

QUINCY CHOICE BUILT BY CARPENTERS LOCAL 723



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For The People, By The People 2.0

Making the Right Choice

Putting Residents & Local Businesses to Work

A Case Study of Quincy Choice Neighborhoods Construction,
Boston

April 2015

Introduction

Greetings. Thank you for taking the time to read this case study. *For The People, By The People 2.0* looks at the construction of three federally funded, large-scale construction projects in the Roxbury and Dorchester neighborhoods of Boston. These were a) the renovation of 102 units in 9 buildings, b) the demolition of two buildings and the construction of 49 new units and c), the redevelopment of the former Pearl Hot Dog Factory into the *Bornstein & Pearl Food Production Small Business Center*. These projects are collectively referred to as “The Quincy Choice Neighborhood” projects, as they were all funded by a US Housing and Urban Development (HUD) program so named.

This case study is best read in conjunction with *For The People, By The People: best practices for maximizing resident, minority and female participation on construction projects as learned through the construction of The Salvation Army Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center, Boston*. (available at www.dsni.org/publications). I’ve written it, from my own point of view as a community organizer, to complement the story told there—and really, to show that the project highlighted in that document was extraordinary, but not exceptional. In fact, the successes in that project were quickly replicated right here in the Dudley neighborhood using different contractors.

The number one critique from that first case study was that the successes of that project were unique. Readers said, “Nice job on Kroc but that was just one project. That won’t be replicated and you got lucky with those numbers. You won’t be able to do that again.” This case study demonstrates clearly that it can be done again, and in fact, that it may get easier over time – as the parties to the work become more comfortable with the goals/requirements and the strategies to meet them.

FOR THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE



best practices for maximizing resident, minority and female participation on construction projects

as learned through the construction of
The Salvation Army Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center, Boston



Anything is possible.

Anything is possible is one of Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative's (DSNI) core values. It is something that the DSNI board of directors and staff live by. It is something that is dear to my heart and has had a profound impact on my personal life. That value helped shape the work of the Choice Neighborhoods construction team.

If the team didn't believe that *anything is possible*, we very well may have had settled for lower hiring requirements and minority/women business enterprise (m/wbe) goals and projects with minimal community benefit. We could have just built buildings. We didn't, though. We believed that anything was possible and that these projects could and would provide tremendous benefits to the community.

As an organizer, I never, not even for a second, took to heart any of the Kroc Center case study critiques. I **knew** that the best practices compiled by the Dudley Street community could be replicated on the Choice projects. Sure, Kroc was an all-union project and Choice utilized both union and non-union workers, but that didn't matter. The basic principles learned through Kroc could be used again with great success. I hope to not only share the Choice Neighborhoods construction team's story but to also show that *anything is possible*. Don't ever let people tell you that it, whatever "it" may be, can't or won't get done.

In Solidarity,
Travis Watson
April 2015

A note to the reader regarding "goals/requirements": On these three projects we had workforce (the people) *requirements* and minority/women owned business enterprise (the companies employing the people) *goals* written in the contract. Most commonly, you will find projects with only workforce *goals*. In the best case scenario you will have *both* workforce *requirements* *and* minority/women owned business enterprise (m/wbe) *requirements*.

Even though we exceeded our mbe *goal* on these projects, when it comes to construction workforce organizing it's generally helpful to think of goals and requirements this way: goals are something *you try* to obtain and requirements are something that *you do* obtain as *requirements* are often tied to monetary penalties for non-compliance in a contract.

