

RETHINKING VACANT LOTS IN ROXBURY, MA

PURPOSE

Roxbury is an area of significant cultural importance for many people but it is often overlooked by the City of Boston when it comes to policy implementations and revitalization efforts. The area is in danger of severe cultural loss and there is an impending presence of displacement by large housing developers. Through the redevelopment of vacant parcels into community-based spaces, we can eliminate the opportunity for developers to turn these plots into luxury high-rise apartments like so many before them.



HISTORY OF VACANT LOTS

Many of the vacant lots in Roxbury are a direct result of historic redlining against minority populations, failed urban renewal efforts, public disinvestment, and acts of arson. With proper purpose and vision, we can reactivate these spaces and transform them into something for the long-term community.

INCLUSIVE, COMMUNITY-ORIENTED GREEN SPACES



- Site Characteristics**
- ~15,000 Sq. Ft. (~100 ft x 150 ft)
 - Proximity to existing community-building institutions
 - Connection to potential future apple orchard
 - > Able to act as an extended platform for community activities and connection-building



Proposed Community Development Plan

- City of Boston Parks and Recreation
- Provides opportunities for local businesses providing classes, events, concessions, etc. in Boston's public parks
 - Park Partners Program: connects groups interested in local park programming and park improvement

Potential partnership with Vine Community Center to provide information resources and application help for local park-related employment and vendor opportunities



OUTDOOR YOUTH SPACES

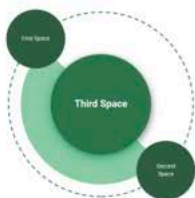
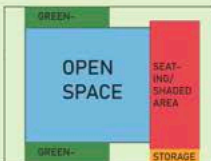
Outdoor youth spaces would provide students a third space outside of school and home. Third spaces are designed to encourage social interactions, to create unique touchdown spaces, to foster connectivity and creativity. The outdoor space could be customizable to different schools according to their needs. School clubs and even lessons could be taught in the space.

Context

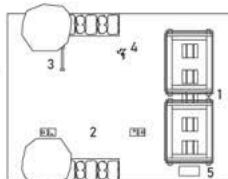
- No outdoor space for Dearborn students.
- Most parks lack spaces specifically for games.
- Youth need safe public spaces where they can come together, engage in activities related to their diverse needs and interests and freely express themselves.

Vision

- Tables for certain types of games such as chess and cards
- Game library
- Shading and greenery
- Plenty of open space for activities
- Youth centered
- Customizable to the needs of the students/youth



- Program
1. Seating/Shaded Area
 2. Cornhole Area
 3. Connect 4 Area
 4. Jenga Area
 5. Storage



APPLE ORCHARDS

This proposal actively combats displacement because it brings back history to Roxbury, MA. By creating this community space, people are able to connect through similar interests while learning about the history of the city. Learning is important in this space because there is so much to educate about Roxbury's history of orchards, community gardening, how to maintain apples, and more. These apple orchards can act as a staple for the community bringing people together once again.

A LOOK AT A OTHER PROJECTS

Copley Community Orchard, Vancouver, B.C.

Some community orchards are totally volunteer-led initiatives. Others are managed by non-profit organizations. Copley community orchard in Vancouver was founded in 2002 as a joint project between the Environmental Youth Alliance (EYA) and community members, but now it's entirely run by volunteers.



ReTree US, Durham, ME

ReTreeUS is a charity in Maine, in the northeastern United States, which is making things much easier for local schools. ReTreeUS helps schools design and plant orchards free of charge. They provide the fruit trees and the fruit tree care education that goes with them. The charity also offers online resources and curriculum materials that schools can use to teach young people about fruit trees and how to grow them.

One really lovely bonus is that ReTreeUS also provides schools with educational signage that teaches children about local food production and the environment, the benefits of trees, and the role of pollinators in food production.



HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO GROW APPLE TREES?



HOW DOES THIS POSITIVELY EFFECT ROXBURY, MA?



How could fresh fruit access benefit the neighborhood?

Healthy food access is important to a neighborhood because it provides an outlet to those who want a change in their lifestyle. Having a nearby apple orchard that can provide for the neighborhoods will allow people to access apples at an affordable cost. Another positive is that it is supplying residents jobs and local retailers, restaurants and consumers with healthy foods. Among the benefits are giving youth productive activities and helping to improve health — something that continues to be a high concern.

How could apple orchards influence community development?

Apple orchards can offer opportunities for educational programs to have an outdoor classroom. This can be very beneficial to a community because it essentially allows knowledge to be exchanged from person to person. Regardless of age, apple orchards can connect everyone. Apple orchards can provide the community with knowledge on where their food comes from, therefore, teaching people of all ages about food growing. These orchards could explore the idea of food clubs, those who hold events to connect through a common ground. Thus, creating a hub of community development through apple orchards.

How can apple growing provide for nearby Bodegas?

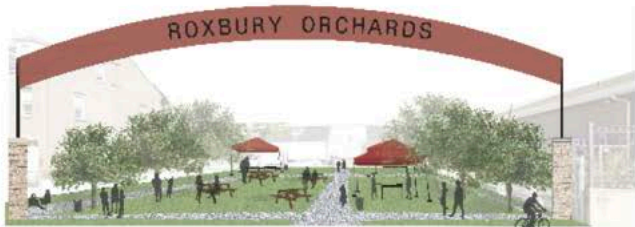
In a way, bodegas provide culture to a community. Bodegas are less likely to have fresh foods because the lack of affordable access. Therefore, creating nearby apple orchards can not only provide for those who raise the crops, but those who want to go to the orchards to purchase healthy foods. These apples can be positive for bodegas because it can influence individuals to eat healthy at an affordable price. It is important to have access to fresh foods for the betterment of the community as a whole so that healthy habits are created and not lost through time.

