

A Message from Christine Araujo Executive Director



Connecting People to Place.

I hope that this update finds you and yours healthy and that you have been spared from some of the many negative impacts of COVID-19.

Despite the restrictions, we have all been busy at TACC. This year, we published two new reports: *Pathway for Girls: Insights into the Needs of Young Women in Nubian Square* and *Nubian Square Market Analysis*.

The *Nubian Square Market Analysis* was released in mid-February with positive coverage in the local press. We thank Joyce Stanley for the wealth of information she brought to the report as well as the research consultants, Initiative for a Competitive Inner City and FXM Associates. Both the executive summary and the full report are available on our website. One of the recommendations that came from focus groups with both residents and businesses was the need for evening and Saturday activities. From this, *Savor the Square*, an open-air market located in the long-vacant Blair Lot, was born.

For those of you who visited *Savor the Square* during one of the four Saturdays in August, September, and October, I am sure you will agree that the music and the vendors were phenomenal! It was such a joy to see so many happy (masked) faces and laughter as residents had a chance to meet in person. TACC was extremely diligent about adhering to all COVID-19 guidelines and requirements and did not experience any problems. We are particularly grateful to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development for funding from the Urban Agenda Grant Program that helped to underwrite the expenses. Working with Roxbury Main Streets, we hope to be able to increase the number of market days in Summer 2021.

Working in collaboration with the City of Boston's Department of Health and Human Services, the Boston Center for Youth and Families, and other community stakeholders, TACC is addressing the economic empowerment recommendations from the *Pathways for Girls* study. In the New Year, we will launch a Theory of Change process in order to develop a common language and common outcomes.

In 2021, TACC will continue to work with community partners to implement the recommendations of both studies. As always, please keep in touch; I welcome your input and suggestions.

I close wishing you and yours all the best in the New Year!

Warm Regards,
Christine

UPDATE WINTER 2020

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Connecting People to Place: An Update

WATERWAYS: CONNECTING RESIDENTS OF ROXBURY AND DORCHESTER TO BOSTON'S WATERFRONT

While activities look different in 2020 due to requisite adjustments due to COVID-19, TACC is excited to report that *Waterways* has continued to support substantive in-person and virtual activities that have increased access and utilization of waterfront programs and given voice to a broader group of residents from Roxbury and Dorchester to impact programs, policies, and accessibility so that as the waterfront continues to evolve, the needs and interests of the community are actively considered and implemented.

Recent *Waterways* activities include:

VIRTUAL FAMILY NIGHT: FORT POINT DISTRICT 100 ACRES OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN: Through an ongoing collaboration with the BPDA, Sasaki Associates, and our community partners, TACC has opened up multiple opportunities for Roxbury and Dorchester residents to provide input into the 100 Acres Master Plan. These actions are based on the belief that for the waterfront to be fully realized and maintained as a resource for this and future generations, community- and resident-level perspectives from a broad range of neighborhoods must be consciously elevated and supported.

On August 27, TACC hosted a virtual event for Roxbury and Dorchester families to understand their opinions on the draft concepts for the Fort Point District 100 Acres Master Plan in English, Spanish, Somali, and Cape Verdean Creole. Children shared their ideas through interactive activities; teens and adults joined a conversation about both the land and waterside uses of Fort Point Channel between the Summer Street Bridge and the former Gillette properties. The conversation deepened understanding of residents' aspirations for the area and the range of amenities and ground floor uses that will best ensure that Fort Point is an inclusive space. Fort Point is an important waterfront location due to the mix of uses (recreation, culture, employment) and its relative proximity and ease of access (Silver Line, South Station) for Roxbury and Dorchester residents.

UN DIA DE KAYAK 2020: On September 12, Roxbury and Dorchester residents of all ages came together in the Fort Point Channel for a fun, free day of kayaking and on-land activities conducted in English and Spanish. While there were some modifications due to COVID-19 restrictions, the event once again demonstrated it meets a need: reservations filled up very quickly and 2019 participants wanted to return and bring additional friends and family members.

Through a survey, TACC learned that participants are interested in other recreational activities: canoeing, paddle boating, fishing, sailing, water yoga, swimming, and jet skiing; participants see a need for the following post-kayaking amenities: food (81.8%), bathroom (72.7%), drinking water (81.8%), shade (45.5%), a place to sit and relax (72.7%), and a play area for children (63.6%).

