



our **BrookLINE**



rethink  
your city

---



community  
**IDENTITY**  
visioning  
TARGETED  
DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGY STUDY  
DECEMBER 2013



powered by **evolveEA** for  
South Pittsburgh Development Corporation  
with support from  
Design Center  
Urban Redevelopment Authority  
Pittsburgh Department of City Planning





the firehouse

## 00.00 acknowledgements

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South Pittsburgh Development Corporation is an all volunteer community development organization in Brookline and was established in 1992. The organization is made up of 14 board members and has a membership of 75 residents. The organization is working to promote positive energy and projects in our neighborhood so that we can remain the third largest neighborhood in Pittsburgh and continue to support the 90+ businesses that make up our neighborhood.





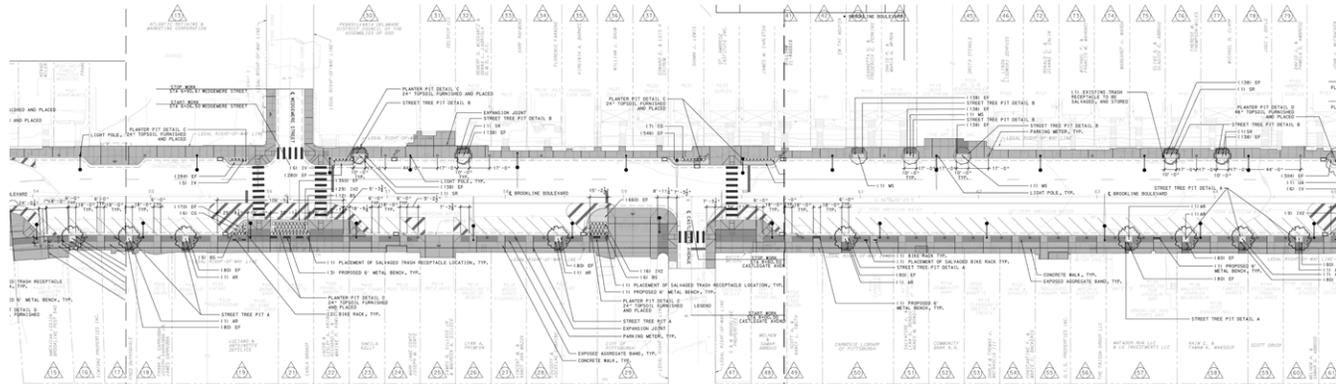
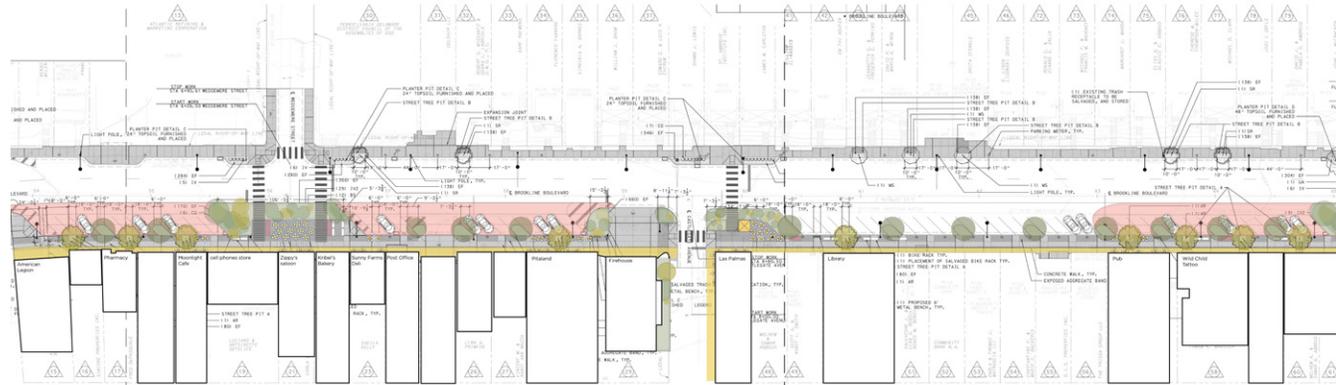
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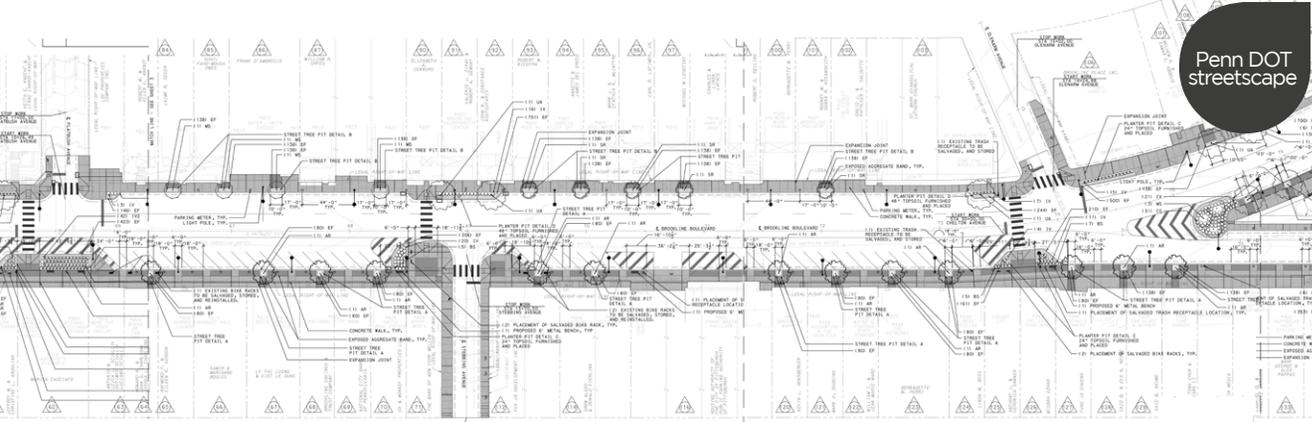
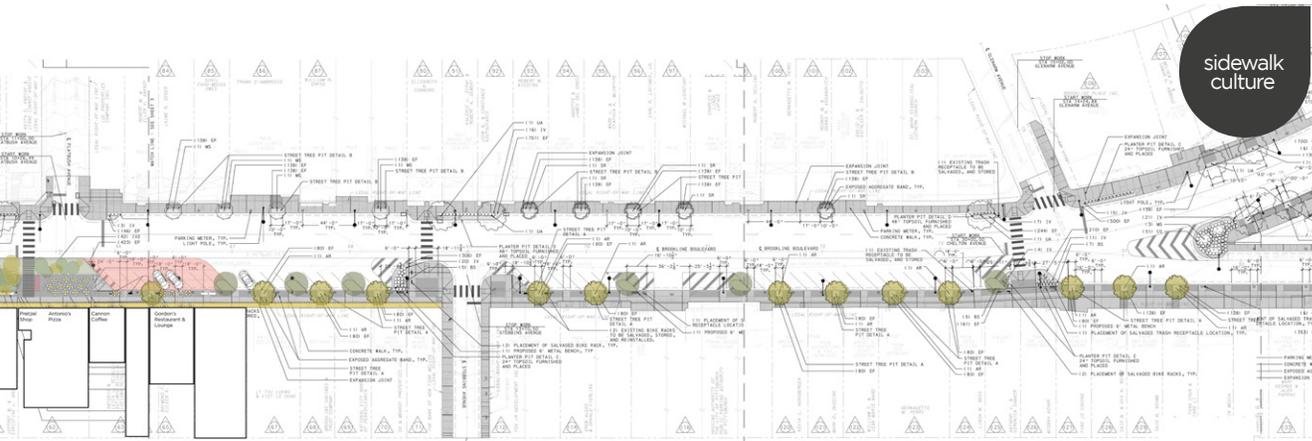
Brookline Boulevard has seen great change in the past 100 years and is on the threshold of changes that will determine its next century. What began as a dirt road connecting two communities later became a vibrant community place itself. As businesses rooted alongside the road, families shopped, travelers drove, and trolley riders visited the neighborhood, it became the center of community life. Today the trolleys are gone and the number of visitors have diminished, but the community has continued to support the mainline. The business district has the potential to reach beyond the surrounding community to become known across the city for its restaurants, merchants and services.

True to its boulevard title, Brookline is well traveled by residents and, to a lesser extent, by people using it as a through street. The generous width allows for “car-friendly” head-in parking in the business district and is part of the unique character of the district. The ongoing multi-million dollar road reconstruction project is making the area vehicle friendly and is also improving the pedestrian experience with safety and aesthetic improvements for sidewalks, crosswalks and other areas. When the Brookline Boulevard renewal project is complete, the streetscape will become the proverbial red carpet to welcome people to the community—yet there are still improvements to be made.

Although the community is fond of the Boulevard, it is little known across the city. In order for the business district and the community to thrive, it needs to attract visitors and ultimately new residents. This project created a vision and identity for the Brookline Boulevard corridor that is memorable to draw others to the community and resonates with business owners and residents. The plan needs to identify actionable opportunities for business owners and residents to contribute to the renewal to galvanize around the necessary actions.



## 01.00 executive summary



This document outlines the community vision. By listening to the community aspirations, analyzing the neighborhood's physical fabric, and by looking for patterns across market and demographic trends, the following identities emerged:

### International Marketplace

Brookline's business district will be a unique place to eat and shop for international cuisine and products, supported by the emerging immigrant demographics and the presence of established and new ethnic businesses

### Fun and Fit

Brookline will be known as a community known for its recreational athletics, community health, and entrepreneurial energy around sports, supported by its robust recreational centers

### Friendly and Accessible

Brookline will be known as a friendly and accessible "complete community", supported by amenities and assets that attract a diversity of residents.

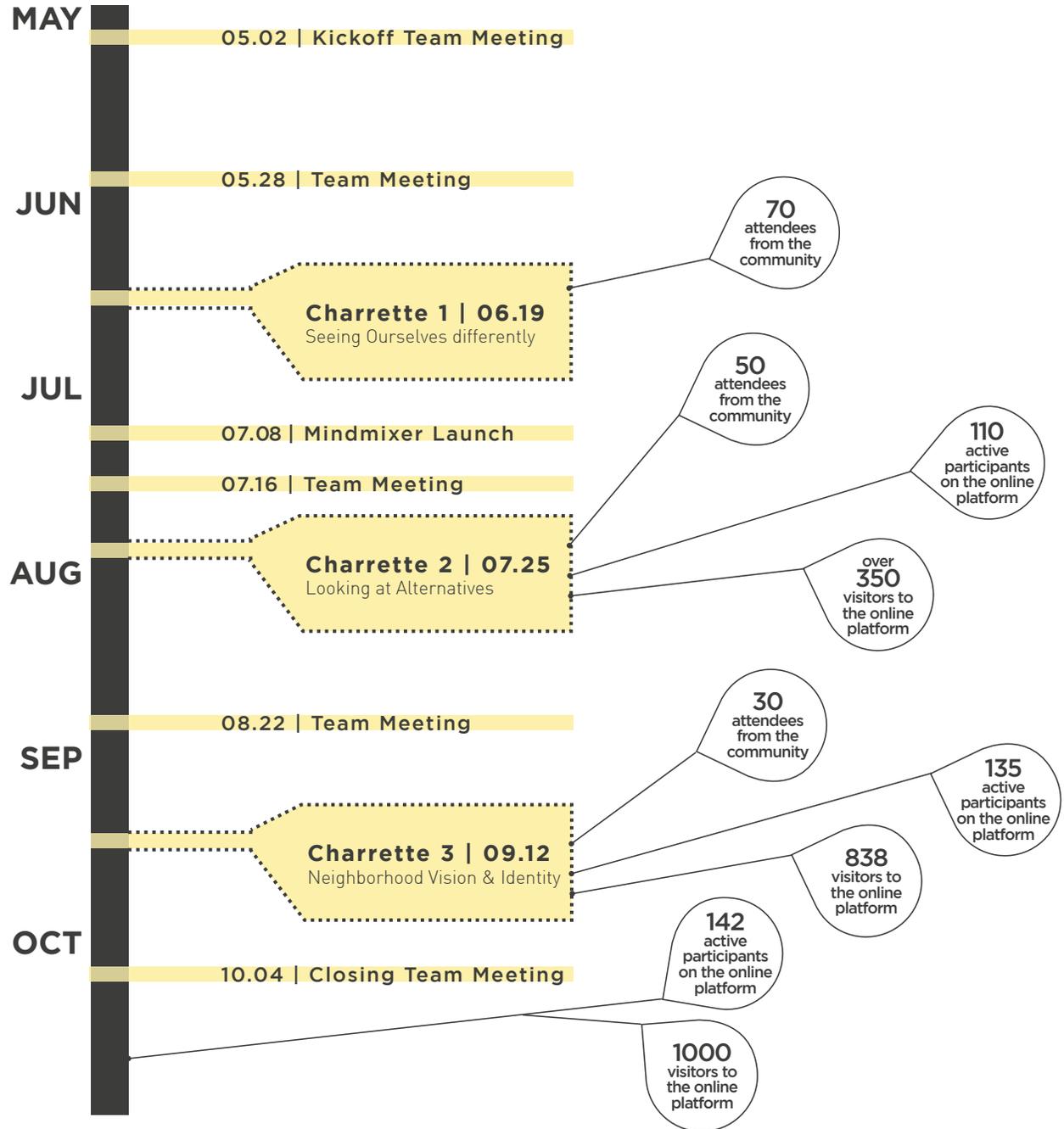
This report includes a phased action plan including short, middle and long term actions. The community group, which is currently powered by volunteers, can take immediate action while building capacity for larger and more complex projects in the future. Both in the design of Brookline's physical fabric and in the increase in the community capacity, this project hopes to position Brookline Boulevard as the center of an evolving and resilient community.