How can creating apple orchards bring the community together?

The intention for apple orchards is to provide a gathering space for family, friends, strangers, etc to create memories. The community is presented opportunity to come together and help maintain these beautiful orchards. These apple orchards can be considered a third space for people who want to have a pleasant space to meet other people. Ultimately, this is a place where people and the rest of nature successfully work together to create abundant harvests.



329 DUDLEY ST



COMMUNITY GARDENS

The Roxbury area is in danger of severe cultural loss and there is an impending presence of food scarcity and displacement. Through the redevelopment of vacant parcels into community gardens, we can eliminate the opportunity for developers to turn these plots into luxury high-rise apartments like so many others before them while providing the community with access to fresh food.

WHAT IS THE CITY OF BOSTON DOING CURRENTLY?

CITY OF BOSTON

**PARKS AND RECREATION
OPEN SPACE PLAN 2015-2021**

Seven year action plan to assess the current state of Boston's open spaces and propose changes for the future that will enhance the community.

GROWBOSTON

**OFFICE OF URBAN AGRICULTURE
GRASSROOTS PROGRAM**

"The Grassroots program supports the development of community gardens and other open spaces. The program provides grant funds, City-owned land, and technical assistance to neighborhood groups and nonprofits that want to organize, develop, own, manage, and maintain community gardens and open space in the low and moderate income neighborhoods."

MAYOR'S OFFICE OF FOOD JUSTICE

FOOD ACCESS AGENDA 2021-2023

Mission
"The mission of the Mayor's Office of Food Access of the City of Boston is to improve equitable access to nutritious food with respect to affordability, physical accessibility, and cultural connectedness. In pursuit of this mission, DFA will foster a more food secure community with a vibrant, inclusive food culture, reflective of the diverse residents of the City."

FOOD FORESTS

"Food forests transform vacant, City-owned lots into locally-run, public edible parks. The food forests in Boston are run by the Boston Food Forest Coalition (BFFC), a nonprofit land trust, with community members."

***Trustees of Boston**

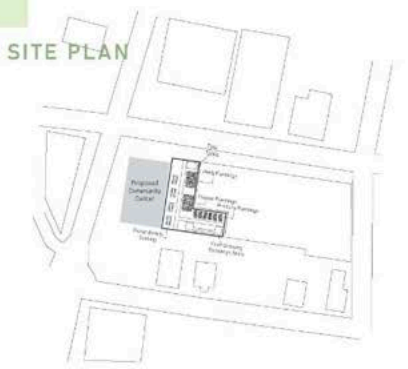
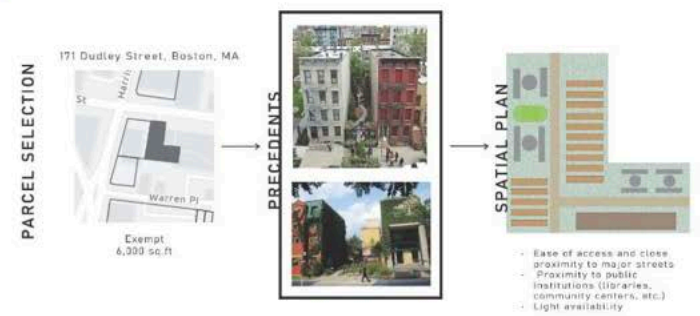
A local organization that specializes in the conservation, preservation and care of existing community gardens in the Boston area by gathering local volunteers.

- Currently manage 10 Roxbury community gardens including 403-405 Dudley Street across from the St. Patrick's Church

PLANTING SELECTION

	<p>Season: Warm (Spring-Fall) Growing Season: 14 weeks Watering: Rain water is sufficient</p> <p>Oranges grow best in a well draining and loose soil plot with a lot of sun.</p>
	<p>Season: Warm (Spring-Summer) Growing Season: 60-90 days Watering: Every day to every other day</p> <p>Peppers grow best in a spacious plot with a lot of sun and well-drained soil.</p>
	<p>Season: Warm (Spring-Summer) Growing Season: 45-100 days Watering: Consistent watering</p> <p>Tomatoes grow best in a warm environment with a lot of sun.</p>

- GOALS**
1. Target Audience = Elders
 2. Fill plots with all-year blooms
 3. Reserve a section for food growing and commerce



THINKING ABOUT THE GREEN NETWORK ALL TOGETHER...

PROPOSED GREEN SPACE MAINTENANCE PLAN

Development of a Roxbury Parks Conservancy responsible for:
 Implementation of a Youth Education and Summer Employment Program: a program providing education, training, and summer employment opportunities to Roxbury's youth interested in parks and recreation, landscaping, conservation, landscape architecture, horticulture, environmental studies and other related fields to prepare for careers in the field while also helping to maintain local open spaces. Similar to the Emerald Neckalce Conservancy's Youth Leadership and Green Team Programs.

Creation of Park Employment Opportunities for local residents:
 Year-round job positions for park maintenance and organization of community events in Roxbury's green spaces

FUNDING

Community Preservation Act (CPA)
 The CPA allows communities to create a local Community Preservation Fund to raise money through a surcharge of up to 3% of the real estate tax levy on real property for open space protection, historic preservation and the provision of affordable housing.

The Grassroots Program
 The Grassroots program supports the development of community gardens and other open spaces. The program provides grant funds, City-owned land, and technical help to neighborhood groups and nonprofits.

The ARTery
 The ARTery funds would help to transform unused lots into community spaces.