys; 30 residents participated in focus groups; and 12 business owners shared their perspectives during interviews.

The Steering Committee provided invaluable help in guiding the work and providing feedback at key milestones. Outreach to different segments of the community – residents, businesses, shoppers, city officials, civic leaders, and property owners – helped the project team understand the many different perspectives that inform future

GOALS

Through this process, the following goals for the future shape the Action Plan and its recommendations:

1. A clean and safe downtown for the whole city, offering a vibrant cultural life.
2. A downtown neighborhood with well-maintained housing stock and new residential infill suitable for a mix of incomes.
3. A thriving business district that welcomes all, with well-lit and transparent storefronts.
4. A walkable downtown with easy to navigate street crossings, clear signage, and well managed transit operations.



google street view

The Broadway Corridor has a comfortable scale and some historic architecture, but overall has a worn look.

actions. Steps were taken to facilitate communication in both Spanish and English, using focus groups, individual interviews, community forums, surveys, and hands-on activities.

IMPLEMENTATION

Change is never easy, but is better when guided by a shared vision with a commitment to work in partnership. In Chelsea, many pressing needs compete for scarce resources. In response, this action plan focuses on a series of high priority strategies, most of which can be implemented by multiple community partners over the next three years and are expected to yield visible, tangible results.

The actions listed in the table below address economic development, infrastructure, housing, and quality of life issues. Some of these actions are targeted to specific areas in downtown, while others are corridor-wide. Through many one-on-one conversations, different entities have agreed to “champion” individual actions. Partners that could help out or are critical to an action are listed in the more detailed charts in Chapters 2-6. Inherent in these actions is the understanding that development will be incremental, and that plans must remain flexible. In this way, change is more easily tailored to the aspirations and abilities of the participants who have committed themselves to this process.

- High Priority
- Highest Priority

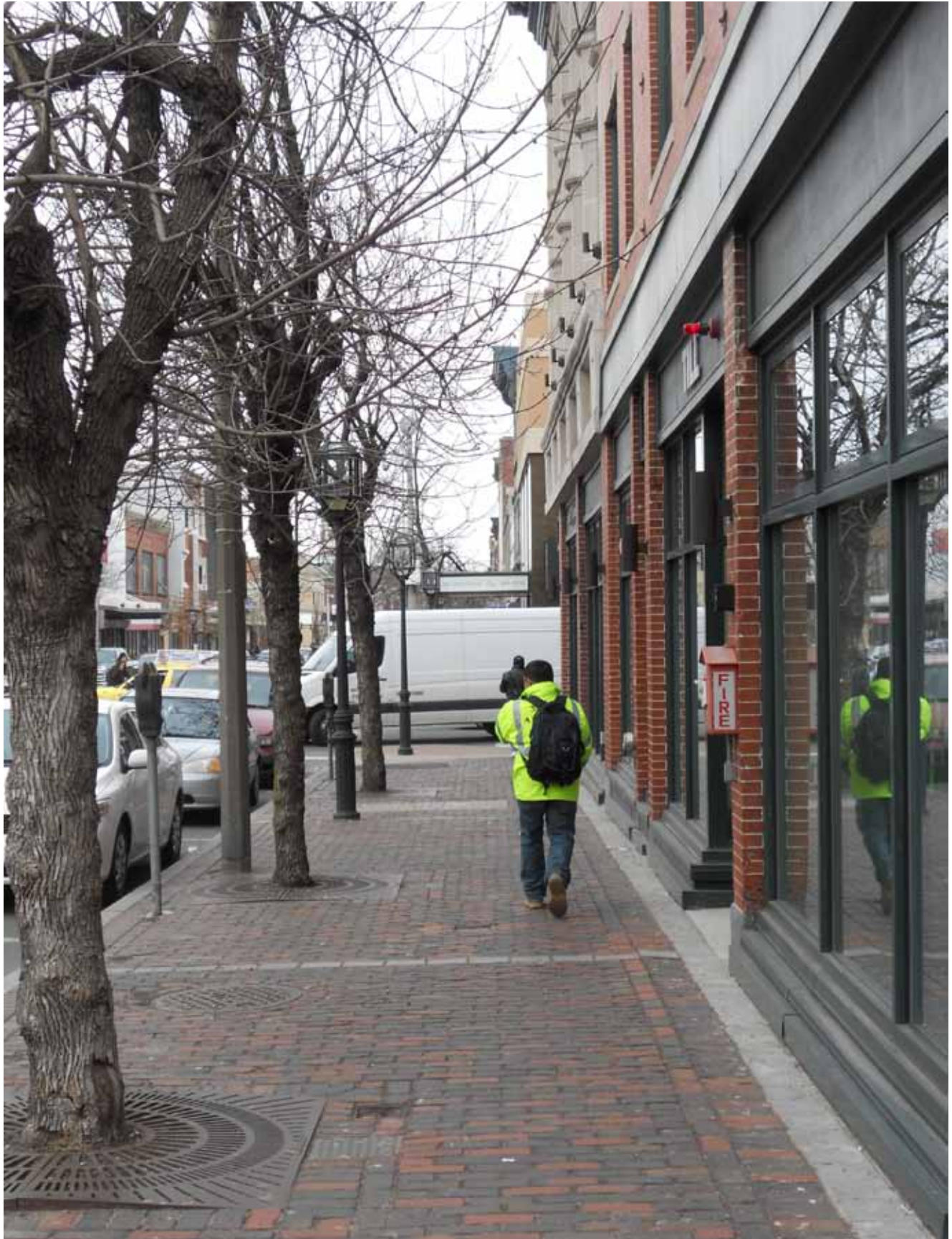
SUMMARY OF ACTION STEPS

Quality of Life					
Action Item	Champion	Chelsea Square	Business District	Bellingham Sq	5th/Chestnut
Chelsea Shines	TND/CET; Chamber of Commerce	○	●	○	○
Window Transparency	City of Chelsea	○	●	○	○
Window Lights	Chamber of Commerce	○	●	○	○
Police Walking Routes	City of Chelsea Police Dept.	○	○	●	○
Prostitution Task Force	City of Chelsea Police Dept.			●	○
Crime Free Zone	City of Chelsea Police Dept.			●	
Community Navigators	Community Leadership Team			●	
Adopt-a-Park	Substance Abuse Task Force	●		○	○
Park Programming	Adopt-a-Park groups	●		○	
Farmers Market	MGH, Healthy Chelsea	●			
Highway ROW Maintenance	City of Chelsea				●
Property Owner Task Force	TND, Trinity Mgmt., CLT				●
Liquor Licenses	City of Chelsea Police Dept.				●

Infrastructure					
Action Item	Champion	Chelsea Square	Business District	Bellingham Sq	5th/Chestnut
Circulation	City of Chelsea	●	●	●	●
Streetscape Design	City of Chelsea	●	●	●	●
Parking Meter Limits	City of Chelsea	●	●	●	●
Parking	City of Chelsea	●	●	●	●
Silver Line Wayfinding	City of Chelsea	○	○	●	○
Bus Stop Locations and Benches	City of Chelsea, MBTA			●	
Chelsea Square Improvements	Adopt-a-Park Group	●			
Tree Planting	City of Chelsea, Chelsea Collaborative				●
Highway ROW Lighting	City of Chelsea				●
Pedestrian Alleys	City of Chelsea				●

Housing					
Action Item	Champion	Chelsea Square	Business District	Bellingham Sq	5th/Chestnut
Housing Incentives	Downtown Housing Working Group	●	●	●	●
Rehabilitation Loans	City of Chelsea, Chelsea Restoration Corp.	●	●	●	●
Community Preservation Act	City of Chelsea	●	●	●	●
Housing Code Enforcement	City of Chelsea	○	○	○	●

Economic Development					
Action Item	Champion	Chelsea Square	Business District	Bellingham Sq	5th/Chestnut
Downtown Council	Chamber of Commerce	●	●	●	●
Marketing and Branding	Chamber of Commerce	○	●	○	○
Healthy Dining Week	Healthy Chelsea, MGH	○	●	○	○
Restaurant Competition	Chamber of Commerce	●	○	○	○
Façade Improvement	City of Chelsea	○	●	○	○
Business Training	Chamber of Commerce	○	●	○	○



Broadway is the main shopping district for the 22,000 residents who live within walking distance.

1. FINDINGS

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Broadway will be the central hub for Chelsea, a place to see and be seen. Anchored at either end by Bellingham Square and Chelsea Square, Broadway will be a bustling retail and restaurant district. Serving primarily the residents within walking distance, the unique mix of ethnic foods and products also will attract visitors from other parts of the Boston metropolitan area, who enjoy the historic streets and architecture. With the City's focus on enforcement of the building code, residents will have access to healthy and safe housing. New infill residential development throughout the corridor will produce over 100 units of market and subsidized housing, supporting the economic and cultural diversity of the neighborhood. The energy in the downtown will be driven in part by its connection to other businesses and activities on Everett Avenue, 5th Street, Cary Square, the Box District, and waterfront, which connect to Broadway's distinctive squares.

Bellingham Square

At one end, Bellingham Square will be alive with people, a mixing ground driven by the nearby Silver Line Stations, community college students, visitors to City Hall, and passengers on the bus lines. On warm days, many people will meet with friends in the plazas and others pass through but stop to listen to street musicians and watch performers who entertain children and adults alike. With so much foot traffic, a range of businesses will thrive in this area. Traffic and pedestrian calming will enhance the movement of people in all directions. Employees in the area, such as the Massachusetts Information

Technology Center (MITC), will be drawn down 5th Street, knowing that they can find lunch while enjoying shady plazas and comfortable places to sit outside on warm days.

Chelsea Square

Chelsea Square will anchor the other end of the corridor with its distinctive landscaped parks. Around its edges, existing and new restaurants will cluster, making this a destination for residents and visitors alike. With excellent social media reviews, these restaurants will offer unparalleled Latino and other cuisines. Many residents in the area will make their way to Chelsea Square to enjoy weekly summer music events, food festivals, outdoor performances, and art shows. The Apollinaire Theatre will draw a local and regional crowd, including programs that engage Chelsea youth. Chelsea Square will be the pivot point for business and activities on Everett Avenue in one direction and Broadway in the other, while also serving as the gateway to new

The parks in Chelsea Square are a distinctive place along the Broadway Corridor.