# visioning + engagement process 02.00

Envisioning a community's future is a powerful event that shapes both the physical environment and the people within it. The Brookline Vision and Identity Study is significant because it has identified priorities while forging the community spirit to see the vision to completion. The plan is a product of active community engagement (both at the public meetings and online through an active platform), data driven analysis, and formal and spatial investigations, from which has emerged a commitment to long term horizons and sustained actions.

Both members of the South Pittsburgh Development Corporation and volunteers from the community jointly shaped a core team along with advisers from the Design Center, URA and Department of City Planning. This core advisory team identified the major issues facing the community, provided background information about the built environment and history and assisted in encouraging participation from the community both to the major public meetings but also on the online Mindmixer platform.

The process was structured to identify the values, places and stories behind the community of Brookline that act as assets to the neighborhood and competitive advantages to the surrounding communities. Brookliners visualized the current identity of their community and envisioned how building on those assets, they can develop different future scenarios.



## 02.00 visioning + engagement process



community

### Public Meeting 01: Seeing ourselves 2013 Assets | 06.19

In the first public meeting, the community discussed its defining characteristics; how Brookline is perceived by the residents themselves and by other neighborhoods in the Pittsburgh area. They focused on the values, stories, activities and assets of Brookline that shapes its identity. More than 70 attendees from the neighborhood presented their ideas about Brookline and called out the main assets, liabilities and opportunities of both the neighborhood in general and the Boulevard. The attendees participated in three exercises visualized in this report.



services  
&  
businesses

### Public Meeting 02: Seeing ourselves 2020 Vision | 07.25

In the second public meeting, evolveEA reported back the trending identities of Brookline, with more in depth information about demographic trends as well as the input from the first public meeting and the online platform. Data about population changes, available services, and housing trends informed residents as they considered the values, places and activities that make Brookline unique. In response to that the 50 attendees were asked to work in teams on what the future identity of Brookline should be. They shared their aspirations and identified possible future challenges for their community. Finally they came up with specific projects that will contribute in shaping their vision for 2020.



events  
&  
activities

### Public Meeting 03: Vision + Alternative Identities | 09.12

In the final public meeting, evolveEA presented three alternative future identities that emerged from the community participation process through the open meetings and the online platform. The three identities built on the current values and assets of the community and proposed strategies on how to turn them into competitive advantages. The community gave comments and feedback on the three vision identities that were included in this final document.



friendly  
&  
accessible

Brookline is the second largest neighborhood of Pittsburgh and it is located “20 minutes to anywhere”.

Brookline is the second largest neighborhood of Pittsburgh after South Squirrel Hill with an area of 2.1 square miles. It is located in the South Hills area and it defines the southwest border of the City of Pittsburgh. Brookline borders Beechview, Overbrook, Carrick, Bon Air, Mt. Lebanon and Baldwin.

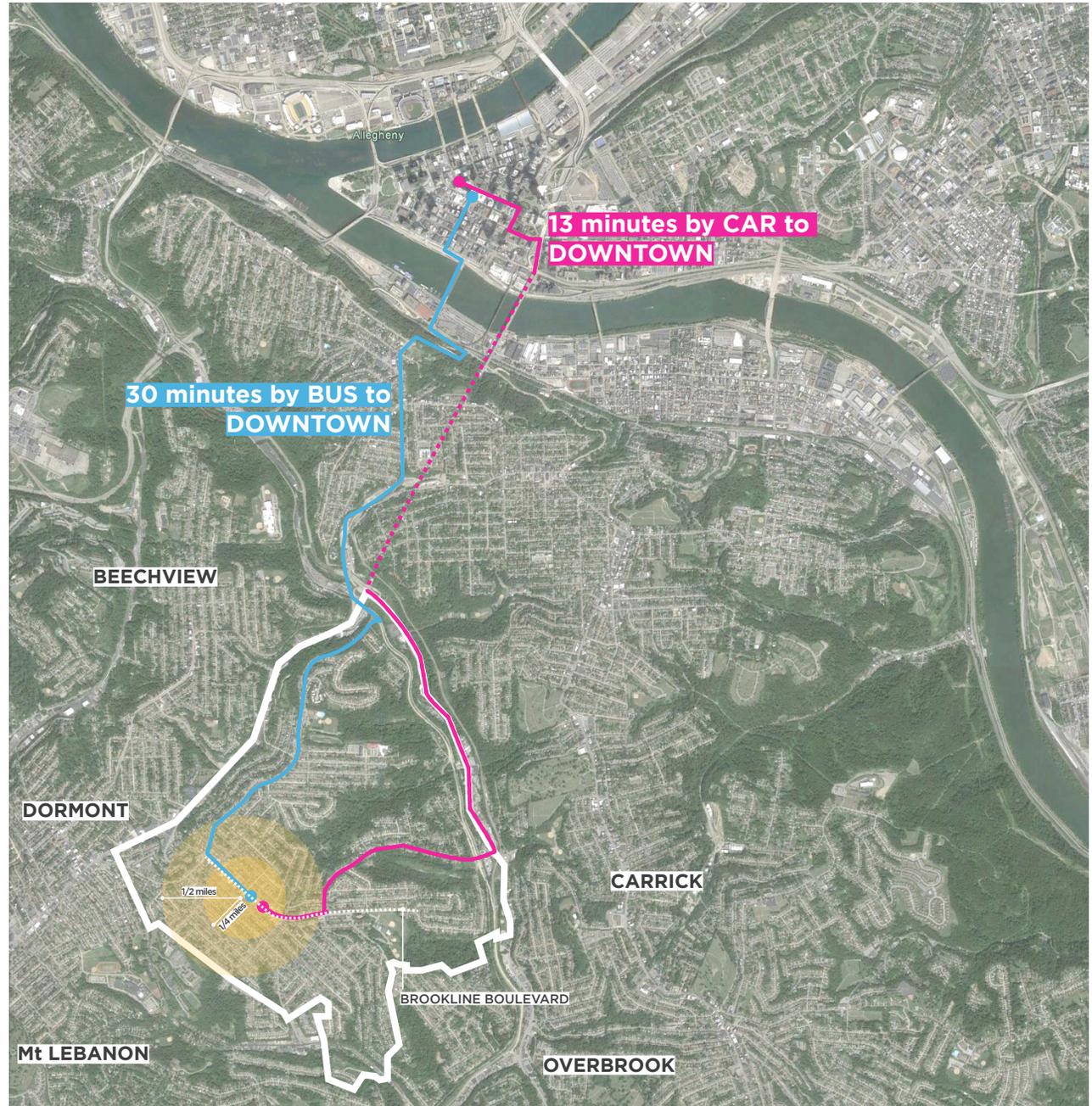
Although it has the fourth highest population in the city, ranking after the neighborhoods of Squirrel Hill, Oakland and Shadyside, it has a relatively large interior area without major regional attraction. This gives it an insular quality that is appealing to residents but can be a challenge for creating an external identity essential for attracting customers and businesses.

Its residents are proud to be “20 minutes to anywhere” and indeed you can reach downtown by car within 13 minutes. This is also a double edged sword, as this accessibility requires a car and the community is relatively underserved by public transit. There is only one bus line (39) that connects the Brookline neighborhood with downtown Pittsburgh.

In addition, the convenient car access to regional retail and attractions can make it difficult for local businesses to compete. Almost all Brookline residents own at least one car and challenging topography can make walking inconvenient for some lesser abled community members.

Along the borders of the neighborhood there are two light rail lines passing, connecting Brookline to downtown and southern suburbs. On the West limit of Brookline runs the Red Light Rail Line and on the East the Blue Light Rail Line. Although the light rail could be a great opportunity for the community, it is remote to Brookline Boulevard and does not connect to other population centers.

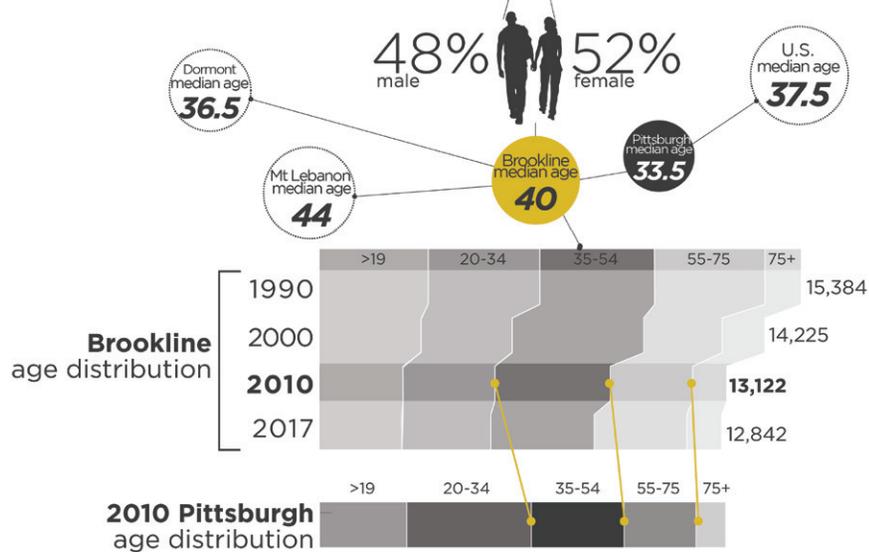
*Future indicators might include number of bus lines, percentage of car ownership, increase in public and alternative transit infrastructure.*



Brookline is facing upcoming changes like declining & aging population and changes in community diversity.

03.00 developing an understanding

Brookline has **13,122** PEOPLE in 2010

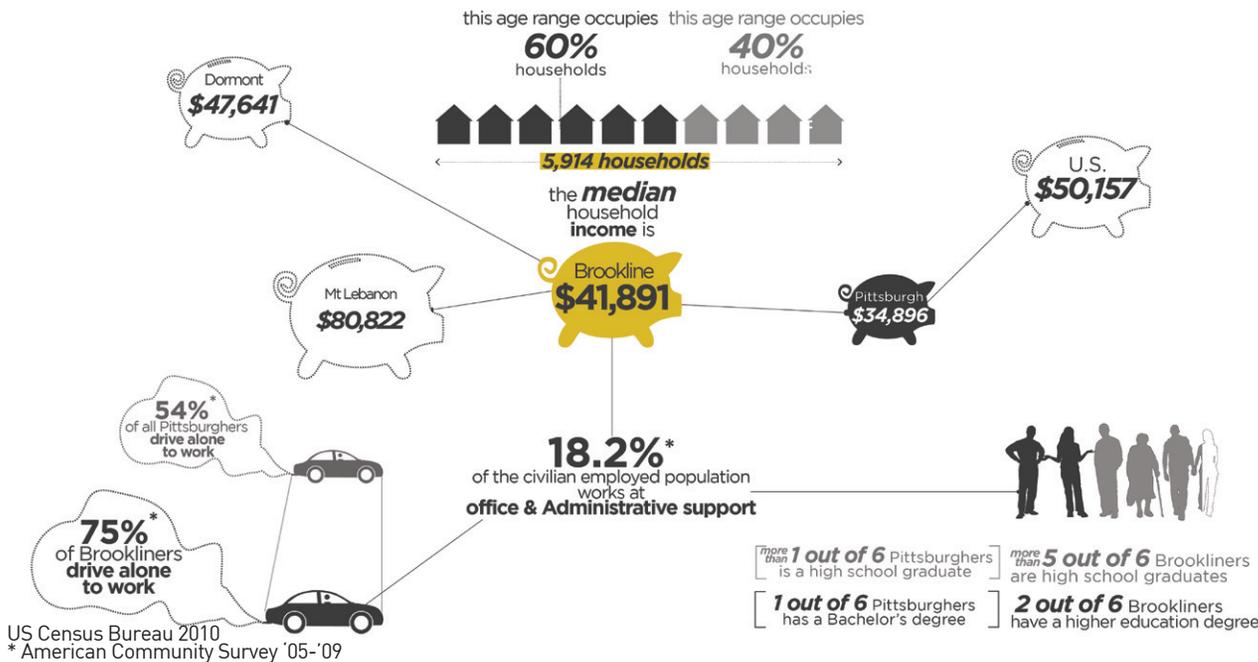


Currently, Brookline has the fourth largest population among Pittsburgh neighborhoods. However, the three neighborhoods preceding it; Squirrel Hill, Oakland and Shadyside, are denser neighborhoods with great influx of young professionals and students. Brookline is facing upcoming changes like a declining and aging population and changes in community diversity.

The change has been less dramatic than in other communities, Brookline's total population and age spread has remained relatively constant, especially in comparison to communities in parts of the East End and in parts of the West End. The relative stability of the aging-in-place population also means that Brookline is below the city average in the number of 20-34 year olds who live in the community. This age group is most expansive in neighborhoods with an influx of newcomers. Despite the relative lack of newcomers, those that have come are taking on active role in leadership in community initiatives.

Brookline's workforce is broadly educated with five out of six Brookliner's graduating from high school and 2 out of 6 graduating from higher education. According to the Census, the largest segment of the workforce is employed in the office and administrative support sector. The relatively high income level, the lack of these jobs within the community boundary, and the prominence of home ownership presents both need and opportunity for Brookliner's to own a car. Seventy-five percent of Brookliners report driving alone to work, much higher than the city average of 54% of Pittsburghers who drive alone to work.

