



PUTTING LEGACY FIRST

PLANNING FOR THE BOSTON 2024 OLYMPICS



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Executive Summary

Boston's Olympic bid – like many powerful ideas – carries the prospect of great reward and the risk of great failure. To realize the reward, the region's political, community, and business leaders must focus not only on making the Games a success, but also on creating an Olympic legacy with long-term benefits. We must leverage the planning and investment for the Olympic Games to make Greater Boston a more connected, livable and prosperous region – regardless of whether our bid is chosen, and even after the Games end.

NEEDED: A COORDINATED PLANNING PROCESS

Currently, Olympic planning activities are spread across many different entities and levels of government. Overall, there is no clear link between the private host committee and the public agencies that must review its proposals. The project will require a myriad of public approvals, but no public entity exists to coordinate the review process. A regional conversation about venues, impacts, infrastructure, and mitigation has no clear home, leaving no real way for neighboring municipal officials or state legislators to be involved in the process. There are many good reasons to adopt a much more proactive and comprehensive approach to Olympic-related planning, and to do so quickly.

ESTABLISH AN OLYMPIC PLANNING

COMMISSION: The Commonwealth should establish, fund, and staff an independent Olympic Planning Commission. The Commission should coordinate the public planning process across jurisdictions; oversee the input and approvals of state and regional agencies; recommend amendments to the bid; identify public sector investments that are merited based on their broad and long-term benefits; and work with Boston and other municipalities to develop legacy plans for the venue sites. The Commission should also coordinate communication among Boston 2024, the City of Boston, surrounding municipalities, the Governor, and the Legislature; and take the lead in responding to concerns and mediating differences.

It should evaluate the impacts of the Games and suggest ways to minimize and mitigate negative impacts. The Commission should work closely with Boston and other affected or participating municipalities, but it should not supersede municipal authority for permitting and approvals, either in Boston or elsewhere.

FOCUS ON LEGACY: The Commission should support a competitive bid and a successful Games, but it should focus on developing a positive legacy for the region that will last well beyond 2024. It should operate on four basic principles:

- Make this an Olympics that athletes, residents, and visitors can truly reach by transit, walking, and biking.
- Build Olympic facilities and infrastructure that will serve the city, Greater Boston, and the Commonwealth for decades to come.
- Maximize private funding for the Games and limit public funding to infrastructure projects with long-term benefits.
- Make the Olympics a catalyst to build a more equitable region.

MAXIMIZE PARTICIPATION: The Commission should maximize public input and participation with a special focus on under-represented groups, e.g., seniors, youth, small businesses, people of color, low-income households, people with disabilities, immigrants, and non-English speakers.

BE REGIONAL, TRANSPARENT, AND INCLUSIVE: The planning process itself must be regional in nature, engaging multiple municipalities as partners

in the effort. It must be transparent and inclusive so that all affected communities have an opportunity to participate.

FINANCING THE OLYMPICS AND THEIR LEGACY

RECOGNIZE THE DIFFERENT BUT

COMPLEMENTARY ROLES OF PUBLIC AND

PRIVATE FUNDING: Overall, the Olympics should maximize private investment and minimize the use of public funds. We recommend against the public sector making infrastructure or programmatic investments that do not advance a broader vision for a more connected, livable, and thriving region.

However, if legacy development is intended to strengthen the region beyond 2024, it is unrealistic to rely solely on private dollars. The public sector has a legitimate role to play in repairing, modernizing, and expanding infrastructure that will last beyond the Games, just as the private sector has a role to play in supporting improvements that will advance the Olympic bid and make the Games a success. Those elements that are solely related to the Games should be financed entirely by private sources. Projects that generate shared benefits to the Games as well as long-term public benefits should be financed by a mix of public and private funds.

USE VALUE CAPTURE AS A FINANCE TOOL: Value capture is a type of public financing that uses the increased value created by public infrastructure to help pay the capital, debt service, or operating costs of that infrastructure. Although value capture has been used sparingly in Massachusetts, it is an important and widely-used tool in other states, where it has helped to fund transit improvements, other infrastructure, and mixed-use development that enhances property values and property tax revenue. Massachusetts should revitalize the Value Capture Commission, which was established in 2013, to analyze how we can better take advantage of these financing techniques.

THE OLYMPICS WHERE YOU NEVER NEED A CAR

The Boston Olympics should be fully accessible by transit, bicycle, and walking. A strong and well-functioning transportation system, fully capable of handling the increased demand of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, must be the clear goal of the Olympic planning process. In fact, Olympic planning provides an opportunity to advance good transportation ideas that will have long-lasting benefit whether or not the bid is successful – and that should not wait until 2024 to be implemented.

The MBTA stands at the center of any effort to improve our transportation system. Given the recent and projected growth of homes and jobs near transit, additional capacity on the existing MBTA system is critical to avoid overcrowding. Targeted expansion of the system is also needed to provide access to critically underserved areas and to unlock development potential at key sites.

Despite these needs, the political will and funding remain elusive. Projects like South Station expansion, the Green Line extension, and the proposed West Station in Allston would make the Games more successful *and* would have far-reaching benefits for transportation and economic development. If the Games were to provide the focus and sense of urgency needed to overcome the political barriers that stand in the way of a truly world-class transit system, this alone would be a transformative legacy.

A walkable and bikeable Olympics requires investment in our pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and the pace of improving accommodations for transit riders with disabilities must be speeded up. We should modernize parking and fare collection at the MBTA, coordinate T service with other transit providers in the region, and pilot a system of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).



KEY TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The public and private sector should gather the political will to fully fund crucial transportation investments, and to complete them before 2024.
- Boston 2024 should contribute resources to accelerate MBTA compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Municipalities should implement accessibility improvements such as upgrading sidewalks, curb cuts and crosswalks, especially to accommodate people with disabilities – and the state should help with more money.
- Boston 2024 should contribute to pedestrian accessibility improvements between Olympic venues, transit, and visitor accommodations.
- Boston 2024 should purchase Hubway bike share stations at Olympic venues and visitor accommodations.
- A coordinated system of managing parking at transit stations – including modern fee collection systems – should be developed for everyday use.
- The MBTA and Regional Transit Authorities should implement integrated fare collection, and better coordinate with Transportation Management Associations and other transit providers for seamless trips.
- The proposed Olympic Lanes should serve as a pilot for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), and the MBTA should work with municipalities to implement BRT even before the Games.

KEEP PEOPLE IN THEIR HOMES; BUILD MORE HOUSING FOR THE FUTURE

Many former Olympic cities provide lessons about the impact the Games can have on the housing market, and on the lives of individuals residing nearby. These include the relocation of the homeless, evictions, shortened leases, and other forms of displacement. Direct displacement in Boston is unacceptable, but also unlikely, because the proposed venues are not residential neighborhoods. Olympic planners and government leaders must pay very close attention to this issue if new venues are introduced.

We must also attend to the potential indirect impacts that Olympic construction or large scale legacy development may have on rents and sales prices in surrounding neighborhoods, while also recognizing that two of the three major venue sites examined in this report are already poised for transformative redevelopment in the coming decades.

Whether displacement is caused by direct or indirect means, it is an unacceptable outcome, and planning for the Games and associated public policy must be focused on preventing it.

One positive outcome of the Olympics could be the creation of new units of housing, which the City of Boston and the entire metropolitan region desperately needs. MAPC has estimated that



Metro Boston will need 435,000 new housing units by 2040; and the City of Boston has set a goal of delivering 53,000 new housing units by 2030. If the Olympic Games, or even the bid itself, were to catalyze the creation of a significant number of these new homes – affordable to households at a range of incomes – that would be a very positive result indeed. Achieving that outcome would require careful planning and oversight. It would even be possible to create a whole new neighborhood – as Boston has several times in its history – on one or more of the proposed venue sites.

KEY HOUSING RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Olympic venues should be sited and designed to avoid direct displacement of existing households.
- The Commonwealth and local governments should develop and adopt a comprehensive package of tenant protections to prevent the displacement of tenants to accommodate visitors before and during the Games.
- Municipalities should develop clear regulations and tax policies allowing temporary home rental through on-line booking.
- Municipalities and social service agencies should develop and adopt protocols to protect homeless individuals from harassment and relocation prior to and during the Games.
- The Olympic Planning Commission should establish a Social Impact Advisory Committee (SIAC) to evaluate and monitor the potential social and equity impacts of the Games.
- Boston and the Olympic Planning Commission should establish specific and binding targets for affordable housing development at the venue sites after the Games. Those targets should substantially exceed existing inclusionary housing requirements and should give high priority to on-site construction, rather than off-site or payments-in-lieu-of housing.
- Public agencies should develop an inventory of affordable units that are near Olympic venues and that are at risk of loss between now and 2034, and work with Boston to develop a plan to preserve those units.
- The Commission should study the impacts of Olympic-related development on the construction industry and cost of construction, and make recommendations to deliver lower-cost housing.
- Boston 2024 and the Olympic Planning Commission should support the development of new data resources and modeling tools to analyze the secondary impacts of large-scale redevelopment of Olympic sites.

TRANSFORMING OLYMPIC VENUES INTO GREAT NEIGHBORHOODS

The Olympic proposal focuses on three main venue sites: Widett Circle/Cabot Yards, Columbia Point, and North Allston – all in the City of Boston. All have significant development potential. Infrastructure improvements for the Games could position these sites for long-term legacy development to advance the region's housing and economic development goals. This section raises issues that need to be addressed at all three sites through the planning process, related to housing, jobs, equity, urban design, and climate change resiliency.

KEY VENUE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Olympic and legacy developments should improve the overall climate resiliency of the neighborhoods where they are located.
- The vast majority of Olympic venues should be accessible by foot, bike and transit.
- The Olympic legacy should include meaningful improvements to existing parks, open spaces, and youth sports facilities, determined with the engagement of the municipal government and local neighbors.

WIDETT CIRCLE/CABOT YARDS: This area has not previously appeared as a redevelopment site in any city or regional plans. However, the area is well-situated for development due to its location within walking distance to two Red Line stations, South Station, and employment centers in the Financial District, Seaport, and Back Bay. More than 7,000 housing units are under construction or consideration in the immediate area. However, Widett Circle is currently cut off on all sides by highway ramps and rail lines, and the entire area is occupied by industrial and transportation uses. Due to the current uses and lack of connectivity to nearby neighborhoods, major investments in decking and transportation connections are required to enable redevelopment.

Creating new pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections – in all directions from the site – would

increase the viability of legacy development on the Widett Circle/Cabot Yards site, and would make any future development much less car-reliant.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WIDETT CIRCLE/CABOT YARDS:

- Construct new pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections between Widett Circle/Cabot Yards and South Boston, the South End, and Roxbury.
- Boston 2024 or the master developer should bear the costs of reconstructing or relocating the transportation facilities currently occupying the site, and these facilities should be relocated in a way that does not increase the burden on environmental justice populations.
- Planning for the deck and transit infrastructure must allow for multiple future transportation and climate scenarios.
- Boston, in collaboration with the Olympic Planning Commission, should lead a planning process for legacy development at the Widett Circle/Cabot Yards site, with the goal of developing new zoning, urban design guidelines, open space requirements, public health mitigation measures, and binding affordability requirements.
- Boston 2024 must begin to identify alternative sites for commercial enterprises and should provide favorable terms for their relocation.

COLUMBIA POINT: The Columbia Point neighborhood is proposed as the location for the Olympic Athletes Village, to be constructed on the former Bayside Exposition Center and surrounding parcels that are largely but not entirely owned by the University of Massachusetts. The site is not included in the university's 25-year master plan, because it was purchased after the plan was completed. The university conducted a community charrette in 2012 that generated many ideas for the site, but to date UMass Boston has said little about its long-term plans.

At the same time, the Columbia Point Master Plan, approved by the Boston Redevelopment Authority

in 2011, envisions a mixed-use neighborhood of 4,000 homes and more than a million square feet of commercial development oriented along a redesigned and pedestrian-friendly Morrissey Boulevard.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COLUMBIA POINT:

- Reconstruction of JFK/UMass Station and Kosciuszko Circle should include significant improvements for walking and biking, and should be funded primarily by Boston 2024.
- The Athletes Village should be designed for legacy use as a mixed-income neighborhood and strong access to parks, consistent with the Columbia Point Master Plan. The number of dormitory units in the legacy development should be consistent with the UMass Boston Institutional Master Plan.
- The Athletes Village should be designed to accommodate legacy uses without relocation of modular housing units to other parts of the city.

NORTH ALLSTON: The area dubbed “Beacon Yards Precinct” by Boston 2024 comprises three major sections: existing Harvard athletic facilities and a City of Boston park (Smith Field); Harvard-owned land between Western Avenue and Cambridge Street, where Olympic aquatics and tennis venues are proposed; and Beacon Yards, a parcel owned by Harvard University and currently occupied by a highway interchange and rail yard.

Through the Allston Interchange Improvement Project, MassDOT plans to reconstruct the interchange, shrink the rail yard, build a new commuter rail station (West Station), reconstruct Cambridge Street, and build new surface streets, open space, and bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure. This project would open up 70 to 90 acres of developable land, creating an opportunity for an entirely new neighborhood located between Harvard, MIT, and Boston University, with riverfront property and direct rail access to downtown Boston.