The Action Plan engaged over 450 residents, business and property owners, government, civic institutions and non-profit organizations, and other stakeholders.

developments along the waterfront. This will be the hinge block that draws employees and residents from many areas, and also will become a stronger neighborhood center in its own right with new infill residential.

Business District

With new investment in street trees, lighting, signage, and sidewalks, the distinctive character of the historic architecture on Broadway will be more visible. The area will retain its distinct appeal with few national chain stores, and many unique small businesses. In some places, new infill development will showcase more modern designs while remaining respectful of the prevailing building context. To match the public investment, individual businesses on Broadway will take advantage of loan and grant programs to invest in their own stores. These improvements will range from simply changing store window displays to more complete renovations of building facades. Some will invest in new signs. Almost all will feature lighted windows that help illuminate the entire street in the evenings and create a safe environment even when businesses are closed.

Leadership

Broadway’s businesses will be thriving due to the tireless activities of the many champions identified in the Action Steps. Together they will represent the voice of the residents and business community, promoting this unique district within the city and beyond. Partnerships will form around joint projects such as safety and cleanliness, housing incentives, and physical improvements, engaging individual business owners and residents as well the City, Chamber of Commerce, and non-profit organizations.

The Chamber will be the platform for launching a downtown council that begins to manage and advocate for downtown. The downtown council would outreach to engage all the Broadway area businesses, offering training in strategy, finance, taxes, insurance and other business topics. Property owners, the Chamber, and the downtown council will work toward creating a Business Improvement District (BID) that will have more sustained funding. Building on the work of the downtown council, the goals of the BID will be to organize and work with all businesses, promote downtown, program regular events and activities, provide additional clean and safe activities, and help maintain streetscape elements such as trees and street furniture and the adjacent storefronts.

PROCESS

The Broadway Corridor Action Plan is a joint effort led by The Neighborhood Developers (TND) and the City of Chelsea, with the participation of over 450 residents, business and property owners, government, civic institutions and non-profit organizations, and other stakeholders. Madden Planning Group was engaged to advise the team and work on business district recommendations. The project builds on previous planning studies, City-led conversations, and NeighborCircles that have been held by TND with Chelsea residents over the last five years.

The project was funded by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and was actively launched in summer 2013.

The initial project goals are as follows:

1. Foster civic engagement in the city's revitalization process
2. Improve housing conditions
3. Create greater housing choice
4. Foster a lively, safe, diverse, and attractive downtown.

The project approach involves a commitment to participatory planning as the basis for a community-driven action plan for the Broadway Corridor. This plan acts as a social compact with businesses, non-profits, other community stakeholders, the City and Chelsea, and residents all playing a significant role in "delivering" on the vitality of the community, addressing issues related to housing, infrastructure, economic development and quality of life.

During the process, a Steering Committee provided a sounding board for ideas and helped guide the process and recommendations, representing the perspective of business owners, residents, non-profit organizations, property owners, elected public officials, and the City of Chelsea. Three community meetings allowed participants to add their voice directly through input, activities, and discussions held in both English and Spanish (Appendix A).

In addition to community meetings, the action plan is informed by fieldwork, business and shopper intercept surveys and interviews with key stakeholder groups, including teens, elderly, and other residents, as well as local real estate developers. Informal discussions with business owners were ongoing, with assistance from the Chamber of Commerce and its Latino Division. Research into best practices used in other communities is woven into the report and its findings. The project also benefitted from simultaneous initiatives in Chelsea,

such as the Substance Abuse Task Force, launched by the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) and the City of Chelsea, and the City's 10-Point Plan to Enhance Public Safety.

PHYSICAL SETTING

The Broadway Corridor is truly a transit oriented, mixed-use district, with a range of uses that is often the goal of many new developments. Broadway has always served as the main street of the city, the spine of the downtown civic and business district. Today, the area has become more of a neighborhood center, frequented by the approximately 22,000 residents who live within walking distance (U.S. Census, 2010).

The historic character of Chelsea is evident in its narrow streets, brick materials, consistent early 20th century architectural styles, and handsome architectural details (Figure 1.1). With years of deferred maintenance, however, the storefronts and buildings show evidence of wear and tear with limited new investment (Appendix B). Similarly, lack of investment and maintenance affects the area's residential units. In the public realm, the character of the street suffers from missing trees and patched sidewalks.

Downtown Chelsea has three designated historic districts that celebrate its historic architecture and scale.





Figure 1.1 Three National Register Historic Districts encompass the Broadway Corridor, which were designated because of the early 20th Century architecture.

Surrounded by compact multi-family neighborhoods, the retail district is concentrated along Broadway in a half-mile stretch between Chelsea Square and Bellingham Square, although some businesses are found on side streets just off Broadway, and Cary Square features another cluster of shops. Stores offer clothes, shoes, musical instruments, furniture, food, liquor, and convenience goods, and include bakeries, an urban grocer, and a full service pharmacy. Restaurants in the area range from fast food to sit down service, offering many Latino and Asian specialties.

The mix of retail in any downtown is difficult to regulate. Broadway has the advantage of few vacancies and few personal services that can often dominate downtowns. However, it does have a large number of convenience stores, perhaps reflecting the ease of establishing these businesses by new entrepreneurs. The

impact of liquor stores on Broadway is amplified by activities such as on-street recycling that sometimes blocks the sidewalk and sales of nips that can lead to public drunkenness.

Bellingham Square anchors one end of the Broadway business district with City Hall, Bunker Hill Community College, Senior Center, Chelsea Public Library, Chelsea Fire Station, and the Saint Rose church and school as prominent destinations. Chelsea Square anchors the other end, with the Police Station, Apollinaire Theatre, and the District Court nearby. Broadway is home to several non-profit organizations and professional offices, both at ground floor and upper levels along the street.

With some senior housing and several schools nearby, the district streets are often populated with people of all ages, including families with young children. All the surrounding streets are primarily residential, with rowhouses, apartments,

and other multi-family properties, often sited on small parcels with multiple owners. The Shurtleff-Bellingham neighborhood rises on the shoulder of the hill above downtown, and the residents of the Box District have easy access to Broadway. On Washington Avenue, Cary Square anchors the Addison-Orange and other neighborhoods north of downtown. To the west, the downtown district runs up hard against the elevated Route 1 structure, with only a few connections through to the Everett Avenue area (5th Street, Everett Avenue, and 2nd Street in the downtown).

As a transit hub, five bus routes serve the area and represent some of the most heavily travelled routes in the MBTA system, all of them sharing the two stops in the heart of Bellingham Square, one in each direction. Pedestrian traffic is opportunistic in this area where multiple one-way streets enter at diagonal intersections. Along the corridor, there are few traffic calming measures and no traffic signals to manage vehicular and pedestrian traffic, except at 5th Street and at Williams Street.

The nearby commuter rail station accesses Boston's North Station as well as the beach communities located to the north along the Newburyport / Rockport line (MBTA, 2010). Currently in design, the proposed Silver Line extension will have a dedicated busway within the former Grand Junction rail right-of-way, connecting Chelsea to the Blue Line, East Boston, Logan Airport, South Boston Innovation District, and South Station. The project, which is expected to start service to the Box District and Downtown in late 2016, will include a \$20 million commuter rail station and a \$3 million Greenway (Governor's Press Release, 2013).



Five different bus routes circle through the Broadway Corridor (MBTA Routes #111, 112, 114, 116, 117), all of which share the same bus stops.



Figure 1.2 In addition to the bus routes, the City is also served by commuter rail to North Station. The future Silver Line extension will connect to Logan Airport, South Boston Innovation District, and South Station.

CITY CONTEXT

Although close to downtown Boston, Chelsea is bounded by water and linked by bridges to East Boston, Charlestown, and Revere. The Tobin Bridge, which passes high over the edge of the Broadway corridor, is symbolic of both the separation and the connection to other places.

Chelsea is one of the smallest and most densely populated cities in Massachusetts, with a total population of approximately 40,000 in an area of less than two square miles (City of Chelsea). The city has always been an enclave for new foreign-born immigrants, which today make up 45 percent of the total population (U.S. Census, 2010). Like many US cities, the demographics of new immigrants have shifted over time. Once a center for Jewish and Eastern European culture in the early 20th Century, the city of Chelsea is now a majority Latino community, who make up 62% percent of the population (Figure 1.3; U.S. Census, 2010).

Compared to its neighbors, Chelsea is home to a relatively low income community. The median income in Chelsea is \$43,919, and approximately a quarter of the residents live below the poverty line. The unemployment rate

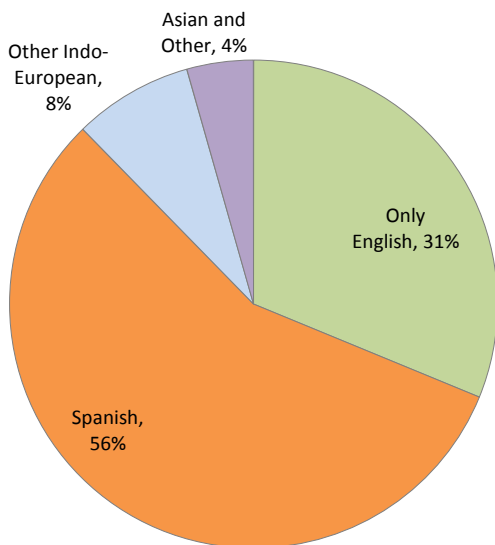
is 11% while an estimated 31% of the population is not currently in the labor force. Approximately 69% of those over 25 years have a high school degree or less schooling (U.S. Census, ACS 2008-2012).

In recent years, the City has been working to reduce crime, with reported crimes down 24% in 2013 (Chelsea Police Department, 2013). Most reported crimes are property crimes (1209) as compared to violent crimes (441). The City has been making a concerted effort to continue to reduce crime, recently adopting a 10-Point Safety Plan, which includes funding for additional officers, as well as community outreach “navigators” and other preventive strategies. Like many communities in Massachusetts, opiate drugs have been a specific issue in the downtown area. Chelsea is the site of one of eight methadone clinics within a five-mile radius of downtown Boston (Opiate Addition Resources). This clinic on Crescent Avenue is reported to serve 700 patients a day. During 2013, 119 narcotics violations and 31 alcohol violations were reported in the City (Chelsea Police Department).

