“Good Jobs, Not Gentrification”: The Fight for Community Centered Development in Roxbury

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Abstract: This thesis examines the potential and limitations of organizing for community control and employment benefits in Boston’s Roxbury neighborhood. Following decades of disinvestment, this community is experiencing an upsurge in new commercial and residential construction. Concerns about gentrification and displacement of low and moderate income residents inspired a wave of direct action organizing demanding tangible local employment benefits from new development. The campaign culminated in the passage of a “Good Jobs Policy”, to be applied to future construction projects in Roxbury.

This thesis factors in organizing strategy and political context to explain the campaign’s successes and failures. The findings indicated that appropriate preparation and timing, a strong organizing infrastructure, political support and sustained community mobilization helped ensure the policy’s passage through the local advisory body. The exclusion of one of its intended provisions can be attributed to the poor governance practices and the competing priorities of local stakeholders. Drawing on these lessons, this thesis recommends a set of priorities and actions to advance community control and benefit from future development in the neighborhood.

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Introduction

The neighborhood of Roxbury is the geographic center of Boston and an epicenter of gentrification. The city is experiencing an unprecedented development boom, with much of this new construction catering to a luxury model that is out of reach for middle and low income communities. Due to the scarcity of land, many investors are now expanding their real estate portfolio to historically disinvested areas of the city. For decades, Roxbury has suffered from structural racism that has and been viewed as a risky investment for developers. However, with its unparalleled inventory of vacant parcels, proximity to downtown, and public investments in its commercial center, it is now seen much more favorably.

While there is a sector of the Roxbury community that wholeheartedly welcomes the influx of new commercial and residential projects, others see it as a threat to the stability of long-term residents and business owners. This concern was heightened by the failure of developers to hire and adequately compensate neighborhood residents on construction sites. A group of concerned individuals responded by protesting these construction sites to heighten awareness of the issue and demand a reversal of these infractions. This campaign continued over the course of several years and culminated in the passage of a policy to raise job standards for all new construction in the neighborhood.

As the City of Boston initiates multiple planning initiatives in Roxbury and other neighborhoods, its expressed commitment to equitable development requires the ability to learn from historical and contemporary community struggles. This case provides insights into the dynamics of fights for community controlled governance in Roxbury. The lessons of this campaign are used to recommend strategic actions to further local governance and development benefits that prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable community members.
Research Question and Methodology

This thesis explores the factors that contributed to the success of this neighborhood campaign and those that inhibited its progress. How did the local organizing infrastructure and community mobilization strategy shape the campaign’s trajectory? What role did city officials play? How did the development oversight committee’s composition and structure shape the outcome? What effect did the changing political environment have on the proceedings?

To analyze this case, the following methods were employed: (a) a review of relevant news articles and planning documents, (b) observing Roxbury Strategic Oversight Committee meetings, (c) in-person interviews with campaign leaders, elected officials, developers, and RSMPOC members.

Structure

The first chapter offers a conceptual framework of community control and brief overview of local hire and community benefits organizing. Chapter 2 focuses on Roxbury’s historical resistance to top-down planning and development, beginning in the urban renewal era. Chapter 3 presents the case study narrative, detailing the major events that shaped the Good Jobs Campaign. Chapter 4 discusses the factors that contributed to and detracted from the passage of the Good Job Policy. Based on this analysis, Chapter 5 offers recommendations for strengthening community control of planning and development in Roxbury. Chapter 6 concludes with a review of key findings.
Chapter 1

Community Control and Benefit: Concepts and Strategies

Community control is the quest for self determination in urban neighborhoods. James DeFilippis describes it as the ability of residents within a given locality to exercise authority over the institutions that govern their lives. While some view community control as separatist, it is better understood as a middle ground between separatism and dependency; a type of power sharing between a geographical community, local government and other relevant stakeholders. Importantly, it is resistance oriented—something that must be continually striven for, rather than fully achievable.

Activists have turned to community control strategies to defend their neighborhoods from top-down neoliberal development and center endogenous leadership. The realization of the demand for local democratic governance necessitates a transfer of power from city governments to local jurisdictions. Community control activism was central to the Black Power Movement, with local organizers in cities across the country securing high levels of authority within public education, policing and economic development institutions. The concept is now regaining popularity in response to the pervasive gentrification of once disinvested urban areas.

The Role of Participation and Organizing

One method for pursuing community control is through active participation in planning and development processes. This is a challenging pursuit because, although public participation mandates ostensibly gives residents a role in decision making, the limits

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4. Altshuler, *Community Control: The Black Demand for Participation in Large American Cities.*
5. DeFilippis, “Community Control and Development: The Long View.”
placed on the scope and structure of input often belies this objective. Drawing on her experience as a participation advisor for the 1960s Model Cities urban development program, Sherry Arnstein argued that much of what is popularly labeled participation actually severely limits the power of local stakeholders in low-income communities. True participation, she concluded, is realized only through citizen control—wherein residents possess the lion’s share of decision making authority over policies, management, and funding for the development of projects in their neighborhoods.6

The demand for citizen control, however, is routinely undermined by city officials and substituted with increases in resident representation on planning bodies. This institutionalization, however, often precipitates the dilution of the community’s objectives. Political scientist Janice K. Tulloss argues that, by agreeing to “dance with the devil” through the process of political incorporation, community control activists sacrifice the autonomy that helped ensure the integrity of their message. As such, she suggests that the representation of activists on decision making bodies should be viewed as one component, rather than the ultimate measure of community control.7

Community organizing is often utilized by activists to further their impact. In the 1990s, a wave of such activity arose in cities across the nation by groups demanding a more equitable distribution of economic benefits from development.8 Eager to expand their tax base through the attraction and retention of businesses, local governments offer tax abatements, credits, bonds and a range of other subsidies to the private sector.9 The tax payers that foot the bill often fail to reap tangible benefits, and in fact become saddled with significant rent hikes and the threat of displacement. Local campaigns to resist this unequal development practice use tactics mirroring those of labor unions such as strikes, pickets and collective bargaining to secure economic benefits for residents.10

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6 Arnstein, “A Ladder of Citizen Participation.”
7 Tulloss, “Citizen Participation in Boston’s Development Policy: The Political Economy of Participation.”
9 “An Overview of Accountable Development.”
Community Control of Labor: Local Hire Policies

Securing good jobs for residents through local hire policies is a key objective of campaigns for community controlled development. These provisions obligate developers and business owners to hire a specified percentage of their workers from local neighborhoods and other target demographics, such as women and people of color. Local hire mandates most often cover construction industry jobs, but can also be applied to permanent positions in other types of businesses. There are two primary ways through which local hire is enacted: city ordinances and contractual agreements.

Adopting local hire through a city ordinance institutionalizes the employment policy for all new construction receiving city funding or reaching a given square footage. Contractors are expected to perform the outreach necessary to carry out the affirmative action hiring requirement and submit periodic reports on worker demographics to the appropriate city agency. Despite these standardized procedures, there are multiple barriers to successful implementation.

