

TALBOT-NORFOLK TRIANGLE ECO-INNOVATION DISTRICT

BOSTON, MA, USA • JUNE 2017



TNT EID COMMUNITY PLACEMAKING

NEIGHBORHOOD OVERVIEW

The Talbot-Norfolk Triangle Eco-Innovation District (TNT EID) is a comprehensive, sustainable development initiative spanning 13 blocks of Codman Square, a historic district in the Dorchester neighborhood of Boston, MA. Codman Square boasts a long history as one of Boston's major civic centers and is host to a wealth of historic buildings including schools, churches and public facilities dating as far back as the early 19th century. However, the district has historically been underserved and economically disadvantaged, with an increasing number of abandoned commercial buildings and some deteriorating residential housing stock.

Historic Codman Square has been a neighborhood and community center for many years. Over 35 years ago, a place-based organizing entity, the Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corp. (CSNDC), was formed and for the last 19 years has been led by Gail Latimore, a former architect and veteran of nonprofit management and development with over 25 years of experience working in the public and nonprofit sectors. In 2010, the community began an extensive, community-based, area-wide planning process called Millennium 10. This work engaged over 1,000 residents in a comprehensive effort to surface and create bold environmental, economic and social equity goals in the Talbot Norfolk Triangle. Partially fueled by a new transit corridor, the Fairmont Commuter Rail Line, in 2012 the neighborhood coalesced around a grassroots commitment to sustainable redevelopment without displacement and a focus on job creation, transit-oriented growth and neighborhood revitalization. The effort spurred the creation of the Talbot-Norfolk Triangle Eco-Innovation District.

SNAPSHOT

PROJECT TYPE: Neighborhood Redevelopment

SITE SIZE: 46 acres; 13 city blocks

RESIDENTS: 1,500

BUILDINGS: 520 residential units

DEMOGRAPHICS:

African American: 78%

Latino: 20%

Caribbean and Haitian: 8%

Adults: 74%

Children & Youth: 26%

ECONOMY:

- 50% unemployment rate among males of color

- 66% of residents live at or below the poverty line

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES:

Transit-oriented development, certifiable green affordable homeownership and affordable multifamily rentals, open space, green infrastructure, retail, placemaking, improved health via walkability and bikeability, renewable energy, water conservation, and outcomes measurement.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS:

- Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation
- Talbot Norfolk Triangle Neighbors United
- City of Boston
- LISC Boston
- Enterprise Community Partners
- Barr Foundation



SOLAR INSTALLATION

The TNT EID is Boston's first eco-innovation district, and has been specifically addressing both sustainability and economic prosperity within a holistic urban regeneration process. The TNT EID has begun to implement on the ground projects that address equitable transit-oriented development, local renewable energy generation, open space, walkability, bikeability, urban agriculture, green infrastructure, public health and safety and local job creation. The TNT EID also focuses on performance and reporting, and it received a Barr Foundation grant to measure the climate-related impacts of sustainable development throughout the district.

TNT EID AND ECODISTRICTS: BUILDING LOCAL GOVERNANCE CAPACITY TO KEEP BENEFITS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The partnership between the TNT EID and EcoDistricts began in 2013. As part of the annual EcoDistricts Summit, EcoDistricts and CSNDC co-hosted a charrette to accelerate the TNT EID's community regeneration journey. The charrette convened over 60 local leaders, residents and urban regeneration practitioners from across the globe to provide expert guidance to the TNT EID team.

In June 2014, the relationship between the TNT EID and EcoDistricts deepened with the district's recruitment into the two-year EcoDistricts Target Cities pilot program, designed to advance sustainable, district-scale development while creating replicable models for change. Target Cities also was an opportunity to advance a group of exemplary, diverse projects through peer learning and shared experience. The program focused on collaborative governance training, technical assistance and peer networking to help projects align stakeholder interests and responsibilities, establish a district governance model, create a district roadmap and implement catalytic projects.