This case study is dedicated to **Mayor Thomas M. Menino & John E. Barbour, Jr.**

Thank you Mayor Menino for your service, sacrifices, partnership and friendship. We in the Dudley neighborhood are forever grateful. There are truly countless examples of way that Mayor Menino contributed to the realization of our community's vision, including his support over the years for:

- Over 500 new units of permanently affordable housing, and the renovation of hundreds more;
- The opening and re-development of three community centers (Vine Street Orchard Gardens and the Kroc Center);
- Renovation of the Strand Theatre as an anchor for our arts and cultural center;
- Investment in the business viability of Blue Hill Avenue, support for small business owners and investments in development of green spaces along the way;
- Thousands and thousands of youth jobs;
- Many new, and needed, parks and open spaces, including Trina Persad Playground, Dudley Town Common and Dennis St. Park; and
- Breaking ground on three new schools (Orchard Gardens, Lila Frederick and the Haynes Early Education Center) and standing with us in our shared efforts to make Boston the best urban school district in the nation



John Barbour Jr. passed away suddenly on Friday May 3, 2013. Before his untimely passing, John was a key member of the Choice Construction Hiring Team. He was actively involved in his community, partnering in a local Soul Food business, Dudley Soul Food, as well as Project R.I.G.H.T, and Quincy-Geneva Housing Corporation, was the Project RIGHT, Inc.'s Board President and led the Intervale St./Normandy St. Residents Association. John was instrumental in the Lilla Frederick Pilot Middle School Building Design process, monitored the school's construction hiring compliance with the Boston Residents Jobs Policy, and ensured that the quality of the construction of the school building met appropriate standards. He participated in the submission of the Frederick's pilot school application and was on its Board of Directors. Through his work and dedication John was well respected among his peers. John also served as a mentor for several young people with the passion and commitment to helping others throughout his life.



The Team

The following four non-profits met weekly and became the Quincy Choice Neighborhood Construction Hiring Team tasked with ensuring that project requirements and goals were being met. DND was a key partner.

Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation

www.dbedc.org

Dorchester Bay EDC develops comprehensive strategies integrating organizing and development in its slate of programs. We offer assistance in three broad categories: housing, economic development, and resident initiatives/community organizing.

Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI)

www.dsni.org

The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) is a nonprofit community-based planning and organizing entity rooted in the Roxbury/North Dorchester neighborhoods of Boston. DSNI's approach to neighborhood revitalization is comprehensive including economic, human, physical, and environmental growth. Its mission is *"to empower Dudley residents to organize, plan for, create and control a vibrant, diverse and high-quality neighborhood in collaboration with community partners."*

Project R.I.G.H.T.

www.projectright.org

Project RIGHT promotes involvement in neighborhood stabilization and economic development within the community of Greater Grove Hall (Roxbury and North Dorchester). We train and support emerging leadership by providing an inclusive network for resident organizations to engage in community building efforts within Grove Hall.

Quincy Geneva Housing Corporation (QGHC)

www.quincygeneva.org

Quincy Geneva Housing Corporation is a non-profit organization serving residents with the greatest need in the Grove Hall Area through the development of social, economic and housing opportunities.

Department of Neighborhood Development

<http://dnd.cityofboston.gov>

The mission of the Department of Neighborhood Development (DND) is to make Boston the most livable city in the nation.

Working with Boston's communities, DND helps build neighborhoods through the strategic investment of public resources. DND's main functions are to set and implement the City's housing policy, manage the City's real estate portfolio, and strengthen Boston's small businesses.

DND served as the lead applicant for the Quincy Choice Neighborhood implementation grant and has continued to play a vital project management role as the project has moved forward.



Overview of Choice Neighborhoods

The Choice Neighborhoods program supports locally driven strategies to address struggling neighborhoods with distressed public or Housing and Urban Development (HUD)-assisted housing through a comprehensive approach to neighborhood transformation. Local leaders, residents, and stakeholders, such as public housing authorities, cities, schools, police, business owners, nonprofits, and private developers, come together to create and implement a plan that transforms distressed HUD housing and addresses the challenges in the surrounding neighborhood. The program is designed to catalyze critical improvements in neighborhood assets, including vacant property, housing, services and schools.