*Future demographic indicators might include resident age distribution, median household income, transit practices, and activity and health indicators.*



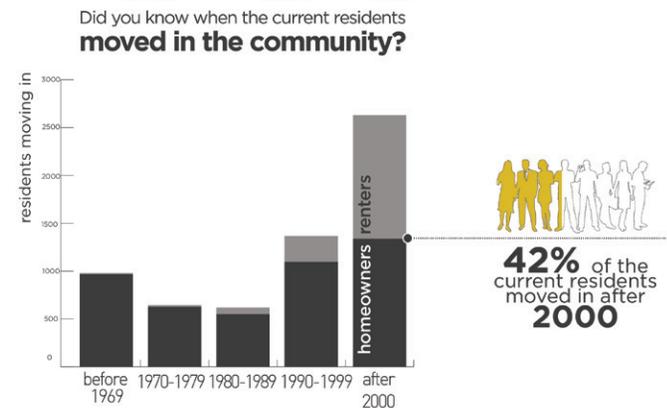
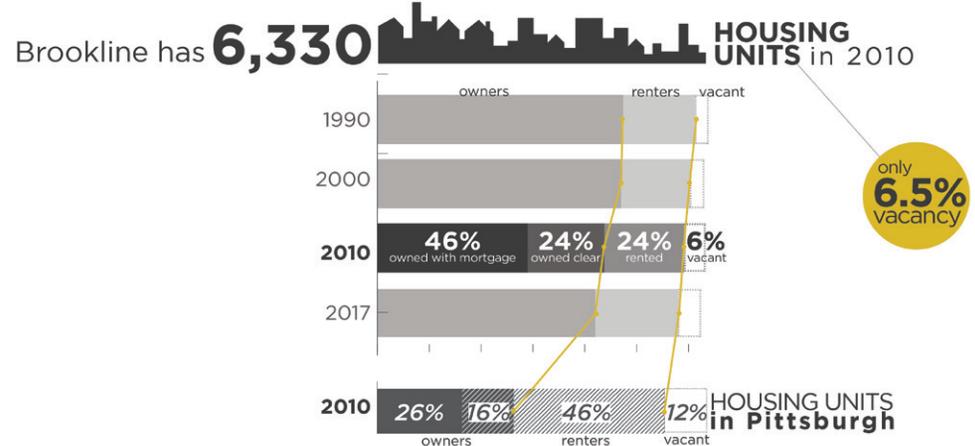
Brookline has affordable housing but lacks in diversity of options  
The population of renters has increased over the last decade but is still low.

Brookline has just over 6,000 housing units, with the majority of residents owning their homes (72%). This is well above the city average of private ownership [42%]. In 2010, Brookline had fewer renter occupied units than in any Pittsburgh neighborhood.

Many Brookline homeowners have lived in the community for a significant time, with 60% of the community having moved to the community prior to 2000. Interestingly, the move-in rate remained relatively constant each decade until the most recent period of 2000-2010, when the move-in rate spiked, representing the remaining 42% of the residents. Half of the newcomers entered Brookline as renters and half as owners of their house or apartment. Given the relative lack of housing unit diversity and low numbers of apartment buildings, this statistic might affirm community perceptions that there are an increasing number of houses being rented out as investment properties.

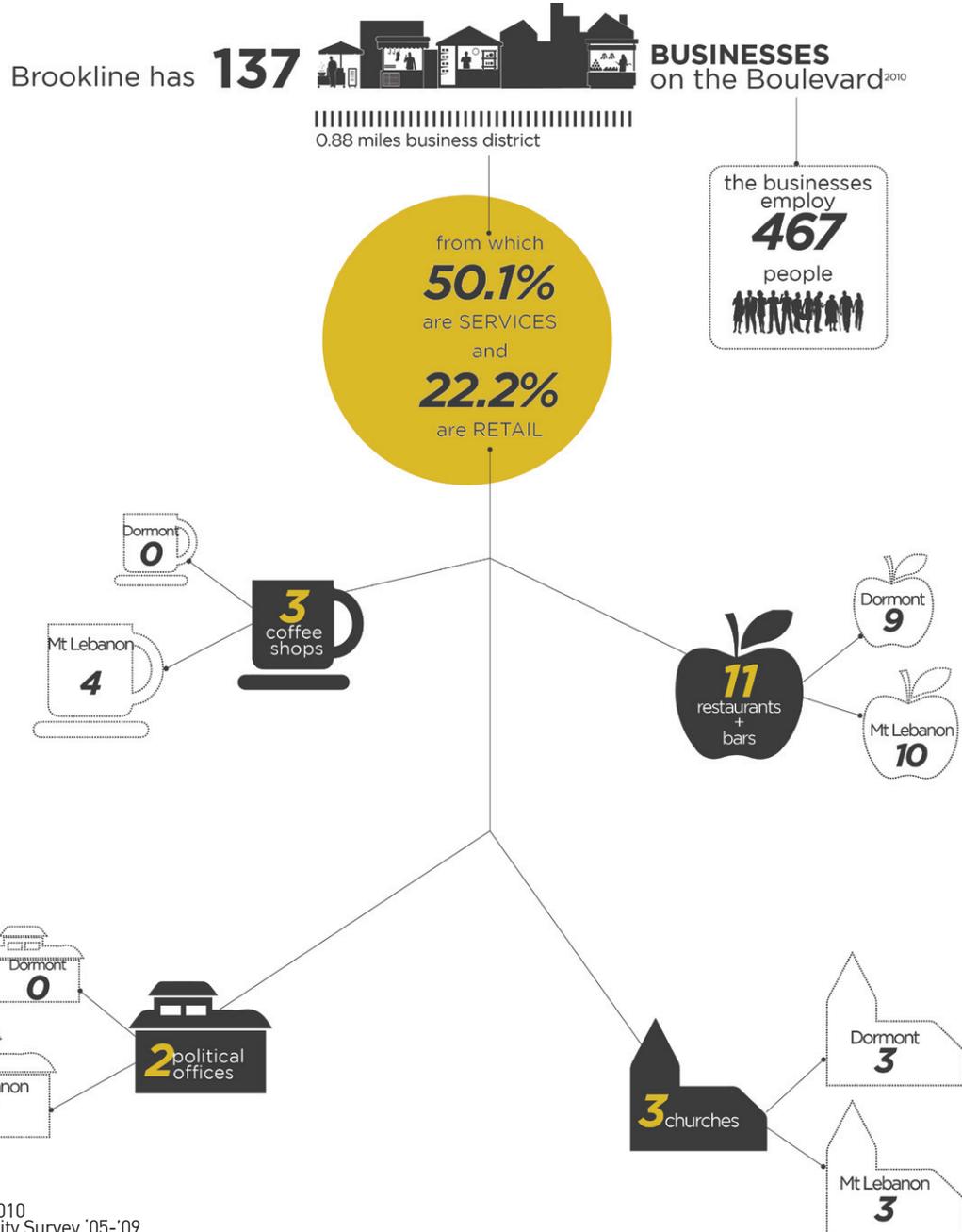
The median home value in Brookline is close to the median for Pittsburgh. The value is 20% less than Dormont, the most comparable benchmark community. Not surprisingly, it is well below the median value for Mt. Lebanon. Most of Brookline's housing was built between 1920 and 1960 and is predominantly single family detached housing (96%) between 1,000 and 1,400 square feet. Most homes occupy lots that are smaller than 1/8 of an acre.

*Future real estate indicators might include number of transactions, average sale price, average homeowner investment in property. Future demographic indicators might include average age of new residents, number of move-ins, property choices for newcomers and areas with high numbers of transactions.*



Brookline has a strong long continuous business district with a diversity of business types.

03.00 developing an understanding



The Brookline Boulevard business district is almost a mile in length. In comparison to benchmark communities, this is approximately the same length as Dormont's Route 19 and Potomac corridors and shorter than Mount Lebanon's Route 19 business district. Unlike these communities, the business district is not on a main thoroughfare and so lacks visibility and public transit accessibility. On the positive side, parking is ample and the negative effects of traffic flow are less intense than in either benchmark communities.

The largest business sector in the business district is services (50%) which is likely related to the destination quality of the boulevard. The next largest sector, retail (22%), consists of local serving businesses with some significant regional exceptions such as Pitaland.

In comparing keystone business types against the benchmark communities, Brookline Boulevard has more coffeeshops, restaurants and bars and political offices than its closest community, Dormont. Its numbers also seem comparable to Mount Lebanon, however, Mount Lebanon's businesses are regional and serve a higher volume. A better comparison would be to compare revenue per square foot; however this data was not available.

*Future benchmarking indicators might include number and types of businesses, average age of establishment, and revenue per square foot.*

US Census Bureau 2010  
\* American Community Survey '05-'09

Popular places of Brookline lay in the heart and on the periphery of the neighborhood.

During the first community meeting, the residents of Brookline were asked to identify places of importance both along the boulevard and across the entire neighborhood. This map presents the results of that inventory.

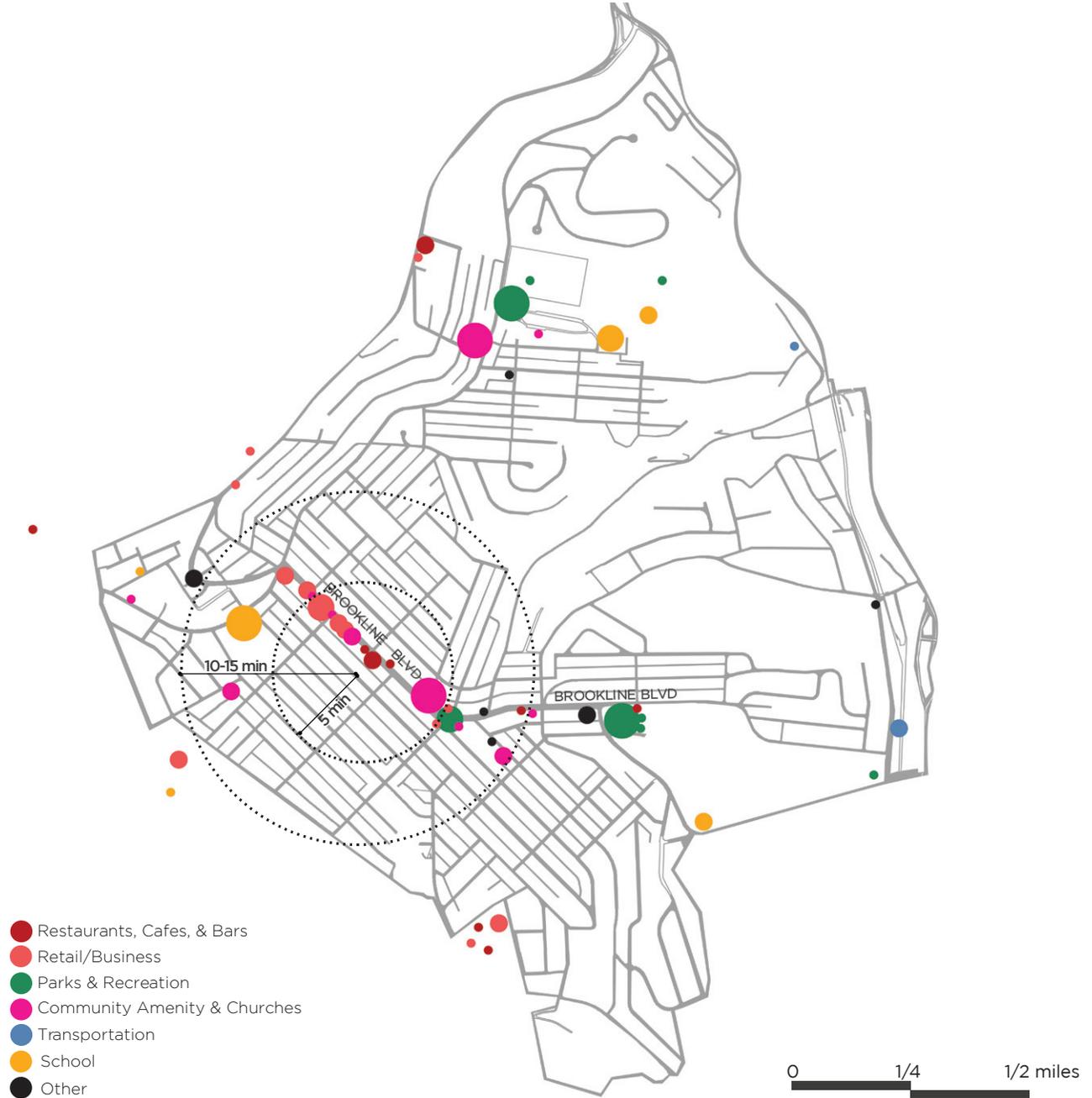
Community members chose businesses, parks, schools, churches and transportation for their contributions to the community identity. Those places were inevitably clustered along the boulevard, but also found on the periphery.

The remainder of the neighborhood consists mainly of residential areas and this has fewer highlighted places and landmarks.

It should be mentioned that the community identified several points of attraction beyond the limits of the neighborhood, as they add significantly to the residents' everyday needs.

The Boulevard provides a plethora of services and businesses, from restaurants, bars and coffee places that attract local residents to the Carnegie Library and unique local shops. Some of the food related businesses have recently gained regional recognition and attract residents from across the Pittsburgh area.

Finally, the Boulevard ends at the Recreation Center, which was identified as a great asset to the community. The Recreation Center acts as an anchor both for Brookliners and for residents of the surrounding neighborhoods.



The Boulevard is home to a diversity of retail, services and institutions; from restaurants, bars, coffee places to the Carnegie Library & the Recreation Center.