Over the course of the Target Cities program, the TNT EID team traveled to five U.S. cities for four workshops, one charrette and one convening hosted at the 2014 EcoDistricts Summit.

ABOUT THE ECODISTRICTS CERTIFIED PROGRAM

EcoDistricts Certified is the standard for community development that makes equity and sustainability fundamental to neighborhoods for all. By embracing the standard, neighborhoods commit to becoming the first certified EcoDistricts in the world. EcoDistricts Certified is the result of seven years of research, pilot projects and the best thinking from international experts. It provides a flexible, holistic, and rigorous "how to" framework for organizing and achieving important public policy, sustainability, and investment goals.

Learn more at:

<https://ecodistricts.org/ecodistricts-certified/>



Each host city — including Boston, MA, Washington, DC, Atlanta, GA and Denver, CO — acted as a learning laboratory in which Target Cities members saw other communities' projects first-hand and shared stories and strategies. In summer 2017, the TNT EID began moving through the EcoDistricts Certification process and is part of the first cohort of certified EcoDistricts.

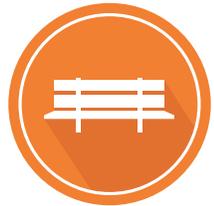
PROJECT GOVERNANCE

TNT EID's governance structure is made up of an Executive Committee that meets approximately every two months to review aspects of projects and make recommendations. Participants include representatives of the City, funders (LISC and Enterprise), a CSNDC board member, CSNDC staff members, neighborhood representatives, and an outside Ecodistrict representative. The CSNDC staff members serve as staff, researchers and presenters to the Executive Committee. Additionally, there are working groups that meet as needed to provide assistance to the four TNT EID focus areas: transit-oriented development, local energy generation, green infrastructure, and retrofits.



EARLY WINS

PLACE: Codman Square has an expanding portfolio of affordable housing through existing building renovations and LEED-certifiable new construction. They've also developed incentives and programs for first-time homebuyers and rent support for low-income families. CSNDC offers financial literacy, small business development support and homeownership initiatives to educate residents and prevent displacement.

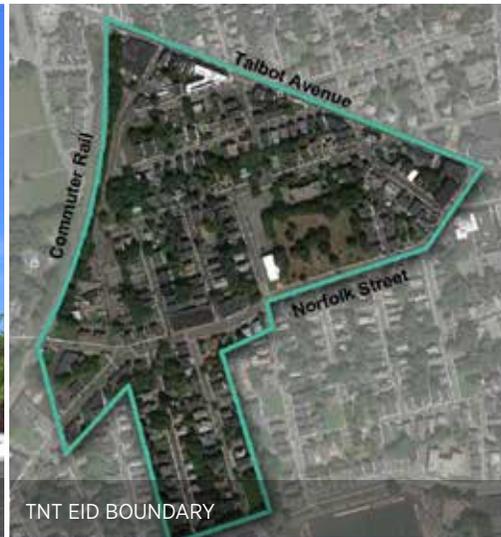


PROSPERITY: Planning is underway to convert the district's aging "Auto Mall" into a mixed-use hub of innovation and housing, complete with career training centers and community spaces. The hub is expected to include business and retail space to attract startup ventures and entrepreneurs.