Choice Neighborhoods is focused on three core goals:

- 1. Housing:** Replace distressed public and assisted housing with high-quality mixed-income housing that is well-managed and responsive to the needs of the surrounding neighborhood;
- 2. People:** Improve educational outcomes and intergenerational mobility for youth with services and supports delivered directly to youth and their families; and
- 3. Neighborhood:** Create the conditions necessary for public and private reinvestment in distressed neighborhoods to offer the kinds of amenities and assets, including safety, good schools, and commercial activity, that are important to families' choices about their community.

For more information check out Choice Neighborhoods on the HUD website: www.hud.gov/cn

The City of Boston's Choice Neighborhoods Plan, known as the Quincy Corridor Transformation Plan, has centered on the redevelopment of Woodledge/Morrant Bay, a severely distressed 129-unit HUD- assisted housing development. Redevelopment of the target housing project was carried out in two phases. Quincy Heights I called for the renovation of 102 units in 9 buildings. Quincy Heights II called for the demolition of two buildings and the construction of 49 new units on three adjacent parcels. Now complete, the development contains 129 units, all of which continue to offer deeply affordable housing to the residents through ongoing project-based Section 8 subsidies.

The Quincy Corridor Transformation Plan also included a focus on purposeful use of vacant and abandoned property, construction or rehabilitation of parks and community gardens, improvements to community facilities and activities to promote economic development, job creation and asset building. The total project costs are estimated at more than \$92 million.

The Choice team used approximately \$500,000 in *Critical Improvement Funds* to support the redevelopment the former Pearl Hot Dog Factory in Dorchester into the *Bornstein & Pearl Food Production Small Business Center*. The 36,000 square foot center was transformed into a multi-tenant food production facility and business incubator.



Source: <http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=CNFY2010-2011.pdf>

What We Did

Our team was tasked with ensuring that our workforce requirements and goals were being met and that the Choice projects provided community benefits. Our team chose to go beyond the Boston Residents Jobs Policy numbers of 50% Boston residents, 25% Minorities and 10% women and adopted the Roxbury Strategic Master plan numbers of 51% Boston residents, 51% Minorities and 15% women as we did at Kroc .This is what we did and how we got it done:

1. We used a mixed workforce of both union and non-union contractors.

The Reason: The Dudley Street community’s construction workers are employed by both union and non-union contractors. Having a mixed workforce provided more opportunity for local residents to participate on the project.



2. Ensured that all three projects paid prevailing wage.

The Reason: We wanted to ensure that the workers, regardless of union affiliation, were being paid a fair wage. Union or non-union, you just can't have two people out there doing the same job getting paid different wages.

3. We thoroughly vetted each potential general contractor looking at their track records of hiring residents, minorities, women and minority and women owned business enterprises. Once the general contractor was selected, we then obtained their proposed sub contractors for the work. Finally, we followed the same vetting process used to select the general contractor for each sub contractor.

The Reason: Contractors past work history speaks volumes. If they haven't hired residents, minorities and women in the past, what makes you think they will do it this time, for your project? The same goes for their track record with utilizing minority and women owned-business enterprises.

4. We hired a workforce diversity consultant / construction monitor

The Reason: A dedicated diversity consultant can really boost the community benefits your project/s can bring into a neighborhood.

5. We had aggressive hiring requirements (written as “requirements and not goals”) written into the contract. We used The Roxbury Strategic Master Plan numbers (the same numbers used on Kroc of 51% Boston residents, 51% minorities and 15% women.)

The Reason: Don't settle. Push for high workforce requirements that are contractually binding. Remember, *Anything is Possible*.

6. We had MBE/WBE project goals of 30% MBE and 10% WBE

The Reason: Push for higher MBE/WBE goals on your projects. Challenge yourself and your project team. Our project finished with the total value of the contract going to 44% MBE and 10% WBE

7. We ensured that contractors provided workforce timelines

The Reason: Having a workforce timeline from your contractors helps your team determine if they are/will be meeting their workforce hiring commitments. It can also be a tool to hold the contractor accountable if their numbers begin to slide.