## 03.00 developing an understanding



### ☕ coffee places

1. Moonlite Café
2. No Name Coffee Shop
3. Cannon Coffee
4. Isis Café

### 🍰 bakery/pastry shops

1. Kribel's Bakery
2. Party Cake Shop
3. Vinnie's Pretzel Shop

### 🍴 restaurants

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tisha's Sunny Farms</li> <li>2. Vinny's Great Pizza</li> <li>3. Pita Land, Inc</li> <li>4. Las Palmas Tacos</li> <li>5. Mateo's Pasta &amp; Panino</li> <li>6. Scoops on the Boulevard</li> <li>7. Antonio's Pizza</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Gordon's Restaurant &amp; Lounge</li> <li>9. Fox's Pizza</li> <li>10. Brookline Deli</li> <li>11. Hank's Hot Dogs</li> <li>10. Tong Garden</li> <li>11. It's Greek To Me</li> </ol> |
|---|---|

### 🛒 retail stores + services

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sunoco</li> <li>2. Geekadrome</li> <li>3. Mazza Shoe Store</li> <li>4. Boulevard Tobacco Outlet</li> <li>5. Cricket</li> <li>6. Rugs 4 U</li> <li>7. The Violet Bouquet</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Privi Vault Collections</li> <li>9. Armond's Frame Shop</li> <li>10. Co Go's</li> <li>11. Seven Eleven</li> <li>12. Hideaway Mini Mart</li> <li>13. Community Bank</li> <li>14. PNC Bank</li> </ol> |
|--|---|

### 🍷 bars/liquor stores

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Zippy's Salloon</li> <li>2. State Liquor Store</li> <li>3. Brookline Pub</li> <li>4. Brookline Beer Mart</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Boulevard Lounge</li> <li>6. JR's Sports Bar &amp; Grill</li> <li>7. Marshall's Lounge</li> <li>8. Enoteca Diana</li> </ol> |
|---|---|

### 💇 beauty salon

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Salon Canova</li> <li>2. Lovely Hands Massage</li> <li>3. Jo's Salon</li> <li>4. Meyers Barber Shop</li> <li>5. Sal's Barber Shop</li> <li>6. Cuts &amp; Styles</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Salon Cristianna</li> <li>8. Sun of Intanity</li> <li>9. Anna Nails Design</li> <li>10. Hair By Conroy</li> <li>11. Garcia's Cut Offs</li> <li>12. Polo Barber Shop</li> </ol> |
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### 🏥 medical services

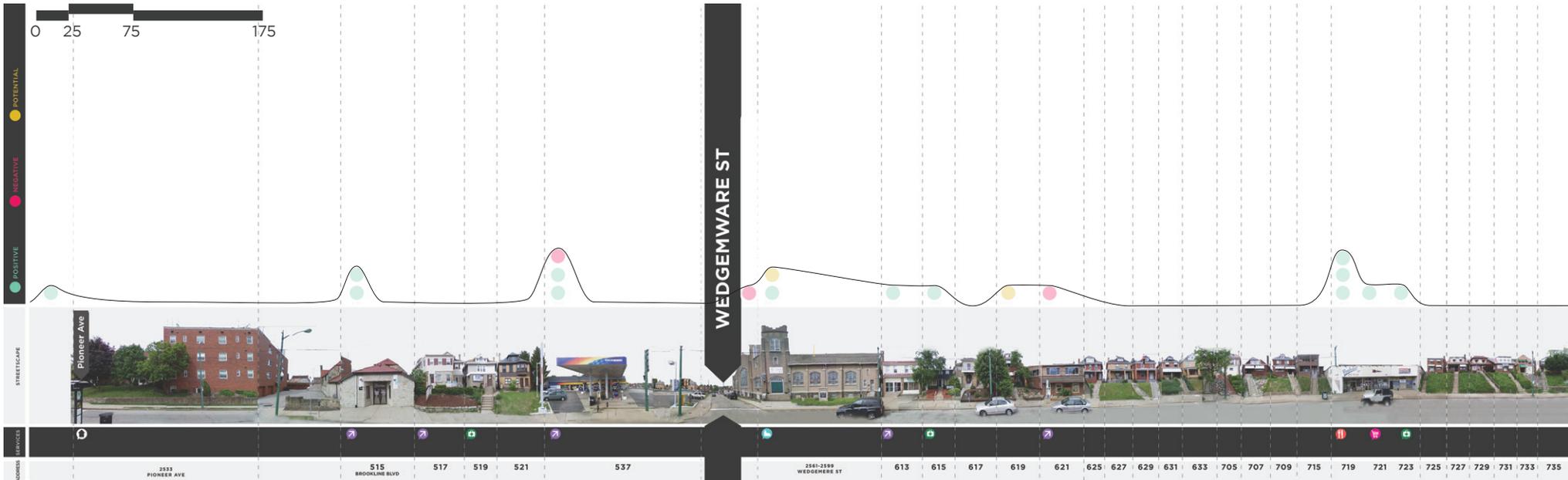
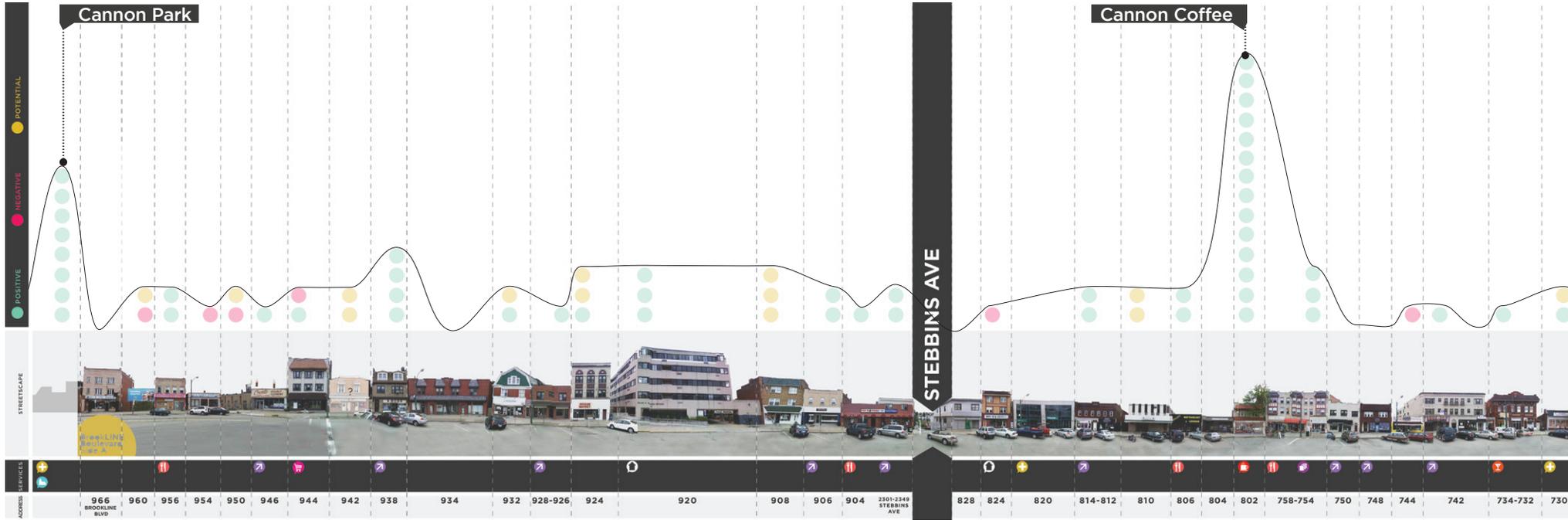
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CVS Pharmacy</li> <li>2. Medi-Help</li> <li>3. The Medicine Shoppe</li> <li>4. Robert Miggantz, DMD</li> <li>5. Dr. Guy Reschenthaler</li> <li>6. William Luffy Dental Lab</li> <li>7. Brookline Chiropractic Cntr</li> <li>8. Ankle &amp; Foot Centers of Pgh</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. A Boss Opticians, Inc</li> <li>10. Preferred Primary Care</li> <li>11. Michael Clements MD</li> <li>12. Mercy Behavioral Health</li> <li>13. Dr. Lawrence Purpura, MD</li> <li>14. Kyros Family Dentistry</li> </ol> |
|---|--|

### 🏛️ cultural + institutional amenities

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. U.S. Post Office</li> <li>7. Firehouse</li> <li>3. Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh</li> <li>4. St. Mark Evangelical Lutheran Ch</li> <li>5. South Hills Art Center</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Brookline UP Church</li> <li>7. Brookline Elementary School</li> <li>8. Angel's Place</li> <li>9. Brookline Recreation Center</li> <li>10. American Legion Post</li> </ol> |
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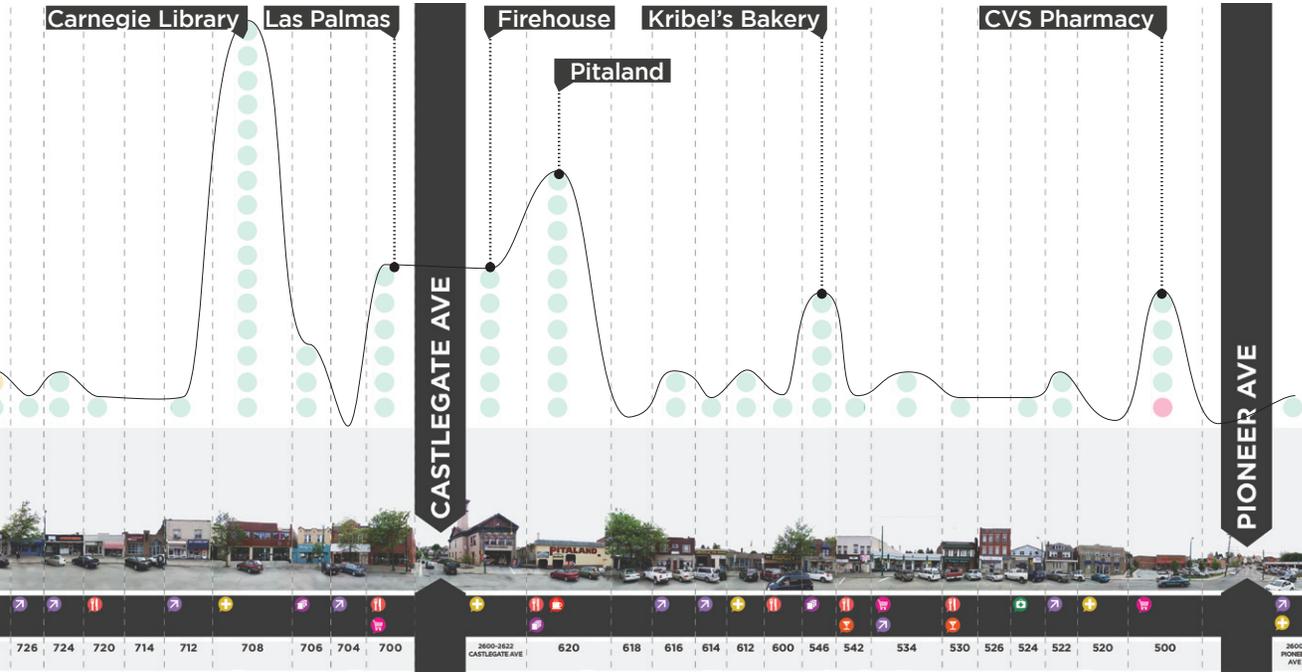
[as of Summer 2013]

There are relatively low rates of vacancy but underutilized places present opportunities for new uses.



Among the most popular places along the Boulevard are coffee places, restaurants, churches and the Carnegie Library.

## 03.00 developing an understanding

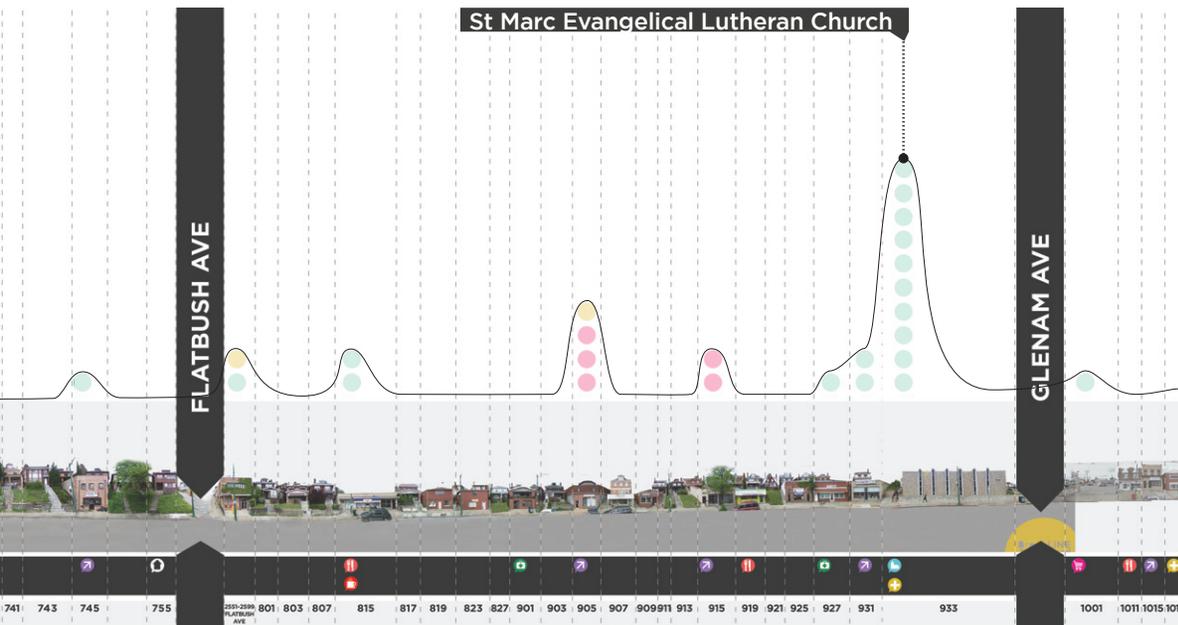


A community is known for its places and landmarks as well as for its significant functions and activities. Brookline has many landmarks and popular places that attract both the residents and people from surrounding neighborhoods.