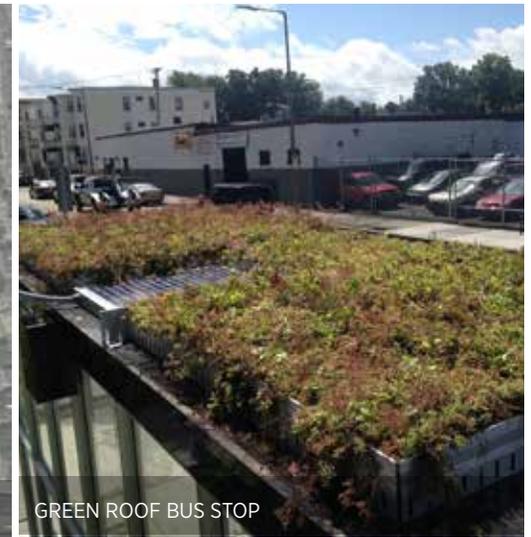




TALBOT COMMONS | RENDERING



TNT EID BOUNDARY



GREEN ROOF BUS STOP

HEALTH + WELLBEING: In 2015, CSNDC, in partnership with the Boston Project Ministries, received a three year, \$90,000 grant from the Boston Public Health Commission as part of the Partnerships to Improve Community Health to expand the CSNDC’s smoke-free housing policy and promote health and mobility in the TNT EID. Additionally, an initiative is underway in the district to promote biking as an alternative and healthy form of transportation. Finally, the district is now home to an urban agriculture site that sells its produce at a local farmers market; provides job training for men of color, placement and referrals to previously incarcerated men of color.



CONNECTIVITY: The TNT EID was selected as one of only two Boston neighborhoods to pilot a Slow Streets initiative under Boston’s Vision Zero Plan to eliminate fatal and serious traffic crashes by 2030. Project construction is expected to be completed by June 30th, and will include signage, speed humps, chicanes, crosswalks and green infrastructure projects that will be implemented across the TNT EID. Additionally, a tree planting program that will teach TNT Youth and then previously incarcerated men of color about tree planting and maintenance, is expected to place more than 100 trees and shrubs in TNT and surrounding area, and will also allow CSNDC to measure the economic and environmental benefits of those plantings.



RESOURCE REGENERATION: Home energy retrofits, financed through grants and programs, have improved the energy efficiency of over 40% of the district’s homes and apartments. Additionally, green bus shelter roofs, rain barrels, solar panels, trees and other sustainable infrastructure are actively being implemented across the TNT EID. Recently completed TNT EID Energy Feasibility analyses indicated that the district’s combined green infrastructure and energy investments could reduce greenhouse gasses in the TNT EID by 11 percent, while saving neighborhood stakeholders \$267,900 on energy costs. Graduate students from Boston University and staff from sustainability consultant Linnean Solutions did the feasibility analyses.



LESSONS LEARNED + CONTINUED CHALLENGES

At the end of the two-year Target City program engagement period, each participating district was evaluated by its internal staff and board, and by EcoDistricts personnel. The comments below reflect shared assessments by all parties and describe the very real challenges that communities face in their effort to regenerate underserved or blighted neighborhoods, even those with a reputation for advancing exemplary projects and/or demonstrating best-practices.

- Codman Square is characterized by consistency, shared vision and commitment. Its goals and objectives are clear to all parties and success can be quantitatively and qualitatively measured.
- Despite the experience and dedication of the CSNDC staff, efforts remain under-staffed and underfunded with gains made too slowly, particularly compared with private sector development efforts. Nonetheless, the pace of housing creation has accelerated and small commercial gains can be seen throughout the TNT EID.
- Coordination with the City of Boston continues to change with incoming and outgoing political leadership. Grant funding is inconsistent and slow.
- While community engagement is critical to CSNDC's formation and implementation process, residents are busy and have limited capacity for volunteer engagement.

NEXT STEPS

- Build a portfolio of neighborhoods seeking certification in Boston, leveraging Codman Square as a peer learning opportunity.
- Map a district-scale strategic engagement plan for the city of Boston and the Boston Redevelopment and Planning Agency.
- Initiate key anti-displacement and sound equity engagement policies for the city's "Imagine Boston 2030" plan.

“Target Cities gave us a chance to see the development of urban regeneration projects across the country in cities like Denver, Atlanta and Washington, DC. It was good to know that there are folks experiencing challenges like ours and to see how they and their communities are addressing them. Branding us together as ‘ecodistricts’ gives a sense of common purpose and additional leverage as our small group negotiates with city and private sector developers.”

– GAIL LATIMORE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CODMAN SQUARE NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

ABOUT ECODISTRICTS

EcoDistricts is nonprofit that advances a new standard for community development. Through its programs and certification standard, EcoDistricts helps create equitable, sustainable, and resilient **neighborhoods for all.**