8. We convened weekly workforce development meetings and reviewed contractor utilization reports

The Reason: It is important to check in with the team weekly to go over the progress of the project and to ensure contractors are meeting their hiring commitments.



9. We had walk-on applicants join a workforce database.

QGHC maintains a database of union and non-union construction workers from the neighborhood. The database was used on the Choice projects and also forwarded to other projects in the city.

The Reason: If walk-on applicants can't find work on your project, perhaps they can on another. Inform them of other potential jobs. A total of 112 workers were hired on construction projects through the Choice Team. The vast majority worked on Choice Projects while some worked on other projects in the city.

10. We offered training for workers in essential certifications.

The reason: An appetite for more vocational technical training in the neighborhood is certainly there and needs leadership around.

11. We are creating a database of m/wbe workers to forward to general contractors

The Reason: This will hopefully serve as a tool for other developers to use when looking to hire minority or women owned business enterprises on their future projects. (*projects with an "s" meaning that developers use m/wbes on all their future projects, not just the ones with requirements.*)

12. We informed workers on our database and in the neighborhood of job and career advancement opportunities including:

A Building Pathways information session, the NEI Jackson Commons/Tropical Foods employment fair and the Merit Apprenticeship Program. Additionally, a flyer was created and distributed that listed the addresses of other construction projects taking place in the city.

The Reason: Maybe you can't offer them a job today, but maybe you can point them in the direction of their next one or some training.

13. We paid special attention to ensure that sub-contractors were creating job opportunities for women.

The Reason: Getting woman to work at fair levels in construction is still a major challenge. We all need to do better and make this right. This project as a whole had huge community benefits. The Pearl project nearly hit our female worker requirement of 15%. But Quincy Heights I&II we lost a major opportunity for putting women to work. We at DSNI challenge ourselves, this team, people reading this and developers to do better and help put women in construction to work.

14. We worked to try and make sure that sub-contractors were getting paid on a regular, consistent basis.

The Reason: Besides being the obvious, right thing to do, paying workers on a regular, consistent basis helps ensure that the work continues without interruption.

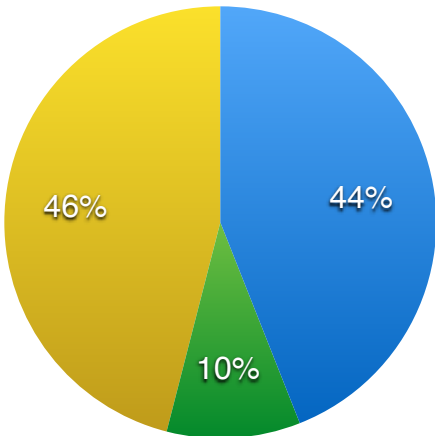


MBE and WBE Economic Impact

Minority and women-owned business economic impact on Choice Neighborhoods Projects

All three projects had substantial minority and women owned business participation. Our project goals were 30% MBE and 10% WBE. We finished with 44% MBE and 10% WBE.

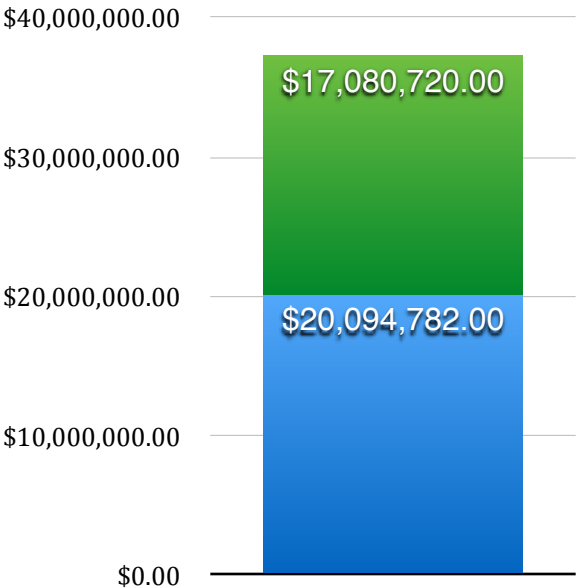
● MBE ● WBE ● Non MBE / WBE



% of Choice Contract Awards

MBE and WBE Combined for 54% of the total value of the subcontracts on all three Choice Projects (Quincy Heights I, II and Pearl)