The community identified the following landmarks:

- A. Carnegie Library
2. Firehouse
3. Recreation Center
4. Cannon Coffee
5. Cannon Park
6. Las Palmas grocery store and tacos
7. Pitaland
8. Kribel's Bakery
9. St. Marc Evangelical Lutheran Church
10. CVS Pharmacy

The landmarks and popular places of Brookline highlight the underlying significant functions taking place in the community. Places of importance in the neighborhood are places where residents can get together, eat, drink, organize events, and places with religious significance. Residents do appreciate and support the amenities within their community. Moreover, several places within the neighborhood are becoming known outside of Brookline, including ethnic retail and food.



- places with positive impact on the residents
- places with negative impact on the residents
- places where residents see potential

Brookline's future identity emerged from the residents' values, favorites places and popular activities along the Boulevard.

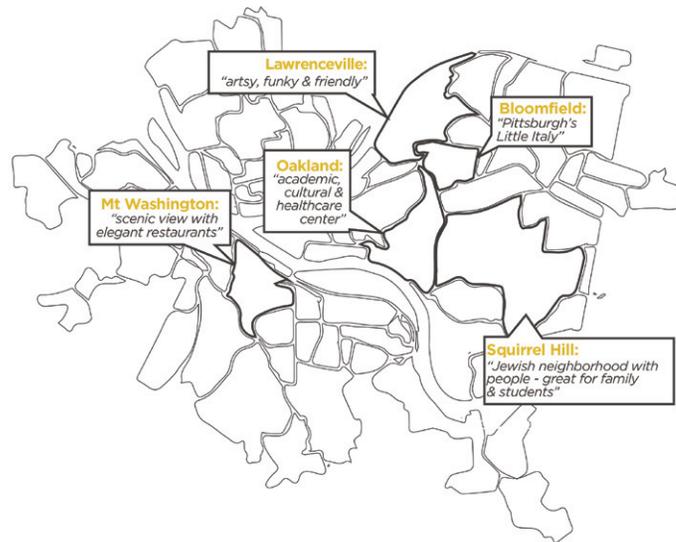
A community's identity is defined by its unique places and landmarks, the activities and events happening at the neighborhood's public places and the values that residents appreciate the most. Normally communities hold multifaceted identities as a result of their history and ongoing transformation.

Even though a community identity consists of a combination of things, most often it is distilled down to one or two characteristics when viewed by non residents. For example, in Pittsburgh, Oakland is often known as an "academic, cultural & healthcare center", Mount Washington as a "scenic view with elegant restaurants", Lawrenceville as "artsy, funky & friendly" and Bloomfield as "Pittsburgh's Little Italy". Despite the fact that these communities have a richer identity, they are often defined by the characteristics that are unique compared to other communities; it becomes their competitive advantages.

Thinking within this realm, the community considered Brookline's identity and its competitive advantages that make it distinct from other Pittsburgh neighborhoods, especially the rest of the South Hills communities.



[activity defines communities] [values defines communities] [place defines communities]



## 04.00 emerging identities

Identity is important to guide internal culture and align goals and actions. It is also important for external perception; it is especially important to business districts, where good publicity yields economic opportunity. Identity is critical to Brookline beyond the Boulevard, as the neighborhood strives to attract and maintain residents. A unique and appealing identity has to be developed from Brookline's competitive advantages. From the public participation process, 3 distinct strengths were distilled into three identities.

### International Marketplace

Brookline will be attractive for its diversity of international retail and services in its full service business district.

International Marketplace emerged from the increasing number of immigrant owned or ethnic businesses that are appealing to both existing demographic shifts and existing residents alike. Brookline Boulevard is the place where this identity is most visible.

### Fun and Fit

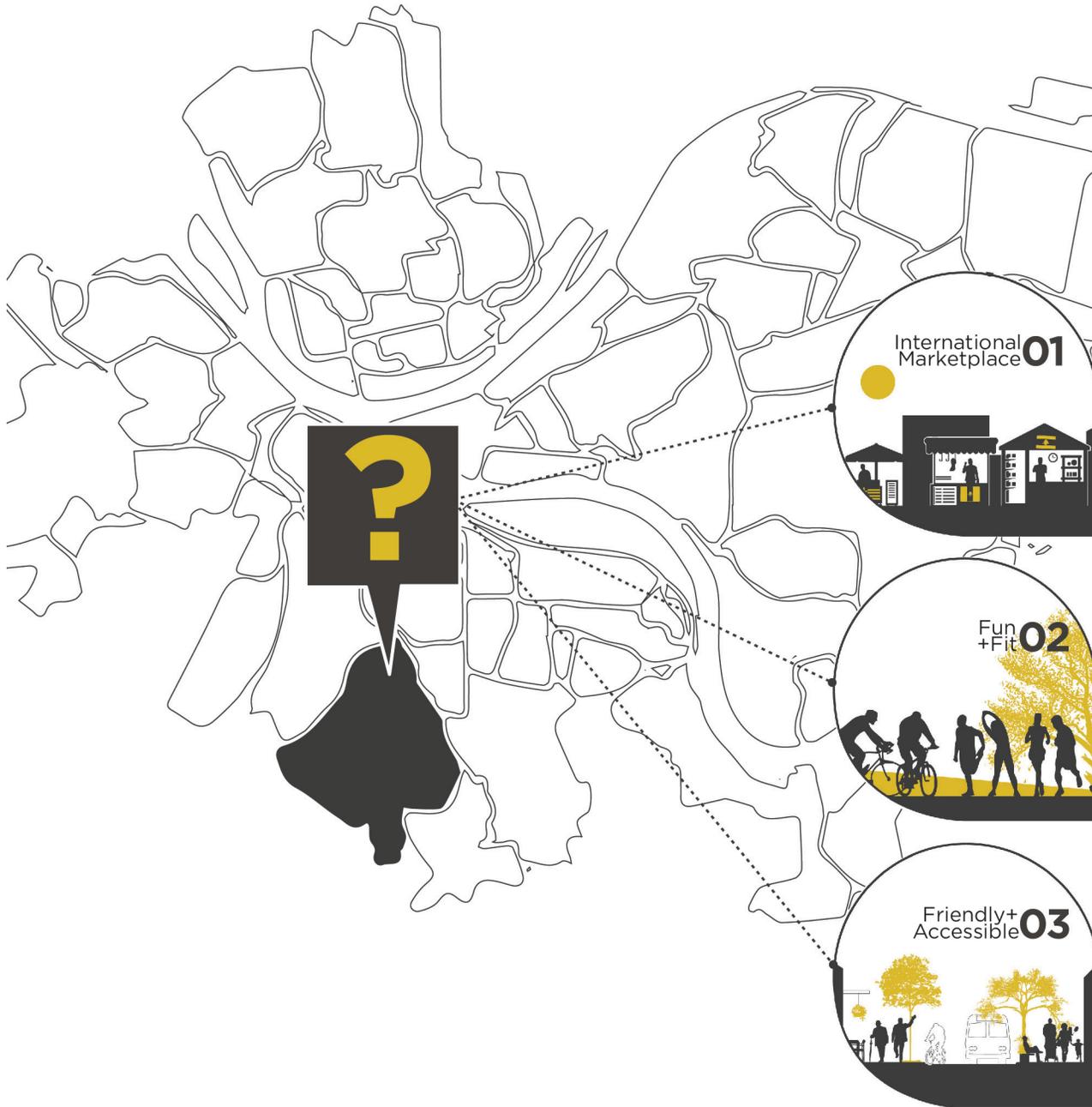
Brookline will be attractive for its athletic and active facilities, activities and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Fun and Fit describes the "competitive advantage" of the well loved parks and recreation center and Brookline's reputation for athletic prowess. The parks and recreation center is where this identity is stronger; this plan proposes ways to augment this and to bring a Fun and Fit presence to Brookline Boulevard's business district.

### Friendly and Accessible

Brookline will be attractive as a welcoming and complete community.

Friendly and Accessible proactively addresses the future changes in demographics to position Brookline as a welcoming and accessible community. This identity is seen throughout the neighborhood, including the residential and commercial fabric.





**PRINCIPLES:**

**1 Create a tipping point for an international destination.**

The biggest area of growth in new businesses on the Boulevard has come from international retail and food service. Some of these businesses have a city-wide or regional reputation and are very popular within the community. The boulevard is approaching a critical mass of international businesses where the cluster could make the Boulevard attractive as a destination. This emerging trend is not intentional at this point and could be strengthened with strategic actions that continue the organic growth of the market.

**Work with existing and incoming merchants to identify and attract related business.** Evaluate what type of businesses would be supportive or desirable. Solicit for business interests within the community.

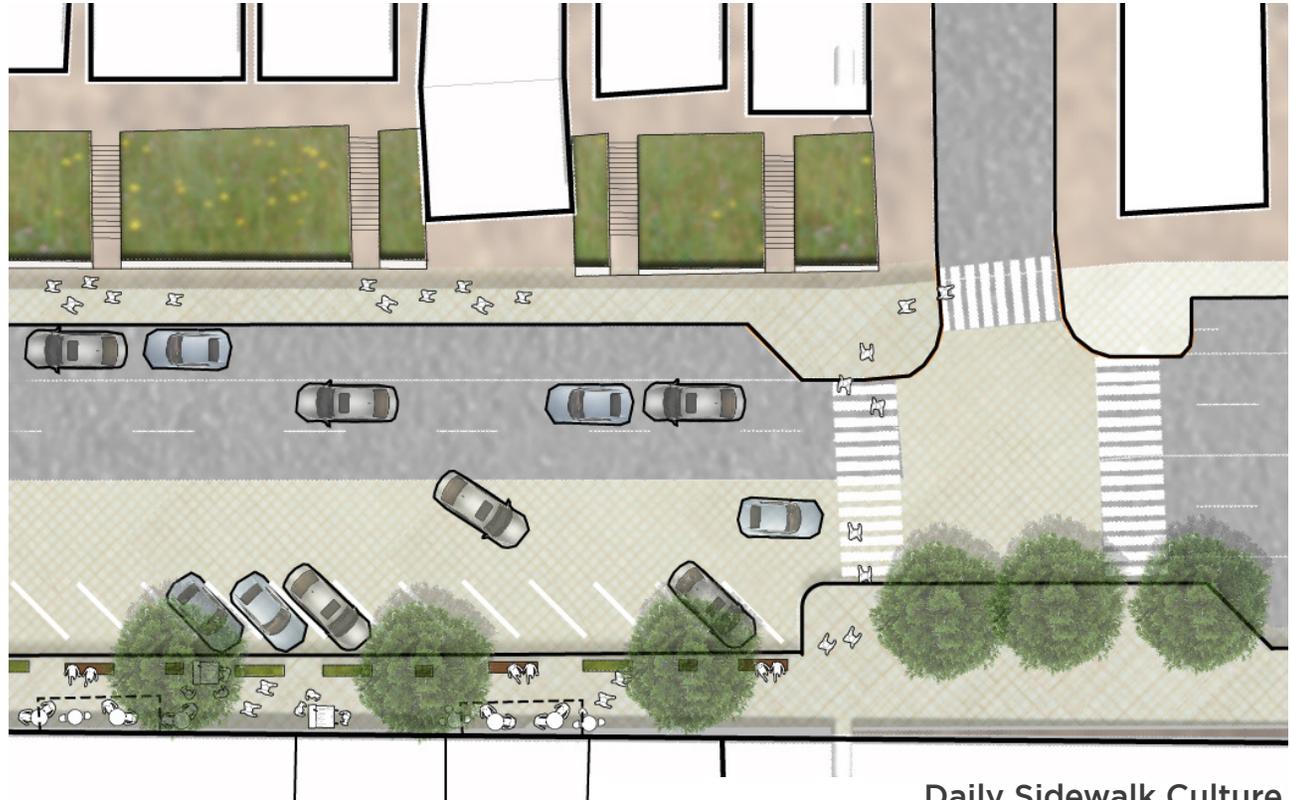
**2 Provide support to start up and small businesses**

Take advantage of existing resources (URA) and cultivate new connections to business support networks. Specific initiatives might include:

**Immigrant/small business friendly financial anchor.** Work with a local bank branch to understand resources available for small businesses. Promote bank programs that help overcome barriers particular to immigrant communities.

**Immigrant/entrepreneur ambassador program.** Designate a person to reach out to the immigrant population to help them understand entrepreneurial and business mechanisms.

**Create an incubator.** Lower startup risk for retail & small businesses with shared spaces & services such as “hotelling” office space or a cooperative retail store.



Daily Sidewalk Culture

**INTERNATIONAL MARKETPLACE**

*Brookline will be attractive for its diversity of international retail and services in its full service business district.*



## 04.01 emerging identities



### Your IDEAS bringing life to the Boulevard

Assistance for Small Businesses	International Spice Gardens	Web & Social Media Presence
Business Incubator	International Farmer's Market	Streetscape Improvements & Guidelines
Tax Abatement for New Businesses	Small Inclusive Market	Trees
Pop-Up Shops	Notable/Diverse Restaurants	Light on the Firehouse
Facade Improvement Program	Food Festival	Outdoor Seating
Targeted Business Recruitment	Burgh Bits & Bites Food Tour	Stormwater Management/Green Infrastructure
Scavenger Hunt	Wayfinding System	Civic Space/Mini Plaza with Seating
Quick-Serve Healthy Restaurants	Entrance Markers	Streetlamps
Smoke-Free Bar	Improved Transportation Access	Street Furniture
Public Art	Bike Infrastructure	
	Free Parking for the First Few Min	

**Recognize the business district as a job creation/training center.** Small businesses are an excellent place to learn a skill or trade or to gain business skills. Create educational opportunities, such as seminars on preparing taxes or on software to build community capacity.

### 3 Integrate existing businesses into all efforts to strengthen full service quality of district.

The small businesses, whether part of the international identity of the Boulevard or part of the full service business district, have many of the same needs. Programs should benefit and integrate both types of businesses. Encourage existing businesses to become a part of the international marketplace identity.