Resistance from the construction industry is one key implementation challenge. Developers have questioned the constitutionality of local hire ordinances in court, arguing that they violate interstate commerce and equal protection clauses. While many city ordinances have withstood these legal threats, it nonetheless created a chilling effect on their full implementation.

Poor compliance with local hire polices can often be attributed to subpar monitoring and compliance. Institutional resources are grossly inadequate for tracking adherence of the projects that fall under the policy. Therefore, contractors readily get away with misrepresenting the demographics of their workforce. Transparency is even further obscured by the limited “good faith effort” requirement of many policies that allows still more opportunities for contractors to justify not meeting hiring targets. This lax language means that as long as contractors submit documentation of their attempts to recruit

12 Cantrell, Esq., Enforceability of Local Hire Preference Programs.
members of targeted groups, they remain in compliance. Further, city administrators frequently fail to impose the penalties described in the ordinance when contractors do not follow these minimum protocols.  

**Securing Employment Benefits through Contracts**

Another way to secure local hire benefits from development is through contractual agreements. There are several types of contracts, including community workforce agreements, development agreements and community benefits agreements (CBAs)—each with unique features. CBAs typically cover large construction projects in low-income neighborhoods. While they are structured to offer a multitude of benefits for local residents, employment mandates such as local hire, living wage standards and labor organizing protections tend to be their most prominent features. The lessons learned from previous CBA organizing are relevant for a range of similar efforts. Lead by coalitions of local stakeholders, CBA campaigns engender participatory governance in contexts where little exists. Successful efforts make strategic use of established development approval processes where activists can bring the community’s grievances and interests to the forefront. By claiming these meetings as community organizing spaces, activists exert control in the planning process and pave the way for negotiations. Unlike with local hire ordinances, the community coalition that helps secure the agreement typically stays involved through implementation. While this places additional responsibility on the coalition, it also can improve compliance. Furthermore, continued involvement allows the coalition to sustain power while educating community members on the realities of the development process. This often sets the stage to pursue more expansive economic justice initiatives in the future.

The political landscape of a locality also plays a critical role in campaign success. In places with existing local hire ordinances, CBAs can reinforce and expand these policies.

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14 Musil, *The Sleeping Giant: Community Benefit Agreements and Urban Development.*
15 ibid.
16 Parks, “The Politics and Practice of Economic Justice.”
while spreading benefits to additional projects. Having political allies is important to these campaigns, as elected officials hold power over project approvals and subsidy allocations that developers need. They are therefore in a position to convince them to negotiate with community coalitions. Once an agreement is solidified, these officials can also help ensure the inclusion of the CBA’s provisions in the city’s development contracts, in order to reinforce the obligations therein. 17

Assessing Local Hire Impacts

In addition to understanding the politics of local hire campaigns and policies, it is important to discern the potential and limitations of this tool. Because local hire policies only apply to specific types of development projects, only a small number of residents receive direct benefits. These policies are often implemented when there is renewed financial interest in neglected neighborhoods, and therefore dependent on external capital that spurs gentrification and displacement.

Despite these realities, local hire campaigns are worthwhile endeavors in many circumstances. The demand they make for responsive development can lead to tangible gains and serve as the breeding ground for more robust community control fights thereafter. Therefore, this tool should be viewed as one component in a larger struggle to advance community control of economic development in marginalized neighborhoods.

17 ibid.
Chapter 2

Chronicling Struggles for Community Control and Benefit in Roxbury

1960s: Resisting Urban Renewal

The current community mobilization surrounding new construction in Roxbury follows a historical trajectory with origins in the urban renewal era. In 1966, the City of Boston began carrying out plans to construct a crosstown expressway that would run through Roxbury and adjacent neighborhoods. Armed with federal funding and eminent domain powers, the Massachusetts Department of Public Works cleared land in preparation for the planned 8-lane highway. A long battle marked by protest, community organizing, coalition building and garnering political allies, eventually lead to the cessation of the project in 1969. The highway’s defeat was a major victory for residents in Roxbury and the surrounding areas, yet, the mass demolitions and accompanying displacement continued to impact the area for years to come.

Community resistance to government-funded development during this period not only lamented its detrimental physical effects, but also the failure to produce employment opportunities in black communities. In the 1960s, new federal grants became available for rehabilitation projects in urban areas through the Model Cities program. Despite proclamations of prioritizing community participation on these projects, employment on construction sites continued to exclude residents from the neighborhoods where they were located. In response to these injustices, protests erupted in cities across the country demanding that black workers be hired on government sponsored construction projects. The threat of construction site shut downs lead many city governments to adopt affirmative action plans to desegregate the construction industry.

\[\text{Goldberg, Black Power at Work: Community Control, Affirmative Action, and the Construction Industry.}\]
\[\text{ibid.}\]

13
Despite the creation of such a plan in Boston, discrimination against black construction workers persisted. An incident where dozens of black employees were fired without justification at the site of a low-income housing project provoked neighborhood activists to form the United Community Construction Workers (UCCW) in 1968. As a community based union of employed and prospective construction workers, UCCW advocated for increased job access, training opportunities and integration in the trade unions.\(^3\)

**1970s: Coalition Building**

UCCW later joined forces with other organizations in an effort to increase their impact. As detailed in *Chain of Change*, the Third World Jobs Clearinghouse was formed in 1975 with UCCW and other groups representing Latino, Asian and Native American communities in Boston. Despite internal conflicts over representation and leadership within the umbrella organization, the groups worked together to access city funding to operate a construction job training program. They soon learned, however, that training alone was not enough to secure job placements for graduates because city agencies failed to include affirmative action clauses in their development contracts.\(^4\)

Returning to direct action to pressure developers to hire workers of color, the Clearinghouse’s placements rates experienced an upsurge. However, one construction site picket escalated between protesters and white laborers and prompted trade unions to lobby the city council to revoke the Clearinghouse’s funding. This defeat was too much for the organization to withstand, despite the eventual reinstatement of financial support. Realizing the extent to which perceived hostility towards union workers was politically disadvantageous, some Clearinghouse members decided to form a new coalition inclusive of white constituents.

With a focus on construction job access for all Boston residents, the newly formed Boston Jobs Coalition gained a wide base of support. After drafting a policy to mandate

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\(^3\) Nelson, *Black Atlantic Politics.*

\(^4\) King, *Chain of Change: Struggles for Black Community Development.*
that developers of city-funded projects hire a minimum percentage of local residents, people of color and women, the Boston Jobs Coalition requested endorsement by candidates running for office during the 1979 mayoral campaign. This strategy proved successful when, after being reelected, Mayor White enacted the Boston Residents Jobs Policy (BRJP) through executive order. While the policy received backlash from the construction industry, it withstood a legal challenge. The Coalition, however, disbanded due to unresolved racial tensions amongst its membership.  