Over the past several years, the City of Chelsea has been aggressively moving to attract new investment, while improving city services, increasing civic pride, and raising the profile of the city generally. The City of Chelsea is a prime location for growth, given its proximity to Boston, rich and vibrant population, historic character, and engaged community. Housing and development costs in the City of Boston have weathered the recent recession and have steadily increased over the past several years, putting pressure for additional housing opportunities in surrounding communities, especially those with urban settings close to Boston and transit lines.

Through a combination of city initiative and market conditions, Chelsea has already begun to realize new residential, office, retail, and hotel development, especially in the area north and west of Route 1 (Boston Globe, 2013). With over

Figure 1.3 The majority of residents speak a language other than English at home.



“Latino entrepreneurs continue to display a deep work ethic that is combined with a strong feeling of connectedness to the community.” (Borges-Mendez, 2005).

Housing

It was suggested that the downtown should have more housing affordable to a wide range of incomes. The upper floors above the storefronts could be renovated for more housing, although some pointed out that this was not always suitable for families since there were no yards. People wanted landlords to be more accountable, with “fewer tenements,” fewer infested buildings, and less overcrowding. The challenges of new development was noted, especially where the zoning process involved site-by-site decisions rather than district-wide incentives for new investment.

Safety

Many expressed concerns about the constellation of problems associated with prostitution, drug use, panhandling, loitering, inebriation, shootings, and domestic abuse. Some hoped that the police would be a greater part of the community, and others suggested that there be more Spanish speaking police officers. Brighter streetlights were suggested. Some identified the issue that

bars open too early, and that the Licensing Commission could do more to adjust hours or restrict licenses for problem properties.

Infrastructure

Residents wished that cars would stop for pedestrians, and that there were more pedestrian crosswalks. The bus stops are too congested. Improvements to the citywide recycling program were suggested, and the problem of littering came up over and over. While some recognized that there was not a lot of room for green space, the desire to fill the empty tree pits was mentioned frequently. Some thought that more public parking was needed, while others did not find this to be a major issue. People viewed the area under the highway as both an opportunity and a challenge in that it attracts undesirable activity. The proximity to Boston and the access to transportation were seen as assets, although some thought that the buses contributed to negative influences in Bellingham Square. Some residents who attend Bunker Hill mentioned that the street activity in and around the bus stop was a deterrent to entering the building.

Challenges for Immigrant Entrepreneurs



Immigrant business districts offer specialties and niches not available in other markets. Many local retailers are independent and self-reliant, with relatively low liability and low capital investment in their business. They tend to be self-employed, and the business can be the means to support the family. In these situations, business owners are hardworking, relatively isolated, and time-constrained since they work long hours. They may have little access to information, expertise, online resources, or technical support, and often are unaware of city or state programs that may be helpful or regulatory requirements that are necessary. Many are reluctant to report crime. Businesses may be run on a cash basis, sometimes month to month, with limited profits and little access to capital or credit.

Growth and change are not always desirable, and if the market changes, it's often difficult to adapt. Given their work schedules, attendance at programs, business meetings, and training sessions are hard to prioritize. For many, language barriers and lack of formal training in retail or business can lead to a lack of confidence in expertise. Advice on legal, insurance, and tax issues is often needed. Licenses and permits for repairs or new products are relatively expensive, and the rules can seem daunting. Escalating rents and utility costs threaten their stability and landlord relations can be an issue. While a small business owner may have knowledge of their own products and day-to-day sales, this does not scale up to management skills. They often depend on a few suppliers who help them determine inventory, although a wider network of suppliers would allow them to negotiate better prices, service, and reliability. There are structural barriers to lending and financing is often from family members (Appendix B).

CORRIDOR GOALS

Based on the direction from the Steering Committee and input from the community, the shared vision for the future of the Broadway Corridor is summarized in the following goals:

1. A clean and safe downtown for the whole city, offering a vibrant cultural life
2. A downtown neighborhood with well-maintained housing stock and new residential infill suitable for a mix of incomes
3. A thriving business district that welcomes all, with well-lit and transparent storefronts.
4. A walkable downtown with easy to navigate street crossings, clear signage, and well managed transit operations.

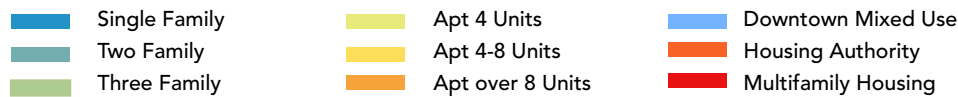
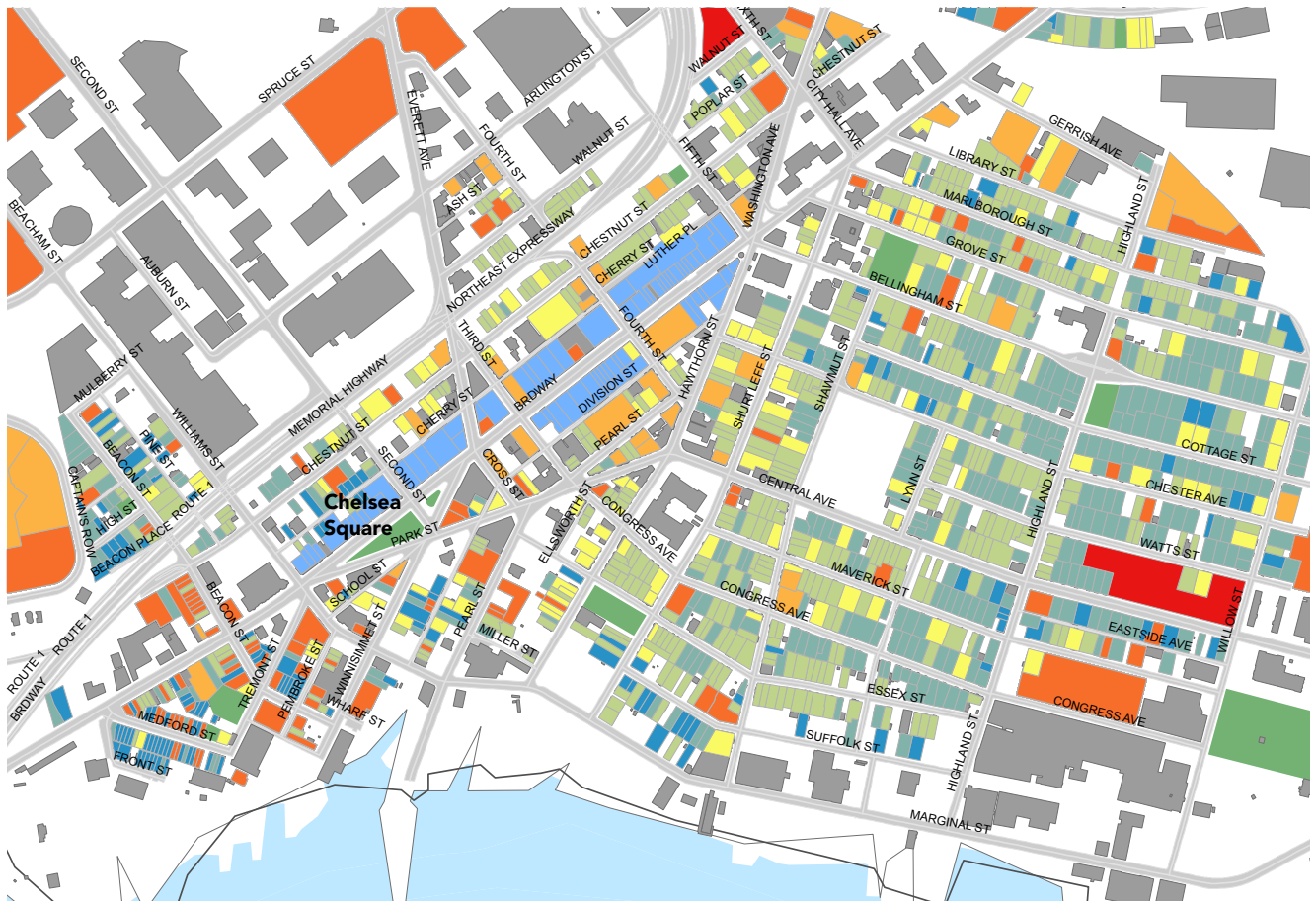


Figure 1.3 The area around Chelsea Square has fewer homes (City of Chelsea Assessor, 2012)





Focused attention is needed to address issues such as safety in key areas, management of trash and recycling, and the quality of storefront facades.

APPROACH TO IMPLEMENTATION

In order to achieve the community's goals for the Broadway Corridor, a set of working principles help to establish the framework for implementation and the action plan:

1. High-impact prioritized actions are needed in key areas to create the momentum for change

Working within the collective vision for the overall corridor, the Action Plan recommends high-impact, prioritized strategies specifically tailored for the following key areas:

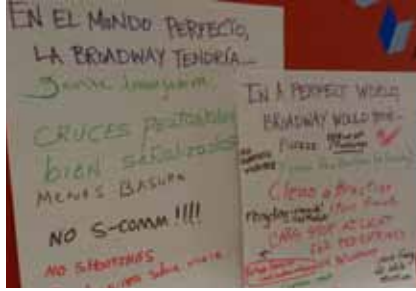
- Business District: clarify the role of the city, the property owners, and the business owners in managing downtown and improving its appearance.
- Bellingham Square: address traffic congestion, streetscape, and inappropriate behaviors in this central place.
- Chelsea Square: pursue opportunities to enliven an underutilized asset.
- 5th and Chestnut: focus attention on a unique confluence of uses and activities that are creating a negative impact in the area.

This approach provides benefits on two levels. First, developing strategies for implementation in a specific area focuses limited resources, mitigates dilution of effort, and increases likelihood of positive outcomes. It serves as a form of phasing. Second, by treating each of these focus areas as pilot initiatives, strategies can be implemented and more readily evaluated for effectiveness for future efforts. This does not imply that areas such as Cary Square are less important, but only that the need is less.

2. Some actions must be applied corridor-wide to be effective

Policy changes and infrastructure systems, in particular, are more likely to be effective if applied across the corridor. Management of traffic circulation, pedestrian routes, transit operations, and open space links to the Silver Line corridor are systems oriented and the impacts of any one move will affect all areas. Housing incentives and programs may be geographically focused but are more likely to have a broad application. Any zoning changes could affect building dimensions, parking, and use restrictions in the entire area.