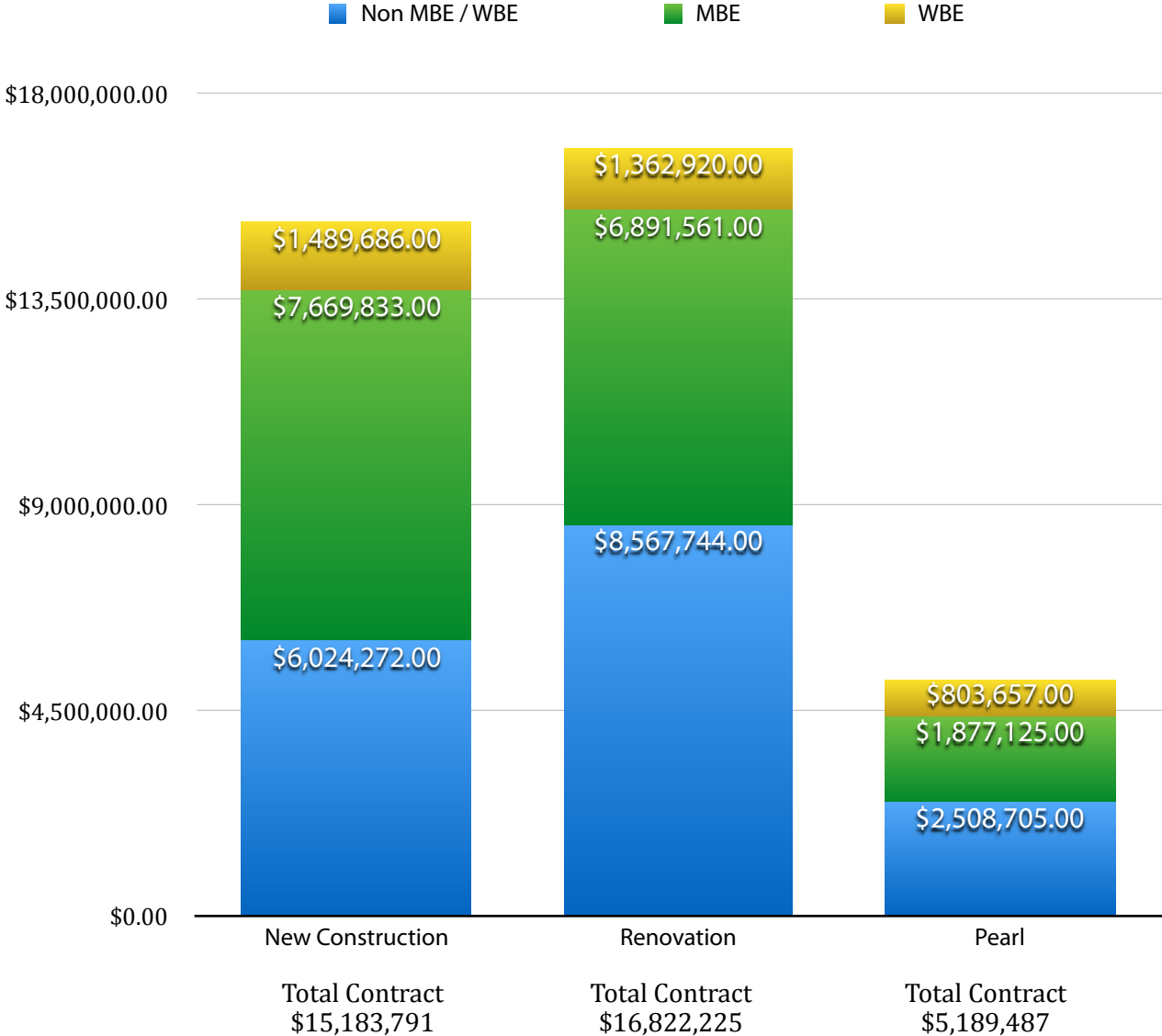
■ Non MBE / WBE
■ MBE + WBE Combined



Total Contracts Available for all Three Choice Projects Combined (Quincy Heights I, II and Pearl) = \$37,175,502