TACC is grateful to an incredible group of on-water and on-land event partners. Piers Park Sailing Center provided the kayaking and paddle boarding equipment, instruction, and a nurturing/safe environment for participants of all abilities to kayak in the Fort Point Channel; Boston Children's Museum for providing free admission to family groups with young children; The Institute of Contemporary Art for providing free admission to all participants; Sasaki Associates for colorful gift bags and a photography activity; and Fresh Food Generation for providing the delicious and healthy food to fill up each group's picnic basket. Thank you to the BPDA and Barr Foundation for their generous support of Un Dia de Kayak 2020.

This year, *Waterways* is embracing winter. With cooler temperatures and ongoing COVID-19 restrictions in the months ahead, TACC, residents, community partners, and programming partners, are thinking through creative and safe ways to stay physically active and connect with each other. Keep an eye out for updates on New Years Eve activities in Nubian Square and on the waterfront.

Connecting People to Place: An Update

WATERWAYS



SAVOR THE SQUARE



Connecting People to Place: An Update

SAVOR THE SQUARE

As 2020 comes to a close, we look forward to 2021 with new possibilities, and great expectations. This year saw the inaugural journey of the *2020 Savor the Square: Open-Air Market Series* at the Blair Lot in Nubian Square. The impetus for this series was based on the strong responses by Roxbury residents and businesses during focus groups conducted as part of the Nubian Square Market Analysis (February 2020) for active placemaking in Nubian Square.

There was a stated urgency for Saturday and evening events in the Square; events that not only attracted residents, but also showcased the diversity in cultural entertainment, encouraged civic engagement, and provided exposure to new and additional shopping experiences.

In collaboration with Roxbury Main Streets (RMS), TACC launched this open-air market where all City and State COVID-19 restrictions were observed including distance between vendors; the types of musical instruments allowed; capacity of staff, visitors, and vendors in the lot; mandatory mask wearing; and social distancing between visitors. Once envisioned as a weekly seasonal market, the COVID-19 response was to have four themed events, one each in August and September, and two in October.

Visitors browsed and purchased goods from the entrepreneurs who represented a cross-section of practitioners in the creative sector and brought positive energy to the events through unique and interesting wares: soaps, candles, jewelry, Afrocentric and Native American art, and accessories. The number of vendors increased from six during the August launch to sixteen on October 24.

TACC and RMS extends a special thanks to our speaker, J. Cedric Woods, PhD, Director, Institute for New England Native American Studies at UMass Boston, for contextualizing the plight of the Native American community local and nationally and its embedded history in Roxbury.

An eclectic range of music filled the space and the Nubian Square business district, thanks to the Grooversity (Afro - Brazilian Drummers), Jamin Joe Johnson (Caribbean Beat), Makanda Project (Jazz Ensemble) and Fallou Small (African Drummers).

Food was another draw to the event. Our collaboration with The Trustees of Reservations brought fresh, healthy, and locally grown produce at affordable prices. Prepared foods were provided by Fresh Food Generation, Soleil Boston, and Just-T Pearl Beef Frankfurter Cart.

Staff for the 2020 Census and Voter Registration were at the August and September events. A special thanks to Yemti H. Ndienla and Willa Burnett, Boston Community Action Team/ Teen Empowerment for providing these vital resources. We thank the Planning Advisory group, composed of residents and businesses, which met bi-weekly starting in April. And of course, thank you to all our community partners who were instrumental in making this series a success: Haley House Cafe, Boston Planning and Development Agency, City of Boston, and Castillo Wine & Spirits. Special thanks to our funders, the Commonwealth's Urban Agenda, Berkshire Bank, and Madison Park Development Corporation/ Hibernian Hall.

Surveys of visitors reveal the benefits and unmet demand for programming key spaces within Nubian Square. Savor the Square was overwhelmingly a draw for Roxbury residents (51%); furthermore, 99% of respondents stated that they would return to shop and dine in the Square. It was great to see the laughter and conversations between the many residents who had not seen each other since late winter.

As TACC and RMS look to 2021, we are motivated by the fact that 88% of survey respondents indicated they would attend *Savor the Square 2021* as a weekly open-air market. If you are interested in planning for or funding next year's series, please contact carole_walton@tamcc.org.

