



**FOCUS GROUP TAKEAWAYS
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The Roxbury Cultural District and Dudley Square Main Street held three focus groups for Roxbury artists and business owners on May 21, June 21, and June 29. Over 80 participants contributed their ideas to the discussion. Needs, opportunities, and recommendations shared during the conversations include:

I. IN PROGRESS/MILESTONES	II. SHORT-TERM	III. LONG-TERM
<p>Overarching Theme: Connectivity (Places, Businesses, Artists, Community, Ideas)</p>		
<p>A. Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New collective events (i.e. 1st Fridays); vitality of existing events/traditions (Roxbury Open Studios). ● Collaborate with abutting neighborhoods on events. ● Artists spotlight to bring people to a public forum. ● Drive participation in events. ● Milestones: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community calendar on RCD website; sharing events on Facebook. 2. On 11/4/17, collective community celebration in the Bolling Building. <p>B. Marketing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Culturally rich definition through branding; start saying there is a lot here. ● Connection to the broader community. ● Joint marketing of assets inside and outside district (other cultural districts, MFA). ● Targeted marketing campaigns to specific audiences. ● Milestones: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Website and plan for digital content that tells the multifaceted story of arts, culture, and creative economy businesses in Roxbury. 2. Logo, exploring options. <p>C. Governance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Roxbury artists/creative business owners need to be a part of the district policy making process. ● Milestones: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. RCD governance with Roxbury artists and business owners on Board of Directors. <p>D. Networks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Access to and marketing of City of Boston resources. ● Connections to Mayor’s Office of Arts and Culture. ● Milestones: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Direct line of communication with Mayor’s Office of Arts and Culture; staff participation in meetings and planning process in Roxbury. 2. Direct line of communication with state agencies, including Massachusetts Cultural Council. 	<p>A. Comfort and Maintenance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gathering space outdoors for storytelling, sharing ideas, and public performances. ● Places to sit and rest; benches. ● Overall cleanliness of Dudley Square. ● Additional trash receptacles that are emptied regularly. ● Maintenance of trees; overall greening and landscaping enhancements. ● Streetscape that is more pedestrian and cyclist friendly; traffic calming. ● Safety: Improve safety in Dudley Square. ● Increase resident access to Bolling Building. <p>B. Visibility and Wayfinding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify connections between cultural assets (knitting together); encourage people to go to new places, events, and businesses. ● Weekend and evening activity; nightlife; stores to remain open. ● Central location for information. ● Raise profiles of existing local businesses. ● Directory and signage to support retail stores in Bolling Building. ● Sidewalk signage. ● Highlight existing parking facilities and public amenities. ● Public Art: Use murals/public art to tell Roxbury’s story visually. ● Leverage link between food and culture; increase visibility of restaurants; food trucks to support events. ● Engines to drive foot traffic to businesses; need more customers and local support. ● Engage existing customers: 18,000 weekly customers at Tropical Foods. <p>C. Networks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Business to Business network within Roxbury; connections between businesses and nonprofits. ● Business education/training for artists/small business owners. ● Hire local artists for pay. ● Consortium to bring together business owners/artists/social media. ● Conduit for families and youth to access art and culture (traditionally role of churches). 	<p>A. Facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Physical hub/town common to meet, mentor, and showcase work; arts building as a destination and gathering space. ● Parking: Additional parking as standalone garage or incorporated into development projects. ● Makerspace (i.e. Artisan’s Asylum) ● Arts venues/events where artists can sell their work. (Filmmakers need resources.) ● Artists housing; affordable live-work space; family housing for artists. ● Food: Sit down restaurant, test kitchens, public markets. ● Dedicated space for youth engagement in the arts (not in violence). ● Temporary use of vacant parcels. <p>B. Gateways and Nodes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Physical/visual gateways to the cultural and business districts (Dudley Square, Eliot Square, Washington/Melnea Cass, Ruggles Street, Gordin Veteran’s Memorial Park, Bartlett Station, Warren Street). ● Build key partnerships to activate gateways and nodes. <p>C. Networks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Business attraction and retention; ecosystem of other businesses (i.e. hardware stores, cleaners, cobblers). ● Clearinghouse/booking agency to connect Roxbury artist to opportunities throughout Boston. ● Leverage new development to support arts and small business (i.e. Percent for Art). ● Commission local artists for public art in new development projects.