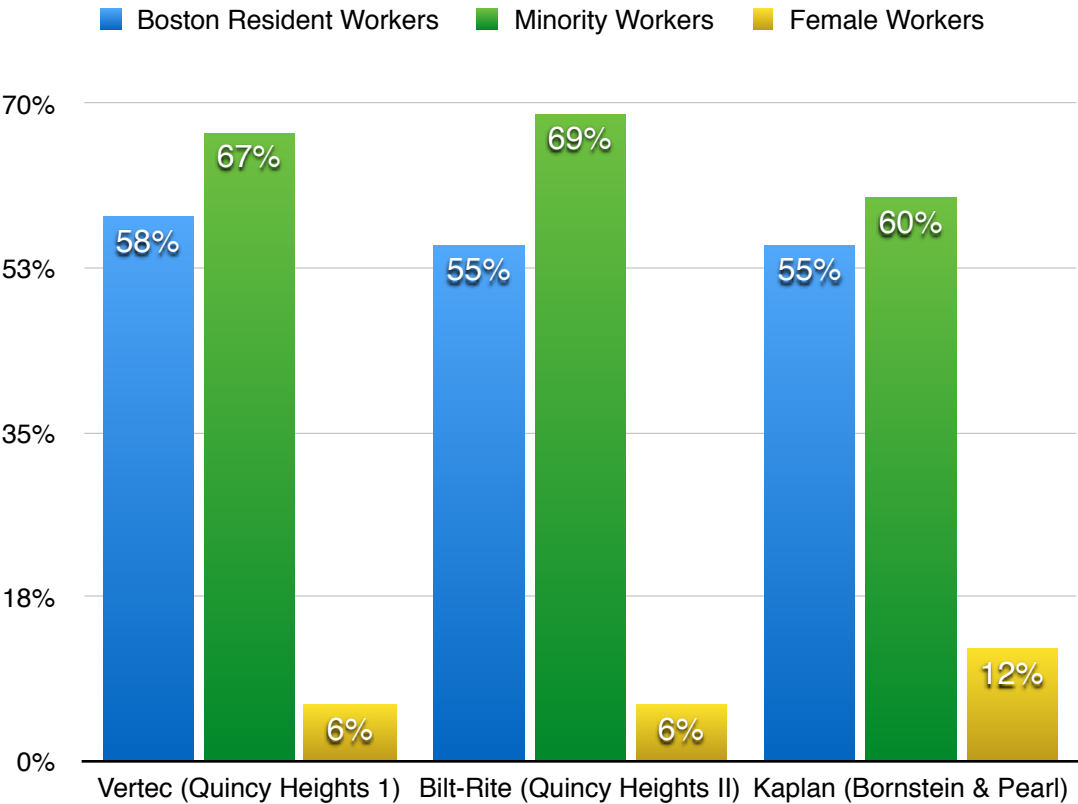
MBE and WBE Economic Impact

Minority and women-owned business economic impact on Choice Neighborhoods Projects



Final Construction Workforce Numbers

Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative once again played the role of lead community planning partner on large projects (The Kroc Center being the first) that have helped set the standard for putting residents, minorities, women and m/wbe to work on major construction projects. None of this work would have been possible without a tremendous team. Harold Raymond, our diversity consultant from Quincy/Geneva Housing Corporation, deserves special recognition for his outstanding leadership in holding contractors accountable to their contracts and hiring commitments of 51% Boston residents, 51% minorities and 15% women and for providing training opportunities for residents; Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation set the table by placing those commitments into the contract; Project R.I.G.H.T., along with DSNI ensured contractors and partners were accountable and that they fulfilled their contract-binding obligations; The City of Boston made sure the entire project became a reality. The graph below details each contractor’s workforce numbers on the three projects. **Together, these three projects had an average workforce of 56% Boston Residents, 65% Minorities and 8% Women.**