Unfortunately, less than half of the needed funding has been identified, enough to reconstruct the aging I-90 viaduct but not enough to reconfigure

the interchange and build the train station and new surface streets. If those improvements are not made, Olympic facilities in North Allston would likely have to be scaled back, and the opportunity to create a new neighborhood would be stifled. Therefore, the most important Olympic legacy for North Allston is the potential for the Games to provide an impetus to fully fund and complete the Allston Interchange Improvement Project.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NORTH ALLSTON:

- Boston 2024 should advocate for the Allston Interchange Improvement Project, including West Station, to be funded and fully constructed by 2024, and should contribute financially to aspects of the project that will directly benefit the Games.
- The City of Boston and the Commonwealth should use value capture and expanded public-private partnerships to fund the Allston Interchange Improvement Project and future transit service at West Station.
- Boston 2024 should advocate for and contribute to funding new pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access across the Charles River via the Grand Junction Bridge.
- Boston 2024 should work with MassDOT and institutional stakeholders to incorporate dedicated bus lanes into the Allston Interchange Improvement Project to serve the Olympic Route Network and legacy Bus Rapid Transit routes.
- To connect Olympic venues along the Charles River, Boston 2024 should explore a new ferry service that could persist as a commuter ferry or water taxi service.
- The Boston Redevelopment Authority should work with Harvard University to produce a future development framework for Beacon Yards.
- The City of Boston should initiate a neighborhood master planning process in Allston, and do so quickly enough to influence the bid and the ongoing design of transportation infrastructure.

Introduction

The proponents of Boston's bid for the 2024 Summer Olympics have put forth the proposition that Boston should host the Games only if they help the city and the region to achieve longer-term goals for growth and development. The host committee (Boston 2024) sees the Games as a potential "catalyst to create good-paying jobs, spur economic development, improve our infrastructure, increase affordable housing, provide educational opportunities for our young people and inspire the next generation."¹

These are powerful and attractive aspirations. Indeed, they echo the goals of many recent programs and planning processes, including Governor Romney's "Commonwealth Capital" program; Governor Patrick's "Planning Ahead for Growth" initiative; *MetroFuture: Making a Greater Boston Region*, the regional smart growth

plan adopted in 2008 by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC); and more recently, early discussions of Mayor Walsh's "Imagine Boston 2030" planning effort.

The problem is that the goals advanced by Boston 2024, while plausible and attainable with careful planning and execution, are not guaranteed. Some Olympic cities have achieved them; many have not. In reality, the Olympic bid – like many powerful ideas – carries with it the prospect of great reward, and the risk of great failure.

On the one hand, a successful Olympic bid could generate thousands of jobs building facilities and infrastructure, planning and hosting the events, and meeting the needs of tens of thousands of visitors. It could provide the vision and momentum for investments to modernize our transportation, water systems, and parks – along with a deadline that will help to get the work done. Olympic venues and villages could build a physical and

¹ www.2024boston.org/principles

financial foundation for residential and commercial development, adding new homes and businesses to Boston and surrounding communities. Hosting the Paralympic Games could also focus efforts to make facilities and infrastructure more accessible and safe for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities. If Boston and the Commonwealth were to shine in the international spotlight for three weeks in the summer of 2024, we could certainly see growth in our tourism and convention business for many years to come.

On the other hand, poor planning and a lack of attention to the negative impacts of rapid development could lead to serious long-lasting problems. The Olympics could bid up the price of land, the rent or selling price of homes, and the cost of contracted labor. These rising costs could force lower-income families out of their homes if steps weren't taken to intervene. If venues and infrastructure were built without careful attention to the post-Olympic needs of the region, we could waste capital on structures that would lie dormant or under-utilized. Cost overruns could plague the construction of facilities, and without adequate safeguards these could well become the responsibility of the city and state's taxpayers.

Success might not be guaranteed, but fortunately, neither is failure. And neither one is going to "just happen." We – the people of the Boston region – have the power to choose, or at least the power to strongly influence the outcome. But how? The first step is to ask the right questions, and the most important question is this:

How can we leverage the planning and investment for the Olympic Games to make Greater Boston a more connected, livable and prosperous region – regardless of whether our bid is chosen, and even after the Games are over?

Every plan we draft, every venue we choose, every investment we make, every permit we grant, and everything we build should first be judged by the

answer to this question. That's what we mean by planning for the legacy of the Games.

This paper explores how to put legacy first. It considers how we can maximize the long-term benefits of planning for the Olympic Games, while minimizing or mitigating some of the negative impacts that inevitably accompany major developments.

We start by exploring how we might fashion a planning process that focuses on legacy. Some of the issues we will explore include the following: What kind of planning is going on now? How could we make it better? What are the main goals of the planning process? How can we make sure the public is fully and fairly involved, including groups that are typically absent from public planning efforts? How can we focus on long-term legacy, while at the same time adopting a plan that will advance our bid and make the Games themselves a success?

Secondly, we will explore some of the issues around financing the Games, and how to achieve a proper balance between private investment focused on facilities and infrastructure that are critical to the Games, and public investment focused on long-term benefits for the region. The report then shifts to a series of three major topical concerns:

- transportation (including transit, walking, bicycling, and accessibility);
- housing (both affordable and market-rate; existing as well as new);
- issues related to the proposed central venues, including open space and climate change adaptation.

In each of the four sections, we will lay out our recommendations, as well as key questions we think deserve attention during the planning process.

Planning for a successful Olympic Games is one of the most challenging planning tasks in the world. Planning for an Olympic legacy that will transform

the Boston region is even harder. Still, it is not beyond our grasp. The people of Metro Boston are among the most highly educated, innovative, and prosperous on earth. We have enlightened political leaders and a business community that supports this bid. We have not always been united – like many places, we have our fair share of fractious political debates. But when we act in a coordinated and unified way, with a clear set of goals, there is little we cannot achieve.

Needed: A Coordinated Planning Process

Designing, financing, and executing a successful Olympic Games require many different public and private entities to work together toward a common goal. Fluid communication and a clear decision-making process are essential. On the private side, site owners, major non-profit institutions, organized labor, and the broader business community all

have critical roles to play. On the public side, several federal agencies, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the City of Boston, neighboring municipalities, various quasi-public agencies, and the University of Massachusetts are key actors.

It is especially important that a single entity take responsibility for convening these interested parties, keeping everyone engaged, raising and addressing key questions, and making sure that the legacy impacts of the Games remain front and center. To date, no one has filled that role.

Many mostly-uncoordinated parties have taken on aspects of planning for the Games. Boston 2024, a private non-profit entity, is serving as the host committee and preparing the official bid documents. Several City of Boston staff are focused on the Olympics, and Boston Mayor Marty Walsh has recently established an Office of Olympic Planning to “focus on the development of the City of Boston’s plans and policy as potential hosts for the Games.”² The city has been holding a series of public meetings in Boston neighborhoods to discuss

² <http://www.cityofboston.gov/news/default.aspx?id=20083>





the Olympics. Governor Baker has recently hired an outside consultant to independently analyze the Olympic bid and advise state government on potential costs to taxpayers. Members of the Legislature have indicated varying degrees of interest and skepticism, but they have no clear role thus far. The same can be said of mayors and municipal managers in communities surrounding Boston, and in other parts of the state.

Overall, there is no clear planning process that links the public and the private sector. A regional conversation about venues, impacts, infrastructure, and mitigation has no clear home so far. Mayor

Walsh is a strong supporter, but the Governor has not yet made a decision about whether or how to be involved, so it is difficult for state officials to know how to engage in the planning process. Since it now seems likely that a binding statewide referendum on the Olympics will be held in 2016, legislators and municipal officials outside of Boston may well take a “wait and see” attitude, further delaying a productive planning process.

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Despite this somewhat confusing state of affairs, there are many good reasons to adopt a much more proactive and comprehensive approach to Olympics-related planning, and to do so quickly. Communities across the region would be in a much better position to influence the bid if they could examine the issues holistically and work toward a shared vision. This approach would improve coordination between the public and private sectors, across municipal lines, and between municipalities and state government. It would also ensure that the Olympic planning process takes into account and respects various state and local plans that are either completed or under development, including state and regional transportation plans, neighborhood plans, and open space plans.

In order for the Olympic bid to move forward, Boston 2024 and the City of Boston will need

dozens of permits, variances, and certificates issued by a variety of local, regional, state, and federal authorities. A single entity should coordinate the planning and application process for this bewildering set of approvals – and ensure that any proposal submitted to one entity does not contradict proposals submitted to others.

Boston 2024 has been the driving force in the Olympic bid process to date. It developed the idea when few people thought it was realistic, galvanized support within the business community, and encouraged the USOC to choose Boston as the nation's applicant. Boston 2024 should continue to play the principal role in finalizing the bid and advocating for the city's selection. However, as the process moves into a new phase, we recommend the creation of a public-sector entity charged with ensuring the public interest is advanced through the bid process and, if the bid is selected, through the implementation of the Games.

In order to coordinate the planning process, to focus on the Games and legacy issues simultaneously, and to involve the many diverse communities that have a stake in these discussions, we believe the Commonwealth should establish, fund and staff an independent Olympic Planning Commission. We note that Representatives Aaron Michlewitz and Michael Moran, both from Boston, have filed House Bill 2925 to establish a commission with defined responsibilities in the Olympic planning process. While the Commission we recommend may have a somewhat different membership, powers, and objectives, we believe that House Bill 2925 is on the right path by suggesting a single state authority to create a more unified, transparent, and coordinated planning effort.

It is beyond the scope of this report to recommend all of the specific powers and responsibilities of the Commission, but we do suggest some basic guidelines:

- 1) The Commission should coordinate the overall public planning process across jurisdictions throughout the Greater Boston region, and it should oversee the input and approvals of state and regional agencies. It should help coordinate communication among Boston 2024, the City of Boston, surrounding municipalities, the Governor, and the Legislature, and take the lead on responding to concerns and mediating differences.
- 2) The Commission should evaluate the impacts of the Games, suggest ways to minimize and mitigate negative impacts, and transmit its analysis to the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) as part of the Massachusetts Environmental Protection Act (MEPA) review process. The Commission should work closely with Boston and other affected or participating municipalities, but it should not supersede municipal authority for permitting and approvals, either in Boston or elsewhere.
- 3) The Commission should focus on planning decisions and investments that will generate a competitive bid and a successful Games, but it should also focus on developing a positive legacy of the Olympic planning process, a legacy that will last long after 2024, and even if Boston is not ultimately chosen as the host city. In order to fulfill these dual responsibilities, the Commission should be empowered:
 - a. to recommend amendments to the bid that will yield more beneficial impacts;
 - b. to identify public sector investments that are merited based on their broad and long-term benefits, establish criteria for such investments, and evaluate whether proposed investments meet those criteria; and
 - c. to work with Boston and other host municipalities to develop venue-site legacy plans to be implemented after the Games (or perhaps sooner, if Boston's bid is not chosen).



- 4) The Commission should maximize public input and participation through innovative and diverse methods of civic engagement, with a special focus on groups that tend not to participate in public planning efforts, e.g., seniors, youth, small businesses, people of color, low-income households, people with disabilities, immigrants, and non-English speakers.

The role of this new entity would not be to advocate for the Games, but to advance the interests of the region through the bid process. As such, it should have the authority to set binding requirements on the Olympics, much as the Massachusetts Gaming Commission was charged with applying binding requirements on the operators of casinos and other gambling facilities.

Composition of the Commission is key, and there are many ways to craft its membership. Overall, we would suggest a Commission with perhaps a dozen members, with most individual appointments allocated to Governor Baker, Mayor Walsh, Senate President Stanley Rosenberg, and House Speaker Robert DeLeo. At least one member should be appointed by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), the regional planning agency for Metro Boston, which has more than 50 years of experience in land use planning, transportation, environmental protection, impact assessment and

mitigation, and civic engagement in the planning process. One member should also be appointed by the Metropolitan Mayors Coalition, which includes the mayors and managers of the 14 urbanized municipalities in the Inner Core of Greater Boston, where most of the impacts are likely to occur.

In order to ensure that the members of the Commission have the requisite skills and expertise, Mayor Walsh and Governor Baker could be required to appoint members with experience in fields such as transportation planning, housing, economic development, infrastructure finance, or the management and security of large-scale public events. Representatives of the labor movement and the business community could also be added. Two members should come from the communities that are most likely to be impacted by the Olympics (as the bid is presently structured, those communities would probably include South Boston, Dorchester, and Chinatown, but it could include other nearby neighborhoods). We suggest that Boston 2024 appoint one member to serve on the Commission in an ex officio capacity, i.e., without a vote.

The Commission – and, indeed, the planning process itself – should have some clear goals that demonstrate a focus on legacy. We suggest the following mandate:

- **Make this an Olympics that athletes, residents, and visitors can truly reach by transit, walking, and biking.** This is a commitment that Boston 2024 has already embraced, and it will be a critical factor in keeping costs manageable and making our bid competitive. Undoubtedly, some venues will be located outside of Boston, perhaps because athletic facilities are superior or for other compelling reasons – but planners should resist the temptation to scatter venues around the state, which would inevitably defeat the walkable character of the Games.
- **Build Olympic facilities and infrastructure that will serve the city, Greater Boston, and the Commonwealth for decades to come.** We should choose and build infrastructure projects that will provide jobs, homes, mobility, and recreation in the future, well beyond three weeks during the summer of 2024. A focus on legacy must be a key element of the planning process.
- **Maximize private funding for the Games and limit public funding to infrastructure projects with long-term benefits.** Venues, facilities, and operations that relate exclusively or primarily to the Games should be funded privately. Legacy projects that will help the Olympics but provide multiple benefits to the region for decades to come should be funded with a mix of public and private capital.
- **Make the Olympics a catalyst to build a more equitable region.** Involve neighborhoods, community groups, and small businesses in the planning process. Establish and monitor specific and ambitious goals to hire low-income workers, people of color, and minority/woman-owned businesses. Work to expand the supply of affordable and workforce housing, and to avoid displacement in communities near the Games. Infrastructure projects associated with the Games should bolster transit, improve open space, and reduce environmental hazards in low-income communities and communities of color.