1980s: Neighborhood Councils

In the 1980s, a resurgence of top-down planning in Roxbury precipitated a strategy to increase neighborhood control of development governance. During a building upsurge in Boston, Roxbury leaders became aware of the BRA’s redevelopment plans for Dudley Station that focused on the proliferation of office towers. These leaders, who had been involved in the area for years following the failed highway project, viewed this top-down planning as an affront to the community’s autonomy. In response, they created the Greater Roxbury Neighborhood Authority (GRNA) to demand local control of the neighborhood’s redevelopment. The community outcry eventually lead the BRA to adopt a lower impact project that provided comprehensive community benefits.

This outcome demonstrated how the GRNA could wield political power to help steer the course of development, but its leaders had their sights set on securing more sustainable forms of local control. In this pursuit, they launched the interim Roxbury Planning Advisory Committee (which later became the Roxbury Neighborhood Council) to serve as a neighborhood council—an initiative that aligned with the mayor’s campaign promise. However, their demand for project approval and veto power proved politically intractable. Determined to see the institutionalization of robust neighborhood based planning and development powers, the GRNA formed a coalition with other groups seeking more neighborhood authority in Boston.

5 Clavel, Activists in City Hall.
6 ibid.
7 ibid.
The Coalition for Community Control of Development included dozens of community based organizations across the city, with strong leadership from the GRNA. The coalition began its operations in 1988 with foundation funding and a staff of one. They drafted a home rule petition that would enforce democratic elections of neighborhood councils and grant them the power to create and enforce master plans and approve and veto development proposals and zoning variances. The petition also requested a funding allocation from the city for the operation of local councils. Despite widespread neighborhood support, many of those in political office viewed the ordinance as anti-city and promoting political competition. The mayor dismissed the coalition’s mission as frivolous, stating: “I urge you to join with me in working on the pressing issues of drug abuse, illegal guns, and violence. Ridding the neighborhoods of these three scourges will give neighborhood residents a real sense of community control.” The strong political opposition from City Hall sealed the fate of the ordinance and the coalition itself. With it, the prospects of strong institutionalized mechanisms of local development governance were suppressed.

2000s-2010s: Roxbury Master Plan and BRJP Implementation

With much of the land cleared in the 1960s still undeveloped, a group of local leaders initiated a comprehensive neighborhood planning effort with support from Mayor Menino. Through coordination between the Roxbury Neighborhood Council and the BRA, a years-long community process ensued to draft the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan between 1999 and 2003. The final document stressed the need to support development that corresponded to the needs of current residents and staving off neighborhood displacement. The plan also detailed the creation of the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee (RSMPOC) to oversee the disposition of ten urban renewal parcels.

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8 "Legislative Summary of the Discussion Draft: Home Rule Petition."
9 Clavel, Activists in City Hall.
10 “Home Rule Petition”
Soon after the formation of the RSMPOC through a nominations and mayoral appointment process, tensions arose concerning the committee’s role and governing procedures. During the first several months, the committee held private meetings, which confused and frustrated community members who were looking to participate. The committee chair saw this as a necessary step to build capacity and promote cohesion, but did not take steps to communicate this to the public. After the meetings became open, the community’s frustrations with the committee persisted due to the failure to adequately incorporate public feedback into their decision making process. RSMPOC members experienced disappointment with the community engagement process and struggled to effectively communicate with the BRA, who they felt belittled their authority. These power struggles and communication failures continued to characterize much of the committee’s work going forward.13

Attention on the RSMPOC waned over time due to slow development progress. The committee contributed to the creation, review and approval of RFPs but experienced numerous disappointments when developers were later unable to carry out their projects.14 The onset of the Great Recession eventually brought construction progress to a complete halt. It was not until the city-funded Ferdinand redevelopment was underway that the first parcel under the committee’s purview reached the development stage in 2014.

This time period—corresponding with Mayor Menino’s five terms in office—saw a steep decline in adherence to the Boston Residents Job Policy. The percentage of Boston residents working on covered construction projects plummeted from 44 percent to 30 percent between 1993 and 2014—neither of which met the 50 percent target.15 While the 25 percent hiring goal for racial minorities was achieved, their percentage decreased from 38 to 31 percent. Exacerbating this decline is its occurrence alongside a 66 percent rate of

13 Greeley, The Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee: A Case Study of Empowered Participatory Governance.
14 Informant #6, interview.
15 Rocheleau, “Construction Hiring Goals Not Met in Boston.”
growth in the city’s composition of racial minorities, who constituted the majority of the city’s population by 2010.¹⁶ These figures suggest that the percentage decline in the employment of local workers of color was particularly severe. The only category that saw an expansion during these years was female employees—from 2.8 to 4.4 percent—still well below the 10 percent target.

The RSMPOC and BRJP are outgrowths of 50 years of community control organizing in Roxbury. Their endurance can be largely attributed to their incorporated status. However, shifts in political power, weak enforcement mechanisms and the dearth of community inclusion during implementation have stifled their ability to provide benefits for those who need it most. The case study that follows details a contemporary campaign to hold the city and developers accountable to community labor standards at yet another defining moment in the neighborhood’s history.

¹⁶ Melnik, Demographic and Socio-Economic Trends in Boston.
Chapter 3

Case Study: Chronicling the Good Job Standards Campaign

The Ferdinand Building and the Dudley Plan

Built in 1895, the Ferdinand building is a historical landmark located in the center of the Dudley Square commercial corridor. Once the site of the nation’s largest furniture retailer, it thrived in the period before urban renewal wreaked havoc on the neighborhood’s economic base. It remained unoccupied and in a state of disrepair beginning in 1979.¹

During the course of his mayorship, Menino sought ways to catalyze the revitalization of Dudley Square through the redevelopment the Ferdinand building as a key anchor. In 1999, Massachusetts’ governor Paul Cellucci agreed to a $200 million plan to make the site the new home of the state’s Department of Health.² When the project was later foiled by the succeeding state administration, Menino orchestrated the city’s takeover of the building through the BRA’s power of eminent domain.³ This decision was not without controversy—the building’s prior owners and local activists felt blindsided by the administration’s failure to consult relevant stakeholders prior to the taking.⁴

Mayor Menino launched the Dudley Square Vision Project in 2007—an initiative to plan the revitalization of targeted structures in Dudley Square, including the local police station and public library. An advisory task force was set up to assist in creating a strategic action plan and serve as a liaison between the city and the neighboring community.⁵ Construction on the Ferdinand building began in 2011, upon securing the

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¹ Handy, “Led by School Building, Boston Seeks to Revitalize Dudley Square.”
² ibid.
³ McMorrow, “City Hall’s Broken Promise in Dudley Square.”
⁴ Miller, “City Plans to Move Offices to Dudley Square Building.”
necessary funding for it to serve as the new headquarters of Boston’s Department of Education. In addition to housing this public entity, the $115 rehabilitation was designed to offer ground floor space for private retail. Dutch architectural firm, Mecanoo and Boston-based Sasaki Associates were selected to carry out the public-private redevelopment effort.

Characteristic of his approach towards development, Menino was determined to see the project through despite any vocal resistance. Speaking about the construction’s commencement he asserted: “I know there will be pushback as we go – ‘The Ferdinand is too big or too small, the process is too fast or too slow, the project is too public or too private, it’s never going to happen or it never should.’ You know what I say? It’s too important. It’s too central. It’s too urgent. We will never know how great Boston can be until Dudley Square is great once again.’” To those who questioned the project’s potential to accelerate displacement, he declared it would have the opposite effect because of the employment opportunities new investment would generate.