### 4 The international marketplace is powered by families.

Recognize that all aspects of Brookline's identity can contribute to the success of the International Marketplace by attracting and integrating the immigrant community that can power new businesses.

### 5 Expect challenges as the community changes.

Many communities that welcome immigrants or international populations have concerns about possible changes. Communities have been successful with the following strategies:

**Provide information** about benefits of immigrant entrepreneurs

**Create a forum for ongoing open dialogue** to deal with emerging issues

**Recognize that Brookline has a long history of immigrant entrepreneurs** and highlight the past achievements



**PRINCIPLES:**

**1 Cultivate Brookline’s “competitive advantage.”**

Brookline has two well-run athletic facilities and dedicated individuals who administer highly respected athletic programs. Team performance and the facilities are a source of neighborhood pride; because they are connected to competitive networks, they are a way that nonresidents can become familiar with the neighborhood. This competitive advantage should be cultivated in two ways:

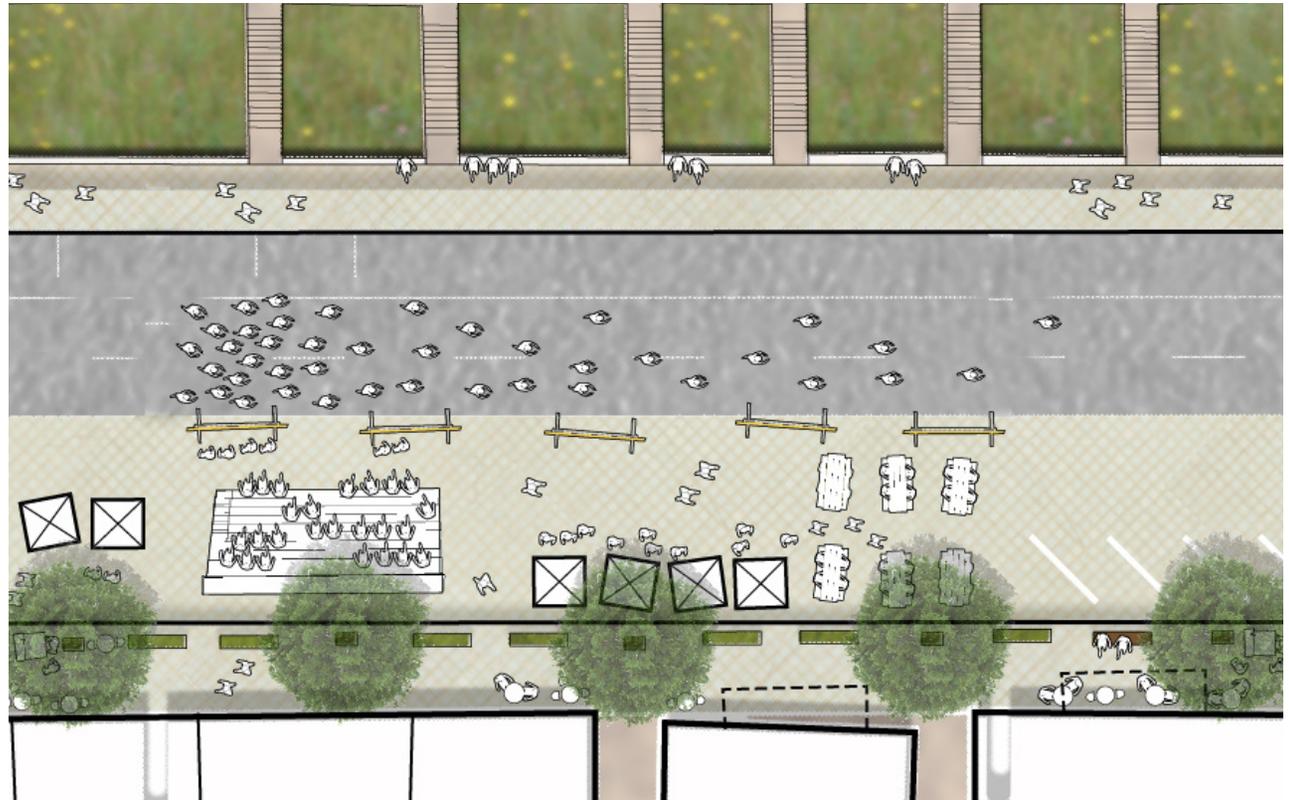
**Improve existing facilities or create new destination facilities.** This could occur through partnership or corporate sponsorship. Search for a corporate sponsor, such as the existing Penguins relationship or one with Dick’s Sporting Goods or REI, and create a high performance facility that would be used for major competitions or could be income producing. Cultivate a relationship with for profit operators of unique facilities such as ropes courses, climbing walls, etc.

**Market and continue to support strong sporting performance.** Consider that strong performance could be an attractive element to families or individuals looking to locate in a community with good facilities and programs. Reinforce athletic program partnerships with schools, another key element for potential new residents.

**2 Encourage a healthy culture.**

Brookline should also be known as a community where the active and fit culture includes the aging population and those who don’t consider themselves athletic. The Rec Center has an impressive list of offerings for the general public. This needs to be marketed both within the community and external to the community to create a new kind of “competitive advantage” as Brookline seeks to strengthen its identity. Assets that exist or could be augmented include:

**Brookline is a walkable community** with excellent facilities.



**Breeze Festival Sidewalk Culture**

**FUN & FIT** *Brookline will be attractive for its athletic and active facilities, activities and entrepreneurial opportunities.*





**Your IDEAS bringing life to the Boulevard**

- |                                       |                                |  |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Corporate Sponsored Sports Facilities | Path Network & Fitness Trails  | Tax Abatement for New Businesses       |
| New Sports Facilities                 | Races and Events               | Pop-Up Shops                           |
| Yoga Studio                           | Dodgeball Day                  | Targeted Business Recruitment          |
| Quick-Serve Healthy Restaurants       | Outdoor Yoga                   | Urgent Care Facility                   |
| Sports Medicine Facility              | Bike Infrastructure            | Assistance for Small Businesses        |
|                                       | Night Walk/Block Watch Workout | Business Incubator                     |
|                                       | Running Track                  | Free Parking for the First Few Minutes |
|                                       | Wayfinding System              | Web & Social Media Presence            |

**Brookline has entry level or noncompetitive programs**

**Brookline has a fit culture beyond the rec center** with year round activities run through nontraditional providers (e.g. a church sponsored walking group)

**Brookline residents have access to healthy nutrition options**

**Brookline residents have access to affordable health care** focused on preventative maintenance

**3 Envision athletics as and entrepreneurial opportunity.**

Athletics goods and services offer many opportunities for developing new businesses.

**Bring new Fun and Fit businesses to the Boulevard.**

Some examples from other communities include establishment of a regional skateboard specialty shop (Plank Eye Board Shop, Belview), neighborhood yoga studios (Schoolhouse Yoga, multiple neighborhoods), and coffeeshop bike team sponsorship that brings repeat business from group rides (Tazzo D'Oro).

**Continue to bring festivals and events to increase the business district profile.**

The Brookline Breeze and Breezefest and race could be augmented to have higher regional profile. Other type of activities occurring at the athletic centers (boxing tournament or softball leagues) or new offbeat activities (e.g. a Dodgeball fest on the Boulevard, dirty dozen steep hill bike race) could bring further attention to the community as fun and fit place.



**PRINCIPLES:**

**1 Capitalize on Brookline's assets by considering it a "complete community."**

A complete community describes a place that is great to live, work, shop and play, all qualities that residents have identified as assets in Brookline. This could be used to competitive advantage by:

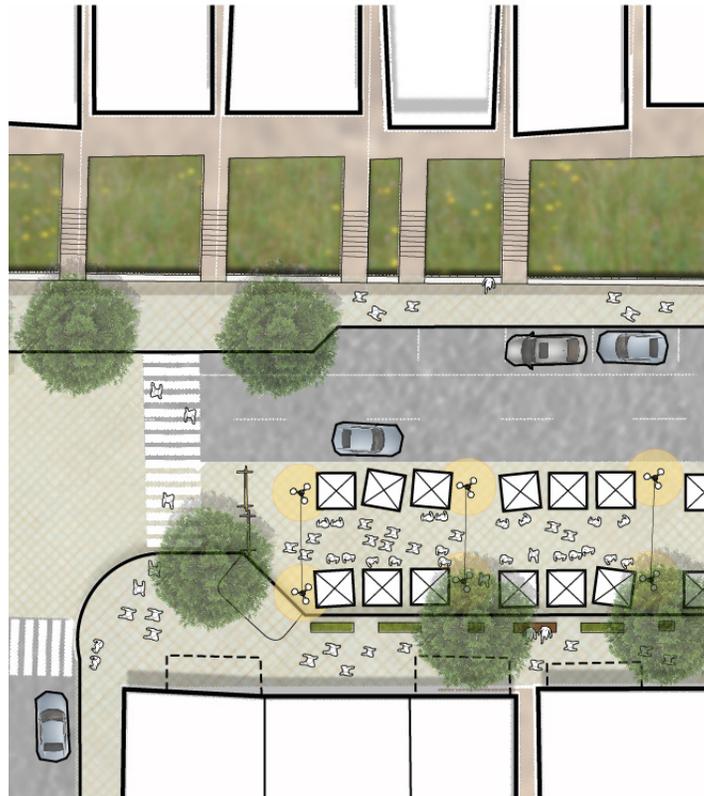
**Develop marketing material in complete communities.**

The community can develop material that speaks to the dimensions of complete communities such as access to food, transportation, housing, recreation, education, retail and employment. This can inform residents, visitors, business owners, real estate agents etc.

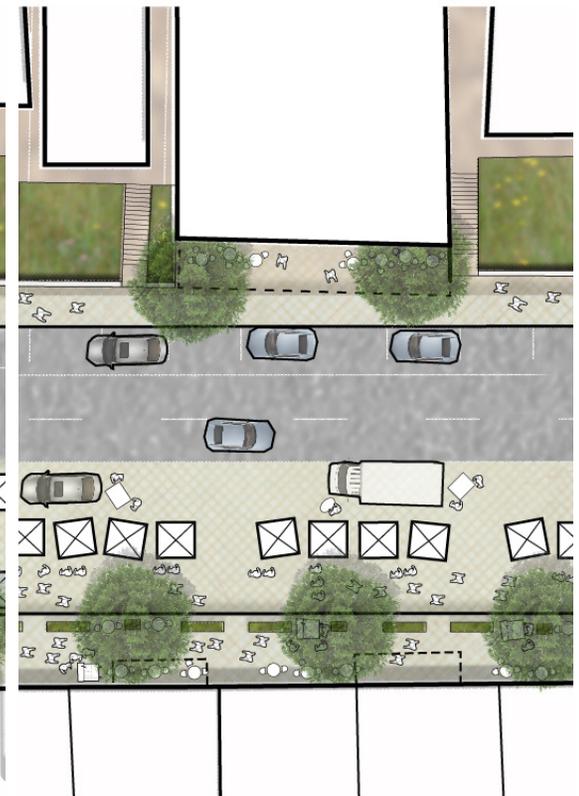
**Create a community plan that defines Brookline as a complete community.**

As the community is creating its own definition of a complete community, it can formalize an approach to tracking these issues and to making improvements. A small working group could do a yearly review of these categories, establish priorities, and create working groups to deal with emerging issues. Examples include:

- The community would be strengthened with more transit options, attracting the Millennial generation and giving options to elders. Track and advocate for more bus routes, bike infrastructure, etc. to decrease reliance on the car.
- Housing choices are fairly narrow in the community and the community would appeal to emerging demographics of singles living alone and changing family sizes with the addition of other housing types. Explore opportunities to increase density around the Boulevard, attracting transit and more spending at businesses.
- The community has high quality public and private education options near by. However, the public education system is in flux and vulnerable. Promote successes, build community support, and track issues to be prepared for sudden shifts in the system.



**Brookline Flea**



**Farmer's Market**

**FRIENDLY & ACCESSIBLE** *Brookline will be attractive as a welcoming and complete community*





**Your IDEAS bringing life to the Boulevard**

Quick-Serve Healthy Restaurants  
 House Tour  
 Regular Clean-Up  
 Smoke-Free Bar  
 Public Art  
 Flea Market

Community Garden/Edible Park  
 Farmer's Market  
 Small Inclusive Market  
 Strengthen Business District

Welcome Bags/Gifts  
 More Diverse Housing Options  
 Promote Quality Schools  
 Park & Ride  
 Improved Transit Options  
 Bike Infrastructure

Block Watch  
 Beat Cop  
 Real Estate Training

Immigrant Help Center  
 Ambassador Program  
 New Media Social Networking

Improved Public Spaces  
 Dog Park  
 Trees  
 Fix Potholes  
 Fallen Heroes Memorial

**The community should consider its environmental assets such as open space and wooded areas.** It can position itself to be resilient in the face of upcoming changes such as extreme weather events or new stormwater regulations. Think about Brookline as an ecodistrict to understand assets and liabilities related to energy, water, and food.

**2 Become known as a welcoming community.**

Welcome visitors and newcomers with gestures and programs that encourage them to connect and contribute to the community assets.

**This could be as simple as a signature “welcome bag” for new residents** that include coupons, invitations to participate, and critical information about the community.

**It could also involve long term institutional engagement** as with the establishment of immigrant friendly programs that support their integration into the local culture, schools, and economy. Churches have taken the lead in Brookline. Some cities, such as Dayton, Ohio, have developed this to intentionally attract immigrants. No regional communities have yet to adopt this approach and it could be a competitive differentiator for Brookline.

**Target the real estate community as a funnel for future residents.** Prospective buyers, especially those from out of town, often know of a community through their real estate agent. Cultivate relationships with the real estate community (the URA currently does this for Brookline) and have material that clearly articulates Brookline’s assets and identity.

