

# Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council

## Ad-hoc Whole Foods Committee

Report to full JPNC

June 28, 2011

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## **Introduction**

On January 14, the Jamaica Plain Gazette reported that Hi-Lo, a Hyde Square supermarket that had served the Jamaica Plain community for 47 years, would close and be replaced by a Whole Foods Market. Many people across the community had strong reactions to this news. Some were excited about the prospect of a supermarket that could provide healthy, sustainable, organic food and specialty health supplements, as well as prevent the space from being vacant and bring with it new jobs in this difficult economy. Others were dismayed about the loss of a cultural institution that sold a wide range of hard-to-find, ethnic foods at relatively affordable prices, and concerned about the impact a large multinational corporation might have on gentrification and small businesses.

The Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council (JPNC) convened two forums, each attended by more than 200 people, on February 8<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> at the Kennedy Middle School. At the first, nearly 50 people spoke out against Whole Foods. People who supported Whole Foods reported feeling too intimidated to speak during this forum, so the JPNC made efforts to accommodate all viewpoints at the second meeting, including alternating speakers who identified themselves as supporting or opposing Whole Foods.

The issue of Whole Foods' arrival in Hyde Square remained a hot topic in the media and on-line blogs during February and March. Two groups sprung up to lobby for or against the grocer: "Whose Foods" organized against Whole Foods, while "JP for All" supported the supermarket's arrival. Partially inspired by these two groups, hundreds of people wrote letters to elected officials, including the JPNC, or left comments on the JPNC website.

On March 29, the JPNC passed a motion that said, in part, "Based on what we know now, we have concerns that Whole Foods is not a good fit for Hyde Square." The motion passed by a count of 8-7, reflecting the divided opinions of both the Council and the community at-large. It is attached as Appendix A. That vote touched off a new firestorm of rhetoric on both sides of the issue, but in particular seemed to energize those residents in support of Whole Foods.

During the March 29 meeting, the JPNC established an ad-hoc committee to continue evaluating the Whole Foods issue and to attempt to move from the divisiveness of the current debate toward a solution that the vast majority of the community could support. The official mandate of the ad-hoc committee is included as Appendix B.

Steve Laferriere, who was appointed Chair of the Ad-hoc Committee, wrote a letter, which is included as Appendix C, explaining the purpose of the committee and calling for volunteers. Ten community members were eventually chosen by drawing names out of a hat. Two slots were reserved for those supporting Whole Foods, two for those opposed to the store, two for members of the business community, two for residents of Hyde Square, and two open to any JP resident or business owner. One member was unable to continue their work on the committee, and another member ceased participating after two meetings, leaving the committee makeup as follows:

Steve Backman, JPNC Member  
Dave Baron, JPNC Member  
Erica Bial<sup>1</sup>  
Monty Cornell<sup>2</sup>  
Judith Grant  
Steve Laferriere, JPNC Member  
Jamey Lionette  
Ben Mauer  
Anne Mackin<sup>3</sup>  
John McLoughlin, DPM  
Andrew Murray  
Monica Rey  
Jesse White, JPNC Member  
Jay Zoldak, JPNC Member

In addition, 79 community members not selected for the committee have attended meetings, participated in editing sections of this report, or submitted information via a form the committee created on the JPNC website.<sup>4</sup> Four people in particular have contributed a great deal by assisting in writing and editing pieces of the report: Terry Mason, Helen Matthews, Norma Rey-Alicea, and Martha Rodriguez. Two elected officials, City Councilor Felix Arroyo and State Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz, appeared at the Committee's meeting on April 28 and presented us with letters to consider in drafting our report. These letters are attached as Appendices D and E. The JPNC also submitted a letter with recommendations to the Committee, which is attached as Appendix F. All three letters encouraged the Committee to explore a potential community benefits agreement with Whole Foods.