Seven months into the rehabilitation of the Ferdinand building, a group of local activists began picketing the construction site. Organized by Roxbury native Priscilla Flint of the Black Economic Justice Institute, the group included an estimated two-dozen individuals expressing their outrage over the project’s failure to comply with BRJP employment standards with the slogan “Boston Jobs for Boston Residents”. The protesters also denounced the city’s failure to apply sanctions for the transgression.

It was through volunteering with the Dorchester-Roxbury Labor Committee that Priscilla became aware of the project’s diversity shortfall upon review of the developer’s bi-weekly project reports. Born and raised in Dudley Square, Priscilla has fond memories of the community that existed before the many years of disinvestment. Although her role as activist is new, she finds it a natural outgrowth of her passion for her community

6 “Mayor Menino Announces: The Dudley Plan.”
7 Ross, “Dudley Done Right: City Starts Work on Major Rehab of Long-Struggling Boston Square.”
8 Larson, “Protesters Demand More Local Jobs at Ferdinand.”
9 ibid.
10 Informant #1, interview.
and personal experience regarding the impact of unemployment on her wellbeing. Withstanding attempts by city officials to quell protests, Priscilla and other activists continued to picket the site until the mayor arranged a meeting between the developers and RSMPOC chair. The convening concluded with an apology from the developers and a promise to improve hiring numbers.\(^\text{11}\)

**Tropical Foods Wage Disputes**

Spurred by the Ferdinand redevelopment, the next major construction underway in Dudley Square was the Tropical Foods supermarket on parcel 10. Tropical Foods has operated in the Roxbury neighborhood since 1974. Founded by Cuban immigrant Pastor Medina, he later sold the store to his son in law Ronn Gary Sr. who helped grow it from a small corner market to a full service grocery store offering a wide selection of ethnic foods. In 2006, Ronn’s sons Ronn Jr. Gary and Randy Gary took over the store’s operations. As one of the only grocery establishments with in the Dudley area, it has established itself as an essential neighborhood amenity.\(^\text{12}\)

When the BRA opened up the parcel adjacent to the existing supermarket in 2011, the owners seized the opportunity to submit a development proposal with plans to significantly expand their operations with a brand new building. They partnered with Madison Park Development Corporation, a CDC that was formed in the mid-1960s in response to the destruction in Roxbury following the city’s failed highway expansion. With ownership of over 1,400 housing units, it is the largest CDC in the state.

In their joint proposal, the development team extolled the economic impact the project would have on the local economy. The proposal included strong assertions concerning the employment benefits of the development; with an estimated average hourly pay rate for construction laborers of $50-$60 an hour. Using 40 percent of construction expenditures as a standard estimate of total labor costs and factoring in the BRJP mandate, the team

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\(^{11}\) ibid.

\(^{12}\) "About Us." Tropical Foods Supermarket.
projected that Boston residents would collectively earn $6 million, people of color $3 million, and women $1.2 million in construction wages.\textsuperscript{13}

These employment and wage estimates were critical to garnering popular support for the project. During the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee’s (RSMPOC) proposal review, the development team committed to adopting construction hiring targets beyond BRJP standards for people of color and women, per the committee’s request.\textsuperscript{14}

After receiving their designation in May of 2013, the development team secured millions of dollars in funding assistance through the MassWorks infrastructure program, the U.S. Office of Community Services Healthy Food Initiative grant, and New Market Tax Credits.\textsuperscript{15}

Concerns about the eventual wages paid to workers employed at the construction site were raised at an April 2014 RSMPOC meeting when committee member Dorothea Jones reported claims that some workers were being paid as little as eleven dollars an hour. Several members of the body believed that projects receiving federal funding were required to pay workers prevailing wages but Nat Healey of Madison Park refuted this assumption during his progress update to the committee. He acknowledged that the project had not yet fulfilled its minority-hiring goals, but was on track to do so in the upcoming months. Members of the RSMPOC voiced their disappointment at these revelations; stressing that the committee’s approval had been based on the developer’s ability to meet the hiring and wage numbers outlined during the review period. Councilor Jackson characterized the failure to make good on these promises as undermining his and the community’s support, and contrary to the goal of local wealth creation.\textsuperscript{16}

After becoming aware of these employment infractions, local activists attempted to contact representatives from Madison Park and Tropical Foods. When they eventually pinned down members of the real estate team, they were told that as an open shop job

\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Parcel 10: Response to RFP.}
\textsuperscript{14} \textit{RSMPOC Monthly Project Update Meeting.} March 2015.
\textsuperscript{15} \textit{“Tropical Foods Expansion Poised to Move Forward.”}
\textsuperscript{16} \textit{RSMPOC Monthly Project Update Meeting.} April 2014.
The CDC, however, committed to ensuring that all employees receive a minimum of $15 an hour going forward, and back-paying those who had received less.17 This remedy was deemed insufficient by activists, who proceeded with direct action to demand more accountability for the infraction. The construction site pickets that ensued centered job quality as an integral component of the wealth creation prioritized within the Roxbury Master Plan. With slogans like “No More Slave Wages”, activists situated this issue within the larger history of black economic marginalization.18 Madison Park conceded that the wages described in the RFP had perhaps been too high and attempted to shift attention to their support of minority enterprises and record of development in the neighborhood.19

In response to a request from BRA Deputy Director Dana Whiteside, Madison Park submitted a memo outlining the site’s hiring progress and labor practices. Therein, employee wages are listed as $15-$25 for unskilled positions and $20-$50 for skilled jobs. The memo also details efforts to increase targeted hiring. Of the total “walk on applicants”, 6.9 percent were hired, representing eight percent of total worker hours. There is mention of hiring an independent consultant to help ensure that wages did not fall below the $15 level.20

For additional oversight of employment practices, Councilor Jackson facilitated biweekly meetings between his office, the citizen monitoring committee, and the development team.21 He also met with BRA officials to explore the potential of levying sanctions on the developers, but this inquiry received little traction.22 As construction progressed, diversity hiring rates came close to target, but the damage left by the wage controversy was not soon forgotten.