Other actions may be prioritized in one area, but realistically apply throughout. Many of the strategies suggested for the Business District are appropriate for commercial properties fronting on Chelsea Square, Bellingham Square, Cary Square, and the side streets. The geographic focus for a downtown business organization would include the entire study area. A palette for streetscape improvements in Bellingham Square should set the stage for a larger streetscape project for the entire corridor.



3. Each action must have a champion, but all relevant partners need to participate

Residents, business owners, property owners, non-profit organizations, and the City all have a shared interest in the success of the district. Viewed alone, each group has limited resources, but working together, more will be possible. To move forward, each entity will need to demonstrate similar levels of initiative and investment taking on actions appropriate to their mission, interests, and responsibilities. Over the long term, a sense of partnership and civic infrastructure will help sustain downtown and its continued success.

Through conversations with involved stakeholders, a “champion,” or lead entity, is designated for each action, along with a list of partners. This approach respects the ability of the various stakeholders to adopt a few focused actions and measure the success of their efforts. The hope is that successful initiatives will be vetted and applied to other areas in the corridor, as applicable, in future phases of plan implementation.

4. An incremental and flexible approach to development will allow for course corrections and assessments to measure success

The study area is an historic district, with many different owners and interests. It currently serves a diverse population, fulfilling the role of a vital neighborhood center as well as the traditional downtown for the city. With few vacancies, the corridor does not demand drastic action to address widespread failure, but rather a need for thoughtful, strategic actions to build momentum for change and continued investment. Residents, small business owners, and property owners need to stay involved in dialogue about the future, so they can benefit from any change.

The chapters that follow explore the vision, unique situation, and implementation strategies for each of the key focus areas. Throughout the report, a series of best practices from other communities are highlighted as the basis for evidence-based recommendations. With a focus on action, the recommended strategies have developed through the community process and conversations with the City, non-profit organizations, businesses and residents, who all will play a role in realizing the future of the Broadway Corridor. Each action has a **Champion** or Champions who will take the lead in moving the process forward. In some cases, this is direct implementation, but in other cases, it may mean ongoing advocacy that will lead to implementation by others. As a community compact, many people will be involved, and these are listed as **Partners**. The recommended actions have been narrowed down to those that are most relevant and highest priority with the expectation that they will be initiated in Years 1 to 3 (Appendix C).

Community participation and the involvement of committed champions is a foundation for the Broadway Corridor Action Plan.



Access to high quality housing, whether new or rehabilitated, is a corridor wide goal that may require zoning changes and other incentives.

2. CORRIDOR-WIDE STRATEGIES

VISION: A WORKING DOWNTOWN

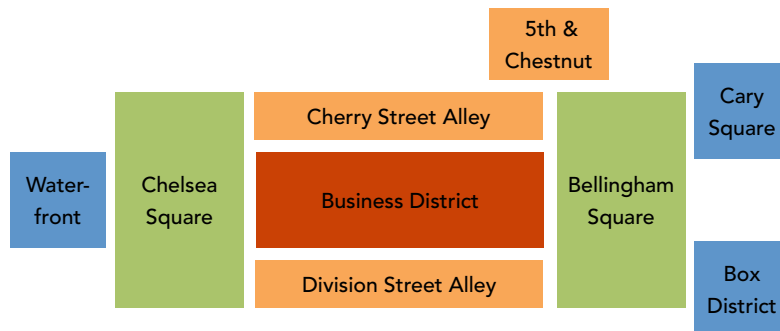
New investors and existing property owners will find the City’s zoning code easy to use and tailored to the unique conditions of development in a dense, historic area. Incentives will be in place to encourage new infill residential development in the district and adaptive reuse of upper stories along Broadway. Funding sources will be tapped to facilitate land assembly where necessary, to promote affordable housing, and to create the amenities to attract new residents.

Area residents will have access to safe, decent, and healthy housing.

The stock of mixed-income units will be preserved and increased through redevelopment of distressed, vacant, and underutilized properties and renovation of existing units. Residential choices in the area will be expanded in new mixed-use development. New buildings will respect the historic scale but may be more contemporary in character.

Traffic operations will be well-managed with new bus stops assigned for the different route numbers to disperse crowding. Wayfinding and signage will direct traffic, and pedestrians will use clearly defined crosswalks. Bump-outs will facilitate crossing, while also providing greater room for bus stops and tree planting. From time to time, individual parking spaces will be converted into “parklets” with green landscaping or bike racks or outdoor café seating.

A working partnership of property owners, business owners, and the City will ensure that all businesses have the necessary



supports and that the district is marketed as a single destination that serves the local residents, the city, and the region.

CONTEXT

Challenges for New Investment

Downtown Chelsea is comprised of three different historic districts, all on the National Register: Downtown Chelsea Residential Historic District, Bellingham Square Historic District, and the Chelsea Square Historic District. Much of the architectural character is coherent, although some of the one-story buildings and underutilized properties detract from the sense of character. Land parcels are small and ownership is fragmented, making it difficult to assemble any sites for redevelopment. With the typical lot size in this area, economies of scale for residential projects cannot be achieved and requirements for on-site parking are not feasible or desirable given the historic urban character.

Like many neighborhoods in the city, the existing housing stock in the Broadway Corridor is aging and may not have seen recent investment. The City is making strides to increase code enforcement and has prioritized key areas using CDBG funds. Chelsea was recently granted funds

under the Working Cities program to improve housing conditions and stabilize the Shurtleff-Bellingham neighborhood, which borders the Broadway Corridor.

Zoning Policies

Most of the study area is currently in the Business Retail (BR) Zone, and the edges fall within the Residential 2 (R2) Zone. Zoning changes may need to be updated to encourage new investment in both small and larger properties.

The BR Zone currently allows a maximum height of 80 feet (8 stories), with no maximum or minimum density. The zone permits a rich mix of uses including multifamily housing and most retail, restaurant, and office uses appropriate for an urban area.

The zoning code has been amended to include many positive features, such as design standards, performance criteria, and shared parking provisions. New project development may also set in motion a process of site plan review on large projects, greater than 8,000 square feet and generating the need for more than 25 parking spaces.

Other zoning changes to be considered would be the application of a new overlay zone to encourage housing development or renovations, and possibly

adjusting parking requirements and some dimensional requirements. These changes should acknowledge the very urban, transit oriented nature of the study area. More detailed recommendations are found in Appendix E.

Circulation

Most of the vehicular traffic is regulated only by stop signs, creating uncertainty and conflicts for cross traffic and pedestrians at each intersection. With two lanes of one-way traffic, frequent buses, and parking on both sides, pedestrians face many challenges.

The current streetscape needs updating and attention to address utilities, gaps in street tree plantings, and sidewalk conditions. If a palette of materials and design features is developed for Bellingham Square, these elements should be extended along the length of Broadway to tie together the downtown area and demonstrate confidence in the future.

Approach to District Management

The largest challenge for any downtown is the need for an appropriate entity to manage the appearance and operations of the entire district and coordinate the activities of the businesses (Table 2.1). The role of property owners and business owners must each be considered distinctly, as many businesses are located in rented space. These two private sector interests have quite different outlooks tied to degree of control, security of tenure, time horizon, and financial benefits associated with change. The public sector’s role is best suited to infrastructure investment, parking, public safety, and trash removal, but also can play a leadership role in catalyzing change.

A number of business support models exist, and each has its strengths and weaknesses. All of them struggle to identify and sustain funding sources. Membership models, such as a typical Chamber of Commerce, miss the opportunity to organize the smaller businesses that are most in

Table 2.1 Retail District Management

	Appearance	Operations
Civic district-wide focus	Streetscape, district character and identity, wayfinding and district signage	Street cleanliness and safety; cultural programming; district marketing; parking, loading, and traffic; business permitting and licensing processes; business ambassador
Private building and business focus	Facade conditions, window treatments, business signage	Customer-focused retailing; financial, tax, insurance and other trainings; licensing and enforcement of problem properties

Jamaica Plain Business Development Programs

The Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation (JPNDC) has had an economic development component for many years because of significant retail and commercial components to their projects, including the Brewery, supermarket, and a health center. The small business program operates directly out of the community development corporation (CDC) with a full-time staff person, who brings retail management experience. This position benefits from being part of a team that includes CDC organizers, real estate professionals, senior management, and administrative staff.

The JPNDC offers a variety of small business programs both to support entrepreneurs and employment. For workshops and trainings, it surveys the store owners to identify needs and convenient times. JPNDC does not have their own loan pool but serves as an intermediary to private loans for the business community. It typically assists with six to ten loans per year and has helped realized \$10 million in financing for local businesses. Its role is to offer technical assistance and add credibility with the banks when store owners make an application. They also help recruit new businesses for ground floor retail, through combined efforts of the business development manager, real estate team, and community organizing team. Jamaica Plain also has a separate Main Streets program; which in Boston has been heavily funded by the City, and a Shop Local initiative.

In Jamaica Plain, store owners were wary initially, but over time trust has been built largely through visible examples of store owners receiving financing and renovating and/or expanding their stores. The business development manager spends a lot of time walking up and down the street, directly engaging store owners in their shops, an effort that probably took one to two years to build the necessary relationships.

Sources of capital for business improvement are not the problem but rather the need to get store owners loan-ready and connect them to sources. Banks are more involved in the community now, in part because the Community Reinvestment Act has changed the dynamic awarding credits for making the actual loans. The loans are 100% guaranteed by the Small Business Association (SBA). Generally the JPNDC approach has been to encourage existing business owners to be more successful so that they can benefit as the market gets stronger. (Richard Thal, JPNDC, 2013)

need of help and that can least afford a membership. Chambers are often effective in marketing and advocacy at the citywide or regional level. The typical Main Streets organization is better suited to outreach and organizing, but without some public subsidies, must fund raise every year to cover costs. Some community development corporations take on business development as part of their economic development efforts, but without related real estate projects, sustained funding remains an issue.

A Business Improvement District (BID), which is funded by property owner assessments, has the advantage of promoting the entire district and has a steady revenue stream. With a more secure position, BIDs can be transformative in leading clean and safe programs, marketing, sponsoring cultural events, managing data, and ultimately organizing and advocating for property

owner and business interests. In order to win property owner approval for a BID, a sustained outreach effort is necessary to demonstrate the value of the services in the short term and the value of increased rents and property in the long term.

