

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Boston Square Together?

Boston Square Together is a community-focused planning process where neighbors, business owners, and local and city partners are working together to advance a neighborhood vision for the heart of Boston Square. The partners are committed to advancing an equity-focused, shared vision that weaves Health, Education, Arts & Culture, Recreation and Technology (H.E.A.R.T) into a mixed-use, mixed-income 10-acre redevelopment area in the neighborhood.

Boston Square Together - Project Principles

Boston Square Together builds upon the hard work of past community planning efforts, including the 2009 Boston Square Area Specific Plan, the 2019 City of Grand Rapids Strategic Plan and the 2019 Southtown Business Area Specific Plan. By working with a group of committed neighbors and local community organizations, we are committed to achieving the following project principles on the 9-acre site:

- **Affordable housing** options for a wide range of income levels
- **Homeownership** opportunities on both the site and surrounding neighborhoods
- **Dedicated** spaces for local business ownership, with an emphasis on reflecting the diversity of 49507
- **Emphasis** on construction contracts for minority, women and 49507-owned companies
- **Neighborhood-based** construction employment opportunities
- **Dedicated** community spaces
- **High-quality** Early Childhood Learning Center
- **High-quality** and sustainable design
- **A future design** that integrates an equity-focused approach to HEART for all: Health. Education. Arts. Recreation. Technology.

How will the development provide access to affordable housing and home ownership for existing and future neighbors?

In partnership with Boston Square neighbors, city officials, local businesses and nonprofit organizations, Amplify GR is working on a comprehensive housing strategy to:

- **Support** through collaborative programs that work with existing homeowners to make critical repairs (75 homes renovated to date) and supporting new homeownership opportunities for lower income families (50 new homeowners by 2025).
- **Increase** the amount of permanently preserved affordable housing for individuals, families and seniors.
- **Ensure** that 50%+ of new apartment units are protected as affordable for those making 60% or less of the Area's Median Income.

Who are the Boston Square Together Partners?

Community Organizations

- Boston Square Neighborhood Association
- Early Learning Neighborhood Collaborative
- Oakdale Neighbors
- City of Grand Rapids

Quarterback

- Amplify GR

In-Neighborhood Affordable Housing Partners

- Home Repair Services
- ICCF

Implementation Partners

- Brinshore Development
- Rockford Construction
- IFF
- Isaac V Norris Architects
- Integrated Architects
- Urban Works
- Nederveld
- Virdis

The Boston Square neighborhood is diverse. How will partners ensure minority-owned businesses have access to space and resources to open and grow?

Boston Square Together partners are creating spaces for 50+ new businesses in Boston Square and Cottage Grove, with a commitment to business ownership that reflects the neighborhoods we serve.

- Boston Square Together construction partners will ensure a minimum of 30% of the Boston Square (BSQ) construction work will go to neighborhood-based and minority-owned companies. Additionally, we will ensure that future retail tenants are reflective of the diverse neighborhoods we serve.

How are Boston Square Together partners addressing the concern of displacement?

Amplify GR, a partner in the Boston Square Together project, is an organization committed to affordable housing first, in a mixed-income and diverse neighborhood, where safe and affordable housing options exist for families across all income levels. A minimum of 50% of new units will be income restricted for lower-income families. In addition to affordable rental options, partnerships with Home Repair Services and ICCF will support new and existing homeowners obtain and remain in their homes. These partnerships will provide funds for home renovations for existing homeowners and down-payment assistance for new homeowners.

Our Vision Statement:

Boston Square (BSQ) is a community focused on families, neighbors, and the commitment to our deep roots in cultural, racial, and socioeconomic diversity. These qualities are embedded in the vision for Boston Square Together, a project that will bring growth to our neighborhood. We collectively aspire to provide added quality of life to current and future residents and their families through accessible and inclusive opportunities in housing, education, health and well-being, employment, and business ownership.

Boston Square Together partners are committed to growing and developing our community in a holistic direction that is informed by residents and influenced by shared power among multiple parties with a common purpose. The Boston Square Together project will deliver equitable outcomes for families and neighbors today and for future generations.

Community Partnership Agreement Overview

Why Partnership?

The Community Partnership Agreement is a **COMMUNITY COMMITMENT** that takes a partnership approach to achieving outcomes that honor and uplift resident priorities. “A rising tide lifts all boats” and we understand that when a community is performing well, all people will benefit from it. Our goal is to maintain a neighborhood lens that honors resident voice and cultivates the shared vision for the future state of the neighborhood through collaboration and partnership. We recognize that no one organization can achieve these outcomes alone.

The Community Partnership Agreement (“CPA”) outlines a variety of housing, economic and community amenity goals that require shared responsibility for greater collective impact. The CPA frames a set of neighborhood priorities that a group of committed organizations and residents will try to achieve over the next 15+ years to create more equitable outcomes in Boston Square.

The purpose of the CPA document is to detail the objectives and roles of the Parties, who collectively agree to advance a vision and plan for investment in a 10-acre redevelopment area referred to as Boston Square Together. The primary objectives memorialized in the CPA include understandings around (1.) Community Space and City Infrastructure, (2.) Economic Opportunities and (3.) Housing for All. The Project will advance equitable and inclusive outcomes in the areas of health, housing affordability, education, and economic opportunity for those residing in and around the Boston Square neighborhood.

To view the Community Partnership Agreement in its entirety, visit: bostonsquaregr.org

Partners:



Community Partnership Agreement Key Components



ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

1. In multiple phases of construction within Boston Square Together project, a minimum of 30,000 square feet of commercial space will be created that is suitable for local business-ownership opportunities.
2. Amplify GR and its implementation partners will adopt a goal that a minimum of 30% of the overall cost of construction will be sourced by 49507-based or Kent County-based Minority, Women-owned, and/or Section 3 firms.



HOUSING FOR ALL

- 1. Rental Affordability:** Ensure that a minimum of 50% of newly constructed rental units (currently projected as 230-250 units in total) will be classified as affordable for those households at or below the 60% Area Median Income (AMI) level with rent equal to 30% of net income at that income level for a minimum of 30 years according to the standards of the Michigan State Housing Development Authority MSHDA Standards. Subject to necessary approvals, a portion of the units will be allocated to households making 50%, 40%, and 30% AMI or less.
- 2. Homeownership:** a) Commit to creating 40 new homeownership opportunities onsite (50% of which will be subsidized), b) support broader neighborhood homeownership by supporting a down payment assistance program for 50+ low to moderate-income households, c) off-site home purchase and renovations in partnership with city and other organizations to facilitate 50+ new home purchases and 50+ home renovations through new or expanded programming for low-to-moderate income families.



COMMUNITY AMENITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

1. **Create** a new public park as well as internal walking paths and community garden beds.
2. **Extend** Evergreen Street eastward to Fuller Avenue.
3. **Develop** a new early learning center for children 6 weeks to 5 years of age.
4. **Develop** a new community center to support health and wellness.
5. **Return** banking and grocery options to Boston Square.