17 Informant #2, interview.
18 Ibid.
19 Homan, “Protesters Picket Roxbury Tropical Foods Development.”
20 Ibid.
21 Informant #3, interview.
22 Ibid.
From Protest to Policy: Pushing Good Job Standards

As the Tropical Foods protests persisted, some campaign leaders began crafting a policy proposal that would mandate a set of labor standards for all new construction projects under the purview of the RSMPOC. By implementing a policy linking new construction with employment benefits, the group sought to allow the community to intervene in the market in a way characteristic of a labor union. This effort was supported by their participation and coordination with other labor activists in the recently revived Boston Jobs Coalition, with the long term goal of seeing the policy implemented citywide. 23

Research conducted by campaign leaders revealed that the majority of the jobs created from new development were low-wage service sector positions, leading them to target both construction and permanent employment in the proposed standards.24 The fractured trust between community stakeholders and developers spurred by the Tropical Foods experience was used as leverage for advancing the Good Jobs Policy. The RSMPOC’s official role in making development decisions in Roxbury heightened its appeal as the appropriate forum for the effort.25

The first hurdle faced by campaign leaders was getting the proposal considered by the oversight committee. To press the issue, they collected over 400 signatures through targeted canvassing in Dudley Square from local residents backing the proposal. They later contacted these individuals by phone and recruited many to attend subsequent RSMPOC meetings to further demonstrate their support. This community mobilization effort, in addition to Councilor Jackson’s advocacy as an ex-officio member of the RSMPOC, lead to the formation of a working group comprised of RSMPOC members and leaders of the Good Jobs Campaign.26

Over the course of several weeks, the two groups adapted the proposal into a document agreeable to both parties. The original document included the headline “Good Jobs Not

23 Informant #2, interview.
24 ibid.
25 Informant #4, interview.
26 Informant #1, interview.
Gentrification”, with the authors articulating the need for stable and living wage employment to counteract displacement pressures. Although the RSMPOC members in the working group agreed with the need to establish labor standards, they advocated for a shift in messaging to one focused on the concept of wealth building. In response to this feedback, the community coalition removed the more adversarial components of the text and complied with requests to quantify their claims with relevant statistics.  

The revised document retained the standards for wages, diversity and labor organizing protections of the original proposal: a minimum of 51 percent Boston residents, 51 percent people of color and 15 percent women for all construction sites. All construction workers would receive the prevailing wage, irrespective of trade union affiliation. Post-construction employers at these sites would be required to have a workforce comprised of a minimum of 51 percent city residents, 51 percent people of color and 51 percent women. The minimum wage for these positions would follow Boston’s current Living Wage standard, which then stood at $13.89 an hour and was set to gradually increase to $16.89 by 2017. In addition, all job sites would be covered by a card check neutrality provision to protect against employer resistance to unionization. The proposal also addressed strategies for implementation, including stringent reporting mechanism, community based monitoring and the use of sanctions for noncompliance.  

Despite cooperation from the RSMPOC on the job standards, activists faced several additional hurdles to moving the policy forward. Oversight committee members informed the campaign leaders in the working group that the next step was to meet with the RSMPOC executive committee to iron out any issues before the proposal was put to a full committee vote. Despite their efforts, campaign leaders were unsuccessful in tracking down the RSMPOC committee chair, who later resigned from his post. Sensing an intentional delay, they returned to its mobilization tactics—packing public meetings and demanding a vote.  

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27 Informant #2, interview.
28 Wealth Building from All New Development in Roxbury.
29 Informant #2, interview.
New Job Standards for Parcel 9?

At the same time that the job standards proposal was being debated, a development approved by the RSMPOC in 2011 was finalizing its funding package and attempting to proceed with construction. The developers, Urbanica, Inc., had proposed the construction of an extended stay hotel, residential housing units and retail space on the parcel 9 lot across from Tropical Foods. The authors asserted that through the attraction of a new clientele base and provision of amenities, the project would improve the economic and social life of the neighborhood. Additionally, the team estimated the creation of 140 construction jobs and 86 full time permanent positions.30

As the developers sought their final approval from the BRA in 2015, members of the Good Jobs Campaign zeroed in on the employment standards of the project. During a January RSMPOC meeting, Urbanica revealed that its new plan would reduce the size of the hotel and therefore only necessitate between 30 and 40 full time positions. They also informed the committee that they would use Marriott as the hotel operator and set base wages at $13.80 an hour. This news was met with disapproval from Councilor Jackson who noted that unionized hotels in Boston ensured a minimum wage of $18 an hour and the refusal of the operator to agree to card check neutrality did not bode well for improving the site’s wages in the future. Activists and several members of the RSMPOC echoed the call for the developers to secure more robust employment benefits. The lead developer, in turn, communicated his frustration with feeling subject to a new round of scrutiny after previously being approved by the committee to carry out the project.31

Tensions between the hotel developers and campaign supporters intensified at subsequent RSMPOC meetings. Despite the ambiguity regarding when the job standards policy would be put to a vote, campaign leaders continued to mobilize community members to attend RSMPOC meetings in large numbers. Urbanica solicited support for their project through an online petition and numerous meetings with Councilor Jackson and other

31 Larson, “Jobs Topic Dominates Oversight Committee Meeting.”
elected officials. Explaining that the BRA was delaying the project’s final approval pending the job standards vote, Urbanica implored campaign supporters to consider the cost of another lost opportunity to redevelop the neighborhood.

The predicament expressed by Urbanica elicited a range of reactions from the oversight committee. Councilor Jackson reiterated his decision to withhold support until the developers was able to find an operator who agreed to card check neutrality. Senator Sonia Chang-Díaz expressed empathy for the developers, but stressed the importance of establishing standards that supported community benefit. Despite her collaboration on the job standards proposal, Dorothea stated that she did not think it should interfere with the progression of a previously approved project.

With the status of the hotel project still in limbo, the oversight committee delayed a vote on the job standards for several weeks. The lack of open communication regarding the vote heightened the frustrations of campaign supporters, evidenced in the heated exchanges at RSMPOC meetings. Further exacerbating tensions was the practice of only allowing attendees to address the room at the very end of meetings, often after important decisions had been made. At the March RSMPOC meeting, campaign supporters disregarded this rule, calling out for certain members of the oversight committee to step down from their post for not behaving in the community’s best interests. Others expressed concern about the committee’s lack of official procedures or record keeping, which made it difficult to hold them accountable for their actions.

These unresolved concerns about meeting procedure, community representation and the impact of the proposal on the hotel development all factored into the vote on the Good Jobs Policy at the April 6th RSMPOC meeting. The committee co-chairs began by informing attendees that the executive committee had come together in advance of the meeting and made the decision to remove the card check neutrality provision from the job

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32 Informant #5, interview.
33 *Monthly Project Update Meeting*, March 2015.
34 Ibid.
35 This section relies on observations at the March 2, 2015 RSMPOC meeting.
standards proposal. This revelation prompted Councilor Jackson to question the authority of the executive committee to make such a decision without consulting him or others in the working group. The co-chair responded that there was no precedent prohibiting this course of action and explained that there were members of the executive committee who were uncomfortable with voting on the policy in its original state.

Outcries from attendees and other committee members lead to an agreement take a vote on the card check neutrality provision apart from the rest of the proposal. Ahead of the vote, ex-officio committee member Senator Sonia Chang-Díaz inquired about the existence of bylaws that could help clarify the appropriate voting procedure, to which the co-chair replied in the negative. Another committee member inquired about whether or not the card check provision would apply to previously designated parcels, to which there was no definitive response.

