

A Message from Christine Araujo Executive Director



Connecting People to Place.

These have been a couple of tumultuous weeks. As many of you know, TACC's founder, [Joseph E. Corcoran](#), passed away on June 3. Beyond his professional accomplishments as a leader in moving the needle on affordable housing, Joe was TACC's champion, the force behind initiatives focused on equity and the empowerment of Roxbury residents. We convey our condolences to his family.

Entering Summer 2020, I am, like all of you, grappling with the far-reaching impact of two pandemics: [anti-Black racism](#) and [COVID-19](#). As I walked through Nubian Square this morning, the shuttered businesses and quiet streets and sidewalks signal the devastating impact of the COVID-19 shutdown on Nubian Square businesses and the business environment.

As Roxbury determines a response to the increased and unanticipated economic challenges of COVID-19, there is a critical need to expand collective impact. The research and recommendations from the [Nubian Square Market Analysis](#) (February 2020) can help frame the short- and long-term strategies to see the community through these times and into a more vibrant future.

Policymakers, businesses, elected officials, and residents must recognize and respond to the structural issues identified in the report that have limited Nubian Square's ability to reach its full potential as Boston's premier Black business district. The goal should not be to merely remedy the current conditions due to the shutdown, but rather to aim higher and empower Nubian Square as a thriving business district in the City of Boston.

As we enter the summer, we say hello and goodbye to several interns and fellows. On behalf of the TACC's staff and board, thank you to Dr. Mia Chandler, Deja Knight, and Amber Gautam from Harvard University's T.H. Chan School of Public Health for their assistance and contributions to TACC's [Pathways for Girls](#) research this fall and spring. Congratulations to David Nardelli on his graduation from Northeastern University's School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs; we are fortunate David continues to be part of our team as a full-time staff member. This month, TACC welcomes Andy Bonilla, a summer intern from Boston College's Corcoran Center for Real Estate and Urban Action.

Warm Regards,
Christine

UPDATE SUMMER 2020

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Connecting People to Place: An Update

PATHWAYS FOR GIRLS

Recommendations from TACC's December 2019, *Pathways for Girls: Insights into the Needs of Young Women in Nubian Square* (P4G) study highlighted the need to:

1. Provide young Roxbury women with empowerment programming designed to address their gender-specific needs based on the P4G findings as a model;
2. Address the lack of employment and engagement with programming to meet their specific needs and interests;
3. Take immediate action to respond to safety and security concerns in Nubian Station;
4. Develop outcome measures for programs that reflect the interests and needs of young women in Roxbury to benchmark success; and
5. Provide young women with a fair share of resources, including funding and prioritization of gender-specific, individualized, and inclusive empowerment programs.

Despite COVID-19, TACC, with assistance from youth researchers, and three Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health Master students, has been working with local partners, stakeholders, and experts on implementation of the study findings and recommendations. This includes an inventory of available programs; the development of tools for assessing the quality of available empowerment resources; and finally, facilitation of stakeholder engagement to close empowerment resource gaps.

To this end, TACC partnered with the City of Boston's Centers for Youth and Family and the Mayor's Office of Health and Human Services in January to host the Girls Lead 2020 Partnership Breakfast at the Vine Street Community Center. Leaders from 12 local, community-based organizations serving girls and young women in Roxbury began a stakeholder analysis with the goal of systematically gathering and analyzing programming information to identify and address gaps in empowerment programs for young women.

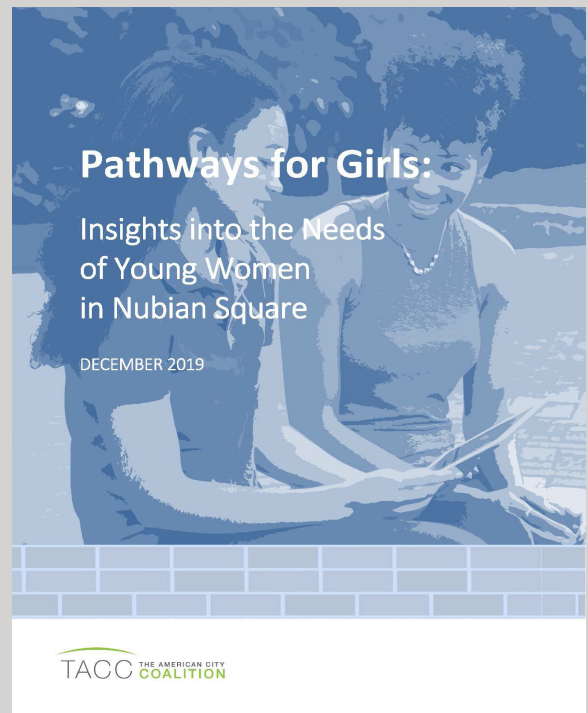
Interest in TACC's unique approach to community-based research continues to grow.