A number of additional considerations should inform the planning process. While focused in Boston, the Games would most certainly have a regional effect on transportation, housing, jobs, and public resources, so the planning process itself must be regional in nature, engaging multiple municipalities as partners in the effort. It must be transparent and inclusive so that all affected communities have an opportunity to participate. It should leverage recent planning efforts and should complement planning efforts underway. Chief among these is “Imagine Boston 2030,” Mayor Walsh’s new citywide master planning effort.

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However, the initiation of a citywide master plan does not eliminate the need for dedicated Olympic planning, which will be both more focused (on specific sites and issues) and broader (to include sites and impacts beyond Boston). Furthermore, the proposed timeline of roughly two years for Imagine Boston 2030 puts its conclusion after the decision of the IOC, whereas an Olympic planning process must shape the bid, choose infrastructure priorities, and define the public sector role long before that.

Throughout the planning process, it is also important to remember that Boston and its

neighbors are already changing rapidly, with an unparalleled building boom and a recentralization of economic growth to the urban core, and growing concerns about displacement and gentrification. It is clear that the region will look and operate very differently in ten years, regardless of the bid's success. One salient question is, "How would the Olympics affect the Boston of 2024, not the one we live in today?" Understanding changes that are already taking place should be a critical element of the planning process.

Preparing for the region as it will be in 2024 reminds us that one of the most important sets of decisions is not how particular parcels will be used *during* the Games, but rather how that plot of land or nearby infrastructure will be used *after* the Games end. This must be a central goal of the planning process. It is appropriate that the Commission – as a public entity – oversee those discussions with municipal officials, local landowners, and nearby community groups. Creating a post-Olympic plan for a parcel involves much more than maps and artists' renderings. It should also include plans for: a) ownership of the site, which may need to be sold or transferred; b) reconstruction or renovation to transform a building or land from Olympic to post-Olympic use; c) detailed and binding plans for affordable housing, open space, and other community benefits to be provided either during the Olympic construction process or after the Games end; and d) a financing mechanism to make the transformation possible.

Ideally, the Olympic use of a site will already will move it part way to its post-Olympic use. For example, it will cost less to transform athlete housing into dorm rooms, apartments, or condominiums than it would to build those housing units from scratch on vacant land. But the transformation will cost *something*. Plans must be created to account for those costs, and a timetable must be established to ensure that

the transformation happens promptly after the Games conclude. We do not want Olympic facilities and venues "hanging around" for years after the Games while we decide on critical elements of transformation. The time to make those decisions is during the bid process itself, or shortly thereafter.

In closing, it is instructive to look at the example of New York City, which conducted parallel "Olympic" and "Legacy" planning for all of the major Olympic sites, so that once the IOC decision was made, the city could either proceed with Olympic implementation or move forward with development alternatives. As a result, New York has seen (or will soon see) transformative redevelopment of major sites that were part of the Olympic plan: Hudson

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Yards, Atlantic Yards, Hunters Point, Terminal Market, and the Williamsburg Waterfront. Certainly the outcomes in New York are not perfect, and they remind us that Boston must place a special focus on the issue of displacement. Still, this example demonstrates that a robust planning process can produce results that have enduring value for the city and the region even if the bid is not successful.

Financing the Olympics and Their Legacy

Thus far, much of the public discourse about the Olympics has focused on potential public expenditures that might be incurred to support the Games. Like most observers, we would like to maximize private investment and minimize the use of public funds. We recommend against the public sector making infrastructure or programmatic investments that do not advance a broader vision for a more connected, livable, and thriving region.

However, if we focus on investments that would not only benefit the Games, but that also would strengthen the region well beyond 2024, it is unrealistic to rely solely on private dollars. The public has a legitimate role to play in repairing, modernizing, and expanding infrastructure that will last beyond the Games, just as the private sector has a role to play in supporting improvements that will advance the Olympic bid and make the Games more successful. Potential public investments should be evaluated not only on the basis of whether they might support the Games, but also on the basis of whether they would be worthwhile investments even if Boston were not to be awarded the Olympics in 2017.

The Commission, working with Boston 2024, the municipalities, and other partners, should establish a hierarchy for investment in critical infrastructure, site improvements, and facilities:

- 1) Those elements that are solely related to the Games, with minimal implications for long-term use, should be financed entirely by private grants, loans, or other forms of investment.
- 2) Projects that generate benefits to the Games as well as long-term public ben-

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efits should be financed by a mix of public and private funds, roughly in proportion to those benefits. This could help to advance important infrastructure projects (e.g., the expansion of South Station, the purchase of Diesel Multiple Units (DMUs), or a pilot of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)) that might be accelerated even by a modest infusion of private funds.

- 3) Infrastructure improvements that generate long-term regional benefits that far outweigh their benefit to the Games should be financed through public means.

We recognize concerns that increasing transportation investment in the Boston area in order to prepare for the Games – even if these investments would have eventually been made anyway – could pull dollars away from other parts of the state. While it is possible to ascribe this impact to the Olympics, it is really more a symptom of chronic transportation underfunding. Even in the absence of the Olympics, there are simply not enough resources to meet transportation needs all across the Commonwealth, which is why

increased public spending on transportation and other infrastructure needs remains a critical issue. Increased investment in the Boston area would be a boon to the Massachusetts economy and state tax revenue, but it should not come at the expense of critical projects in other regions of Massachusetts.

To a limited but significant degree, innovative financing techniques known as “value capture” could be employed to help these infrastructure investments to finance themselves. Value capture is a type of public financing that uses the increased value created by public infrastructure to help pay the capital, debt service, or operating costs of that infrastructure. Public investments in transportation and other infrastructure generally increase the value of adjacent land, thereby increasing tax revenues as new homes and jobs are created, new retail stores are built, and property tax assessments increase. Some of these new tax revenues (e.g., property, sales, or income taxes), or developer contributions linked to increased values, can be used to pay a portion of the debt service on the initial infrastructure investment, to finance additional related infrastructure, or even to finance nearby related development such as housing, amenities, or commercial development.

Value capture has been used sparingly in Massachusetts, but it is more commonly used in other states. For example, New York City has used value capture to fund the extension of the #7 Subway Line to Hudson Yards, which had been proposed as an Olympic Stadium location. The site is now under development as a massive new mixed use district, which would not be possible without the subway extension. In some cases, value capture may also be used to fund ongoing operations of new public transit infrastructure. For example, both the construction and ongoing operation of the new Washington, DC Silver Line are funded in part by a property tax surcharge for commercial and new residential properties within a certain radius of the new rail stations in Virginia.

Although it is not a silver bullet to cover all of the costs of infrastructure or site improvements, value capture could be used here to assist in financing some improvements related to the Olympics. However, since value capture is a type of public financing, the same principles enumerated above should apply to the use of value capture as a financing tool: this type of public financing should be used for investments that have a long-term value for the region, while investments that primarily benefit the Games should be privately financed. The importance of value capture is that it allows for public financing of improvements that will trigger long-term value as Olympic sites are redeveloped for their permanent uses.

The Legislature established a Value Capture Commission as part of the 2013 Transportation Finance Act. Although it met a few times late in 2014, it has not met since. Resuscitating the Value Capture Commission and using it to evaluate and improve the existing tools for value capture in Massachusetts could help to fund infrastructure related to the Games as well as infrastructure improvements with long-term public benefits. In order to maximize private investment in the infrastructure and development that will have long-term public benefits, we need to have the mechanisms in place and to incorporate them early in the planning process.

The Olympics Where You Never Need a Car

Boston 2024 is billing its proposal as “sustainable,” “compact,” and “walkable.” The plans include numerous strategies to discourage driving and to encourage transit use by spectators, staff, and volunteers, in addition to the dedicated shuttle services that will be provided for athletes and officials. A strong and well-functioning transportation system, fully capable of handling the



increased demand of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, must be clear goal of the Olympic planning process. In fact, Olympic planning provides an opportunity to advance good transportation ideas that can be implemented whether or not the bid is successful – and that should not wait until 2024 to be implemented.

This is especially true in regard to the linchpin of the region's transportation system, the MBTA. Given the recent challenges faced by the system – the winter of 2015 being just the latest – many stakeholders are skeptical that the transit system is up to the task of serving Olympic visitors, and wonder why resources should be dedicated to Olympic-related improvements when there are so many pressing needs facing the system. Although we, too, are concerned about the MBTA's capabilities, we would turn the question around and ask how the Olympic planning process could be used to advance critical improvements in the MBTA – improvements that would benefit not only the Olympic Games, but the entire region for decades into the future.

The MBTA is one of Metro Boston's greatest and most essential assets, but our failure to invest in the system threatens its future value. The collapse of the system in the winter of 2015 exposed long-simmering deficiencies in our public transit infrastructure, and brought into sharp relief how dependent our state's economy is on transit. Numerous reports and plans have documented the actions needed to address the maintenance

backlog, maintain a state of good repair, and ensure reliability of the system during extreme weather events. Any rider who spent a morning standing on a snowy platform this winter, waiting for a train that did not arrive, knows that those improvements are long overdue.

Despite the challenges facing the MBTA, the transit system continues to be a magnet for economic and residential growth. Within a half mile of rapid transit and commuter rail stations there are over 49,000 housing units and 52 million square feet of commercial space planned or under construction, ranging from high-rise office towers and entirely new transit districts to small-scale infill and compact townhouse communities. While it is desirable to focus growth near transit so that people have more transportation options and are less reliant on private cars, this growth may further strain the capacity of the current MBTA system. A 2012 report estimated that new growth could add 100,000 to 370,000 additional daily trips to the system by 2021³ – an increase of up to 25% over current ridership. As a result, additional capacity on the existing MBTA system – made possible through more frequent trips, larger vehicles, and other operational improvements – is critical to avoid overcrowding.

Increasing the capacity of the existing system includes major capital projects now funded, such as

³ Hub and Spoke: Core Transit Congestion and the Future of Transit and Development in Greater Boston; Urban Land Institute, Boston (<http://www.northeastern.edu/dukakiscenter/wp-content/uploads/Final-Hub-and-Spoke-Report.pdf>)

purchasing new train sets for the Red and Orange line. It also includes investments not yet funded, such as the South Station Expansion, which is needed to allow additional commuter rail service; and investment in new equipment such as Diesel Multiple Units (DMUs), which enable rapid transit levels of service on existing commuter rail corridors, such as the Fairmount Line. While Boston 2024 has said that additional capacity beyond the Red and Orange Line cars might not be essential to the success of the Olympic Games, we believe it is far more likely that additional capacity-adding improvements would expand options to reach the Games, decrease wait times, and minimize disruption to regular functioning of the system during the Games. Furthermore, these capacity-adding improvements are essential to meeting future demand in a growing Boston region.

Even after increasing the capacity of the existing system, prudent and targeted expansion of the transit system – paired with land use policies that support robust transit oriented development (TOD) – would still be needed to provide access to critically underserved areas and to unlock development potential at key sites. For example, the Green Line Extension, which is underway, will promote housing and economic development, while improving mobility for existing residents and lessening the region’s greenhouse gas emissions. The proposed West Station at the reconfigured Allston Interchange would be the key to unlocking one of the largest vacant development parcels anywhere in Metro Boston. Completing the Green Line Extension (all the way to Route 16) before the Olympics would definitely help to bring more people to the Games without the need for cars, and the Allston Interchange could have a positive impact on the major proposed venues in North Allston. These are only two examples of system expansions that could benefit both the Games and the long-term health and prosperity of the region; there may be others that should be considered in the planning process.



Despite critical maintenance needs, the looming increases in demand, and the economic and housing development potential of expansion, the

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political will and funding needed to maintain the system, much less add capacity, remain elusive. While projects like South Station, the Green Line, and West Station may not make or break the Games, their completion prior to 2024 would make the Games much more successful, and the

2024 Olympic bid has the potential to increase the urgency to complete these projects. Transit projects have a history of extended delays, increasing the eventual total cost of the project and delaying the benefits of economic growth and improved mobility. We agree that the region *should* be able to improve and expand its transit system without hosting the Olympics, yet after decades of advocacy, deficiencies remain. If the Games provide the focus and sense of urgency needed to overcome the political barriers that stand in the way of a truly world-class transit system, this alone would be a transformative legacy.

RECOMMENDATION: The public and private sector should work together to use the opportunity provided by the Olympics to gather the political will to fully fund crucial transportation investments, and to complete them on time.

Transportation investments that would support the Olympics should be carefully evaluated for their lasting importance to the region. Boston 2024 bid documents list JFK/UMass, Andrew, Broadway, Harvard, and Park Street as stations for which “station improvements to improve accessibility and vertical circulation systems are anticipated.” However, none of these stations is listed in the MBTA Capital Investment Program for 2015-2019, with the exception of replacement of the stairs at Park Street. Naturally, this does not mean the stations do not need improvements, especially at critical stations like Harvard and Park Street, which may bear the brunt of anticipated growth in commuter load. However, given the MBTA’s current financial situation, it is unclear whether funding could be identified to add five new station overhauls to the capital plan. Furthermore, even if funding were available, it is unclear if these five stations would be the highest priority for receiving upgrades.

