

Section 7.2.10:

MATTAPAN

For an explanation of the organization, content and maps in this section, please see the Introduction to Section 7.2: Community Open Space and Recreation (page 160).

Background

Mattapan became part of Boston in 1870 through the annexation of the town of Dorchester. Mattapan is predominantly residential, a classic streetcar suburb. The Midlands Branch railroad in 1855 followed by the trolley in the 1890s opened up Mattapan to waves of residential construction. Construction in the northern half of Mattapan saw single-family homes mixed in with two- and three-family homes. In the southern half of Mattapan, east and west of Mattapan Square, single-family homes on larger lots were built in the middle of the 20th century. Mattapan Square, at the confluence of Blue Hill Avenue, River Street, and Cummins Highway, with MBTA Red Line trolley service, became the commercial heart of Mattapan. After declines through the second half of the 20th century, Mattapan Square has seen slow but sustained reinvestment over the last twenty years.

Open Space Access & Equity

The BRA's neighborhood boundaries for Mattapan were redrawn in the late 2000s, which reduced its overall area while adding to the adjacent neighborhoods of Dorchester and Hyde Park. Mattapan now has the smallest population of any city neighborhood and it has lost over 7% of its population between 2000 and 2010 (redrawn boundary notwithstanding). Its population density is similar to Roslindale or Jamaica Plain, and its open space ratio of 6.38 acres per thousand residents is a bit lower than the city average of 7.59.

While the entire neighborhood satisfies at least one of the state's criteria for an environmental justice population, park need scores are not as high in this neighborhood as in Dorchester, likely due to Mattapan's lower density (Mattapan Maps 2 & 3). At 27.6%, Mattapan has a higher proportion of children than most of the other city neighborhoods. At 9.2% of the neighborhood population, there are more teenagers in Mattapan than any other city neighborhood.

Mattapan contains four large community parks, as well as the two DCR parks along the Neponset River Reservation (Ryan and Kennedy), all of which support a range of active recreational uses. All the parks but Kennedy Playground contain athletic fields, basketball and tennis courts, play areas, and four have water spray features (Mattapan Maps 7 & 8).

While the community parks serve this neighborhood well, most of the remaining open spaces are urban wilds, cemeteries and other limited access, low use areas. The Gladeside Urban Wild, in particular, is a large natural area with trails and habitat area suitable for exploration, but site access has limited visibility. The neighborhood has expressed interest in increased access and programming in these woodland sites.

The area along the Mattapan and Hyde Park boundary lies between the two large multi-use parks at Ross and Hunt-Almont, neither of which is within a 10 minute walk for many neighborhood residents. Boston Parks will be considering acquisition opportunities in this area to meet this community need. A similar area of need (see Map 10) is illustrated at the Boston Housing Authority Gallivan Boulevard Housing south of Morton Street. While this 27-acre development does not include any officially designated public parks, the residents are served by large shared passive landscape areas. Further consideration should be given to the inclusion of active recreation facilities to serve the needs of the residents in this BHA community.

Future Development

The Mattapan neighborhood contains the large campuses of the Foley Senior Housing Development and the Boston Public Health Commission Campus which limit neighborhood connectivity. Similarly, the Boston Nature Center is isolated by virtue of its location at the northwest edge of the community, with large institutional and residential developments limiting connections to the rest of the neighborhood to the south. Long term disposition, access and use of these sites should be further studied to ensure that possible development protects the open space character of the neighborhood and ideally improves access and connectivity.

Waterfront access is an unrealized opportunity in Mattapan. Only the DCR's Ryan Playground and Kennedy Playground and Community Gardens offer access to the Neponset. The rebuilding of Ryan and Kennedy Playgrounds and the additional attention from the Greenways to the Harbor program has provided paths down to and along the river including canoe launches. As the DCR further develops the Neponset River Greenway (most of which in this section is on the Milton side of the Reservation), Mattapan will benefit from the connectivity this greenway provides.

The DCR recognizes the importance of the connection between Mattapan Square and the River in its Neponset River Reservation Master Plan Phase II. The planning staff at the BRA is aware of this and has suggested that the City re-design Mattapan Square for better pedestrian and bicycle access, using the Complete Streets guidelines, so as to facilitate movement through the Square and onto the Reservation. Coordination between DCR and the City would optimize the accessibility for pedestrians and bicyclists in this whole area, improving the attractiveness of Mattapan as a residential destination, and of the Square as a commercial destination.

Another key development in Mattapan is the creation of the Morton Street station on the MBTA Fairmount commuter rail line. Located in the northeastern part of this community, it provides an additional transit option to downtown. This station opens the possibility of economic and community activity in the Morton Street corridor.

The BRA planning staff is in the final stages of preparing a Corridor Plan for their Fairmount Indigo Planning Initiative. This planning effort in part responds to a 2011 proposal by a group

of non-profit organizations known as the Fairmount Greenway Task Force. Both efforts build on the transportation access opportunities afforded by the state's investment in the Fairmount Line, a commuter rail line that runs from South Station to Readville in Hyde Park, the only commuter rail line wholly within the City of Boston.

Several large, underutilized, potential development sites in Mattapan offer the opportunity to increase the number of residences in this community substantially. Ongoing awareness of the incremental impacts of development on existing open space resources is essential. Advocacy by the community to preserve and enhance existing undeveloped woodlands would protect the open space character of Mattapan for future residents.

Demographic and Socio-Economic Profile

MATTAPAN

Population	
2010 Census	22,600
2000 Census	24,333
Population Growth/Decline, 2000–2010	-7.1%

Population Density	
2010 Census	16.7
2000 Census	18
Density Change, 2000–2010	-1.3

Age	Persons	Percent of Population
0 to 9	2,861	13%
10 to 19	3,363	15%
20 to 34	4,677	21%
35 to 54	6,283	28%
55 to 64	2,732	12%
65 and over	2,684	12%

Teens, City to Community Comparison	Total Population	Total Children 12-17	% of Boston's Children 12-17	Children 12-17 as % of Neighborhood Population
Boston	617,594	33,920	100.0%	5.5%
Mattapan	22,600	2,090	6.2%	9.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Decennial Census, BRA Research Division Analysis

Race/Ethnicity/Latino Status	Persons	Percent of Population
White alone	1,431	6%
Hispanic or Latino	2,735	12%
Black or African American alone	17,263	76%
Asian alone	383	2%
Other	788	3%

Median Household Income
\$48,364

Source: US Census Bureau, 2008–2012 American Community Survey, BRA Research Division Analysis

Percent of Households by Number of Vehicles Available	
No vehicles	27%
1 vehicle	43%
2 vehicles	23%
3 or more vehicles	7%

Source: American Community Survey 2006–2010; BRA Research Division Analysis

Population* with Disability	Persons	Percent of Population
Boston	72,390	11.6%
Mattapan	4,023	16.8%

*Civilian Noninstitutionalized

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009–2013 American Community Survey, BRA Research Division Analysis

N.B.: "0%" means "less than 1%"

All Tables 2010 U.S. Decennial Census, unless otherwise noted





