Workforce Requirements
51% Boston residents, 51% Minority workers & 15% Female workers

Additional Resources:

Boston Residents Jobs Policy Office

www.cityofboston.gov/brjp/

The mission of the Boston Residents Jobs Policy Office is to increase employment opportunities for Boston residents, workers of color, and women on City of Boston funded construction projects and to monitor for compliance with labor standards and prevailing wages on federally funded projects.

Building Pathways

For more information contact:

Tyrone Kindell, Jr., Project Coordinator, at buildingpathways@aol.com or 617-282-2242

Building Pathways is a 6-week program designed to prepare qualified applicants for an apprenticeship in the building trades- the pathway to a rewarding career in construction. Building Pathways is sponsored by the Building and Construction Trades Council of the Metropolitan District in partnership with Action for Boston Community Development and the Boston Housing Authority.

Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative Sustainable Development Committee

www.dsni.org/sustainable-and-economic-development

SDC is responsible for reviewing housing, open space, economic development and environmental projects proposed for the area. The Committee meets the fourth (4th) Thursday of every month, 6:00pm at DSNI

Roxbury Strategic Master Plan

www.opportunityroxbury.com

The Roxbury Strategic Master Plan is a community driven process that aims to revitalize Roxbury by utilizing its assets, increasing opportunities, and encouraging community participation every step of the way. This includes promoting education and job readiness, increasing residential stability and housing opportunities at different income levels, increasing opportunities for small businesses and promoting a sustainable and diverse economy, and creating a safe and energetic public sphere with a convenient transportation network and an enhanced cultural network.

YouthBuild Boston

www.youthbuildboston.org

YBB works with young adults in the Boston area to develop personal and career skills using innovative programs in the building trades, from design and construction to the green industry. The mission of YouthBuild Boston (YBB) is to empower and assist under-served young people from the Boston area with the essential social, vocational, academic, and life skills necessary to navigate a positive pathway to self-sufficiency and neighborhood responsibility.

Final Thoughts & Closing

Sometimes it takes a little more effort to do the right thing. Many of us value our local businesses but end up shopping at big boxes for convenience. But we know that the long term harm of taking that convenient route is the irreparable loss of our local economy.

This concept is the same for developers and organizations trying to achieve workforce requirements/goals. In some instances, they may save on construction costs by hiring a contractor that doesn't offer a living wage, community benefits or employ local residents, minorities and females. But the long-term benefits to our communities is enormous when we support them in doing the right thing.

My hope is that we are all striving to do the right thing. We don't always get there but the hope is that we are trying to and that we are doing it more and more. That's what we ask of developers. We are in no way saying that starting tomorrow you should all wake up and be hiring a workforce of 51% residents , 51% minorities, 15% female and 30% MBE / 10% WBE. But what we are asking is that on your next project try and raise your local resident numbers by say, 10%. The project after that say another 10% and a 5% increase in minority and female participation. Keep working at it here and there and see what works for you.

Bottom line is this: if construction projects aren't hiring residents, minorities, women and minority/female owned businesses at high rates it is because they just don't want to. It's simply an unwillingness to do so. It is not because they don't know how. The tools and knowledge on how to get it done is out there. I hope both *For The People, By The People* and *For The People, By The People Too* can add to the already existing pool of resources for folks trying to do the right thing and get our neighborhoods back to work.

In Solidarity,
Travis Watson
April 2015

Travis Watson is a senior organizer & the communications manager at Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative. He has been with the organization since 2007.

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Our mission is to “empower Dudley residents to organize, plan for, create and control a vibrant, diverse and high-quality neighborhood in collaboration with community partners.”