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RECOMMENDATION: In cases where transportation improvements are principally needed to serve the Games, Boston 2024 should provide the lion’s share of the funding. In cases where the transportation improvements are also a high priority for the region, a larger share of the funding could come from public sources.

In addition to general maintenance and capacity improvements, upgrading the accessibility of the MBTA system for people with disabilities is also an ongoing project in need of increased urgency and funding. Most MBTA stations were constructed prior to the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Accordingly, many of them require major reconstruction in order to be fully accessible. While the MBTA has made significant progress on upgrading inaccessible stations, perennial budget crises have slowed the completion of planned accessibility improvements. In addition, the growth of the MBTA’s state of good repair backlog has had an impact on accessibility, as existing facilities such as elevators, wheelchair lifts, and public address systems fall out of service due to lack of maintenance. Hosting the Paralympics should bring added focus on the moral and legal responsibility to ensure that our public infrastructure serves all members of society.

While the MBTA has a plan to bring all subway stations up to accessibility requirements,



approximately \$2 billion in additional funding is needed to make the MBTA 100% accessible,⁴ including station retrofits, vehicle upgrades, and accessibility improvements to the immediate area around transit stations.

RECOMMENDATION: Boston 2024 should contribute additional resources to accelerate the process of bringing the core transit system fully up to ADA standards by 2024.

The prospect of hosting the Paralympics would raise the profile of accessibility issues for the entire region, and many crucial accessibility improvements would fall to local communities to implement. For example, the MBTA estimates⁵ that at least 75% of bus stops are inaccessible due to inadequate curb ramps, poor sidewalk condition, and/or lack of crosswalks. Addressing these deficiencies often requires coordination between the MBTA and the local municipality, and funding and implementation on the local level.

In addition to the accessibility of the transit system, accessibility for pedestrians with disabilities is also be crucially important. These improvements could include repaving and/or widening sidewalks, constructing raised crosswalks or raised

intersections so that pedestrians have a level path, and ensuring that slopes, curb cuts, and tactile and audio crossing signals are compliant with the ADA and best practices for universal design.

RECOMMENDATION: Boston 2024 should contribute to pedestrian accessibility improvements between Olympic venues and transit, and throughout the area surrounding each venue.

Walkability and accessibility improvements are issues with long-term implications and a significant impact on the Games. The private sector supporters of the Olympic bid, along with the public sector at all levels, have a significant role to play. Improvements to pedestrian safety and the quality of pedestrian experience should include ensuring that all intersections have crosswalks and walk signals; reconfiguring intersections to reduce pedestrian crossing distances and vehicle travel speeds; and adding landscaping and street furniture such as trees, benches, and better streetlights. The walkability of the last leg of spectators' trips would be central to the success of the Games, both from an operational perspective and in terms of the quality of spectator experience; Boston 2024 should therefore play a large role in financing these improvements.

⁴ March 2015 Memorandum from MBTA to MassDOT entitled "Overview of Capital Needs Related to Fixed-Route Accessibility."

⁵ Ibid

In addition to the last leg of a trip between transit and the Olympic venues, many spectators would begin their trip by walking. While Boston 2024 could not be responsible for constructing pedestrian infrastructure improvements to serve every transit station in the region, it could and should support the creation and implementation of pedestrian access plans for key transit stations, especially those near the central venues and those more distant stations with concentrations of hotels and other visitor accommodations. The scope of that planning should extend beyond roads leading directly to and from the identified key transit stations; the planning process should evaluate conditions *throughout* the surrounding neighborhood. The high priority investments identified by that planning process should be implemented alongside the Olympic-specific facilities, with a combination of public and private funds.

RECOMMENDATION: Pedestrian access plans developed to link Olympic venues with transit and visitor accommodations should catalyze local and state investment in pedestrian improvements, with a contribution from Boston 2024 for pedestrian infrastructure that will significantly benefit the Games.

The Boston 2024 bid has a strong focus on walkability, but almost completely ignores biking as a means of transportation. Meanwhile, competing bidders are putting biking front and center: the Hamburg, Germany bid for the 2024 Summer Olympics has promised to make every Olympic venue accessible by bike. Biking, as a healthy form of transportation, is consistent with the Olympic spirit, and can make Olympic venues accessible to many more people without adding to transit congestion. An Olympic bicycle network should be based on existing bicycle network plans and Complete Streets Design Guidelines in the City

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of Boston,^{6,7} the City of Cambridge,⁸ and other venue locations. The network should include links to existing off-street path networks; bikeways separated from motor vehicle traffic on major arterials, with bicycle traffic signals and protected intersections; and low-traffic shared streets for neighborhood connections.

RECOMMENDATION: Boston 2024 should contribute to planning and funding a connected network of high quality protected bike lanes for spectators to travel between venues and other destinations, and should provide ample bike parking at Olympic venues.

The Hubway bike share system can also provide another multimodal option for spectators to access Olympic venues. Hubway is an important part of Greater Boston's multimodal transportation ecosystem, and bolsters the MBTA by providing first mile/last mile connections, and by relieving core transit congestion. By investing in stations and bicycles to locate at Olympic venues and key areas of visitor accommodation, Boston 2024 can jumpstart expansion into new neighborhoods and

6 http://www.cityofboston.gov/images_documents/Boston%20Bike%20Network%20Plan%2C%20Fall%202013_FINAL_tcm3-40525.pdf

7 http://bostoncompletestreets.org/pdf/2013/BCS_Guidelines.pdf

8 <http://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/Transportation/bikesincambridge/bicyclenetworkplan.aspx>



municipalities, and help densify the network in the existing system. While operating these stations beyond the Games would be the responsibility of the municipalities, Boston 2024 could provide both a major benefit to the Games and a valuable legacy to the Hubway system at a cost of roughly \$55,000 per station – which seems miniscule in comparison to other Olympic investments.

RECOMMENDATION: Boston 2024 should purchase Hubway bike share stations and bicycles to locate at Olympic venues and visitor accommodations located within or near the Hubway service area.

The Olympic bid has also highlighted the need for improved regional coordination in managing parking at transit stations. Boston 2024 is proposing a coordinated system for allocating parking at suburban commuter rail and rapid transit stations for Olympic spectators and volunteers. Currently, parking at MBTA stations is not coordinated at all – some lots are owned by the MBTA, some by municipalities; there are arbitrary differences in the price of parking; there is no way to manage supply and demand collectively; and there is no way for drivers to know which lots have availability.

Improvements in parking management, and coordination between the MBTA and municipalities,

are key elements of resolving these difficulties, but technology also has a big role to play. Modernization of parking fee collection systems are long overdue: while many commuters are now paying for parking at MBTA lots with a smartphone app, the rest are still sticking folded dollar bills into a numbered slot on a sign board. This shockingly outdated system is inefficient to manage and difficult to enforce. Upgrading to modern meters or fare gates at MBTA parking lots and municipal lots at MBTA stations would improve parking fee collection and enforcement, and could generate real-time data on parking availability. Providing real-time data would make the whole system more reliable and usable for commuters and enable the overall parking supply to be utilized more efficiently. The Boston 2024 proposal highlights the need for a unified parking system, but these are improvements that are urgently needed today.

RECOMMENDATION: A coordinated system of managing parking at transit stations – including modern fee collection systems – should be developed for everyday use, not just for Olympic spectators, and the region should not have to wait for the Olympics for it to be implemented.

Fare collection across transit agencies currently faces a similar lack of coordination. While the

MBTA is a regional system, there are 10 Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) and dozens of local or private shuttles, including those operated by Transportation Management Associations (TMAs), that connect to the MBTA. Yet fare collection is separate for each provider and trip planning requires major effort by would-be passengers. The Boston 2024 bid includes plans to provide fare passes and trip planning for trips that span multiple transit agencies, highlighting the need for integrated fare collection among the MBTA, RTAs, and other providers, allowing riders to transfer from one system to another while paying a single fare. Once again, improved use of technology could play an important role in overcoming the arcane systems that currently persist in the Boston region. This is another good idea that should not wait for the Olympics in order to be implemented.

RECOMMENDATION: The MBTA and RTAs should implement integrated fare collection, and better coordinate with TMAs and other transit providers for seamless trips across transit service providers.

Finally, the Olympic bid has proposed dedicated bus lanes on Boston streets, an idea that has been studied many times but has seen only limited implementation. The proposed “Olympic lanes” have similarities to Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), enhanced bus service that employs features such as dedicated lanes, pre-boarding fare collection, and traffic signal priority to provide service that rivals rail transit in speed and rider experience, yet at a much lower cost. Existing planning efforts, including MassDOT’s Urban Ring study,⁹ and a recent study group funded by the Barr Foundation,¹⁰ have identified corridors in Greater Boston where BRT would be technically feasible and would dramatically improve transit performance. The proposal for Olympic Lanes should reignite the larger public discussion about implementing BRT in Greater Boston.



Going beyond planning, the timeframe of the Olympic Games offers the opportunity to implement several BRT lines that will actually improve service to and from the Games, taking pressure off the core stations of the MBTA and allowing another means of access from visitor accommodations to the Games.

RECOMMENDATION: The proposed Olympic Lanes should be as consistent as possible with corridors that have already been identified for Bus Rapid Transit, and the MBTA should work with municipalities to implement BRT even before the Games.

9 <https://www.massdot.state.ma.us/theurbanring/>

10 www.bostonbrt.org



Keep People in Their Homes; Build More Housing for the Future

In a region that already has an acute housing crisis, hosting the Olympics raises significant concerns related to displacement, evictions, and declining affordability. In Boston there are concerns that large-scale redevelopment of underutilized sites, whether catalyzed by the Olympics or not, may have ripple effects that drive up housing prices in nearby neighborhoods and across the city. On the other hand, legacy development of the Olympic sites could create thousands of new homes – and perhaps whole new neighborhoods – that could help to meet one of the region’s most critical needs. The legacy of the Olympics’ impact on the city’s housing market will be determined by how well we balance these two conflicting forces.

Many former Olympic cities provide telling stories – both positive and negative – about the impact the Games can have on the housing market, and on the lives of individuals living nearby. Olympic development has caused or contributed to any number of different housing problems, such as eviction and relocation of residents living at venue sites (London, Beijing, Atlanta,

Barcelona), the clearing of homeless people and the demolition of public housing (Atlanta), and uncontrolled rent increases and termination of leases (Sydney, London).^{11,12} Outcomes of this nature are unacceptable, and the planning of the Games and associated public policy must be focused on preventing them.

Some Olympic Games, such as London, Sydney, Barcelona, and Atlanta,¹³ have also been part of broader urban redevelopment processes that have been blamed by some for escalating real estate prices and decreasing affordability. In those cases, it is often very difficult to discern whether sales price and rent inflation is caused by the Olympics, or is the result of broader trends in the real estate market and urban redevelopment. In most cases, both factors may be in play, and this raises the question of how much impact is generated by each factor, and whether careful planning of legacy development could help to mitigate the problematic affordability impacts of urban revitalization. In weaker markets, development associated with the Olympics may have a greater “catalytic” impact on urban growth; in stronger markets (such as Boston) the legacy development on Olympic sites comprises just a portion of the regional urban redevelopment.

11 http://worldnews.nbcnews.com/_news/2012/02/02/10288441-olympic-housing-crunch-london-landlords-evict-tenants-to-gouge-tourists?lite

12 Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions, 2007, Fair Play For Housing Rights: Mega-Events, Olympic Games and Housing Rights <http://www.ruig-gian.org/ressources/Report%20Fair%20Play%20FINAL%20FINAL%20070531.pdf>

13 Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions, 2007.

THE BARCELONA EXPERIENCE

Perhaps more than any other city, the example of Barcelona, which hosted the Games in 1992, is instructive. In preparation for the Games, Barcelona transformed its declining port area into a thriving mixed-use neighborhood that continues to serve the city to this day. In fact, Barcelona is considered the clearest example of a city that enjoys the long-term benefits achievable through hosting the Olympics. Much of the lasting positive impacts of the Barcelona 1992 Games are the result of channeling roughly 83% of total spending (a mix of Olympic, government, and private funding¹⁴) into urban improvements, including major transportation and renewal projects, countering years of neglect.¹⁵

Amidst these investments, the 1,800-unit Olympic Village was developed in an underutilized portion of the Poblenou neighborhood, in a formerly contaminated area occupied by declining industries and separated from the rest of the city and the coast by railway lines. Judges, referees, and media were accommodated in 700 new housing units nearby at Parc de Mar and Val Hebron. Restructuring the rail network and building a coastal ring road opened up the site to the seaside and development opportunity.¹⁶ Old industrial and warehouse buildings in Poblenou were replaced with new housing, offices, hotels, retail, parks, and public beaches.¹⁷ After the Olympics, the area continued to evolve into a vibrant part of the city where housing opportunities were in high demand. The entire city was reconnected to the sea, with largely new neighborhoods lining the coast.