The Committee met nine times in the course of creating this report. Early in the process, the committee split into three groups for the purpose of doing research. The groups focused on collecting data about the current demographics and economic health of Jamaica Plain, the potential impacts of Whole Foods and potential alternatives. As the research was done, we decided to organize the data in the way it is currently presented in this report. Seven people volunteered to consolidate the research and various sections that had been written. Between meetings seven and eight these seven writers decided one person needed to do a final consolidation/edit, which was done by the Chair. More edits were made and suggested at the eighth meeting and this final report was completed at the ninth meeting, on June 22.

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<sup>1</sup> Erica resigned after attending two meetings

<sup>2</sup> Monty and Anne resigned between meetings 7 and 8, citing concerns about the direction of the report at that time.

<sup>3</sup> See note above

<sup>4</sup> <https://spreadsheets.google.com/spreadsheet/pub?hl=en&hl=en&key=0Ai1H1jP0km1odEYwdkZSdRyQUdfbktzZlA4cWt6ZFE&single=true&gid=0&range=A1%3AE600&output=html>

The members of this committee – and the other community members who have contributed in ways small and large to this report – should all be commended, not only for their hard work on this report, but also for approaching this process with an open mind. While many came to this committee with their own opinions and preconceived notions, our ability to look for solutions that can be widely adopted was dependent on our ability to listen to each other, understand each other, and work toward compromises. It's unlikely that anyone agrees with every sentence or phrase in this report, and no one person is solely responsible for any single page. But this report represents each of our best collaborative efforts to deliver a report that represents the concerns expressed by our neighbors and looks for solutions that the community, with the cooperation of our newest member, Whole Foods, can implement.

## **Executive Summary**

This report seeks to address the main concerns raised by both opponents and supporters of Whole Foods. For simplicity's sake, we have grouped these concerns into six broad categories: affordable healthy and culturally-appropriate food; gentrification; local and livable employment; small businesses; traffic and parking; and alternative uses of 415 Centre Street. We endeavored to explore each of these concerns by assessing the current context of each in both Jamaica Plain and Hyde Square. We then researched, to the best of our abilities, the potential impacts that Whole Foods may have on each of these issues. The depth of the research varies a bit from section to section, limited by the information available, the time of an entirely volunteer committee and the interests, experiences, and abilities of committee members and others who contributed.

In an effort to ensure that Jamaica Plain and Hyde Square maximize the potential positive effects of a Whole Foods store and minimize its potential negative impacts, the report makes recommendations to the Jamaica Plain community, the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council, elected officials, and Whole Foods. Essentially, these recommendations boil down to a set of policy and action items for the community to consider, as well as a list of community benefits Whole Foods should provide to the community.

### Recommendations for the JPNC and the Community

#### **I. Affordable, Healthy and Culturally-Appropriate Food**

- A. Recognize the potential positive impact of Whole Foods on some in the community's access to healthy food.
- B. The JPNC should continue its strong support of the recommendation of the Forest Hills Improvement Initiative (FHII) to bring a grocery store to Forest Hills, including continuing to ask the developer of Parcels 'W' and 'V' to bring a grocery store to that space as originally proposed.
- C. Partner with a public health body - such as the Boston Public Health Commission, including the Boston Food and Fitness Collaborative or The Food Project - to evaluate healthy, affordable, and sustainable food needs in all JP neighborhoods, with a particular focus on low-income residents, residents of color, and elderly and disabled populations, and develop further recommendations that can fit into the JPNC's work.
- D. Identify what healthy food opportunities can directly benefit the local economy, with an emphasis on locally-owned businesses and farms.

- E. Partner with City of Boston officials and agencies and local non-profits to identify ways the JPNC can promote healthy eating and strong local food economies for all JP residents, including:
  - 1. Improving food access and helping to develop different areas of JP by attracting or developing anchor tenant grocery stores and supermarkets that are affordable to residents of all incomes;
  - 2. Developing other retail food outlets such as farmers' markets, public markets, cooperatives, farm stands, community supported agriculture programs, and mobile vendors/food trucks – and ensuring public benefits such as SNAP/food stamps can be used at these venues, particularly in areas of greatest need;
  - 3. Increasing the stock of fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods at neighborhood corner stores and small groceries, and encouraging shopping at these stores;
  - 4. Promoting the growing of food locally through backyard and community gardens and larger-scale urban agriculture;
  - 5. Looking at ways to improve transportation to grocery stores and farmers' markets for those at greater distance;
  - 6. Working to support healthier school lunches and breakfasts in the BPS; and
  - 7. Working to increase education about healthy eating and cooking habits