The amended proposal passed with five votes in favor and three abstentions. The subsequent vote on card check neutrality also yielded a majority of votes in favor but when the Chair’s tally did not reflect this outcome, a re-vote was called for. Side conversations between the chair and members of the committee prior to the re-vote, seemed to sway the outcome. The re-vote yielded three votes in favor, three against and two abstentions. Notably, all of the opposed votes came from RSMPOC members who were part of the job standards working group. The co-chair’s tiebreaking vote served to defeat the inclusion of the card check neutrality provision in the Good Jobs Policy.

There were strong initial reactions to this result from those in attendance. Councilor Jackson expressed his disappointment with the partial defeat, calling it a missed opportunity to protect Roxbury workers. Senator Chang-Díaz also conveyed her disagreement with the final vote. A member of the committee defended her vote by stating that the RSMPOC’s charge of furthering economic development in Roxbury requires a holistic assessment of stakeholder benefit. Some activists shared that they felt betrayed by the vote of committee working group members, stressing that had not previously expressed objections to the card check neutrality provision.
The Aftermath: Assessing Motivations, Impact and Next Steps

Despite the defeat of the card check neutrality provision, campaign leaders felt satisfied with their victory. One leader felt that the failure to pass that provision was minor; that it no longer matched the organizing model of many unions. Another activist expressed her amazement with the impact the campaign had made in a relatively short time span. Councilor Jackson was also pleased with the passage of the Good Jobs Policy, which he declared “the highest standards anywhere in the city.”

Weeks after the vote, the mechanism and politics involved in the official adoption of the policy remained obscure. The RSMPOC composed a memo to the BRA detailing the approved proposal, but was uncertain about when they could expect a response, who would make the final decision and what additional political leverage would be necessary. The mayor’s Chief of Economic Development, John Barros, attended an RSMPOC meeting three months after the vote. While expressing his support for the job standards, he also stressed that all development projects require tradeoffs and that it is not always feasible for developers to finance a particular amount of community benefits. He addressed the long-standing need to foster a closer relationship between the Mayor’s Office, BRA and RSMPOC, which he vowed to foster going forward.

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37 Informant #5, interview.
38 Informant #1, interview.
Chapter 4

Case Analysis: Successes and Failures of the Good Jobs Campaign

The approval of the job standards policy by the RSMPOC was both this campaign’s biggest achievement and a sign of the problems limiting community control in Roxbury. The policy’s success can be attributed to the strategic actions of its leaders as well as the political and social environment. The limitations levied on the policy proposal speak to structural and relational dysfunctions of the oversight committee. The following section explores the key factors behind these dynamics.

What Factors Contributed to the Success of the Good Jobs Policy?

Strategy + Timing

- The Ferdinand and Tropical Foods protests prepared campaign leaders to push forward the Good Job Standards policy. These battles exposed activists to the failure of developers to uphold their agreements around community employment benefits. They discovered that protest and negotiation were not sufficient in the absence of a formal agreement. As a result, campaign leaders decided to focus on establishing higher standards and accountability mechanism as a proactive step towards remedying these injustices.

- Campaign leaders capitalized on the momentum of the Tropical Foods dispute to advance the proposal. Unlike the Ferdinand redevelopment, the Tropical Foods project was vetted through the RSMPOC and lead by developers with deep roots in the neighborhood. Consequently, those involved in approving the project felt duped by the blatant disregard for their agreement and eager to hold developers accountable for this type of behavior. The shared outrage from the RSMPOC, elected officials and
community members was leveraged to legitimize the Good Jobs Policy as an appropriate solution to this predicament.

- This campaign occurred amidst a growing movement to increase the minimum wage. The media coverage and local activity around the “Fight for $15”—a demand for employers to raise their minimum wages to $15 an hour, helped mainstream the assertion that businesses had an obligation to provide more livable salaries to their employees. This political environment served as inspiration and support for the Good Jobs Campaign.

- Campaign leaders utilized the RSMPOC to push their proposal. Prior to this campaign, the oversight committee had worked to uphold the Roxbury Master Plan’s emphasis on community wealth building by negotiating diversity and local hire provisions with potential developers beyond BRJP standards. Their existing commitment to local hire made the RSMPOC a strategic site for activists to advance their proposal, as opposed going directly to the Mayor’s Office or BRA. By doing so, activists turned the public meetings into an organizing space—galvanizing community members to play a role in the development of their own neighborhood. The momentum from this battle demonstrated the popular support for their cause to the city and BRA, and therefore, not readily discredited.

Community Organizing Infrastructure + Mobilization

- The organizing experience at Ferdinand and Tropical Foods gave campaign leaders the capacity to later advance the Good Jobs Policy. The Construction site monitoring performed by the volunteer-run Dorchester/Roxbury Labor Committee offered a foundational level of support for this campaign. The quantification of the developer’s shortfall of local employees was the impetus behind Priscilla’s decision to organize the picket of the Ferdinand redevelopment. As a new member of this monitoring committee, she learned the skills necessary to track the progress of the project and use this data as evidence of labor infractions in her direct action efforts. Continuing these tactics later at Tropical Foods served to educate the community on
the pattern of labor infractions occurring in their neighborhood and build a base of supporters to participate in future campaign actions.

- **The involvement of campaign leaders in a citywide labor rights coalition was a critical source of support.** The revived Boston Jobs Coalition had begun advocating for an update to the BRJP at the same time that this campaign was underway. Seeing this local movement as a step towards their overall goal, members of the coalition helped draft and strategize around the Good Jobs Policy proposal. The coalition was also a critical funding source for the Black Economic Justice Institute, which helped sustain the direct action work of the campaign.

In addition to gaining access to technical and monetary support, participation in the Boston Jobs Coalition increased the overall political power of the campaign. During the 2013 mayor’s race, the BJC sponsored a forum during which candidates—including the future mayor and Chief of Economic Development, Marty Walsh and John Barros—vowed to support an increase in the BRJP’s coverage and diversity requirements. These promises gave leverage to activists to proceed with their campaign without encountering significant pushback from the Mayor’s Office.

**Political Support**

- **Councilor Jackson’s support was key to advancing the campaign at key junctures.** The Tropical Foods labor dispute showed Councilor Jackson that evaluating the success of local hire must include an assessment of wages and other labor protections. Aligning himself with activists on the forefront of this battle, he used his authority as a public official to organize meetings between activists and the Tropical Foods development team, sponsor the policy proposal, and stall the approval of the hotel project until labor standards were improved.

- **The change in mayoral leadership opened up new possibilities for the campaign.** After two decades of the Menino administration, Walsh’s instatement opened up the possibility to shift the city’s relationship with neighborhoods. While Mayor Menino
was notorious for steamrolling community planning processes in favor of
development expediency, Walsh vowed to strengthen community input and public
accountability. His expressed commitment to widening access to construction unions
for people of color as well as his appointment of former Roxbury activist, John
Barros, to his cabinet aligned with the objectives of the Good Jobs Campaign. Along
with his pledge to support amendments to the BRJP, these factors were important
protections that allowed the campaign to progress at the rate it did.

- **The city’s development ambitions also played a role in its handling of the campaign.** As the city approached a major construction boom, the Mayor’s Office and BRA looked to maximize this opportunity. The BRA sought to extend its controversial urban renewal powers by garnering the support of effected neighborhoods, including Roxbury. Due to these high level development objectives, the city likely saw an outward display of opposition to the policy as potentially harmful to its priorities.