At the same time, this urban regeneration had troubling outcomes as well. Approximately 150

households were displaced from the Olympic Village site,¹⁸ although most were relocated to subsidized housing; nearly 500 residents of shanties and informal settlements were displaced due to infrastructure construction; and some small businesses were displaced.¹⁹ The Olympic Village in Poblenou became market-rate apartments after the Games, despite efforts to preserve some of the units for low income residents. Fortunately, about half of the Olympic units in Parc de Mar and Val Hebron were set aside for low- or moderate-income households.²⁰ The overall heating of the real estate market²¹ led to indirect displacement due to rising land, development, and housing prices.²²

Barcelona, then, is a prime example of what other host cities can strive for, and the pitfalls that good planning must aim to avoid. Olympic investment should be leveraged to open up new development opportunities that result in the creation of inclusive mixed-use neighborhoods – with housing at all price points. The uptick in real estate values that accompanies Olympic planning must be countered by specific and effective interventions to minimize displacement, and the post-Olympic reconstruction must include both rental and ownership housing to serve low and moderate-income families. The Olympics offer an opportunity to think big and to plan in a holistic manner to achieve Boston's infrastructure and housing goals in the years to come, but the task ahead will be even more challenging than preparing for the Games themselves.

- 14 Stephen Essex and Brian Chalkley, "Urban transformation from hosting the Olympic Games," Centre D'Estudis Olímpics, *University lectures on the Olympics*, 1998: 201.
- 15 A. Varley, "Barcelona's Olympic facelift," *Geographical Magazine* 64 (July 1992), 21.
- 16 K.M. Smith, *Tourism, Culture and Regeneration*. London: CAB International, 2007: 87-90.
- 17 John R. Gold and Margaret M. Gold, "Olympic Cities: Regeneration, City Rebranding and Changing Urban Agendas," *Geography Compass* 2/1 (2008): 300-318, 10.1111/j.

- 18 Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions, 2007
- 19 M. Spa' and M. Botella (eds.), "The Keys of Success: The Social, Sporting, Economic, and Communications Impact of Barcelona '92." Bellaterra: Servei de Publicacions de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 1995.
- 20 Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions, 2007, *Fair Play For Housing Rights: Mega-Events, Olympic Games and Housing Rights*.
- 21 M. Spa' and M. Botella (eds.), "The Keys of Success: The Social, Sporting, Economic, and Communications Impact of Barcelona '92." Bellaterra: Servei de Publicacions de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 1995.
- 22 George Diaz, "Barcelona Reshapes Face But Chips Away at Soul," *Chicago Tribune*, July 25, 1992 <http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1992-07-25/sports/9203070036_1_barcelona-olympic-site-olympic-village>.



One positive outcome of the Olympics could be the creation of thousands of new units of housing, which the City of Boston and the entire metropolitan region desperately needs. In fact, given the pent-up demand for housing in Boston and surrounding communities, a significant increase in production must play a role in solving the region's housing crisis, whether the Olympics come to Boston or not. The city's 2014 housing plan calls for the production of 53,000 housing units between 2010 and 2030 to accommodate anticipated growth, and there is no way to meet that target solely through small-scale infill development in the city's neighborhoods. Indeed, at key points in Boston's history the city has made quantum leaps in development through the creation of entirely new neighborhoods where none existed before, such as the Back Bay and the South End in the 19th century. In order to meet the city's future housing needs, we must look for similarly ambitious opportunities to create dense, lively, mixed-income neighborhoods. If the Olympic Games, or even the bid itself, can catalyze the creation of thousands of housing units affordable to households at a range of incomes, that would be a very positive result indeed. But achieving that outcome will require careful planning and oversight.

DIRECT HOUSING IMPACTS

Analysis of prior Olympics has identified a variety of ways in which the Games have directly caused or contributed to displacement, higher housing cost burdens for low income residents, and community disruption. This section briefly examines these potential direct impacts and strategies to prevent them.

Direct displacement of residents living at venue locations has been documented at many previous Olympics, including Beijing, Atlanta, Barcelona, and (to a lesser extent) London.²³ In these cases, prior residents were evicted and relocated from public or private housing stock to make way for venues, the Athletes Village, or other facilities and infrastructure. In Boston, the proposed venue sites are all non-residential areas and it appears that no direct displacement of existing residents will be required for the major or secondary venues. Even if the location and design of the venues are modified, this commitment to prevent direct displacement should be maintained.

RECOMMENDATION: All Olympic venues should be sited and designed to avoid direct displacement of existing households.

Another potential issue is the temporary eviction of renters to house visitors during the Games, which has been identified during prior Olympics.²⁴ Early termination of leases, summer "surcharges," and steep rent increases have all been cited as

²³ Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions, 2007.

²⁴ In Atlanta, there were reports of landlords price-gouging their tenants during the summer of 1996 so units could be rented to spectators or temporary employees, and while various remedies were considered by the Georgia Legislature, none were adopted. However, there is no hard evidence on how widespread the practice was, and "no one knows how many people ended up paying higher rents, the amount by which rents actually increased, or how many renters were forced to move." (Keating, Larry Atlanta: Race, Class, and Urban Expansion, 2001, Temple University Press, page 155) In the run-up to the 2012 London Olympics there were news reports about evictions for short-term visitor rentals (http://worldnews.nbcnews.com/_news/2012/02/02/10288441-olympic-housing-crunch-london-landlords-evict-tenants-to-gouge-tourists?lite), but MAPC has not been able to find any data or reports on how widespread the problem was.

practices that affected renters in other cities, and residents of boarding houses have been identified as particularly vulnerable to such displacement. Documented evidence of such abuses being a widespread problem during prior Olympics is hard to come by; nevertheless the issue requires serious attention.

Preventing such issues in Boston will require substantial changes in policy, including legislative action to increase tenant rights. For example, it may be necessary to amend existing tenancy laws to prevent displacement of low- to moderate-income tenants, to limit monthly and annual rent increases, to outlaw the application of seasonal surcharges, and to strengthen just cause eviction provisions. Some of these legislative and regulatory changes could be temporary and/or focused specifically in locations of potential impact, but the urgency of the Games may also present an opportunity to advance more widespread and long-lasting improvements to tenants' rights. While achieving the required legislative actions to protect tenants may not be easy, it should be considered a necessary condition of hosting the Games. At the same time, measures that would allow tenants to voluntarily vacate their apartments and share in the proceeds from temporary rentals should also be considered.

RECOMMENDATION: The Massachusetts Legislature, the City of Boston, and other cities that might be affected should develop and adopt a comprehensive package of tenant protections to prevent temporary displacement in the lead-up to the Games and during the events. This package should prohibit the following: no-fault evictions during the year preceding the Games, summer surcharges or other temporary rent increases, and/or "short-leases" designed to end before the Games begin.

On-line systems to rent out private homes or apartments, such as Airbnb, present both a mechanism for avoiding or limiting evictions as well as the potential for abuse. Cities that may

be affected by demand for temporary rentals during the Olympic Games should develop clear regulations and tax policies for such services, making sure to discourage evictions and to maintain proper protections for both the owner and temporary renter. Lessons can be learned from Amsterdam, one of the first major cities to establish a clear regulatory framework for such rentals.²⁵ A system of reasonable safeguards that does not discourage rentals through onerous regulation will be needed regardless of whether Boston hosts the Olympics, but it would certainly create significant opportunities for visitors during the Games.

RECOMMENDATION: Municipalities should develop clear regulations and tax policies allowing temporary home rental through on-line booking. Such a system would expand temporary housing for Olympic visitors, while protecting tenants from eviction.

Criminalization of homelessness and the mass relocation of homeless individuals during the Games has been well documented in previous Olympic host cities.²⁶ The Boston region already faces a homelessness crisis that has been exacerbated by the sudden closure of the Long Island shelter. While the City of Boston opened a new shelter that offers 250 beds and will replace more than 400 beds by July, the city shoulders a significant portion of the state's homeless population. Regardless of the Olympics, the City of Boston, neighboring municipalities, and the state must redouble their efforts to address the immediate needs of homeless individuals, to create

25 <http://www.dutchamsterdam.nl/3326-no-amsterdam-airbnb-ban>, "Airbnb collects tourist tax in Amsterdam"; DutchAmsterdam.com; December 18, 2014

26 In the lead-up to the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, over 9,000 arrest citations were issued to homeless persons, and Fulton County offered free one-way bus tickets out of town to homeless individuals. Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions, 2007, Fair Play For Housing Rights: Mega-Events, Olympic Games and Housing Rights <http://www.ruig-gian.org/ressources/Report%20Fair%20Play%20FINAL%20FINAL%20070531.pdf>



sustainable long-term housing opportunities for those individuals, and to expand housing policies to prevent people from falling into homelessness. Those same parties should also work with Boston 2024 to develop a comprehensive and transparent strategy for to prevent a run-up in homelessness prior to and during the games, and to address the needs of homeless residents. We consider this a legacy issue, because homelessness has long-term negative consequences for the affected individuals, and should be avoided through a combination of adequate shelter facilities, permanent housing, and supportive services.

RECOMMENDATION: If Boston is selected as a host city, Boston 2024, the City of Boston, neighboring municipalities, and social service and advocacy organizations should develop and adopt protocols to protect homeless individuals from harassment and relocation prior to and during the Games.

The 2000 Sydney Olympics may provide a positive example for how to protect the rights of homeless individuals and disadvantaged groups prior to, during, and after the Olympics.²⁷ As a result of a high level of activism prior to the games, and a “social impact study” conducted in 1995, a Social Impact Advisory Committee (SIAC) was established in Sydney to monitor the implementation of the Games.

Despite the prior adoption of legislation which expanded police powers related to vagrancy, the SIAC successfully lobbied the Olympic Coordinating Committee, the City of Sydney, and the Sydney Police to adopt a “Homelessness Protocol” that called for the police to refrain from harassing or detaining homeless individuals unless they needed assistance or posed a safety risk to themselves or others. The Sydney Police ombudsman’s office set up a committee to monitor police activity in relation to the homeless during the Olympic Games, with a particular focus on compliance with the Protocol. The committee met weekly with service providers and advocates who had also stepped up outreach and monitoring efforts related to police action. As a result, local advocates found that the Olympics did not result in significant negative outcomes for Sydney’s homeless population.

RECOMMENDATION: The Olympic Planning Commission (described in a prior section of this report) should establish a Social Impact Advisory Committee (SIAC) to evaluate and monitor the potential social and equity impacts of the Games, and the SIAC should make recommendations to the City of Boston, the Commonwealth, and Boston 2024.

27 Ibid

INDIRECT HOUSING IMPACTS

There is also concern that the Olympics and the associated redevelopment of the major venue sites may have less direct but more widespread impacts on housing affordability by driving up real estate prices and rents in the surrounding neighborhoods and across the city. Dramatic increases in residential property values and rents have been reported in the areas surrounding Olympic venues in London, or even would-be Olympic venues such as Atlantic Yards in Brooklyn. Indeed, many cities have specifically used Olympic development as a catalyst for more widespread urban redevelopment plans in areas they considered “under-valued.” As a result, it is worth examining the indirect effect that Olympic and post-Olympic development might have on housing prices in surrounding neighborhoods. It is also worth noting that two of the major venue sites (Columbia Point and North Allston) are already planned for transformative redevelopment, and the third major site (Widett Circle) is now a candidate for major growth by virtue of its location and the attention that has come to it through the bid process so far.

In Boston, the “Olympic effect” on nearby real estate prices may be mitigated by a number of factors. In the case of Widett Circle/Cabot Yards, the site is buffered from nearby portions of Roxbury and Dorchester by the Suffolk County House of Correction, Newmarket Food Terminal, and South Bay Shopping Center; and is bordered on the east and west by active development areas. On the east, the venue site is bordered by a rapidly developing section of South Boston, a corridor along Dorchester Avenue that has been identified by Mayor Walsh as a “transit growth zone” that will likely be well on its way to being built out by 2024, with or without the Olympics. To the west are Boston Medical Center, the South End/SoWa, and the Ink Block district, established or rapidly emerging high real estate value areas. All told, there are an estimated 3,400 housing units planned or in

construction within a half-mile of Widett Circle, and another 4,000 units are in the conceptual stage.²⁸

Given this activity surrounding the venue site, it is not certain if large-scale residential redevelopment of Widett Circle would amplify the secondary impacts of redevelopment already in the pipeline, or if would lessen them by helping to meet the robust demand for housing in this part of the city.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ONLY MARKET-RATE OR LUXURY HOUSING AT VENUE SITES WOULD WORSEN THE CITY'S AFFORDABILITY CRISIS; A SUBSTANTIAL INFUSION OF AFFORDABLE UNITS WOULD BE ESSENTIAL.

The potential for displacement in neighborhoods surrounding the proposed Athletes Village at the Bayside Expo site is also mitigated by the isolation of the site and the buffer provided by Harbor Point to the east (where 350 units are deed restricted for low income households), the Boston Housing Authority's Mary Ellen McCormack development to the north, and I-93 to the west. As discussed in the section below on venues, the City of Boston has already adopted a Columbia Point Master Plan, which envisions 4,100 new housing units and 1.3 million square feet of commercial space along Morrissey Boulevard, a level of development that would likely have spillover effects in surrounding neighborhoods, regardless of the Olympics.