In February, TACC's youth researcher, Jael Nunez, and Deja Knight, a T.H. Chan School of Public Health Master's

candidate and TACC intern, presented the research at the monthly Boston Girls Empowerment Network so attendees could more fully understand the findings.

Dr. Mia Chandler, a Commonwealth Fellow at the T.H. Chan School of Public Health presented her practicum work at the 2020 Minority Health Policy Annual Meeting in May. Hosted by Harvard Medical School and the Commonwealth Fund. Dr. Chandler's presentation, "Empowerment of Girls in Nubian Square: Community Needs Assessment Phase II," was singled out by expert moderators as a model for community-engaged research. The webinar was attended by over 150 participants from around the world.

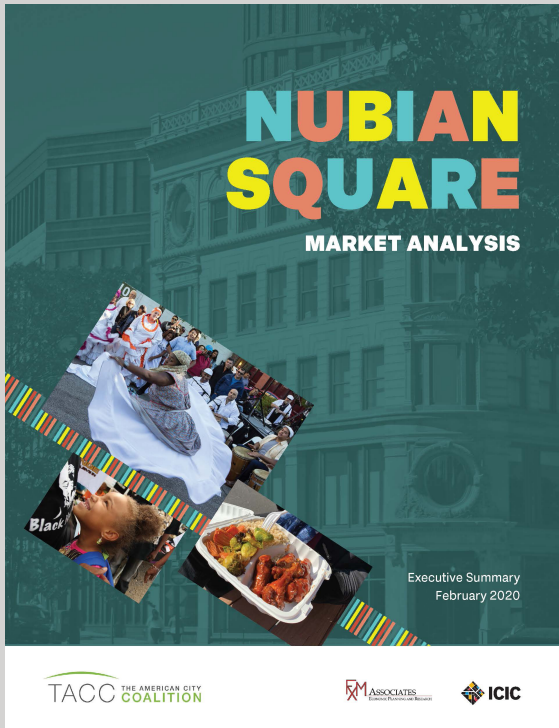
Given the lack of gender-specific research and programs, local foundations are eager to develop a response to the empowerment needs of girls and young women in Boston. Thus, TACC is engaged with these funders to develop and conduct much-needed research and program fine-tuning to achieve the P4G study goals.



To download the report, visit tamcc.org.

Connecting People to Place: An Update

NUBIAN SQUARE MARKET ANALYSIS



In February, TACC released the *Nubian Square Market Analysis*, a quantitative and qualitative analysis that maps a strategy for the sustainability and future growth of Nubian Square. The analysis was developed in collaboration with Roxbury Main Streets, and with consultant services from Initiative for a Competitive Inner City and FXM Associates.

With the recognition that Nubian Square has greater potential to meet the market need of Roxbury residents, the goals of this analysis are to:

1. Identify factors that distinguish Nubian Square as a location capable of attracting and sustaining businesses that will increase its vibrancy as a retail center;
2. Recommend specific initiatives and strategies that can increase Nubian Square's vitality as both Roxbury's commercial hub and one of Boston's major community business districts; and
3. Inform the discussion that will help recalibrate the conversation about the Square's commercial growth.

The report finds Nubian Square uniquely located as one of the more populous (and growing) retail districts among

comparison areas; however, it continues to struggle to competitively perform across retail sales categories.

Furthermore, the data suggests significant sales leakage to nearby districts. This data was confirmed by focus group participants as primarily Centre Street in Jamaica Plain and for specific retail sectors including limited service restaurants and buffets; health and personal care; hobby, toy, and game; hardware; and specialty stores such as meat markets, gift/novelties, and garden centers.