Chelsea has the advantage of a strong Chamber of Commerce with committed leadership and staff. The Chamber serves the entire city, representing industry, institutions, and banks, as well as large and small retail. With this platform, it may be realistic to launch any new downtown-focused organizations out of the Chamber, ensuring broad financial and political support that will be necessary to support the smaller businesses in the Broadway Corridor.

Even with such an entity, control of the retail mix is an elusive goal since so much depends on market demand,

Main Street Model in Framingham

The Framingham Downtown Renaissance (FDR) was formed two years ago as a 501c3 based loosely on the national model for Main Streets. They operate in an immigrant entrepreneurial setting where twenty different languages are spoken. The local chamber of commerce focuses on economic development in the region, and the FDR focuses on downtown. The City is a strong partner and supporter.

The Main Street movement originated out of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and promotes revitalization through a four point approach that becomes the basis for a committee structure (www.preservationnation.org/main-street):

1. *Organization: to establish consensus and cooperation through partnerships and volunteer efforts;*
2. *Promotion: to foster positive image and community pride, while supporting downtown businesses;*
3. *Design: to focus efforts on appearance, maintenance, and a clean and safe environment;*
4. *Economic Restructuring: to strengthen existing economic assets while diversifying the economic base.*

FDR has tailored its committees to serve its own priorities with a clean/green/safe committee and several ad hoc committees and task forces that form around events. Their board of directors includes representation from the local university, banks, realty companies, and immigrant business owners and they are seeking a large employer to fill a current vacancy.

Since the Main Street model does not bring any funding, this must be sought at the local level. The current budget is \$120,000, which supports one staff member and events, with much of the work done by volunteers and college student interns. About \$30,000 comes from CDBG and the remainder is raised by the board, with targeted sponsors for specific events. Space is donated.

The first year of operation was focused on grassroots organizing, building trust, and developing relationships. Through surveys, they generated data about demographics, employees, and customer base. Reporting of crime and building partnership with the police has been a focus. They are also tackling issues of housing, recycling, changing perceptions of downtown (Holli Andrews, Framingham Downtown Renaissance, 2014)

entrepreneurial spirit, and landlord decisions. Permits, licenses and other regulations can sometimes be used to discourage undesirable uses or prevent over-saturation of one type of use. City leaders can also play a role in setting a vision for the overall character of the retail and streamlining permitting. Successful retailers should be acknowledged and encouraged to play a leadership role.

ACTION STEPS

Almost all of the action steps relate to the entire corridor (see Executive Summary). Yet the list of things to do can seem overwhelming, especially where resources are scarce. This section focuses on the few key actions that are overall policies and high priority for the entire study area (Table 2.2).

Certain actions are high priorities for a particular area, whether Bellingham Square, Chelsea Square, the heart of the Business District, or the 5th and Chestnut area. In other cases, actions that are difficult to fund fully can be tested in certain areas as a demonstration project before implementing them out elsewhere in the corridor. These actions are addressed in each of the sections that follow.



Active community discussion and debate about the future character and the appropriate action steps informed the recommendations.

TABLE 2.2 CORRIDOR-WIDE ACTION STEPS

Initiatives	Champions	Partners
Circulation: Adjust traffic patterns, crosswalks, bus stops and routes, given future Silver Line and Commuter Rail developments, addressing conflicts between all modes	City of Chelsea	TND; Healthy Chelsea, Residents, MassDOT/MBTA
Streetscape Design: Develop a streetscape design and materials palette for Broadway, addressing tree planting, sidewalks, crosswalks, wayfinding, etc.	City of Chelsea	TND; Chelsea Collaborative, Residents
Parking Meter Limits: Adapt current parking meter limits to encourage patrons to shop and eat at businesses on Broadway	City of Chelsea	
Parking: Identify short-term locations or opportunities for shared parking, or utilization of parking facilities, that would meet the needs of residents, business patrons, and police department. Identify long-term locations for development of parking structure(s) within walking distance of Business District.	City of Chelsea	TND, private developers
Housing Incentives: Establish working group to evaluate new incentives, zoning, and business development that encourage new housing development. Zoning to address dimensional, parking, open space requirements, district boundaries, inclusionary zoning, and incentives for high quality design.	Downtown Housing Working Group	City of Chelsea DPD, TND, Chelsea Restoration Corporation, private developers, Chelsea Collaborative
Downtown Council: Establish a focused Downtown Council that will set standards, identify mentors, conduct outreach, and organize existing businesses and property owners into a downtown coalition (Phase 1: Main Streets model or downtown business manager)	Chamber of Commerce	Latino Division of the Chamber; Property Owners; Business Owners
Rehabilitation Loans: Offer & expand availability and pool of rehabilitation loans	City of Chelsea, Chelsea Restoration Corporation	Chelsea Works (Shurtleff/Bellingham Initiative)
Community Preservation Act: Assemble working group to assess adoption of the Community Preservation Act	City of Chelsea, TND	Chelsea Collaborative, Chelsea Works (Shurtleff/Bellingham Initiative)



Visibility into stores lets customers know the products for sale, while also providing more "eyes on the street."

3. BUSINESS DISTRICT

VISION FOR BROADWAY BUSINESSES

The businesses on Broadway will reflect the thriving mix of cultures and demographics in Chelsea. Everyone will feel that they have a place there and a reason to visit. An engaged group of business owners will be active partners in cleanliness, and will be investing on a regular basis in improvements to their window displays, lighting, interiors, and inventory. Working with property owners, facades will be improved and some stores will have creative new signs. A program of business supports will be a successful way for business owners to improve skills, adjust to changing markets, and build a stronger constituency for the downtown. The business district will be a destination featuring vibrant and varied retail and restaurants in the metro Boston region. The streetscape will feature newly planted trees, sidewalks, and wayfinding signage.

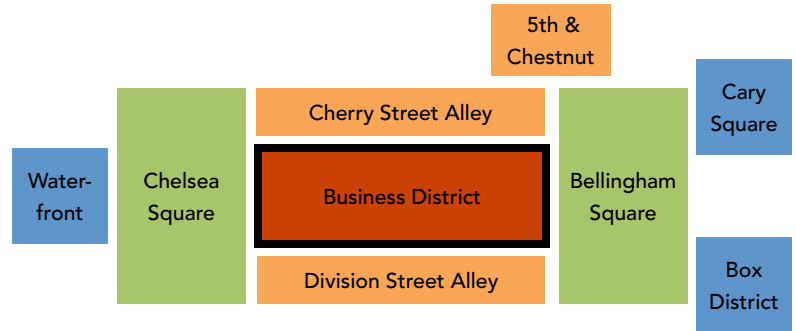
CONTEXT

Shopping Configuration

The heart of the business district extends along Broadway from Bellingham to Chelsea Square, a distance of over 2,000 linear feet. Industry standards and many comparable retail districts are often much shorter, based on a 10 minute walk (1,000 to 1,200 feet) and the desire to concentrate activity.

Ownership

There are sixty-one private property owners on Broadway between Bellingham Square and Chelsea Square. Most own only one very small parcel, and fifteen own one or more parcels (Table 3.1). The



properties on Broadway are assessed at \$60 million and include 723,000 square feet (sf) of building area (City of Chelsea Assessor, 2012). Four non-profits own land along Broadway in the heart of the business district: Knights of Columbus, North Suffolk Mental Health, Salvation Army, and TILL; several others are tenants including Centro Latino and the Chelsea Collaborative.

About a quarter of the Broadway properties are owner occupied. Another quarter of the properties are controlled by Chelsea owners, either elsewhere on Broadway or in the City (Figure 3.1). The primary use category for those properties with Broadway frontage between Bellingham Square and Chelsea Square is shown in Figure 3.2.

Storefronts

The storefronts present an uneven level of investment and care. A few stand out for their attractive window displays, which clearly display the products for sale, but others have covered over their windows with paper signs or otherwise make it difficult to see inside. Roll gates protect stores from perceived crime, but when down, send a signal that the street is not safe in the evening, which discourages restaurant patrons.

TABLE 3.1. Broadway Business District: Ownership Patterns

Ownership Category	Site Area (ac)	Building Area (gsf)	Average Parcel Size (ac)	Average Building Area (gsf)	Count of Parcels	% of Site Area
15 Private Owners-Multiple Parcels	5.4	377,909	0.14	9,945	38	54%
46 Private Owners-Single Parcels	3.0	283,186	0.06	6,156	46	30%
4 Non-Profit Organizations	0.9	62,088	0.14	10,348	6	9%
City	0.8	-	0.39	-	2	8%
TOTAL	10.0	723,183	0.11	7,861	92	100%

Note: Broadway Frontage from Williams Street to Bellingham Square (City of Chelsea, 2012 Assessors Data)

Figure 3.1. Parcel Ownership, Broadway Frontage from Williams Street to Bellingham Square (City of Chelsea, 2012 Assessors Data)

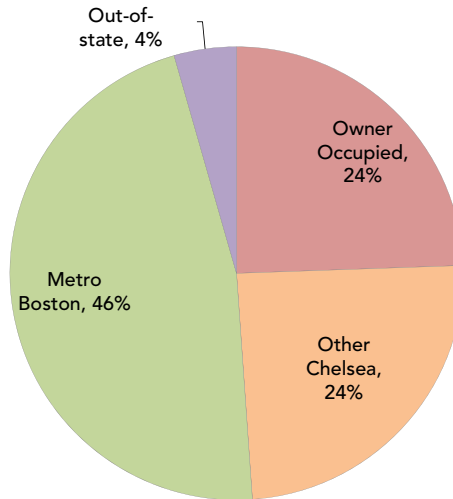
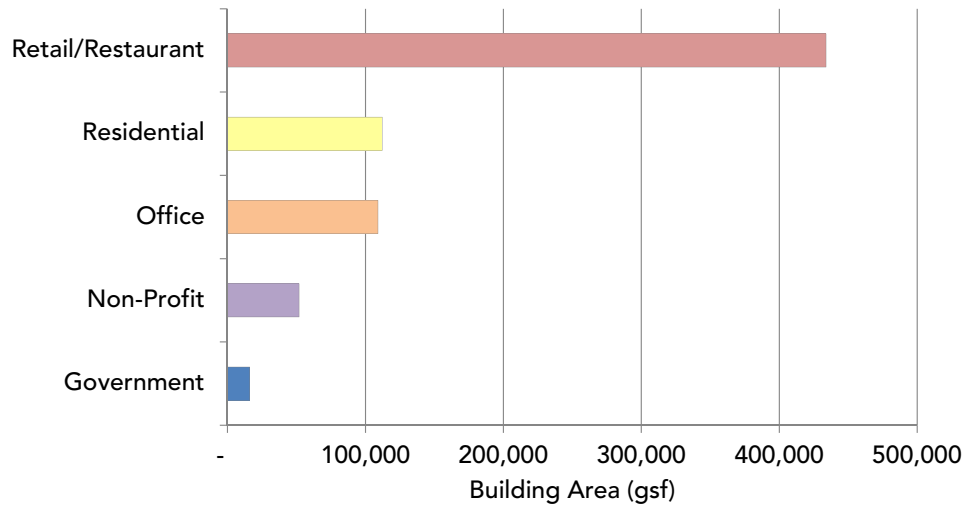


Figure 3.2. Predominant Building Use, Broadway Frontage from Williams Street to Bellingham Square (City of Chelsea, 2012 Assessors Data)



If one goal is to improve the quality and variety of merchandise available for all residents, the stores must generate more sales per square foot. The downtown stores today are largely dependent on the demographics of their pedestrian catchment area. Attracting more mixed-income residents or visitors to the area, and thus supporting a wider variety of retail, involves a multi-faceted equation to change perceptions; clarify wayfinding; and make parking, walking, or transit use seem easy and safe.