The situation in Allston is different, since there are fewer barriers between the venue sites and

28 Development information comes from MAPC's Development Database: www.dd.mapc.org. Figures are current as of May 2015.

adjacent neighborhoods. The construction of West Station and the reconfiguration of the I-90 interchange are likely to have a substantial upward impact on housing prices, with or without the Olympics – but, as we explain in the chapter on Venues, without a major infusion of capital related to the Olympics, the Commonwealth currently lacks sufficient funds to complete these major transportation improvements. Nonetheless, the anticipation of the infrastructure improvements has begun to affect the development around the proposed Allston venues, where 1,060 units are planned or in construction within a half mile, and an additional 570 units are in the conceptual stages. If the plans for interchange reconfiguration solidify, it is likely that development proposals will follow suit, with or without an Olympic nod.

Although it may be hard to predict whether an expansion of housing supply in the run-up to the Games, or as part of the legacy redevelopment on the Olympic sites, would ameliorate or exacerbate housing prices and displacement, two conclusions are certain:

- 1) The development of only market-rate or luxury housing at venue sites would worsen the city's affordability crisis; a substantial infusion of affordable units would be essential.
- 2) Many other steps can be taken immediately to help address the current and worsening affordability and displacement crisis, ranging from preservation of existing subsidized units to stronger tenant protections and an increase in inclusionary housing or linkage requirements.

The Olympics would either construct or set the stage for nearly 10,000 new housing units at the sites of the main venues and Olympic Village. In order to help address the city's dire need for affordable housing for both low-income and middle class households, the planning process should establish specific and binding targets for the number and location of units that will be set aside

for low- and middle-income households. These targets should include both the athlete housing to be converted to permanent units at Columbia Point, as well as the housing that may be built by a master developer at the "Widett Circle/Cabot Yards" site after the Olympic facilities have been disassembled. The exact number and mix of affordable units should be determined through the planning process.

ALTHOUGH CHALLENGING
TO ACHIEVE, WE BELIEVE A
TARGET OF ONE-THIRD TO
ONE-HALF AFFORDABLE
UNITS (FOR BOTH LOW-
AND MODERATE-INCOME
HOUSEHOLDS) IS NECESSARY
AND APPROPRIATE.

We assume that athlete housing produced at Columbia Point will be funded by private contributions, which will help to keep the cost of post-Olympic redevelopment lower than it would be if a developer started from scratch. Land assembly, building foundations, basic structural elements, and many internal systems will already be in place. The cost of retrofitting units from temporary athlete housing to permanent family homes will still be significant, but the lower it is, the greater the level of affordability that can be attained. Public investment in this retrofitting process is entirely appropriate, although that might include value capture from other parcels and development in the vicinity.

Although challenging to achieve, we believe a target of one-third to one-half affordable units (for both low- and moderate-income households)

is necessary and appropriate, given the level of need in the region currently, and given concerns about the potential inflationary effects of the Olympics. Of course, permanent residential or commercial projects should at very least meet the requirements of Boston's linkage statute and inclusionary development requirements, ensuring that a minimum percentage of affordable units are developed on site or nearby, or that they contribute to the financing of affordable units elsewhere in the city. However, these programs on their own will not be sufficient to reach the necessary levels of affordability. Additional subsidies (from public or private sources), and additional requirements on for-profit developers, will probably be needed to attain these higher goals. These goals need to be built into the financial models for the entire Olympics early on to ensure that they are achieved. Otherwise, budget pressures may end up driving the process toward a post-Olympic development plan that prioritizes luxury housing in order to maximize revenue.

Furthermore, in regard to inclusionary requirements in Boston, we suggest that every effort be made to locate the affordable units within the former Olympic venues themselves, rather than allowing payment in lieu to migrate elsewhere in the city. This will help to assure that development on Olympic sites includes a mix of units that are affordable to a wide variety of families and individuals.

RECOMMENDATION: The City of Boston and the Olympic Planning Commission should establish specific and binding targets for the production of affordable units in post-Olympic development at the venue sites. Those targets should substantially exceed existing inclusionary housing requirements in the city and be achieved principally through on-site construction, rather than off-site or payments-in-lieu-of housing.

Even if post-Olympic development included a substantial portion of deed-restricted units, it could also contribute to the loss of such units if it increases the pressure on so-called "expiring use" properties



where the rents are controlled by temporary deed restrictions commonly lasting 20 to 40 years. Many such properties were developed in the 1970s and 1980s and are now reaching the end of their affordability terms. When that occurs, owners are free to convert affordable units to market-rate units unless action is taken to extend the affordability restriction. Affordable units in "hot" real estate markets are most at risk, and those around the Olympic venues may be particularly vulnerable to conversion. On the basis of data from the City of Boston, MAPC estimates that within a half-mile of the three major venue sites there are up to 1,700 affordable housing units whose affordability term may expire before 2030, and 3,000 such units between a half-mile and a mile of those sites. Particularly notable is the Harbor Point development near the Athletes Village, where affordability restrictions on 350 units are set to expire in 2019.

RECOMMENDATION: Municipal and state housing agencies should develop a definitive inventory of units near Olympic venues where either use restrictions or subsidies may be expiring between now and 10 years after the Olympic Games (2015-2034). They should collaborate to develop a plan for the preservation of those units.



Finally, it is worth mentioning another indirect, but potentially significant impact of Olympic-related development: its impact on the cost of construction. *Housing a Changing City*,²⁹ Mayor Walsh's housing plan for the year 2030, identifies the high cost of construction as a significant barrier to more affordable housing in the City of Boston. While Olympic-related building could increase opportunities and raise incomes for people in the construction industry, it is possible that construction costs would increase further if a large portion of the construction industry and labor force is occupied with Olympic-related building, further increasing the cost of construction and making it even harder to finance low- and moderately-priced units in the city. On the other hand, if the capacity of the construction industry is expanded to meet Olympic demand, it could help to reduce the cost of construction over the long-term.

RECOMMENDATION: The Olympic Planning Commission, working with state and municipal housing agencies, should study the impacts of Olympic-related development on the construction industry and cost of construction, and should make recommendations to support the delivery of lower-cost housing.

Finally, much of the concern about the impact of the Olympics stems from concern about Boston's current patterns of redevelopment, gentrification, real estate speculation, and displacement. While there is significant public attention to these

issues, there is a lack of shared understanding about how neighborhoods are changing, what the next ten years of real estate development might bring, the impacts of foreign speculative investment on Boston real estate prices, and what the consequences might be of different development patterns and land use decisions. Early in the bid process, Boston 2024 promised that the Olympic bid could support the creation of the next generation of planning tools for Boston and the region: tools that would provide a more robust analysis of development trends and impacts, and that could serve as a platform for informed community conversations. MAPC, the City of Boston, and many academic partners are already working to improve their understanding of the city's housing needs and trends, and Olympic legacy planning provides an opportunity to advance these efforts and provide benefits for a wide variety of planning needs.

RECOMMENDATION: Boston 2024 and the Olympic Planning Commission should support the development of new data resources and real estate modeling tools that are fundamental to an informed conversation about the secondary impacts of large scale redevelopment at Olympic venue sites.

²⁹ <http://www.cityofboston.gov/dnd/boston2030.asp>

Transforming Olympic Venues into Great Neighborhoods

The Olympic proposal focuses on three main event sites: Widett Circle/Cabot Yards, Columbia Point, and North Allston. All have significant development potential; some have previously been studied extensively, while others have not been considered in prior planning efforts as development opportunity sites. Part of the bid's value proposition is that infrastructure improvements for the Games would position these sites for long-term legacy development that could help meet the region's housing and economic development goals. This section begins to raise key issues about the three main venue sites that will need to be addressed in depth through the Olympic legacy planning, such as whether the locations for Olympic venues are consistent with local and regional goals for development and open space preservation; how to redevelop the venues in a way that advances efforts to meet housing and economic development needs; how to develop the sites in a way that maximizes the benefits and minimizes the burdens for existing residents and businesses; and whether the Olympic and legacy uses of the sites will make the region more resilient to climate change.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES THAT AFFECT ALL THE SITES

CLIMATE CHANGE

All three of the major sites are located at fairly low elevations, and are included in the Army Corps of Engineers' 2014 Hurricane Evacuation study as areas that would be subject to flooding from a major storm that arrives in Boston at high tide (as Hurricane Sandy did in New York City). The Widett Circle and Columbia Point sites would be more severely affected due to their proximity to Boston Harbor, while the North Allston site could be flooded due to a higher-level storm surge

that overtops the Charles River Dam and floods upstream areas. In addition to worst-case storm surge scenarios, all three sites are vulnerable to inundation due to future sea level rise, and legacy development on these sites must take these impacts into account. Building elevations, placement of building mechanicals, elevations of roadways and other infrastructure, and provision for emergency access should all be planned with sea level rise and future flooding potential in mind.

In addition, the design of new buildings, infrastructure and landscapes should adapt to future sea levels by accommodating and coexisting with water, not only attempting to keep it at bay. The City of Boston's recent "Living with Water" design competition³⁰ generated site-specific strategies for how neighborhoods, including Columbia Point and Fort Point (just north of Widett Circle/Cabot Yards), can evolve to meet the challenges of sea level rise. These ideas should be incorporated into Olympic and legacy planning.

Olympic redevelopments should also incorporate best practices in stormwater management. Stormwater attenuation and filtration techniques should be used at the Widett Circle/Cabot Yards, which is proposed as a deck, while infiltration should be the priority for the Columbia Point and North Allston sites. Harvard University's Institutional Master Plan addresses stormwater management in North Allston, and third parties such as the Charles River Watershed Association³¹ and a group of Northeastern University students, who used Beacon Yards as a test case for a master's design studio,³² have proposed dramatically improved stormwater management systems for North Allston. Boston 2024 should incorporate these proposals into the Olympic bid, and replicate the strategies on other sites where such extensive planning work has not yet occurred.

³⁰ <http://www.bostonlivingwithwater.org/>

³¹ http://www.crwa.org/hs-fs/hub/311892/file-639916811-pdf/Our_Work/Blue_Cities_Initiative/Community_Collaboration/Allston_Brighton_Green_Streets_Guide.pdf

³² <http://www.northeastern.edu/camd/architecture/portfolio/beacon-yards-denovo-urbanism/>

RECOMMENDATION: Olympic venues should incorporate best practices in stormwater management and planning for storm surges and sea level rise. Olympic and legacy developments should improve the overall climate resiliency of the neighborhoods where they are located.

MULTIMODAL ACCESS

Multimodal access is another issue that is relevant to all venues, as discussed earlier in the Planning and Transportation sections of this report. Boston 2024 has focused its bid on walkability: the majority of the Olympic venue sites in the original bid are within half a mile's walking distance to rapid transit or commuter rail, and no spectator parking is provided at event locations. While we realize that sites may change due to public input and other considerations, the vast majority of venue sites should be accessible by foot, bike, and transit. As planning for the bid progresses, there may be complications with densely populated urban locations at the same time that there may be mounting political pressure to "share the wealth" and locate more venues in suburban areas or other parts of the Commonwealth. Despite these potential centrifugal forces for a larger footprint for the Games, Boston 2024 must remain committed to preserving transit access and walkability for the vast majority of the Olympic venues, including at least some of those located outside the urban core. Choosing new venue locations accessible only by automobile would water down one of the most attractive features of the bid, worsen the impacts on communities, roads, and the environment, and undermine the legacy potential of building a more sustainable and connected region.

RECOMMENDATION: The vast majority of Olympic venues should be accessible by foot, bike and transit.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Beyond the three main venue sites of Widett Circle/Cabot Yards, Columbia Point and North Allston, many of the proposed Olympic venues are sited in

existing parks or publicly-accessible open spaces. Any reduction of public access to these resources during the Games and the construction period should be minimized and mitigated. Boston 2024 must identify how each park that is used for an Olympic facility will be left in *better* condition after the Games. Long-term improvements to parks and open spaces should be consistent with existing plans and community priorities for the space. For example, the evolving discussion between Boston 2024 and residents and community groups near Franklin Park should shape both the Olympic and legacy plans for the park to address community priorities such as path maintenance and woodlands management.

RECOMMENDATION: The Olympic legacy should include meaningful improvements to existing parks, open spaces, and youth sports facilities, determined with the engagement of the municipal government and local neighbors.

VENUE-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

WIDETT CIRCLE/CABOT YARDS

The location Boston 2024 refers to as "Midtown," an area that includes Widett Circle and Cabot Yards, has not previously appeared as a redevelopment site in any city or regional plans. However, the area is well-situated for development due to its location within walking distance of two Red Line stations, as well as South Station and employment centers in the Financial District, Seaport, and Back Bay. Significant new development is planned or underway nearby on underutilized land along Dorchester Avenue and on the opposite side of I-93 in the Newmarket area. However, Widett Circle in particular is currently cut off on all sides by highway ramps and rail lines, and the entire area is occupied by industrial and transportation uses. Due to the current uses and lack of connectivity to nearby neighborhoods, major investments in decking and transportation connections would be required to enable redevelopment.

Widett Circle/ Cabot Yards



CREATING NEW PEDESTRIAN,
BICYCLE AND TRANSIT
CONNECTIONS WOULD
INCREASE THE VIABILITY OF
LEGACY DEVELOPMENT ON
THE WIDETT CIRCLE/CABOT
YARDS SITE, AND WOULD MAKE
ANY FUTURE DEVELOPMENT
MUCH LESS CAR RELIANT.