Highlighting these specific areas, local businesses can more efficiently tailor their strategies to capture these leakages.

Based on these and other findings, the report presents several recommendations to promote a sustainable and thriving district for existing businesses tailored to the needs of the community.

An abridged version of the recommendations are outlined below:

1. Improve perceptions of safety in Nubian Square;
2. Reactivate Roxbury Main Streets;
3. Recognize market opportunities and invest in specific strategies to assist existing retailers to expand while also recruiting retailers to respond to these opportunities;
4. Promote increased office space development, particularly above street level;
5. Increase market rate residential development while preserving existing affordable housing;
6. Improve the public realm and shared amenities; and
7. Implement a well-designed and coordinated Nubian Square marketing strategy.

As Roxbury faces unanticipated economic challenges due to COVID-19, there is a critical need to increase collective impact. The research and recommendations from the *Nubian Square Market Analysis* remain relevant in framing short- and long-term strategies for the future growth of Nubian Square.

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Connecting People to Place: An Update

SAVOR THE SQUARE

Savor the Square is a monthly seasonal marketplace, which will launch on August 29, 2020. Originally scheduled to launch in June, the opening was pushed back to late summer due to COVID-19. This open-air market will enrich Nubian Square, Roxbury's historic business district, in three important ways:

1. Cultivate a new Roxbury amenity that sparks positive energy, fun, and encourages civic engagement;
2. Supply fresh, healthy, and local food to Roxbury residents to offset the food desert; and
3. Activate a high-visibility public space with food, art, and entertainment to bring foot traffic to Nubian Square.

Savor the Square implements recommendations from the *Nubian Square Market Analysis* where residents and businesses voice a strong need for Saturday and evening events. *Savor the Square* brings together existing brick and mortar businesses and entrepreneurial vendors into one marketplace located at the core of the business district. The market will complement existing businesses by reducing leakage, increasing foot traffic, and introducing new customers and strategies that are essential to their survival given current and future conditions.

A Steering Committee composed of members from Roxbury Main Streets, Berklee College of Music, local business owners, and Roxbury residents meets bi-weekly via Zoom to finalize programming, including outreach to local farmers, artists, and arts and culture organizations. Programming partnerships for the themed events include the Museum of Fine Arts for Indigenous Peoples' Day Celebration, Agricultural Hall on Agricultural Day Celebration, as well as JazzUrbane, and the Day and Evening Academy Community Garden.

Savor the Square is funded in part by the Urban Agenda Grant Program through the Commonwealth's Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development and Berkshire Bank. TACC continues to explore additional funding streams and donation opportunities.

WATERWAYS

Together with our community and waterfront partners, TACC is monitoring recommendations from public health officials, and adapting Waterways activities by adjusting programming schedules and developing new virtual activities. While summer waterfront programs will look different in 2020, and that is a disappointment, there are also some exciting opportunities that have emerged for Roxbury and Dorchester residents to stay connected to each other and the waterfront.

Fort Point District 100 Acres Open Space Master Plan: In September, Roxbury and Dorchester residents of all ages came together in the Fort Point Channel for a fun, free day of kayaking and related on-land activities conducted in English and Spanish. On January 14, a small group of kayaking participants gathered in the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building to share their ideas with representatives from the Boston Planning and Development Agency and project designers from Sasaki Associates. Residents spoke about their current recreational habits, welcoming destinations and public spaces in and around Boston, current waterfront activities, past visits to Fort Point Channel, and public amenities.

Several themes emerged out of the focus group, including the distance participants would travel to visit a park and the amenities needed to support longer lengths of stay at destination parks outside of their neighborhoods. Reflecting on their recent visits to the Fort Point Channel for Un Dia de Kayak, participants identified public bathrooms, water fountains to fill up water bottles, grills, inexpensive/unique shops, affordable food options, and shade from trees or shade structures as amenities that would enhance the area.

TACC is excited to continue to collaborate with the BDPA, Sasaki, and our community partners on the Fort Point District 100 Acres Open Space planning process, by helping to identify thoughtful and impactful ways for Roxbury and Dorchester residents to contribute their ideas through virtual activities for families and youth.