**What Factors Inhibited the Success of the Good Jobs Policy?**

Conflicts amongst stakeholders regarding the goals of development in Roxbury were exacerbated by the poor governance of the RSMPOC. The failure to pass the policy in its entirety speaks to the lack of structure, transparency, education and communication built into the oversight body. The following section outlines these problems in greater detail.

- **The structure of public meetings widened the chasm between the committee and the larger community.** RSMPOC meetings were structured around presentations by developers, followed by feedback from committee members. Residents and other stakeholders were only able to speak at the very end of these sessions, for a brief period of time. This format stifled the possibility of knowledge sharing and productive communication amongst those in attendance, as community

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1 "Mayor Walsh Releases Findings of Audit of Boston Redevelopment Authority."
members wishing to engage more fully in the decision making process became resentful of those running the meeting. Similarly, many of those on the committee—feeling attacked by audience members voicing their frustrations—became resigned to their positions. This polarized environment left little room for a constructive dialogue or a mutual-gains approach towards areas of disagreement within the Good Jobs Policy proposal.

- **The committee’s lack of accountability measures further eroded trust amongst stakeholders.** Absent a set of bylaws or strong BRA presence, the committee established its own procedures and improvised at will. Additionally, without minutes serving as a record of each meeting’s proceedings, transparency regarding the committee’s role and practices was jeopardized. These issues boiled over in the numerous public and private interactions between committee members and community activists. Leaders of the Good Jobs Campaign found it difficult to hold the committee accountable for previous commitments they made and to challenge the permissibility of the executive decision to omit the card check neutrality provision from the policy. Those that opposed the provision were easily able to proceed with a faulty voting procedure that favored their interests.

- **The committee’s ignorance of labor and development practices put public benefits in jeopardy.** As a volunteer body, many RSMPOC members do not have professional backgrounds related to planning and development. While the BRA has provided technical assistance pertaining to the creation of RFPs, the RSMPOC does not receive ongoing education and training for other aspects of their work. The committee’s lack of understanding of relevant policies was evidenced in both the conflict regarding prevailing wages at the Tropical Foods construction and debates about the impact of a card check neutrality mandate. Absent a protocol for collecting and distributing information, decisions on these key issues were based on severely biased information.
Concerns about the impact of the Good Jobs Policy on the hotel development dampened committee support of the policy proposal. The conflation of these two issues was at the root of the defeat of the card check neutrality provision. Although the policy was meant to apply to future projects, the lack of authority from the committee meant they could not ensure that this understanding would become the official practice. Due to many of the committee member’s relationship with and support of the hotel development team, their fears were shared and held more weight then the assurances of community activists. The distrust that had developed between committee members and Councilor Jackson also contributed to this attempt to reinstate power over the development process.
Chapter 5

Recommendations

Since the passage of the Good Jobs Policy through the RSMPOC, there have been a number of important advancements. A group of activists involved in the campaign convened with the Mayor’s Office to begin ironing out a plan to implement the Good Jobs Policy. In an effort to circumvent the challenges associated with recent development projects, Councilor Jackson is spearheading a community planning effort known as “Reclaim Roxbury”, with the objective of producing an updated Roxbury Master Plan and reviving the Roxbury Neighborhood Council. At the same time, the Mayor’s Office and BRA are embarking on a citywide master planning process, while initiating a specific planning focus in the Dudley square area. The mayor recently made appointments to fill RSMPOC vacancies, as the committee is now being targeted to oversee the development of several additional public and private parcels in Roxbury.

The community-centered planning effort that is currently underway has the potential to challenge the city’s focus on ad-hoc advisories with minimal local control. The lessons learned from the Good Jobs Campaign and historical community control struggles in Roxbury and can serve as a guide for this work. The following set of recommendations are aimed at furthering community control of development, both in Roxbury and citywide to benefit those residents most likely to suffer from gentrification and displacement. Accomplishing this objective in the face of ever increasing development pressures requires stakeholder participation to bolster endogenous democratic leadership, public accountability and economic justice. The following section outlines recommendations for improving the functioning of the RSMPOC, BRA, Mayor’s Office, and community activists in support of this mission.

1 Pattison-Gordon, “Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee Gains Land.”
RSMPOC

- **Institute elections to democratize the oversight committee.** The mayor’s recent appointment of five new members to the committee disregarded the established nominations process, and with it, the opportunity for recently engaged community members to shape the committee from the inside. The process by which committee members are selected is an initial indicator of the democratic potential of that body. Mayoral appointments are in conflict with community control objectives because those chosen in this fashion are likely to feel beholden to the appointer’s interests. To remedy this predicament, stakeholders must insist on an elections process that is transparent, fair, and accountable to the community. This process can be facilitated through coordination between the Mayor’s Office, Councilor Jackson and leaders of Reclaim Roxbury. Those members that have served on the committee since its inception should be first in line to transition from their posts.

The election of new members should follow the existing Roxbury Master Plan guidelines that specify that the RSMPOC should be representative of a diverse cross section of organizations and sectors of the neighborhood. Additional demographic characteristics important to prioritize in new representatives include: current neighborhood residents, those in public housing, and young adults.

- **Implement mandatory outreach requirements to ensure ongoing community participation.** While the process of creating the Roxbury Master Plan was lauded for its emphasis on community engagement, the work of the RSMPOC has been marked by insularity. The committee’s lack of robust public participation undermines its legitimacy and fosters an environment of distrust and discord between committee members and residents. A mandate for RSMPOC members to perform substantive outreach to local residents on an ongoing basis would help committee members develop relationships with the neighborhood outside of public meetings, thereby strengthening accountability between the two parties. These outreach efforts would give an opportunity for residents who are not able to attend public meetings to be included in the development processes, more time for all parties to understand the issues at hand,
and the ability to collectively brainstorm strategic solutions.

- **Establish committee bylaws to increase transparency and accountability.** Ambiguity surrounding the committee’s functions, processes and relationships to other entities has caused confusion and stifled accountability. A working group of committee members and community activists can be utilized to solidify priorities and processes for the committee, with input from the BRA and Mayor’s Office.

- **Focus on mutual education and understanding.** Incorporating educational workshops related to planning and development into the committee’s function would serve multiple purposes. This programing would help committee members be better informed about topics on which they will make decisions. Additionally, it would educate the larger community and strengthen their ability to advocate for their interests within planning processes. Finally, these sessions would allow RSMPOC and community members to discuss their own stories related to the chosen topic, with the goal of fostering mutual understanding and respect.

- **Alter the format and structure of public meetings.** Committee meetings should be structured in a way that equalizes the participants in attendance. To strengthen community involvement, collaborative agenda setting and deliberation should be built into the meeting structure. The quality of public participation would also benefit from the simple act of rearranging the seating so that attendees can face one another.