Civic Realm

The width of Broadway reflects its historic character and creates a nice scale to the district. Vintage light fixtures line the street. The public realm shows signs of wear, however; brick sidewalks are patched with asphalt, and many street trees are missing, leaving empty grates and tree pits.

As in many downtown business districts, it's a challenge to accommodate competing demands for the use of the right-of-way (62 feet), including not only on-street parking, buses, and travel lanes, but also adequate zones for healthy trees, outdoor cafes, bicycle lanes, and comfortable passage for the many pedestrians on the sidewalk. Loading and double parking is often inevitable on a commercial street, but ideally can be managed by time of day. The congested bus stop areas further reduce the area of clear passage on the sidewalks.

Parking

Although public parking is located on Cherry Street and under Route 1, some people find access to these locations threatening especially at night via the Chelsea Walk and the 5th and Chestnut area, respectively. The continued use of surface lots on either side of the corridor reduces the ability to site infill



The civic realm is uneven in character.



Overuse of window signs obscures views into and out of the stores.



Access to parking does not always feel safe.

Downtown Business Improvement Districts

A Business Improvement District (BID) is a designated area in which property owners vote to initiate, manage and finance supplemental services or enhancements above and beyond the baseline of services already provided by their local city or town governments. There are currently seven bids in the state: Boston, Springfield, Westfield, Northhampton, Hyannis, Taunton, and Amherst. In February 2014, DHCD awarded grants to eight towns to pursue a BID designation, including an \$80,000 grant to Great Barrington (Berkshire Eagle, 2014.)

Beverly has had a Main Street Program but is now in the planning phase for a BID, which would provide greater financial stability (www.mass.gov, 2014). A Main Street program can be thought of as a first step in organizing a stronger downtown business community. Some communities choose to select outside vendors to operate their maintenance and cleaning program and other manage this internally and see it as a way to hire locally and promote downtown from within.

The Taunton BID was established in 2010 in a Gateway City with a population of 55,000 and 71% of households in the low to moderate-income range. The BID focuses on maintenance, beautification, collaborative marketing, public safety enhancements, and district advocacy, with an annual budget of \$120,000. Upcoming projects will also include parking and transportation strategies, and with partners, support for arts and culture, and real estate strategies to address vacancies and blight. The staff includes a part time executive director, maintenance staff, and an office assistant that is shared with a non-profit partner (www.taunton.org).

development that would help activate the area, and structured parking to replace surface parking is expensive. The residential market often demands either on-site or very proximate parking. In the short term, greater use of the land under the Route 1 highway for shared public parking, especially on weekends, might alleviate some of the issues.

ACTION STEPS

The stretch of Broadway between Bellingham Square and Chelsea Square is the heart of the business district. The action steps listed in Table 3.2 focus mostly on actions that businesses, property owners, and civic organizations can begin in the immediate future to make a difference in the shopper's experience on Broadway and the businesses ability to draw customers.



Longtime local businesses are the cornerstone to the downtown.

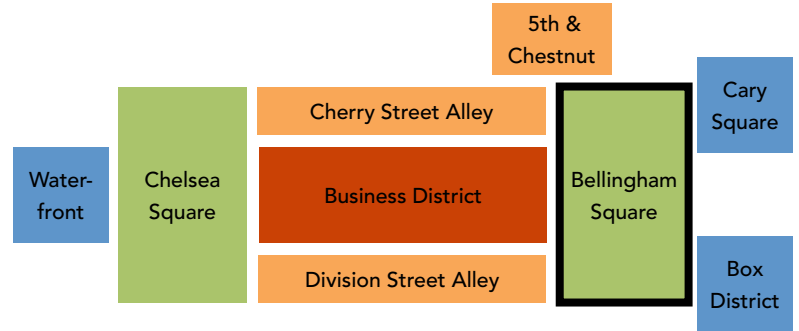
TABLE 3.2. BUSINESS DISTRICT ACTION STEPS

<i>Initiatives</i>	<i>Champions</i>	<i>Partners</i>
Chelsea Shines: Engage businesses in Chelsea Shines Cleanliness Campaign focused on sidewalk cleanliness, trash pick-up, and microscale beautification; as well as group-pricing and timing for trash pickup	TND, Community Enhancement Team, Chamber of Commerce	Business Owners, Residents, Chelsea Collaborative, Roca
Marketing and Branding: Develop a Broadway marketing and branding effort to promote the entire district, including use of technology and social media (e.g. retail directory, cooperative promotion; national Local First initiative)	Chamber of Commerce	Latino Division of the Chamber, Business Owners, City of Chelsea
Healthy Dining Week: Pilot a Healthy Dining Week, engaging restaurants in improving healthy food offerings and marketing these options to new and existing customers	Healthy Chelsea, MGH	Chamber of Commerce, Business Owners
Window Transparency: Work with business owners to ensure a “see in/see out” policy where not more than 10% of window area is covered by signs or other opaque materials.	City of Chelsea	Chamber of Commerce, Business Owners
Window Lights: Encourage business owners to use business lights, dimmers, or decorative window lights to illuminate sidewalks after hours.	Chamber of Commerce	Business Owners
Façade Improvement: Fund and implement a façade improvement program to support business owners in updating their facades and grates	City of Chelsea	Chamber of Commerce, Business Owners
Business Training: Conduct business training sessions based on interest and need, including low cost façade and window display improvements, through one-on-one and small group sessions, and matching successful businesses as mentors to others	Chamber of Commerce	Latino Division of the Chamber, City of Chelsea



Bus stops draw many people into Bellingham Square, but congestion at the stops interferes with other uses such as Bunker Hill Community College.

4. BELLINGHAM SQUARE



VISION FOR BELLINGHAM SQUARE

Bellingham Square will remain a vital urban center for the city, a crossroads in every sense of the word. Programmed activities will attract many residents including families, so that everyone feels safe and welcome there. The flow of pedestrians and traffic will be better balanced through a combination of new signals, raised pedestrian crossings, separated bus stops, and other intersection improvements.

The streetscape design will reflect the pride of Chelsea in making this central square a destination and meeting place, with new street trees, sidewalks, and street furniture. New signage will call out the Bellingham Square location within the larger district and ensure that visitors understand how to navigate safely through the area on the many one-way streets.

With the advent of the nearby Silver Line Station, the circulation of bus routes and the location of bus stops will be adjusted to minimize conflicts with traffic and pedestrians while ensuring safety and convenience for transit riders. In the future, the front entry of Bunker Hill Community College will allow a clearer path to the street, with activities inside the building spilling out onto new plazas and seating areas at the front door.

CONTEXT

Bellingham Square is the heart of downtown Chelsea. The square is readily characterized by its hustle and bustle, and the constant presence of people either traveling through the area, waiting at the various major bus stops, or congregating in the square socially. Lining the square in all directions are well-utilized businesses, including a full service grocery store, as well as some of the City’s public anchors: Bunker Hill Community College, Chelsea Senior Center, City Hall, and the library. The Bellingham Square National Register Historic District captures the quality of the early 20th century architecture and scale.

As designed, the square does not carry all of this activity as effectively or efficiently as it could. The Project for Public Spaces has found that successful places have four key qualities: “they are accessible; people are engaged in activities there; the space is comfortable and has a good image; and finally, it is a sociable place: one where people meet each other and take people when they come to visit” (Project for Public Spaces, 2014). The City has recently engaged a landscape architect to work on a pilot project to identify improvements to Bellingham Square.

Best Practices: Cleanliness

Chelsea has seen success in resident and stakeholder driven cleanliness campaigns. As part of the Trash & Recycling Campaign that came out of the 2009 North Bellingham Hill Action Plan, Community Enhancement Team (CET) members went door to door distributing 250 recycling bins and bilingual educational materials, and the city rolled out new bag and barrel trash collection procedures. Recycling rates in North Bellingham Hill increased dramatically to 43% (compared to 5% citywide) and orderly trash collection was largely achieved.

The City of Chelsea was a key partner in this effort. Inspectional Services stepped up its efforts to ticket egregious trash offenders and a representative of the ISD Department joined CET representatives on trash day each week to walk the streets and issues tickets to those who improperly disposed of trash. Ultimately, the City invested in the creation of a staff position solely focused on the ticketing of those who improperly dispose of trash.

TND intends to reinforce this positive change with a 2014 campaign, which will sustain neighbor to neighbor education surrounding trash, rewarding positive behavior and expanding the number of streets encompassed in outreach efforts to include Bellingham Square. In this next iteration, street leaders will encourage neighbors to take charge of their small section of their block, and will cement the arrangement by asking that participants sign pledge cards. Prize winners will be recognized by Chelsea's City Council and honored in the Chelsea Record and on Chelsea TV, while a gift card raffle will be held each month for those residents who recycle. In addition to short term incentives, the streets that have the best cleanliness and/or participation records in the March - June 2014 period and the July - October 2014 period will win a "street spruce up" whereby TND will organize volunteers to paint fences and porches, install plantings and otherwise leverage the beautification initiated by the residents themselves.

