

## A Message from Christine Araujo Executive Director



### Connecting People to Place.

The advantage of having our offices in Dudley Square is that TACC staff are in constant conversation with the networks in the Roxbury community. These connections allow us to be thoughtful in the projects that we undertake.

Since our last communication with you through our Summer 2019 newsletter, TACC has continued working on two initiatives: Waterways and Pathways for Girls. Look for further details in this newsletter. Thanks to the Barr Foundation's continued investment in TACC, we are working with our partners to develop and implement sustaining strategies which promote access and reduce barriers to recreational and economic opportunities on Boston's waterfront.

TACC is also in the middle of a Dudley Square Market Analysis. This study is using both a quantitative and qualitative methodology for implementation strategies both in support of existing and to attract new businesses. The report will be distributed in January. Both the residents and businesses participants of the Focus Groups conducted in late October and early November, highlighted the need for scheduled Saturday activities with the goal of bringing residents and visitors into Dudley Square to participate in and enjoy entertainment, access quality and fresh produce, shop the local businesses and meet friends and neighbors. This is a next step to enliven Dudley Square which began with light pole banners and the shop local map.

Dr. Mia Chandler, Deja Knight, and Amber Gautam, from Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health, will all be working on the Pathways for Girls project.

The November 22 *New York Times* Op-Ed, "The Life and Death of the Local Hardware Store," speaks to how shopping local may be cheaper, come with quality advice, provide a friendly browsing environment where neighbors meet each other, and limit the packaging impacts on the environment. As we approach the holiday season, I encourage you to seek out the gems in the community in which to shop.

Of course, I welcome your ideas, thoughts, or recommendations.

Warm Regards,

Christine

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# Connecting People to Place: An Update

## PATHWAYS FOR GIRLS

TACC launched the Pathways for Girls project in April with the goal of understanding the experiences, perceptions, needs, and interests of adolescent girls and young women who live near or travel through Dudley Station, as well as shedding light on the social dynamics in the station. The study and survey are adapted from the *Conceptual Model for Women and Girls Empowerment* developed by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Five impactful empowerment pillars were identified: social capital; safety and security; knowledge and skills; family; and mental and physical health.

Throughout the month of May, 108 young women were surveyed by their peers in Dudley Square. In August, TACC field tested the survey findings with young women at the African Community Economic Development of New England, Cape Verdean Association of Boston, Freedom House, and Madison Park Development Corporation.

In designing empowerment programming for young women in Roxbury, TACC plans to build on assets young women possess while addressing asset limitations across all key empowerment pillars based on the study findings. For example, many struggle with limited social capital assets. Specifically, while 75% of our sample often have positive adult role models, at least 40% do not often feel respected by their peers and lack emotionally supportive or trusting relationships with others.

The study revealed that nearly half of the young women are unemployed despite the fact that the majority of them want to work. Over 40% are not involved in programming and 20% are not working or involved in programming.

The findings also show that young women perceive Dudley Square as an unsafe place where they frequently witness violence, drug dealing, and drug use. They also describe being sexually harassed and propositioned by adult men while walking in the Square.

Unfortunately, young women report that the police both in the Station and in proximity have been unsupportive and should be doing more to address these issues.

The study findings identify the need for improvements to services, supports, and outcomes for girls and young women in Roxbury and surrounding areas; the creation of specific pathways to opportunities; and strategies to address gaps in community resources such as education, programs, services, training, internships, and jobs.

TACC's next steps are to work with local partners to implement a number of recommendations including to:

1. Provide young women in Roxbury with empowerment programming designed to address their gender-specific needs using findings from the Pathways for Girls study as a model.
2. Address the lack of employment and program engagement among young women in Roxbury with programming to meet their specific needs and interests.
3. Take immediate action to make young women in Dudley Square and more specifically in Dudley Station to be safe and comfortable.
4. Develop outcome measures for programs that reflect the wants and needs of young women in Roxbury to benchmark success.
5. Provide young women with a fair share of resources, including funding and respect for gender-specific individualized, and inclusive programs for them.

TACC is currently developing strategies and partnerships to implement these recommendations working in collaboration with the City of Boston's Department of Health and Human Services, the Boston Center for Youth and Families, as well as several Boston-area hospitals and community based organizations.



# Connecting People to Place: An Update

## UN DIA DE KAYAK



On September 21, over 150 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. This was the first visit to this area of Boston for 81% of adult participants.