A central feature in the Boston 2024 bid is a reconstructed Dorchester Avenue, dubbed the “Olympic Boulevard,” that would link South Station and the Olympic Stadium. However, while the current Olympic plans improve vehicle and pedestrian access to the north, they do not propose any new connections to the south, east, or west. Despite the Widett Circle/Cabot Yards site’s central location between South Boston and the South End, a lack of street-level neighborhood connectivity is a major barrier to successful urban redevelopment integrated with the surrounding area. According to the current Boston 2024 proposal, all access between the Widett Circle/Cabot Yards site and the surrounding neighborhoods in South Boston, Roxbury, or the South End would be funneled through West Fourth Street, which forms the northern border of the Olympic site.

In order for legacy development to thrive at Widett Circle/Cabot Yards, new bicycle, pedestrian, and transit links must be created. One of these new links should provide direct access from the southern end of the site to Andrew Station, and the South Boston Bypass road should be reconfigured to provide a pedestrian, bicycle, and bus link between Widett Circle/Cabot Yards and Dorchester Avenue. To the

west, the existing connections from West Fourth Street and Albany Street under the I-93 viaduct must be reconfigured to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety, calm traffic, and make the area feel more like a neighborhood street. Most difficult, and most crucial, is creating a new link for pedestrians and cyclists to access Widett Circle from the south. This would most likely involve reconstruction of the Massachusetts Avenue Connector in order to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle traffic and connect directly to the new deck constructed by Boston 2024.

Creating new pedestrian, bicycle and transit connections would increase the viability of legacy development on the Widett Circle/Cabot Yards site, and would make any future development much less car reliant. Furthermore, I-93 and rail infrastructure currently serve as a major barrier between different parts of Boston, cutting adjacent neighborhoods off from one another and funneling all traffic into a few access points that become dangerous and unpleasant for people on foot or on bikes. The Olympic and legacy developments of Widett Circle/Cabot Yards should be designed to help bridge this gap between neighborhoods.

RECOMMENDATION: Construct new pedestrian, bicycle and transit connections between Widett Circle and South Boston, the South End, and Roxbury by reconstructing existing roadways to better accommodate people on foot and on bikes, and by adding new streets where necessary.

The Widett Circle/Cabot Yards site is currently occupied by MBTA, Amtrak, and Boston Transportation Department (BTD) facilities. The site houses critical functions, such as storing towed vehicles, washing trains, and maintaining buses. The Olympic bid proposes building a deck over active rail lines, the commuter rail layover yard, and the Amtrak train wash facility, rebuilding the MBTA Cabot Garage bus maintenance facility on a different portion of the site, and relocating the BTD tow lot.



Widett Circle

Extremely careful planning is needed to accomplish this without disrupting transit operations, which will likely be one of the most costly challenges facing this site.

Boston 2024 has suggested that the Cabot Garage will be able to operate normally until just before the Games, but operations will need to be relocated for a period of months before and during the Games, which may impact service and/or maintenance operations. Alternative locations for the City of Boston tow lot and Public Works facility have yet to be identified, and it may be difficult to find new sites that provide comparable functionality without negatively impacting existing neighborhoods. In particular, it is important that the new sites do not increase the burden on environmental justice communities. In addition, since there are no plans to relocate these facilities absent the Olympics, the costs of relocation should be borne in full by Boston 2024 and/or the master developer of the site.

If these criteria were met, the Olympics could provide a useful impetus to relocate some of these functions to more appropriate locations, allowing the Widett Circle/Cabot Yards site to achieve its full potential.

RECOMMENDATION: Boston 2024 and/or the master developer should bear the costs of reconstructing and/or relocating the transportation facilities currently occupying the Widett Circle/Cabot Yards site, and these

facilities should be relocated in a way that does not increase the burden on environmental justice populations.

The design of the deck also has potential future impacts on the transportation facilities that will remain on the site. Extremely careful planning is needed to ensure that the location of the deck and the configuration of the support pillars do not preclude future enhancements to the transportation infrastructure in the area. Once the deck is built, and buildings are constructed on top of it, there will never be a chance to go back and reconfigure the structure. The design of the deck must account for multiple future scenarios, including transit expansions, new technologies and vehicles, and sea level rise that necessitates elevating the tracks or otherwise protecting against flooding. Climate change vulnerability is a major issue at the Widett Circle/Cabot Yards site, due to its low elevation and proximity to Fort Point Channel. Boston 2024 should work with transportation agencies to ensure the resiliency of the transportation infrastructure that will remain on the site below the deck. Any retrofit projects to improve the resiliency of the rail infrastructure would be enormously more difficult and expensive – if not impossible – once a deck is constructed.

RECOMMENDATION: Planning for the deck and transit infrastructure must allow for multiple future transportation and climate scenarios.

Despite the challenges associated with relocating the various transportation facilities and constructing a deck overtop active rail operations, the difficulty and expense of this undertaking is perhaps the strongest argument in favor of using the site for an Olympic stadium. Without the private capital and political will associated with an Olympic redevelopment, it is likely that Widett Circle and Cabot Yards would not be redeveloped for another generation, and one of the most potentially desirable locations in the region would remain cut off from surrounding neighborhoods and occupied by transportation maintenance facilities. If the site were to be decked over, it could become an unparalleled development opportunity for Boston, with the potential for up to 4,000 housing units and 3 million square feet of retail, office, and hotel development, according to preliminary estimates from Boston 2024. If the decking and infrastructure improvements were funded by private interests, leaving behind a development-ready and pre-permitted site, there would be great potential for the delivery of thousands of affordable and moderately priced units in a location with nearly unparalleled access to jobs and amenities.

In fact, the Widett Circle/Cabot Yards site provides a rare opportunity in the city of Boston to create an entirely new neighborhood just a stone's throw from Downtown, but it would take careful planning to realize the site's full potential. Most importantly, the new growth should not be exclusively luxury housing, even if that were to provide the best returns for private investors. A neighborhood needs a mix of housing opportunities (both ownership and rental) for low- and moderate-income households as well as more affluent residents. While it is too soon to determine what the specific mix of income limits should be (a figure that depends in large part on public contributions to infrastructure and other improvements), we do believe that the City of Boston and the Olympic Planning Commission should establish specific and enforceable targets for the delivery of affordable units, likely in excess of those already required through the city's

inclusionary housing guidelines. Furthermore, the affordable units should be distributed throughout the development and should not be concentrated in one portion of the site or one phase of the build-out. Long-term planning for the site should also address the following issues:

- air quality and public health issues related to the adjacent highway and rail facility;
- open space and recreation needs for the residents (the closest major park is Moakley Park, which is one mile away across six lanes of Old Colony Boulevard);
- commercial development and job creation in a truly mixed-use community; and
- access to goods and services.

RECOMMENDATION: The City of Boston, in collaboration with the Olympic Planning Commission, should lead a planning process for legacy development at the Widett Circle/Cabot Yards site, with the goal of developing new zoning, urban design guidelines, open space requirements, public health mitigation measures, and binding affordability requirements for the site.

While there are no residential uses on the Widett Circle/Cabot Yards site that would be displaced by the Olympics, the use of Widett Circle for the Games would have significant impacts on the private businesses currently located there. Even if Boston 2024 were to provide a financially neutral or positive relocation alternative to the existing wholesale businesses, there might be interruptions to business, and new sites might have different benefits and drawbacks for both the businesses and the new surrounding communities. The impact on employees would also need to be taken into account: new locations could be more difficult for existing employees to access. Consequently, identifying and evaluating alternative locations for those businesses should be a high near-term priority for Boston 2024 and the City of Boston.

RECOMMENDATION: Boston 2024 must begin work immediately to identify alternative sites for Widett Circle commercial enterprises and should provide favorable terms for the relocation of those businesses.

COLUMBIA POINT

The Columbia Point neighborhood has been proposed as the location for the Olympic Athletes Village, to be constructed on the former Bayside Exposition Center, along with some adjacent publicly- and privately-owned parcels. The Bayside Expo Center and surrounding parking lots were purchased by the University of Massachusetts Boston in 2010. The university's 25-year institutional master plan was adopted in 2007, before this site was purchased, and therefore does not include plans for redeveloping it. Instead, UMass Boston is using the Bayside Expo Center property in the near term to support developments underway elsewhere on their campus, providing 1,300 parking spaces and space for construction staging. The university conducted a community engagement process in 2012 that generated a wide range of ideas for the site, but to date, UMass Boston has said little publicly about their long-term plans for the site.

The Columbia Point neighborhood master plan,³³ which was approved by the Boston Redevelopment Authority in 2011, calls for mixed use development with heights up to 200 feet close to the JFK/UMass station. This master plan envisions redevelopment of many commercial parcels along Morrissey Boulevard to create a new mixed use district with an emphasis on for-sale housing. In addition, a denser street network is envisioned, with increased street trees and high-quality bicycle and pedestrian facilities on both existing and proposed new streets.

Walkability improvements in this area are badly needed. Kosciuszko Circle, Morrissey Boulevard, and the JFK/UMass station area are extremely difficult to navigate on foot, while Mount Vernon Street provides an uninviting pedestrian experience. The Boston Redevelopment Authority has a

WALKABILITY IMPROVEMENTS
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preliminary design for Mount Vernon Street³⁴ that would include reducing the number and width of travel lanes, and adding protected bike lanes, traffic calming, and other important streetscape improvements. However, the plan is not yet funded. Furthermore, pedestrian improvements are most needed at Kosciuszko Circle and the T station, which are owned by the state Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the MBTA, respectively. Boston 2024 could provide a major public benefit by improving pedestrian access between the MBTA station, Columbia Point, the neighborhood adjacent to I-93 to the west, Moakley Park, and the Harborwalk. These areas are as treacherous for cyclists as they are for pedestrians. Boston 2024's plans for roadway reconfigurations should include protected bike lanes that separate cyclists from the heavy vehicle traffic.

However, while Boston 2024 renderings show a complete reconstruction of JFK station and surrounding roadways, including the elimination of the rotary at Kosciuszko Circle, JFK/UMass station does not appear in the MBTA's five year Capital Improvement Plan, and neither the state's Department of Conservation and Recreation nor the City of Boston has existing plans to redesign and reconstruct Kosciuszko Circle. These projects have not been identified as a priority for the use of public

33 <http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/getattachment/3dbb6601-3336-492e-bc69-cc4ef07f8dd1>

34 <http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/planning/planning-initiatives/mt-vernon-street-design>

Columbia Point

Preble Street

Joe Moakley Park

William J Day Blvd

Old Colony Avenue

93

Harborwalk

Columbia Road

JFK/UMass

Dorchester Avenue

Mt Vernon Street

William T. Morrissey Blvd

Savin Hill



Venue Area



MBTA Stations



Commuter Rail



MBTA Transit Lines

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles



Data Sources: MAPC, MBTA, MassDOT, MassGIS,
Boston 2024 bid documents

Date: June, 2015



dollars, yet they are essential to the success of the Boston 2024 proposal – therefore, Boston 2024 should play a major role in funding their design and construction.

In addition, the proposed reconstruction of JFK/UMass station and Kosciuszko Circle would have enormous impacts on the area during the construction period, as they are Columbia Point’s primary access and egress for both transit and automobile traffic. Boston 2024 should work with the Columbia Point and UMass community to develop a construction mitigation and transportation access plan for the Games and for construction of both Olympic and legacy developments.

RECOMMENDATION: Reconstruction of JFK/UMass Station and Kosciuszko Circle should include significant improvements to walking and biking accommodations, and should be funded primarily by Boston 2024.

The long-term development potential of the Bayside Expo site in particular is in large part dependent on UMass Boston plans. The university has a longstanding intention to provide on-campus student housing, with the 2007 25-year master plan calling for 2,000 dorm beds. Publicly available information suggests that UMass would not develop the Bayside site between now and 2024, despite

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THE ATHLETES VILLAGE SHOULD BE DESIGNED FOR FUTURE USE AS A MIXED-USE, MIXED INCOME DEVELOPMENT.

.....

the extremely valuable location of this site between a Red Line station and Boston Harbor. Therefore one possible advantage of hosting the Athletes Village on this site is the potential for the Olympics to speed the site’s redevelopment after the Games. Boston 2024’s proposal for legacy development of the Athletes Village suggests that 6,000 beds would become permanent student housing owned by a public authority or financed by a private developer, while 2,500 to 2,900 units would be made available as market rate rentals and for-sale condominiums.

The Athletes Village should be designed for future use as a mixed-use, mixed-income development aligned with *Housing a Changing City: Boston 2030*, Mayor Walsh’s long-term housing plan, as well as the Columbia Point Master Plan, which identifies mixed incomes and a 30% ownership rate as goals. Student housing units should be closer in number to the 2,000 to 3,000 cited in UMass Boston’s Institutional Master Plan, and should include units appropriate for students to remain

on-site throughout their entire enrollment at UMass. Otherwise, the existence of on-campus housing for lowerclassmen will attract students from outside the area, who may move off-campus as upperclassmen and cause a strain on the surrounding housing market, as has occurred in residential neighborhoods surrounding Northeastern University.

The Columbia Point Master Plan also identifies increased access to open space resources as an important goal. Legacy uses of the Bayside Expo site should increase connectivity between Moakley Park, the Harborwalk, and the rest of the Columbia Point neighborhood, as well as adding new public open spaces within the redevelopment site.

RECOMMENDATION: The Athletes Village should be designed for legacy use as a mixed-income neighborhood with high rates of homeownership and strong access to parks, consistent with the Columbia Point Master Plan. The number of dormitory units in the legacy development should be consistent with the UMass Boston Institutional Master Plan.