"The strengths of the neighborhood are that residents and businesses want a better way of life.... they are headed toward the same goal" (Broadway business owner).

Safety Concerns

A consistent theme in community discussions and business surveys was a concern over safety in Bellingham Square. While there is always activity in the area, negative activity seems to overshadow everyday uses and makes the area uncomfortable for many. Many behaviors would be mitigated if a multi-generational population were attracted to linger in the Square. Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC) is an important anchor but the opportunity is muted because of its location behind the bus stop and some safety concerns of students passing through the area to reach their destination.

A more nuanced use of the term "loitering" should distinguish between social activities; disruptive or potentially threatening behaviors; and illegal acts. Greater oversight on licenses and permits for some of the businesses in the heart of Bellingham Square may be needed to minimize negative impacts of liquor stores, bars, and fast food operations.

Substance Abuse

Some of the negative activities are related to substance abuse, which are often attributed to the presence of a nearby methadone clinic serving as many as 700 clients a day, many of whom do not reside in Chelsea. Several citywide initiatives have been developed to manage issues of substance abuse and undesirable activity that surface in Bellingham Square and other parts of Broadway, including the Substance Abuse Task Force and the Chelsea Police 10-Point Plan to Enhance Public Safety (Appendix D).

Cleanliness

Cleanliness was continually raised as a major issue of concern throughout this entire planning process. This sentiment is reinforced by feedback received through TND NeighborCircles and by block condition surveys completed in October 2013, which indicated that trash is a major concern of residents and contributes to negative community standards that allow crime and disrepair to persist.

TABLE 4.1 BELLINGHAM SQUARE ACTION STEPS

<i>Initiatives</i>	<i>Champions</i>	<i>Partners</i>
Police Walking Routes: Identify Police walking routes, including alleys, and ensure that police visibility is high at key times of day and night (10-Point Plan).	City of Chelsea Police Department	TND, Business Owners, Property Owners, Residents, Community Navigators/Community Leadership Team
Prostitution Task Force: Staff a Prostitution Prevention & Intervention Task Force (10-Point Plan)	City of Chelsea Police Department	Non-profit organizations
Silver Line Wayfinding: Link the Silver Line Corridor and downtown, including wayfinding, signage, and on-street extension of Greenway to Chestnut Street,	City of Chelsea	TND, Healthy Chelsea, MassDOT, Residents
Bus Stop Location and Benches: Spread out the bus stops for the different routes and install updated benches at the Bellingham Square bus stop to encourage short-term resting	City of Chelsea, MBTA	BHCC, Residents
Crime Free Zone: Advance a downtown “Crime Free Zone” that includes stay away orders for re-offenders (10-Point Plan)	City of Chelsea Police Department	Non-profit organizations
Community Navigators: Establish two community outreach “navigators” to help people in street with social services (10-Point Plan)	Community Leadership Team, City of Chelsea Police Department	Non-profit organizations

ACTION STEPS

Bellingham Square sets the perception of Chelsea for many people. Tackling some of the more persistent problems in this central place could make a difference to the entire Broadway Corridor. The priority action steps for Bellingham Square are identified in Table 4.1.



Changes to street design, bus stop locations, cleanliness, and programming of space could complement the City's initiatives to address crime.



Chelsea Square is an underutilized resource with its expansive open spaces, civic character, and historic architecture.

5. CHELSEA SQUARE

VISION FOR CHELSEA SQUARE

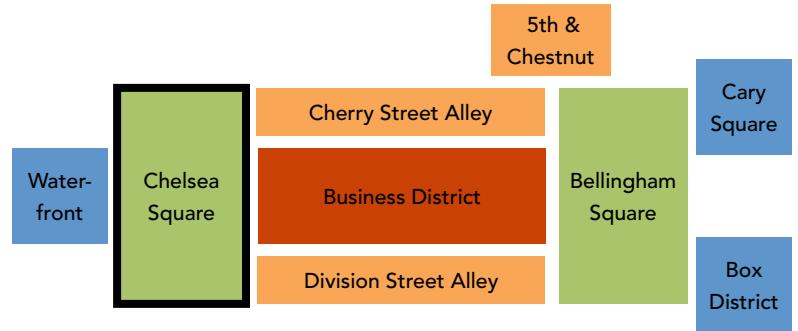
Chelsea Square will become a cultural hub for downtown, with the theater, programmed activities in the park, and more destination restaurants in the ground floor of surrounding buildings. Many of the nearby blocks offer potential for new residential infill, bringing a greater number of mixed income households into this area on a day-to-day basis and adding more “eyes on the park.”

Chelsea Square will become a key meeting ground for residents, employees, and visitors in the city, with easy access to and from the large employers and hotel patrons on Everett Avenue, Admirals Hill, the waterfront, Shurtleff-Bellingham, and the Broadway business district. One of the largest open spaces in the city, Chelsea Square’s central Winnisimmet Park will feature weekly events such as a farmers’ market, music, and visual and performing arts, centered on the Stebbins Fountain and Soldiers’ Monument.

New infill buildings will respect the National Register Historic District but also may include more contemporary architecture, creating distinctive well-lit landmarks in the district. With its green center, Chelsea Square will become a lively destination for cultural and dining activities, supported by a stable mixed-income residential community.

CONTEXT

Chelsea Square seems relatively underutilized and lacking a clear role in the downtown area. The primary features of the Square are a fountain and two monuments, complemented by



brick sidewalks, lawn and trees, benches, granite curbs, and low, cast iron fencing. Surrounding the park are several landmark historic buildings that contribute to the area’s designation as a National Register Historic District.

Anchor Uses

The energy of the Broadway retail district doesn’t quite reach Chelsea Square, however, even though some of the best restaurants in town are located at this lower end. The Apollinaire Theatre, which has a significant regional presence, has relatively low visibility at the neighborhood level. The Police Station fronts on Winnisimmet Park, and yet several residents expressed concern for safety in the park, largely because of some of the overgrowth of trees and shrubs that reduce visibility. Police parking along one length of the park has a dominating visual presence. The District Court provides another anchor, but lies just beyond the zone of Chelsea Square, across Williams Street.

Infill Opportunities

In contrast to the historic building, several one story and otherwise underutilized properties limit the potential users in this area. Some commercial buildings facing the Square are not actively used for retail



Arts Programming in Somerville

Union Square in Somerville has several odd leftover spaces formed by the confluence of intersecting streets. Within these triangles and plazas, a number of events are programmed throughout the year, welcoming residents and visitors to occupy the civic spaces in the business district. The main plaza area features public art and street furniture and has several stores that face directly onto it, providing additional “eyes on the park”.

The Somerville Arts Council runs the ArtsUnion Project to promote cultural economic development in the square, producing events, markets, and cultural tours that reflect Union Square’s diversity. ArtsUnion in partnership with the City of Somerville Planning and Community Development commissioned local artists to design and build street furniture that doubles as novel public art. An Arts Overlay District offers zoning incentives for arts related development in the area.

Some examples of the creative programming sponsored by ArtsUnion include story nights; dance , poetry and music events; collaborative art projects; a Mini-Maker Faire; outdoor dance parties; food festivals; rock and roll yard sale; handmade craft fairs; ethnic festivals; recycled art competition; and outdoor movies.

They also collaborate with the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission and the Union Square Main Streets to host tours that highlight the history, architecture, and cultural diversity of Union Square, including International Food Market Tours. They evaluate the impact of their work on a regular basis through intercept surveys and other economic data. Funding is provided by the MCC’s John and Abigail Adams Art Program and the City of Somerville (www.somervilleartscouncil.org/artsunion).

or restaurants and do not have active doorways. The adjacent district between Chelsea Square and the waterfront is one of the lowest density parts of the city, with many one-story buildings and surface parking lots on relatively large parcels. Over time, private development of residential buildings in this area could contribute to the liveliness of Chelsea Square.

ACTION STEPS

The action steps that will make the most significant impact to Chelsea Square focus on open space and housing measures (Appendix E). While the steps could apply to the whole district, they could be first tested in the Chelsea Square area (Table 5.1)



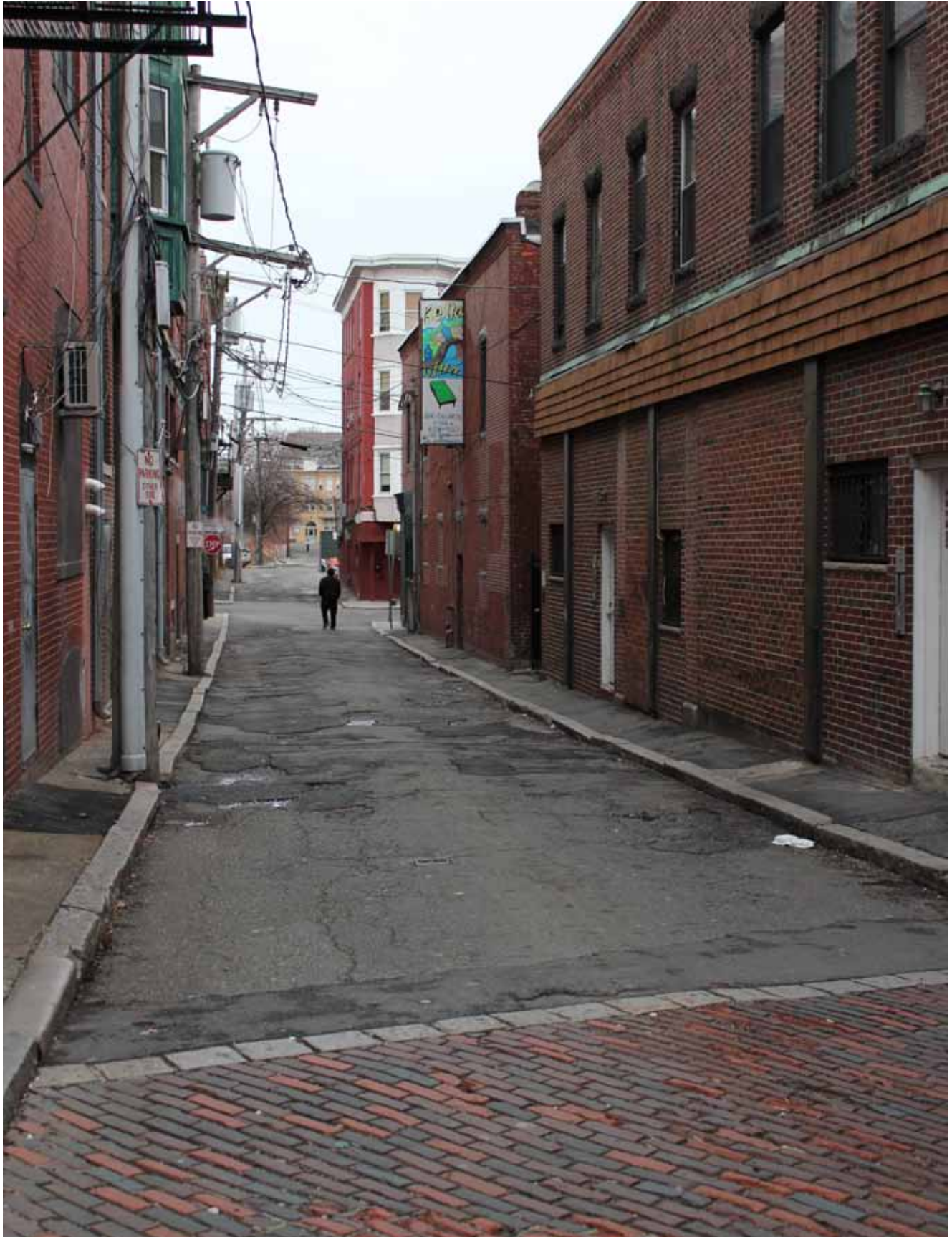
Some of the best restaurants surround the park in Chelsea Square.