## II. Gentrification

- A. Continue to support the creation of new affordable housing, including the following current proposals:
  - i. Jackson Square Community Advisory Committee
  - ii. Forest Hills Improvement Initiative
  - iii. 461 Walnut Ave
- B. Establish the goal of developing more affordable housing in the next ten years than the previous ten (190 units).
- C. Prioritize the creation of affordable rental housing.
- D. Hold residential developers accountable to the affordable housing policies of the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council
  - i. Inclusionary Zoning (Appendix G)
  - ii. Transit-Oriented Development (Appendix H)
  - iii. Healthy Housing Guidelines (Appendix I)
- E. Work to reduce condominium conversions by considering promotion of a tax or fee levied on those who convert apartments to condominiums
- F. Make a priority to preserve all existing affordable housing units



### III. Local and Livable Employment

- A. Support the City of Boston and JPNDNC as they continue to work with former Hi-Lo employees and if necessary, provide them with training opportunities to increase their appeal as prospective Whole Foods employees.
- B. Continue Jamaica Plain's history of supporting organized labor and every employee's right to free speech, freedom of association, and the right to organize and act collectively.
- C. Work with existing community groups to partner with Whole Foods to co-facilitate recruitment and hiring as well as post-hiring support as needed to promote job retention and advancement.

### IV. Small Businesses

- A. Monitor the effect of Whole Foods on the Hyde-Jackson Business District, also known as the Latin Quarter, for at least 5 years, focusing on vacancy rates, percentage of Latino-owned businesses, percentage of businesses catering to the Latino community and percentage of businesses owned locally.
- B. Support locally-owned small businesses, particularly those that reflect the diversity of our community.
- C. Support Hyde Jackson Square Main Streets and other local non-profits that support local businesses.
- D. Support events such as the Tasting Tour of Hyde Jackson Square, First Thursdays, and the JP Shopping Spree.
- E. If Whole Foods applies for a common victualler license or zoning relief to provide takeout, consider the impact these licenses and variances may have on local restaurants.
- F. The JPNC should establish guidelines that would inform its licensing and zoning decisions with regard to commercial development, much as it has done for housing.

### Recommendations for a Community Benefits Agreement with Whole Foods

#### I. Affordable, Healthy and Culturally-Appropriate Food

- A. Commit to the broadest acceptance of food programs and coupons, including SNAP, WIC and EBT.
- B. Provide non-branded education about the benefits of eating fresh produce and related nutritional information, and healthy cooking across cultural contexts, possibly as part of a campaign to support the JP Bucks program (see Local and Livable Employment section for an overview of JP Bucks).
- C. Provide a salad bar to the Curley School (as planned) and expand this program to other Jamaica Plain schools.

## II. Gentrification

- A. Create a fund to be used by credible local organizations for anti-displacement work, foreclosure prevention, tenants' rights counseling, and the creation and preservation of affordable housing.
- B. Provide bonuses for first-time homebuyer employees who purchase homes in Jamaica Plain or in immediately abutting neighborhoods.
- C. Allocate funds for youth training and development to be used for increasing the financial literacy of residents.

## III. Local and Livable Employment

- A. Commit to hiring, across all staffing levels, 75% JP residents at this location over the first five years the store is in operation.
- B. Commit to hiring all former Hi-Lo workers who are interested in working at Whole Foods at positions equivalent to or higher than their former positions at Hi-Lo. Provide appropriate training to help workers advance to higher-paying positions over time.
- C. Partner with local organizations to co-facilitate recruitment and hiring as well as post-hiring support as needed to promote job retention and advancement.
- D. Employee demographics at all staffing levels should reflect the racial, ethnic and linguistic demographics of the Hyde/Jackson Square Neighborhood as of the 2010 Census.
- E. Offer a living wage, as defined by the City of Boston,<sup>5</sup> and a competitive benefits package for full-time employees.
- F. Develop training and employment opportunities for local youths, especially youths of color from low- and moderate-income families.