**3 Be articulate about ways to stay connected.**

Promote established institutions that provide opportunities for people to get involved and stay connected, such as churches, councils, and block watch groups. Given changing demographics and new means of communications, look for places where others may be needed. Social media has been used successfully but is not consistent. Look for funding to start and maintain a social media presence.

Brookline Boulevard is the heart of the neighborhood. It is the community's living room, where business is done, guests are welcomed and people have fun. In that sense shaping the Boulevard becomes the integral part of Brookline's transformation. To make the Boulevard the competitive advantage of Brookline, it needs to be well marketed, it needs to cultivate a business ecosystem and to create sidewalk culture.

**Market the Boulevard**

- **Think regionally and locally.** The size of business district relative to the size of the community will require specialty businesses with low visit-frequency in addition to the local serving, high visit-frequency businesses. This will require marketing the business district regionally and identity development.

- **Market experiences that will bring people back for more.** Reinforce community identity and encourage return visits through both unique and recurring events.

- **Plan for change.** Develop and in depth marketing plan that benefits both existing and new merchants. Involve the businesses in the creation of the plan.

- **Work with social communities.** Tap into existing social networks in the community to attract people to the community (churches, schools, sports leagues). Immigrant social networks are especially strong in this regard and may require different focus to the marketing material. Have immigrant advisors in ongoing marketing efforts.

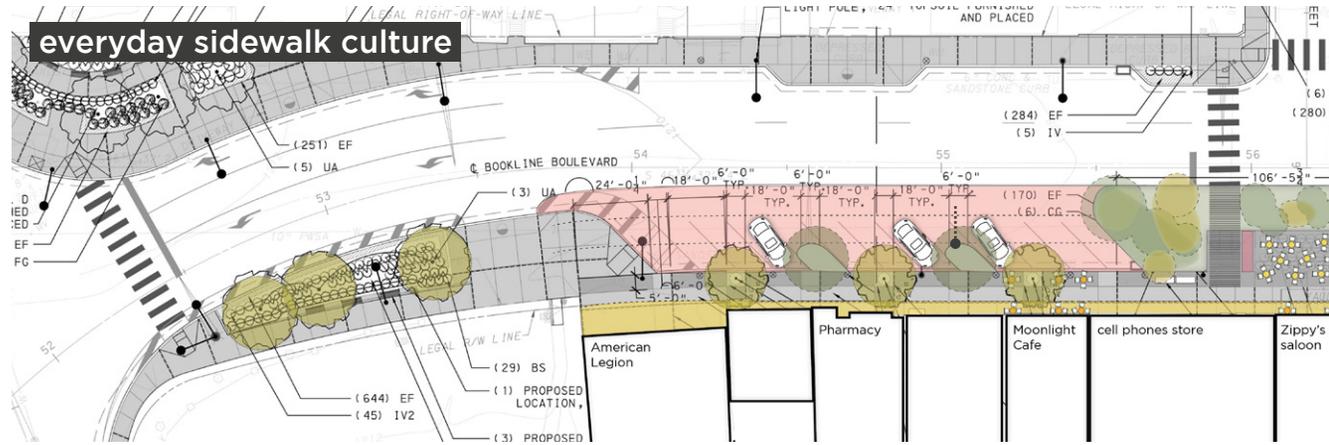
- **Market to both shoppers and businesses.** Market both goods and services as well as a friendly business environment

**Cultivate a Business Ecosystem**

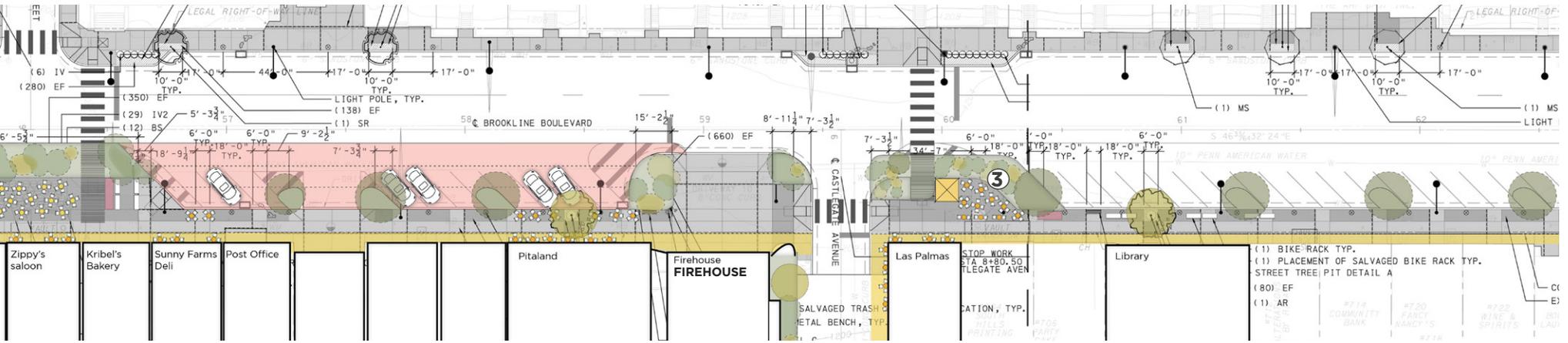
- **Cultivate existing clusters.** These clusters may be formed naturally by proximity and location, size and type of buildings (a cluster of larger/smaller buildings), or compatible business types (restaurant clusters, civic clusters, etc.)

- **Keep a list of businesses desired by the community.** Cross reference with available business support, suitable property, or financial incentives.

- **See vacancies as opportunities.** Track and market vacancies purposefully. Take active role in the disposition process.

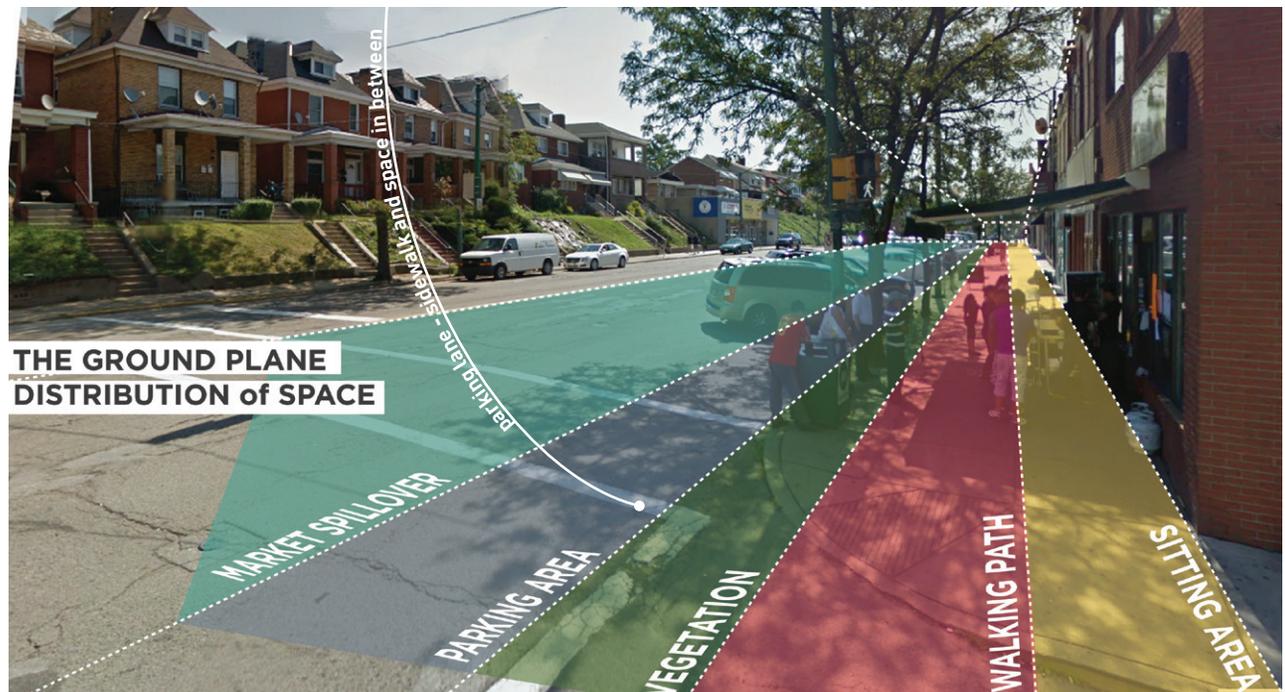


# 05.00 **shaping the Boulevard**



## Create Sidewalk Culture

- **Be visible.** Encourage businesses to engage the sidewalk.
- **Set up shop outside.** Sidewalk shopping is appealing for customers and represents additional square footage for sales.
- **Create a stage.** Public space improvements can give the business district character and provide setting for activity to occur.
- **Reclaim the Boulevard.** Consider the entire width of the sidewalk and street as urban plaza and use it for activities and events. Despite large sidewalks, the dominant perception of the boulevard is as a car route. Even after the sidewalk work, the width signals vehicular priority and makes it difficult to establish a sense of intimacy desirable sidewalk activity. Overly broad roads lead to unsafe pedestrian conditions and lack visibility for businesses due to high traffic speeds.
- **Make memorable places.** A place is defined by its activity and structure. Interesting and engaging landmarks or civic spaces will help orient newcomers and will become the identity of the Boulevard. To encourage people to traverse the length of the boulevard, create a series of activity centers or sights so that there are no gaps that would discourage exploration.
- **Plan for consistent activities.** Recurring activities, whether daily, monthly, or seasonal, create additional incentive to visit the district. They also create excitement with anticipation and become a strong part of the identity of the Boulevard.



## 05.00 **shaping the Boulevard**



**Street Farmers Market**



**Tactical Urbanism residents initiatives**



**Street Painting**



**trees + planters**



**Flea Market**

- **Design guidelines.** Encourage facades with glass, pedestrian shelter and signage standards. Establish a storefront renovation program. Encourage professional involvement in design and construction. Occupy vacant storefronts with temporary displays.

- **Incorporate sustainable infrastructure to strengthen a sense of place.** Minimize summer heat discomfort with trees. Infiltrate water with sidewalk planters. Create small sheltered pockets to encourage year round activity.

- **Address both sides of the Boulevard.** The linear "room" of Brookline Boulevard has two dominant walls, the storefronts to the south and the upslope residential/commercial to the north. Ironically, the upslope wall can be more visually dominant when driving on the boulevard. Create a plan to incent homeowners to improve their front yard slope as an element of the public streetscape (common colored plantings, wall improvements, tree plantings, etc.). Include the upslope businesses in the streetscape planning. Create nodes with sidewalk improvements and activity around commercial clusters or significant cross walks.

With the completion of the Brookline Boulevard reconstruction, the Boulevard will take on a new life as the community living room. Much like any new construction, it will take some time for the room to be personalized and to feel like a welcoming place for residents and visitors. Both this report and the Pittsburgh Department of City Planning have considered ways that the wide road and new pedestrian vehicular traffic patterns can be augmented to create places with visible activity for retail, hospitality and services at the avenue.