The bid documents propose constructing the Athletes Village using modular building techniques, and a Massachusetts facility is proposed to manufacture the modular units. While it is unclear whether this will reduce the cost of the Olympic village itself, it should allow for adapting the units for permanent housing uses at Columbia Point at a reasonable cost. In addition, use of modular construction at this scale creates the potential for greater use of modular construction in Greater Boston (which could lower development costs, by speeding delivery time or by even by lowering hard construction costs as the technology advances in the future). The Commonwealth presently lacks a modular factory, and modular construction has been used relatively infrequently here. Employing modular construction for the Olympics would give development teams, including local construction firms, experience in using these materials and

techniques, which would greatly facilitate their use in non-Olympics projects. However, it would be important to ensure that new building techniques were implemented with high standards for wages and working conditions.

Boston 2024's initial proposal to relocate some of these units after the Olympics is more problematic. It is unclear whether the cost of "disconnecting" and moving the modular boxes would make economic sense, and there is no clear indication of their final destination. Meanwhile, the Bayside Expo site and surrounding area was identified in the Columbia Point Master Plan as suitable for significant increases in density. Repurposing the Athletes Village at Columbia Point would provide a unique opportunity to create a new neighborhood on a site that has many advantages, not least of which are proximity to the Red Line and Boston Harbor. The planning process should lay out in great specificity exactly what the end-state of the units would be, along with the details of reconstruction that should begin as soon as possible after the end of the Games.

The recommendations about housing affordability, neighborhood amenities, and mixed-use development that were discussed above in regard to Widett Circle/Cabot Yards should apply to Columbia Point as well.

RECOMMENDATION: The Athletes Village should be designed to accommodate legacy uses without relocation of modular housing units.

NORTH ALLSTON

The area referred to as the "Beacon Yards Precinct" by the Boston 2024 proposal includes three overall parcels: existing Harvard athletic facilities and the City of Boston park called Smith Field, between North Harvard Street and Soldier's Field Road; Harvard-owned land between Western Avenue and Cambridge Street; and the parcel historically known as Beacon Yards, which is between Cambridge Street and the MBTA commuter rail tracks.

North Allston



The parcel between Western Avenue and Cambridge Street, much of which is currently vacant, is included in Harvard's 10-year Institutional Master Plan, which runs through 2023. A science complex and a hotel planned for this parcel are expected to be completed by 2023. The Boston 2024 rendering for the North Allston cluster shows aquatics and tennis facilities located in this parcel. The area historically known as Beacon Yards is currently a highway interchange and a rail yard that until recently hosted CSX freight operations. Harvard University now owns the land, although the Commonwealth retains transportation easements. Beacon Yards is not included in Harvard's Institutional Master Plan, and Harvard has said

nothing publicly about their plans for this site.

MassDOT has recently completed the first phase of planning and environmental permitting for a \$400+ million project to reconstruct the interchange and shrink the rail yard, with the result of opening up 70 to 90 acres of developable land. The construction of a new commuter rail station, named West Station, is included in this project, and a new rapid transit-style service using Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) rail cars has been proposed. However, only \$165 million of the funding has been identified: enough to reconstruct the aging I-90 viaduct, but not enough to reconfigure the interchange and build the train station and new surface streets.



THE MOST IMPORTANT OLYMPIC LEGACY FOR NORTH ALLSTON IS THE POTENTIAL FOR THE GAMES TO PROVIDE AN IMPETUS FOR THE COMMONWEALTH TO FULLY FUND AND COMPLETE THE ALLSTON INTERCHANGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT, INCLUDING WEST STATION, A RECONSTRUCTED CAMBRIDGE STREET, AND OTHER MULTIMODAL AND OPEN SPACE IMPROVEMENTS.

BEACON YARDS HAS THE
POTENTIAL TO BECOME
AN ENTIRELY NEW
NEIGHBORHOOD LOCATED
DIRECTLY IN BETWEEN
HARVARD, MIT, AND
BOSTON UNIVERSITY, WITH
RIVERFRONT PROPERTY AND
DIRECT RAIL ACCESS TO
DOWNTOWN BOSTON.

The Boston 2024 bid documents do not include any Olympic facilities in Beacon Yards. However, they assume the successful completion of the Allston Interchange Improvement Project, including the construction of West Station and new surface streets. According to Boston 2024, if West Station were not to be built, Olympic facilities in North Allston would have to be scaled back. The most important Olympic legacy for North Allston is the potential for the Games to provide an impetus for the Commonwealth to fully fund and complete the Allston Interchange Improvement Project, including West Station, a reconstructed Cambridge Street, and other multimodal and open space improvements. Beacon Yards is one of the largest vacant development opportunities in the entire urban core of the Boston region. The site has the potential to become an entirely new neighborhood, located directly in between Harvard, MIT and Boston University, with riverfront property and direct rail access to downtown Boston. Yet none of this will be possible without the completion of the I-90 realignment and the construction of West Station.

RECOMMENDATION: Boston 2024 should advocate for the Allston Interchange Improvement Project, including West Station, to be funded and fully constructed by 2024, and should contribute financially to aspects of the project that will directly benefit the Games.

Beacon Yards is a prime example of an opportunity for value capture. Without major public investments in transportation infrastructure, the site is almost entirely occupied by railroad tracks and highway on-ramps, and what little unoccupied land exists is cut off from the Charles River and hemmed in on all sides, dramatically constraining its development potential. Yet if the Commonwealth were to invest public resources to reconfigure the interchange, build a new transit station, construct an entirely new network of neighborhood streets and bike paths, and expand parkland along the Charles River, the development value of Beacon Yards and the surrounding neighborhoods on all sides would increase enormously. The options for the Commonwealth to recapture some of that increased value are complicated by the presence of major nonprofit landowners on both sides of the highway, but serious options remain. The Commonwealth and the City of Boston should not miss the opportunity to finance these critical transportation investments by leveraging the future development value that these public investments would generate.

RECOMMENDATION: The City of Boston and the Commonwealth should use value capture and expanded public-private partnerships to fund the Allston Interchange Improvement Project and future transit service at West Station.

While MassDOT's current designs for a new I-90 Interchange would make a number of transformational multimodal improvements, they do not include key elements that would benefit both the Olympics and the legacy for Allston and the region, including new pedestrian, bicycle, and



transit access across the Grand Junction Bridge, which runs underneath the Boston University Bridge to Cambridge. This link would benefit the Olympics by creating direct access between Beacon Yards and other Olympic venues at Magazine Beach and MIT. Multimodal access over the Grand Junction would also have enormous value as a legacy investment; addressing this missing link in the transportation network has been a central feature of many planning efforts, including the Urban Ring. The City of Cambridge is currently planning a pedestrian, bicycle and transit corridor along the Grand Junction corridor that would lead from the Charles River through MIT and East Cambridge to connect to the Green Line Extension and the Somerville Community Path.³⁵ MassDOT's Allston Interchange Realignment Project proposes rapid transit-style DMU rail service from West Station over the Grand Junction Bridge to Kendall Square, terminating at North Station. This new transit connection would be transformational, linking Kendall Square, one of the fastest-growing

neighborhoods in New England, with future development at Beacon Yards. However, funding for this transit expansion has not yet been secured, and MassDOT's proposal does not include pedestrian and bicycle access across the Grand Junction.

RECOMMENDATION: Boston 2024 should advocate for and contribute to funding the implementation of new pedestrian, bicycle and transit access across the Charles River via the Grand Junction Bridge.

Boston 2024 has proposed an "Olympic lane" that would connect the Athletes Village and North Allston via a dedicated bus route, as discussed in the Transportation section earlier. However, current designs for the Allston Interchange Improvement Project do not include any dedicated bus lanes, or even any new streets for buses to travel across the project area between Commonwealth Avenue and Beacon Yards. New bus routes have received support from many Allston residents and other stakeholders, yet funding constraints and institutional opposition have kept them out of MassDOT's designs thus far.

³⁵ <http://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/Projects/Transportation/GrandJunctionPathway>

A BUS RAPID TRANSIT
CORRIDOR CONNECTING
HARVARD SQUARE TO THE
LONGWOOD MEDICAL
AREA AND BEYOND TO
DUDLEY SQUARE HAS
BEEN IDENTIFIED IN MANY
EXISTING PLANNING
PROCESSES AS A PRIORITY.

More broadly, a bus rapid transit corridor connecting Harvard Square to the Longwood Medical Area and beyond to Dudley Square has been identified in many existing planning processes as a priority. The Allston section of this route is the most difficult area in which to create dedicated bus lanes with existing street configurations. Yet Beacon Yards sits in the middle of this corridor, and the Allston Interchange Improvement Project would create multiple new streets that could easily be designed to accommodate dedicated bus lanes.

RECOMMENDATION: Boston 2024 should work with MassDOT and institutional stakeholders to incorporate dedicated bus lanes into the Allston Interchange Improvement Project, to serve the Olympic Route Network and legacy BRT routes.

Boston 2024 should also investigate the feasibility of ferry service on the Charles River to bring spectators and volunteers between Olympic venues in North Allston, Magazine Beach, Boston University, and MIT. Planning for such a ferry service could spur development of a commuter ferry or water taxi service on the Charles River that could connect rapidly growing employment centers in Watertown and residential areas in North Allston and

Cambridgeport with rail transit at Harvard Square, Charles/MGH, or perhaps even North Station. Watertown is experiencing rapid development along Arsenal Street, which despite its proximity to Cambridge and Boston is already being hindered by traffic and overcrowding on existing MBTA bus routes. A Charles River ferry could provide an important new link to the rest of the urban core. Such a service could be entirely operated by private companies, like the water taxis in Boston Harbor, or could be an MBTA service provided by contractors, like many of the Boston Harbor ferry services.

RECOMMENDATION: Boston 2024 should explore a new ferry service to connect Olympic venues along the Charles River, which could have a legacy implementation as a commuter ferry or water taxi service.

While the Olympics could provide the impetus for the construction of West Station and other transportation improvements, it is not clear whether they would necessarily catalyze development at Beacon Yards and other parts of North Allston soon after the conclusion of the Games. All of the land in question is controlled by Harvard, which has no public plans to develop Beacon Yards before 2024. Given the long planning horizons of such a major university, it is not inconceivable that Harvard might wait decades to develop these sites, which would be unfortunate, given the major public investments directed to the highway realignment and station construction, and the pressing need for additional mixed-income housing and homeownership opportunities in Allston.

Furthermore, the lack of land use planning for Beacon Yards has been a recurring issue in the design of the Allston interchange realignment. The design and placement of highway entrances and surface streets will have major impacts on the future development potential of parcels delineated by the new street network. Accordingly, the Massachusetts Secretary of Energy and

Environmental Affairs (EEA) directed MassDOT in late 2014 to work with Harvard and the Boston Redevelopment Authority to develop future land use development assumptions to inform the design of the interchange.³⁶ However, there appears to have been no progress to date on this issue.

RECOMMENDATION: The Boston Redevelopment Authority should work with Harvard University to produce a future development framework for Beacon Yards that can influence the design of transportation infrastructure and Olympic legacy planning, and accelerate the development of Beacon Yards. MAPC and the City of Cambridge should participate in this process.

Beacon Yards is at the center of a neighborhood that has undergone rapid change in recent years, and is surrounded by an enormous amount of private and institutional development, including major projects by New Balance, Boston University, and Boston College, in addition to Harvard University. Homeownership rates have declined and property values have risen rapidly in Allston neighborhoods on both sides of I-90, driven by major land purchases by Harvard University and increasing investment activity that has converted many owner-occupied units into rentals. A concentration of off-campus student housing has led to major health and safety issues and a declining quality of life for longtime residents, as documented in the Boston Globe's 2014 "Shadow Campus" Spotlight Series.³⁷ Yet efforts to plan for neighborhood change in Allston have been piecemeal at best. There have been no planning processes that incorporate all of the major developments currently underway, and the most recent master plan for North Allston does not

anticipate the interchange realignment project, and therefore does not address the future use of Beacon Yards, much less the opportunities and challenges associated with hosting Olympic venues in North Allston.

RECOMMENDATION: The City of Boston should initiate a neighborhood master planning process in Allston, independent of the Olympic bid, but proceeding quickly enough to influence the bid and the ongoing design of transportation infrastructure.

CONCLUSION

If selected by the International Olympic Commission, Boston will face many challenges to implementing a successful Games, and more importantly, a successful legacy for the region. Yet those challenges are not insurmountable, nor are they specific to the Olympics. An aging transit system, sky-high housing costs, strained public finances, and lack of coordinated planning are all issues that must be tackled if we are to attain a more connected, livable, and prosperous Metro Boston in 2024 – with or without the Olympics. To the extent that the Olympic planning process can generate the focus, energy, and political will necessary to take on these big challenges, it may leave a lasting positive legacy – regardless of whether or not our bid is chosen.

This report has identified a wide variety of issues that must be addressed in the coming months and years. It sets forth recommendations for how the region can take advantage of this unique opportunity to transform Metro Boston for the better. Now is the time for the region's political, community, and business leaders to come together around a shared set of goals, to coordinate their actions, and to bring about a truly "Greater Boston Region," by putting legacy first.

36 Certificate of the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs on the Allston Interchange Environmental Notification Form, Certificate #15278, page 17-18. <http://bit.ly/1RA3inz>

37 <http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/specials/shadow-campus>

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PUTTING LEGACY FIRST

PLANNING FOR THE BOSTON 2024 OLYMPICS

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