Piers Park Sailing Center provided the kayaking equipment, bilingual instruction, and a nurturing environment for participants of all abilities to kayak in Boston Harbor. For 58% of adults, this was their first time in a kayak. TACC partnered with the Boston Children's Museum, Friends of the Harborwalk, The Institute of Contemporary Art, and Save the Harbor/Save the Bay for on-land activities including walking tours, museum visits, and fishing.

This event sought to increase participants': 1. knowledge of recreational and cultural opportunities in and around the Fort Point Channel; 2. familiarity with the Boston Harborwalk and area attractions; and 3. knowledge of Chapter 91 (The Massachusetts Public Waterfront Act), public amenities, and associated wayfinding. Un Dia de Kayak is a strategic extension of TACC's ongoing Waterways Initiative. Using knowledge learned from residents through focus groups, surveys, and data walks, TACC worked to reduce established barriers to access (language, cost, transportation) to connect low-income residents of Roxbury and Dorchester to the Fort Point Channel and Boston Harbor.

Thank you to our event partners, community partners, and generous funders: 2019 Fort Point Channel Watersheet Activation Grant Program, Barr Foundation, Germeshausen Foundation, 88 Acres, and Boloco. Check out photos of the event on Instagram (@TheAmericanCityCoalition)!

## DUDLEY SQUARE MARKET ANALYSIS

Working in collaboration with Dudley Square Main Streets, TACC is in the midst of a Retail Market Analysis of Dudley Square with the assistance of consultant services by Initiative for a Competitive Inner City (ICIC) and FXM Associates. ICIC's research and expertise in driving economic prosperity in America's inner cities is complemented by FXM which specializes in retail and economic planning.

Clearly, Dudley Square has the untapped potential to become a strong business district that supports residents, expands its regional draw, and reinforces Roxbury as a historic and cultural destination. The analysis will identify viable, implementable, and specific retail and commercial uses that will enliven Dudley Square and will support a mixed-use, urban lifestyle environment.

The goal of this market analysis is to: 1. identify the factors that make Dudley Square a location capable of attracting and sustaining the identified demand(s); 2. determine the "Goldilocks" rent based on research of rent comps that show that businesses can be successful and that landlords can make money; 3. inform the discussion that will help "right size" the conversation about Dudley Square's retail growth.

This analysis is being informed by both quantitative and qualitative information. The first quantitative task is to determine the demand by understanding profiles of current and anticipated residents. Information from Dudley Square employees will provide data on the spending power, and the spending leakage out of Dudley Square. The second task is an understanding of the existing industry profile. The competitive analog recognizes that Dudley Square is a unique community and no singular location can be looked to as a competitive or aspirational market. Rather, the analysis will identify multiple comparison market areas that can provide realistic models and "best practices" for future Dudley Square commercial development.

Aspirational areas include models of promoting business development through: transit; welcoming retail mix for different types of people and ethnic businesses; institutional employers; merchant involvement and/or leadership by property owners. The retail opportunity/gap, feasibility and rent analyses will inform the recommendations.

# Connecting People to Place: An Update

## DUDLEY SQUARE MARKET ANALYSIS

The qualitative analysis included four focus groups, two with businesses and two with residents. The general consensus is that Dudley Square has been neglected for too long. Besides the community's human wealth, and the construction of the Bolling Building (among other institutional facilities), residents struggle to identify assets.

The lack of quality offerings of goods and services lead residents to shop in neighboring districts--those where they can park and shop; get most of the family shopping completed in a single trip. These neighboring districts also provide a friendly and welcoming ambiance; have a variety of stores; support Saturday or holiday street activity/festivals; and have public realms that contribute to the feeling of comfort, safety, and security.

In the face of increased development, residents and businesses alike want to maintain their sense of community, one that reflects its history as a predominantly Black business district. Residents were eager to recommend retail uses they would like to see come to Dudley that would achieve their broader vision for the neighborhood.

Both residents and businesses agree that larger chains would be less successful in Dudley, and any businesses needs greater connection to the community to find longevity. Another point of intersection is the need for a Saturday strategy to draw visitors and residents into Dudley Square when business activity is low. These events need to be accessible to all age groups, appeal to Roxbury's diversity, and include entertainment.

Finally, resident and businesses agree on an overarching need: improve marketing and branding. Suggestions include social media, signage, lighting, traffic calming, and improved comraderie between the existing businesses to promote each other and local events.

The final report will be available on our website in January.

## WELCOME TO OUR INTERNS

TACC welcomes three Masters of Public Health (MPH) candidates from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health to our team. Dr. Mia Taylor Chandler and Deja Knight will be completing their student practicums at TACC while Amber Gautum will be completing an independent study.



Mia Taylor Chandler



Amber Gautum



Deja Knight