## IV. Small Businesses

- A. Fund a program that would assist low- and moderate-income residents in buying healthy foods at locally-owned, retail food sellers and farmers' markets, such as the JP Bucks program described in Appendix J.
- B. Share parking with neighboring business tenants after hours.
- C. Create a workforce development/small business fund for training programs that target low and moderate income residents.
- D. Prioritize purchasing products made by small food manufacturers and other businesses in Jamaica Plain and surrounding neighborhoods

## V. Traffic and Parking

- A. Provide the Traffic Study requested by the City of Boston, which should included the following:
  - 1. Traffic Flow

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.cityofboston.gov/Images/Documents/Requirements\\_tcm3-18392.pdf](http://www.cityofboston.gov/Images/Documents/Requirements_tcm3-18392.pdf)

2. Peak hour traffic management
  3. Parking Impact on surrounding community
  4. Environmental Impact/Air Quality
  5. Deliveries
- B. Commit to addressing any issues brought up by the Traffic Study prior to opening.
  - C. Commit to a professionally-facilitated community meeting to discuss traffic and parking 12 months after opening.
  - D. Develop programs and incentives to encourage use of alternative means of transportation and delivery, including providing bicycle parking, serving as a Hubway kiosk, and offering grocery delivery by bike.

## **Affordable, Healthy and Culturally-Appropriate Food**

### **Overview of Importance of Urban Supermarkets and their Availability in Jamaica Plain**

For many years, Hi-Lo Foods provided a source of affordable food and grocery staples for JP's Latino community, as well as a central source of products and brands catering to immigrants from a wide variety of Latin American countries. Hi-Lo also carried fresh produce that met the needs of the Latino population of Hyde Square and beyond at prices affordable to people of modest means. Now that Hi-Lo is gone, how do we fare – in Hyde Square and the broader JP community – with respect to food access for all JP residents?

Measures of food access are complex, but there are broadly-accepted indicators in public policy discussions. The number of full-service supermarkets and groceries in a neighborhood is one such measure, due to the greater likelihood that these stores will offer “a large variety of healthier foods compared with convenience stores and other retail food outlets.”<sup>6</sup> As reported in *Food for Every Child*, a report from The Food Trust (based in Philadelphia), Boston has as much as 30-percent fewer supermarkets per capita than the national average. In addition to having too few supermarkets in Boston, existing supermarkets are unevenly distributed, and lower-income communities are categorically underserved in respect to supermarket access.<sup>7</sup>

So, in this sense, JP is lucky to retain an urban grocery store. With Hi-Lo's loss, and the coming of Whole Foods, we will preserve the presence of a grocery store in the 415 Centre Street location. But this is a grocery store that is universally acknowledged to serve a very different target market than that served by Hi-Lo.

*Food for Every Child* was completed before the closing of Hi-Lo. At that time, Hyde Square was classified as a predominately low-income area, but one with high supermarket sales. Conversely, the rest of JP was classified as higher-income, but with low supermarket sales. *Food for Every Child* prioritizes locating additional supermarkets in low-income areas based on the assumption that residents of higher-income areas have the means to drive to out-of-neighborhood grocers. But this may not be universally true; low-income, elderly and disabled residents reside in all of JP's neighborhoods. Nor is it necessarily desirable for higher-income residents to drive outside of the neighborhood to find a full-service grocer – this adds to environmental pollution, adds stress for these residents, and does not contribute to Jamaica Plain's economic development.

While much of the community debate has centered around the needs of Hyde Square, this neighborhood will soon have two or even three full-service grocers, each targeting different kinds of shoppers (Stop & Shop, Whole Foods, and a possible grocer in the JPNDC's Blessed Sacrament space). The density of supermarkets that would result in the

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<sup>6</sup> The Food Trust and RWJ Foundation, “Harnessing the Power of Supermarkets to Combat Childhood Obesity.” 2011. p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> The Food Trust, “Food for Every Child.” December, 2010. Executive Summary.

