



A Call to Action to Make Roszie the Most Walkable Neighborhood in Boston

12 September 2024

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL ONLY (eileen.michaud@boston.gov)

Boston Planning Department
One City Hall Plaza, 9th Floor
Boston, Massachusetts 02201
Attention: Eileen Michaud, Planner II

**RE: Open Letter in Support of Critical Pro-Housing and Transportation Proposals
Squares + Streets Small Area Plan for Roslindale Square**

Dear Eileen:

Please accept the following open letter in support of critical pro-housing and transportation proposals that have been advanced to date as part of the Boston Planning Department's Squares + Streets Small Area Planning process for Roslindale Square. In so doing, we are openly cribbing in full (with some selected editing) and simply seeking to amplify the open letter/petition text that has been employed by our neighbors involved in Rozzidents for More Rozzidents and Abundant Housing Massachusetts, as follows:

We believe our transit-accessible, intergenerational, and economically diverse neighborhood is a great place to live, and we want to welcome more neighbors to have the opportunity to live here. We therefore support the following recommendations to ensure that Roslindale remains and becomes an even more thriving community in the years to come:

Approve housing development on the Taft Hill municipal parking lot

We previously supported and would very much welcome the creation of mixed-income housing with ground floor active use on the Taft Hill parking lot that also continues to provide public parking. This much-needed addition to our housing supply is perfectly located for transit access, and will increase the support for the Roslindale Square main street business district.

Allow maximum zoning flexibility with S4, S3, S2, and even S5 (where appropriate) districts on commercial corridors, main streets, gateways and community connections

We support zoning that allows Roslindale to grow up and densify organically. That is why we're in favor of applying the S4, S3, and S2 districts that allow for 7-story and 5-story buildings across the commercial core, main streets, gateways, and community connections. We additionally

support the inclusion of an S5 district for a taller mixed-use building should there be an appropriate location for one.

While we appreciate the Planning Department's intention to honor resident preferences for scale and land use, this posture usually results in zoning that is far too deferential to the way things are. Rather than affirm the exclusionary land use decisions that shaped Roslindale over the last 50 years, this rezoning should be more visionary about Roslindale's future.

Legalize incremental housing development with So zoning on Roslindale Square's nearby residential streets

Commercial and residential areas alike should share the responsibility and reap the benefits for adding homes to our neighborhood. That is why we support applying the So "Transitional Residential" district to the residential streets within the Squares + Streets primary planning area. This will legalize 4-story buildings and could result in 500 new homes over the next decade, as well as diversify our streets, and grant homeowners expanded property rights.

Restore two-way Washington St and convert Poplar St to a shared street

Allowing traffic and buses to continue south on Washington instead of going around Adams Park will keep traffic on arterial streets and reduce vehicle miles traveled. Two-way operations on Washington will greatly reduce the need for vehicle traffic on Poplar St. This opens the opportunity for making Poplar a shared street along the length of Adams Park, with wider sidewalks along the park and in front of the Poplar St businesses. While continuing to allow for local deliveries and curbside uses for nearby businesses, the lack of through traffic means that the street could be fully closed to vehicles for special events.

Reduce financial barriers to Commuter Rail access with lower fares and increased service

Increasing service to every 30 minutes and reducing fares to subway fares (Zone 1A) would expand equitable mobility options for existing and future residents and visitors to Roslindale Square, and improve the economic competitiveness of small businesses.

We recognize that our neighborhood is part of a larger city of close to 700,000 people as well as the broader Boston region that faces a massive housing shortage. The result of too few homes is incredibly high housing prices, and that risks greater and more rapid displacement of our most vulnerable neighbors. We want to do our part to ensure that Roslindale and our city broadly meet the needs of a growing population.

Sincerely yours,
WalkUP Roslindale Board of Directors

Boston Planning Department, Eileen Michaud, Planner II
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About WalkUP Roslindale

WalkUP Roslindale, which takes its name from the international movement to foster “**Walkable Urban Places**,” is a collaborative group of residents and business owners dedicated to making Roslindale the most walkable neighborhood in Boston. We advocate for more housing of all types and at all levels of affordability as well as improvements to our public and private built environment that strengthen walking, cycling, transit, and other forms of active mobility as means toward better personal and public health, safety, social capital, economic development, and environmental sustainability. We are led by a board of directors of about just over twenty individuals and have over 800 additional supporters. More information about WalkUP Roslindale and our initiatives can be found at www.walkuproslindale.org.

Copy (by email) to:

Michelle Wu, Mayor (mayor@boston.gov)

Enrique Pepén, City Councilor, District 5 (enrique.pepen@boston.gov)

Josh McCorkle, ONS Representative, Roslindale (josh.mccorkle@boston.gov)