**BRA**

- **Create a fund to sustain community control organizing.** As the owners of the land overseen by the RSMPOC, the BRA will capture much of the economic benefit from new development. To spread this revenue more equitably, a portion of the profit from the ground leases of RSMPOC parcels should be deposited into a fund to benefit community organizing efforts. The Roxbury Trust that was established in 2004 as a parcel-based linkage program for the Ruggles Center, serves as a precedent for this type
of arrangement. The BRA’s recently implemented community benefits program in South Boston can also serve as a model. As previous community control efforts have suffered from lack of secure funding, this initiative could help ensure the progression of grassroots planning and development for community benefits in Roxbury.

- **Implement inclusive public engagement staff training.** The BRA’s poor record of community participation continues to negatively effect its interactions in Roxbury and other Boston neighborhoods. Mandating that BRA representatives engage in a series of trainings on culturally competent and historically informed public engagement would be an important step towards improving the agency’s relationship with neighborhoods.

**Mayor’s Office**

- **Support the implementation of Good Jobs Policy standards citywide.** The Good Jobs Campaign laid bare the slack adherence and enforcement of the BRJP policy. As the city takes advantage of the current building boom, it must support the implementation of the Good Jobs Policy for the RSMPOC parcels and for all parcels that fall under BRJP standards citywide. In recent years, San Francisco has become as strong example of how a city can lead in this effort. In 2011, its city council passed an ordinance which revised its previous “good faith” standard with a mandatory policy with enforceable penalties for noncompliance. Since its implementation, local hire rates have steadily increased and surpassed the required thresholds. With strong leadership, Mayor Walsh can follow suit and continue to collaborate with labor advocates to ensure the policy has the political backing and institutional resources to succeed.

- **Expedite the implementation of anti-displacement protections.** As new investments accelerate rental costs, programs and policies directed at curbing displacement must be prioritized. Mayor Walsh recently announced the creation of the Office of Housing and Stability—an important step towards meeting the goal of inclusivity outlined in the first

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2 "Historic Local Hiring Law Passed in San Francisco."
Imagine Boston 2030 report. For optimal impact, this office should work in tandem with current neighborhood planning and development initiatives, especially those of Reclaim Roxbury. Local community groups such as City Life/Vida Urbana and Right to the City have a history of planning and organizing in this arena and should be looked to for guidance on the direction of the work emanating from this office. Amongst the renter protections that should be prioritized are: passage of the proposed “Just Cause” eviction protection ordinance currently under city council consideration, enacting a “Right of First Refusal” provisions to help renters return to their homes following a temporary relocation due to building repairs, provision of relocation case management and financial compensation to renters for no-fault evictions, and implementation a “No Net Loss” policy that ensures that a designated number of affordable units are maintained in a neighborhood following individual conversions to market rate.

- **Support democratic neighborhood councils.** The city is currently pursuing multiple planning and development processes requiring local participation for PLAN: Dudley Square, Imagine Boston 2030 and the proposed extension of the BRA’s urban renewal powers. The city’s practice of appointing ad-hoc advisory bodies to represent the community is incompatible with the goals of comprehensive planning. The Mayor’s Office has an opportunity to support the local initiative to create a sustainable and representative planning body in a newly reformed Roxbury Neighborhood Council. Ultimately, a democratically elected neighborhood body will help facilitate and formalize the relationship between the city and neighborhood for the benefit of both parties.

**Community Activists**

- **Maintain pressure on the Mayor’s Office and BRA to ensure successful implementation of the Good Job Standards.** The history of local hire community control organizing in Roxbury shows that political incorporation often leads to the...

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3 Guiding Growth: Towards an Inclusive City.
dissolution of the organizing coalitions from which they were generated. While the city’s collaboration on finalizing and implementing the Good Job Policy is a encouraging step forward, campaign leaders must remain organized and prepared to apply pressure as needed to maintain the integrity of the policy. The use of both inside and outside influence will require a careful balancing of strategies amongst campaign stakeholders.

- **Leverage outside investments for additional community benefits.** The Good Jobs Policy will be an important baseline standard for future construction projects in Roxbury, but it does not preclude the obtainment of additional community benefits from developers who want to build in the area. Campaign supporters should closely monitor the development proposals under review by the RSMPOC to determine how these projects can be leveraged to fit the needs of neighborhood residents. This will require creativity and community involvement to align the needs of local stakeholders with the unique profile of specific development projects.

- **Advance cooperative wealth building for existing residents.** To more fully promote the wealth creation and economic justice objectives that undergird the Good Jobs Campaign, its leaders should focus attention on long-term community benefits in economic development. Cooperative forms of community economic control can help build up endogenous enterprises that benefit multiple worker-owners while filling gaps in services and amenities identified by current neighborhood residents. The Center for Economic Democracy and the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative are local organizational leaders that can provide leadership in this effort, while Haley House is a successful local example of a cooperative business model. Reclaim Roxbury can leverage the current interest from the Mayor’s Office, BRA and other governmental agencies in Roxbury to advocate for support and funding for the incubation of cooperative businesses.

- **Prioritize leadership development and relationship building.** The robust history of community control campaigns in Roxbury has inspired and shaped successive
generations of activism. Unfortunately, however, the coalitions that pursued this work were short lived, in part due to internal conflicts and leadership scarcity. The coalitions that have recently formed should adopt a broad-based approach to leadership, so that an individual member does not have the sole responsibility or authority to determine the success or failure of the collective. Likewise, the diversity of background and perspective within these alliances necessitates a proactive, creative and ongoing emphasis on internal relationship building and conflict management.
Chapter 6

Conclusion

The success and failures encountered establishing the Good Jobs Policy provides guidance for future community benefits campaigns. This case demonstrates the importance of strong political alleyship, capitalizing on political momentum, and balancing direct action, research, strategic cooperation and coalition building. The actions of RSMPOC members that impeded the full realization of the campaign’s objectives underscore the importance of establishing clear operating procedures, democratizing local governance bodies, and concretizing and updating community development objectives on an ongoing basis.

This campaign is part of a decades-long fight by the Roxbury community to control their own political and economic destiny. The urban renewal era produced a groundswell of resistance to public-private development that prioritized profits for the elite few over those of the city’s most vulnerable residents. Activism around this ever-present issue has ebbed and flowed over the years in response to changing city regimes and development climates. The more radical aspects of these campaigns were undermined by a dearth of political support, funding shortfalls and internal conflicts in favor of policies and structures that emphasized neighborhood representation. In many ways, the Good Jobs Policy is a continuation of this pattern; a relatively conservative approach to community control. However, the campaign from which it was produced shed light on rampant labor abuses, governance failures, and opened the door to a more comprehensive local movement for equitable development.

The accelerated pace of neoliberal transformation in neighborhoods of color necessitates bold leadership from a variety of stakeholders. Boston’s current political economy presents challenges and opportunities for community control in Roxbury and other gentrifying neighborhoods. If the city is to make good on its expressed commitment to housing affordability and racial diversity, it must fundamentally alter its approach to planning and neighborhood investment from merely sanctioning participation, to
strengthening the capacity of organizations and coalitions to lead development that centers the needs of the most marginalized.
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