Other parts of the Square do not have active retail frontage.

TABLE 5.1 CHELSEA SQUARE ACTION STEPS

<i>Initiatives</i>	<i>Champions</i>	<i>Partners</i>
Adopt-a-Park: Enlist businesses, community groups, or others to “Adopt-a-Park” with either financial support, volunteer maintenance efforts or programming	Community Leadership Team (CLT)/ Shurtleff-Bellingham Initiative	Apollinaire, Chelsea Police, CHARCOLL, TND, Healthy Chelsea, Business Owners, Residents, Roca, DPW
Park Programming: Develop programming and activity for public spaces that promotes and increases the positive presence (i.e., push carts, buskers, musicians, art installations).	Adopt-a-Park groups	City of Chelsea Cultural Council, Apollinaire Theatre, CHARCOLL and nearby businesses, agencies, residents
Farmers’ Market: Secure funding for a Farmers’ Market in Chelsea Square	Adopt-a-Park group	TND, MGH, Healthy Chelsea
Restaurant Competition: Develop a program (or competition) for top restaurants in the area with donated services in design, business, marketing, and use of technology.	Chamber of Commerce	Latino Division of the Chamber; Business Owners; BHCC; UMASS Boston
Improvements to Chelsea Square: Remove fence around greenspace and decrease foliage to support increased functionality & use of space.	Adopt-a-Park group	Chelsea Police Department, City of Chelsea



The alleys in the 5th and Chestnut area affect the perceptions of safety in this area, but could become new pedestrian connections to the Silver Line.

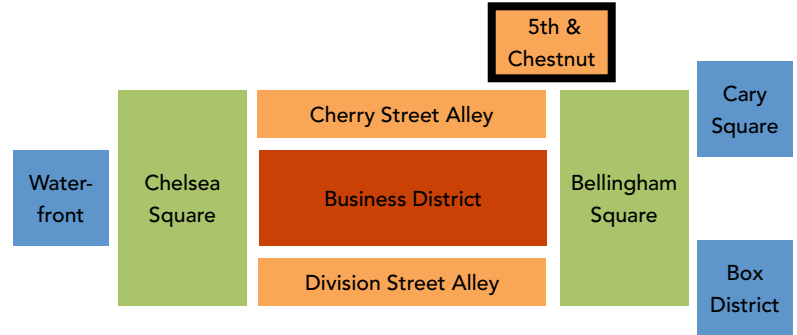
6. 5TH & CHESTNUT

VISION FOR 5TH & CHESTNUT

5th Street and Chestnut Street will become a safe and attractive corner in the downtown, a place where civic, residential, and commercial uses come together with a strong Chelsea identity. Better management will be the hallmark of improvements to this area, through an active partnership of property owners, businesses, residents, State agencies, and City departments. Design fixes will address safety concerns in and around the highway overpass through lighting, streetscape improvements, and better screening of lower parts of the highway. Spaces designed for flexible play by older children will expand opportunities for outdoor activity. In the long term, new development on the surface parking lot west of Route 1 could help activate this area, whether small-scale businesses, parking garages with retail frontage, or other taller buildings with active ground floor uses. Cherry Street will become a safe attractive corridor for pedestrians to cut through to reach City Hall, or in the other direction, to reach the public parking behind Broadway.

CONTEXT

5th Street and Chestnut is a key node in downtown Chelsea since it is one of the few gateways under Route 1 and hosts a unique confluence of activities that need to be carefully managed in order to be compatible. Many neighborhood residents pass through this area along a primary pedestrian route from the Box District and Bellingham Square to the Market Basket on Everett Avenue. Students at the High School and Williams School and employees at MITC also traverse this path. Convenient access onto U.S. Route 1 from 5th Street increases transient traffic in the area.



At the corner of 5th Street and Chestnut, the Kayem Park tot lot has become an important resource for families in the area, although some express concern that older children and adults in the park make it less desirable. Several single room occupancy buildings are in the area. The Salvation Army operates a community center from this location, with worship, fellowship, and youth programs, as well as meal programs, emergency services, and a food bank.

Active retail uses on 5th Street extend from Bellingham Square down to Chestnut and include a well-rated restaurant as well as several bars, a laundromat, and a barbershop. Between Chestnut and Arlington Streets, however, there are no active facades and doorways. Part of the right-of-way is lined with fences, surface parking lot, and informal landscaping, which contributes to a less safe environment in the evening, even though on-street lighting exists. The nearby segment of the Cherry Street alley is distressed, with potholed streets, narrow discontinuous sidewalks, and boarded and barred windows and blank building facades at grade level.

Route 1 in this location rises from a four-foot clearance to approximately thirty feet. As a MassDOT right-of-way, most of the space is well marked as surface parking, which is used by City employees,



Adult use of the playground is a deterrent to play.



The vintage-style lamps under the highway may not shed enough light into all the areas under the highway.



Some uses may not be compatible with others in the area.

although the lower height spaces are reported to attract some undesirable uses in the evening. Some areas along the highway right-of-way are lined with chain link fences, which are in poor condition and collect trash. Sidewalks are narrow on Chestnut Street and many of the tree pits are empty. Many of the residential buildings have “no loitering” or “no trespassing signs” posted.

A major bus stop for the busy Routes #111, #112, and #114 is located at the corner of 5th and Arlington Streets, although this can seem like an isolated location in the evenings. The entrance ramp onto Route 1 lies at the end of 5th Street and attracts through traffic. A crossing guard ensures safe crossings for students throughout the afternoon. The New England Sculpture Services occupies center of the highway ramp fronting Arlington Street, but this industrial building offers no outward appearance of an actively used cultural space.

ACTION STEPS

Many of the recommended action steps in this plan will improve the area around 5th & Chestnut Streets. The actions that will make the most difference and that could set the example for other places in the Broadway corridor are shown in Table 6.1.

TABLE 6.1 5TH & CHESTNUT ACTION STEPS

<i>Initiatives</i>	<i>Champions</i>	<i>Partners</i>
Housing Code Enforcement: Conduct regular program of code enforcement, targeted to problem areas (Phase 2 after Shurtleff-Bellingham)	City of Chelsea	
Tree Planting: Improve tree planting conditions and replace trees on 5th Street; trim vegetation	City of Chelsea, Chelsea Collaborative	Salvation Army
Highway ROW Lighting: Transfer fixtures underneath the Route 1 Highway to another location and replace to better light back areas and recesses of municipal parking lots	City of Chelsea	MassDOT
Highway ROW Maintenance: Clean and maintain right-of-way areas under the Route 1 highway and along its border with Chestnut Street, including Chestnut Street municipal lot; securely fence unusable areas	City of Chelsea	MassDOT, Residents, Property Owner Task Force
Pedestrian Alleys: Improve pedestrian conditions on Cherry Street between 4th Street and Washington Avenue, including resurfacing and lighting, public art and consider eliminating vehicular traffic.	City of Chelsea	
Property Owner Task Force: Organize a working task force of 5th & Chestnut property and business owners to model cleanliness, code obligations, and beautification efforts in the area	TND, Trinity Management, Community Leadership Team	Salvation Army, Bar Los Recuerdos, El Santeneco, Nazca Café, Property Owners, City of Chelsea, MITC, Gallego Real Estate
Liquor Licenses: Monitor existing liquor licenses for compliance with regulations regarding cleanliness, public nuisance, and illegal activity	City of Chelsea Police Department	City of Chelsea Licensing Commission, Residents



Students from the Williams School pass through the 5th & Chestnut area on their way to and from school.



Approximately 1,200 employees work in the MITC building just beyond 5th & Chestnut.

SOURCES

Berkshire Eagle, February 28, 2014

Boston Globe. July 2, 2013. *Chelsea Experiencing Building Revival.*

Chelsea Police Department. 2013 Annual Report.

City of Chelsea, 2012 Assessors Data

City of Chelsea: www.ci.chelsea.ma.us/Public_Documents/ChelseaMA_WebDocs/about

Governor Deval Patrick Press Release, October 30, 2013

MBTA, April 2010 bus ridership

Project for Public Spaces. "What Makes a Successful Place?" www.pps.org/reference/grplacefeat/, accessed February 2014

U.S. 2010 Census; Census Tracts 1601.01, 1602, 1604, 1505.01, cover approximate ½ mile radius of downtown.

U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 American Community Survey

www.chelseapolice.com/digital-community-2/the-alert-network, accessed April 2014

www.downtowntaunton.org, accessed May 5, 2014

www.preservationnation.org/main-street, accessed April 2014

www.mass.gov/hed/docs/dhcd/cd/mdi/2012beverly.pdf, accessed May 5, 2014

www.opiateaddictionresource.com/treatment/methadone_clinic_directory/ma_clinics, accessed April 2014.