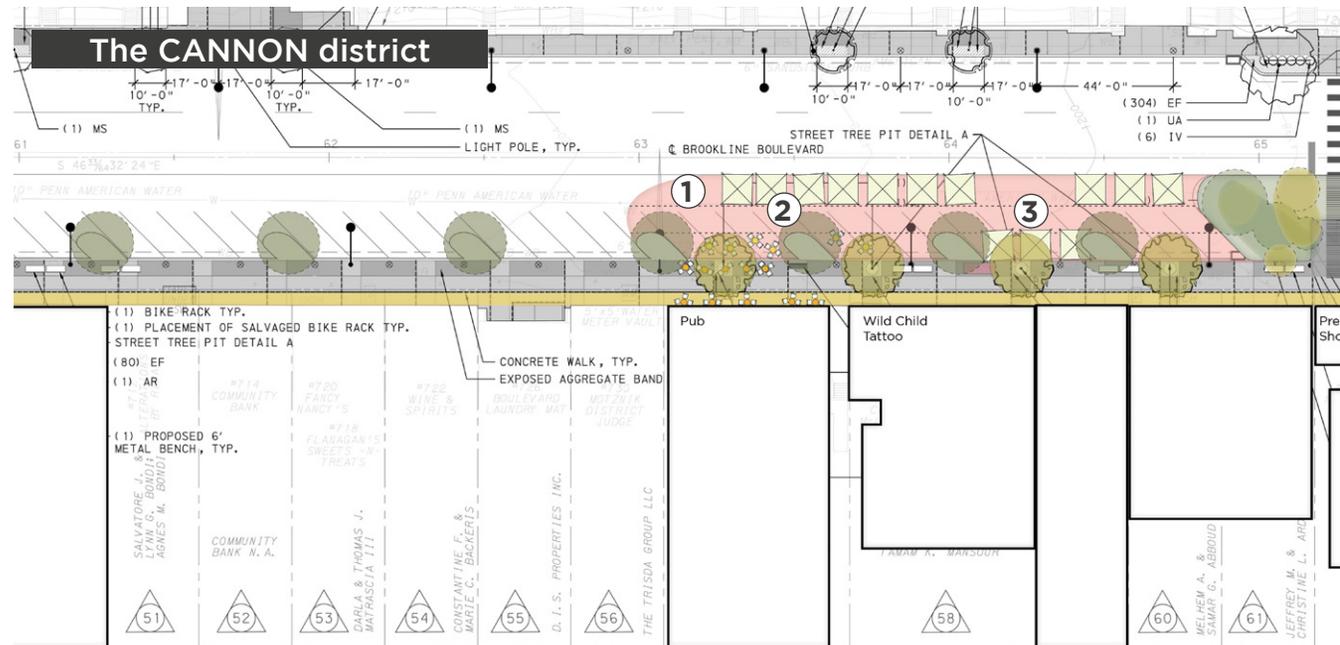
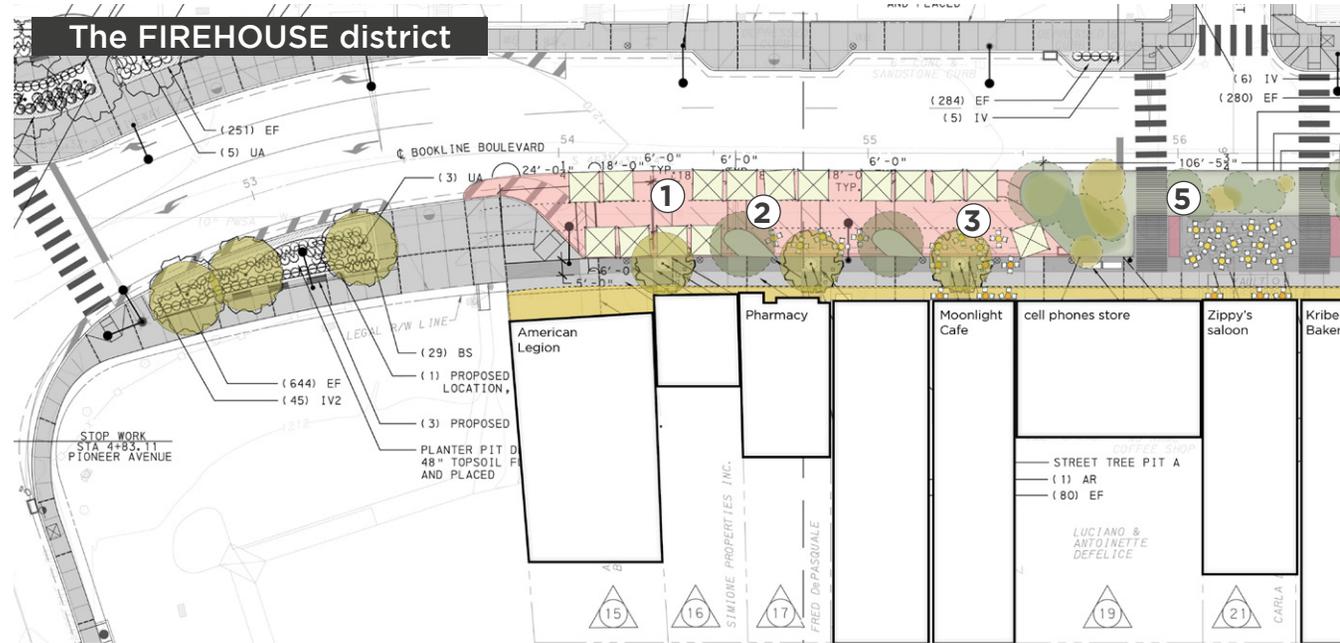
This includes branding two districts; the Cannon District and the Firehouse District. These can become areas with concentrated improvements at pedestrian area and parking lanes to create visible daily activity and areas to stage regularly scheduled and special events.

**1 Clarify ambiguous traffic patterns & improve safety with the Firehouse and Cannon districts.** Create identity over the length of the Boulevard. Paint parking area and access lane to establish “Firehouse” or “Cannon” district.

**2 Create a stronger outdoor room while dealing with stormwater.** Integrating tree wells in the parking lane would help break up the long streetscape into smaller, more memorable rooms and would ease stormwater control.

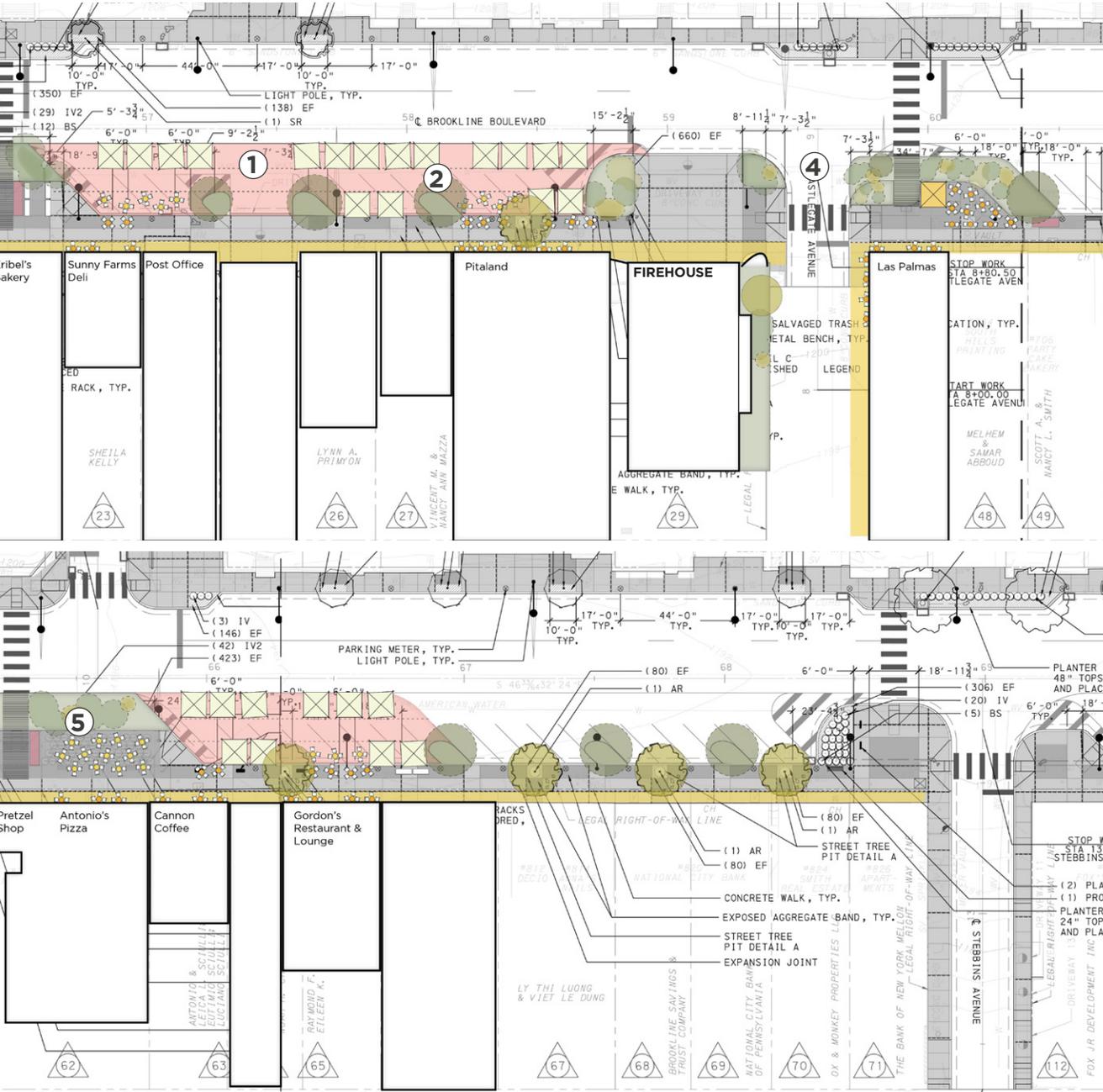
**3 Create a memorable space for recurring events.** Allow for the parking lanes to turn into events spaces on a frequent basis. Light structures, tents and tables can occupy the painted area to facilitate the farmers market, a flea market or cultural events. For the Cannon District, the open-mic event currently realized in Cannon Coffee can be set up outdoors during the summer. Events might shift from one area to the other.

**4 Augment safety islands.** Add planters and other street furniture to activate the pedestrian zone and clarify traffic patterns. Focus street furniture and visible street life at the streets intersection



The creation of signature areas like the Cannon District and the Firehouse District will help to magnetize activity and create memorable places.

## 05.00 shaping the Boulevard



locations. Encourage high visibility of businesses, such as restaurants for these locations to use available sidewalk.

### ⑤ Create extended outdoor seating and encourage visible activity along the Boulevard

Create spaces of extended outdoors seating on spaces where the sidewalk is wider and extend the zone into unused planted or painted areas. Create a strip along the boulevard where business can accommodate outdoors seating, planters, signage etc. That will boost the sidewalk culture and cultivate the outdoors activity especially during summer and spring.



## SHORT- TERM

Short-term activities can be realized with current resources and set the stage for mid and long term activities

## MID-TERM

Mid-term activities require some additional capacity of resources and have longer duration.

## LONG-TERM

Long-term strategies require significant capacity and resources and have the longest duration. Moreover, they require the short and mid term strategies to be begun or completed.

### ESTABLISH ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP to galvanize community action

- Designate or create leading organization and mandate (SPDC)
- Create an organization that can provide professional leadership and services. Many initiatives cannot happen without it.

- Coordinate efforts and secure funding

- Annual report on progress

### CREATE AN IDENTITY PACKAGE to launch a marketing campaign

- Invite business owners to be involved in process to create IM identity
- Define scope of RFP
- Find funding source(s)
- Implement immediate web and social media pieces with study material

- Develop marketing and identity for IM
- Scope could include:
  - Market research
  - Web, social media, wayfinding (electronic, print, environmental), entry markers, streetscape

- Implement plan

### SUPPORT BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT to improve the flow of resources

- Invite aligned groups to be part of efforts
- Find funding sources
- Determine goals key indicators of success

- Business Recruitment
  - Smoke free bar
  - Quick serve restaurant
  - Small inclusive market
  - Notable and diverse restaurants
- Business Support Services
  - Immigrant issues
  - Entrepreneur and start up support
  - Transit advocacy

- Implement plan
- Track boulevard indicators

### CREATE SIDEWALK CULTURE to encourage activation of the sidewalks

- Develop & implement streetscape recommendations per the initial plan
- Short term projects could include:
  - Empty storefront displays
  - Facade improvement resource ed (URA, Design Center)
  - Free parking for the first few minutes
  - Light on the firehouse
  - Encourage businesses to put seating and services on the sidewalk
  - Relocate or augment existing events that support the international theme
  - Farmers Market
  - Burgh Bites
  - Develop scope for additional streetscape planning guidelines
  - Create RFP or use existing city guidelines, or include in identity package

- Develop manual for Brookline Blvd's streetscape, including:
  - Wayfinding
  - Planting / spice garden
  - Bike infrastructure
  - Stormwater management
  - Entry markers
  - Seating/creation of civic space
  - Infill strategy
  - Event infrastructure (street painting)
  - Develop new events
  - International Festival
  - Scavenger Hunt

- Implement plan
- Grants Calendar:
  - Biz Buzz Applications (Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) program)
  - Love your Block
  - Design Center

# FRIENDLY + WELCOMING



06.00 next steps

## SHORT-TERM

Short-term activities can be realized with current resources and set the stage for mid and long term activities

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### ESTABLISH ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP to galvanize community action

→ Designate or create leading organization and mandate

→ Coordinate efforts and secure funding

→ Annual report on progress

### INVITE A BROAD COMMUNITY to be part of the development efforts

→ Identify and invite key individuals to join efforts

→ Inventory different stakeholder groups, both established and those that serve new or incoming populations (e.g. by age or ethnic communities)

→ Implement new means of communication, including social networking or community networking

→ Support or establish programs or efforts to remain welcoming, such as:

- Immigrant assistance centers
- Ambassador programs
- Religious affiliated support

→ Establish mechanisms for ongoing community engagement

→ Shift tactics as demographic shifts warrant

### COMPLETE COMMUNITY PLANNING to understand Brookline's baseline & priorities

→ Inventory complete community assets and establish c.c. baseline, including:

- Affordable, diverse housing options
- Quality schools
- Business district
- Blockwatch
- Recreational facilities

→ Create complete community RFP for 2025 Brookline vision plan

→ Determine best level of community engagement

→ Create neighborhood vision plan and goals based on complete community priorities. Use current study as baseline for projects. Identify areas for improvement such as:

- More diversity in housing
- Housing density at business district and transit
- Park and ride
- Bike infrastructure
- Business district improvement
- Beat cop
- Dog park, trees, memorials, public places, etc.,

→ Implement plan

→ Track progress

→ Revisit plan 3-5 years

### BROADCAST BROOKLINE'S WELCOMING IDENTITY to build the community reputation

→ Continue to do programs to invite newcomers and rally all members of the community to make linkages and connections, including:

- Welcome wagon bags
- Real estate training (URA)

→ Align and update current marketing outlets to complete community concept

→ Increase external marketing outreach:

- Refine information on Brookline as a complete community and its vision
- Actively seek media exposure for Brookline quality of life and monitor reach and impact
- Continue existing programs that bring people to community
- Perform a "new mover study"

→ Host events or create a plan of action to welcome new people such as:

- Newcomer welcome dinners
- School information kits
- Brookline Boulevard material/welcome bags

→ Monitor identity reach and impact



## SHORT- TERM

Short-term activities can be realized with current resources and set the stage for mid and long term activities

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Mid-term activities require some additional capacity of resources and have longer duration.

## LONG-TERM

Long-term strategies require significant capacity and resources and have the longest duration. Moreover, they require the short and mid term strategies to be begun or completed.

### **BUILD IDENTITY** to strengthen Brookline's competitive reputation

→ Inventory of things happening already:

- Group to support sports activities
- Nightwalk/block watch workout
- Free parking for the first few minutes

→ Identifying new opportunities (plan)

- Yoga studio
- Quick-serve restaurant
- Spin studio

→ Create a plan

→ Implement + supporting infrastructure:

- Bike
- Running track
- Rec Center renovation
- Path network fitness trails

### **BRAND THROUGH EXISTING MEDIA** to attract visitors

→ Inventory of things happening already:

- Collective promotion of sports activities and places
- Races and events
- Dodgeball day

→ Web and social media presence

## 07.00 references

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