Hyde/Jackson Square area would not apply to JP as a whole, nor to all of our surrounding neighborhoods. There is no full-service grocer in other JP neighborhoods,<sup>8</sup> though Harvest Co-op has announced plans to build a full-service grocery store in Forest Hills. Residents of areas of Boston described as “underserved” by supermarkets, including Roxbury and parts of Dorchester,<sup>9</sup> are likely shopping at grocers such as Stop & Shop in Jamaica Plain.

Helping to provide greater access to fresh, healthy foods for all JP neighborhoods, particularly in warmer seasons, are an increasing number of options for healthy food beyond the supermarket; urban dwellers are turning to farmer’s markets, community supported agriculture (CSA) “farm-shares,” delivery services such as Boston Organics, food-buying clubs, and other forms of direct producer-consumer sales. Many of these services deliver directly to homes or to local shops for pick up. Urban dwellers are also buying their food from locally-owned markets and bodegas, and working with them to improve the integrity of their products.

### Healthy Food: The Public Health Issue

Access to healthy food is a matter of increasing concern and focus for urban planning and health policy. Diet-related diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and some forms of cancer, are linked to a diet high in processed foods, fat, sugar and salt, and low in “nutritionally dense” foods such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.<sup>10</sup>

Nationally, approximately two-thirds of adults and one-third of children are overweight or obese, a sharp increase from past decades, and diet-related diseases linked to obesity are also on the rise.<sup>11</sup> Our children in particular may face a grim future. For instance, over the past four decades, the obesity rate has more than quadrupled for children ages 6 to 11 and more than tripled for adolescents aged 12 to 19.<sup>12</sup> The economic cost of

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<sup>8</sup> *Food for Every Child*

<sup>9</sup> *Food for Every Child*

<sup>10</sup> Ver Ploeg M, Breneman V, Farrigan T, Hamrick K, Hopkins D, Kaufman P, et al, “Access to Affordable and Nutritious Food — Measuring and Understanding Food Deserts and Their Consequences: Report to Congress.” US Department of Agriculture; 2009. <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/AP/AP036/>. Accessed May 17, 2011.

<sup>11</sup> Flegal KM, Carroll MD, Ogden CL, Curtin LR, “Prevalence and trends in obesity among US adults, 1999–2008.” *JAMA*. 303: 235–241, 2010.

<sup>12</sup> Ogden CL, Carroll MD, Curtin LR, Lamb MM and Flegal KM, “Prevalence of High Body Mass Index in US Children and Adolescents, 2007–2008.” *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 303(3): 242–249, 2010; Ogden CL, Flegal KM, Carroll MD and Johnson CL, “Prevalence and Trends in Overweight Among US Children and Adolescents, 1999–2000.” *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 288(14): 1728–1732, 2002.

treating these children is eclipsed only by the human toll we may see; this generation of children may have a shorter lifespan than their parents because of poor diet.<sup>13</sup>

Massachusetts and Boston are no exception to these trends. The Boston Public Health Commission's Report, *Health of Boston 2010*, says that 23% of Boston adults are obese, 6% have diabetes, and 22% have hypertension (chronic high blood pressure).<sup>14</sup> But not all Bostonians share this burden of disease equally. *Health of Boston 2010* shows that lower-income and some minority populations have much higher rates of these conditions. For instance:

- Obesity rates are 30% or higher for Bostonians who are Black, Latino, make less than \$25,000 per year, or have attained an educational level of a high school diploma or less;
- Bostonians' high blood pressure status is inversely related to income;
- Between 2001 and 2008, the overall rate of diabetes mortality in Boston decreased 15%, but increased 59% for Latinos.

Obesity and hunger are linked because the cheapest foods that are also filling tend to be highly processed, energy dense high fat and caloric foods, foods that also contribute to obesity.<sup>15</sup> The current economic downturn has resulted in a nearly 20 percent year-over-year increase in the number of Massachusetts residents at risk for hunger. In low-income communities, families with children experience hunger at three times the rate of the rest of the state.<sup>16</sup> With experts predicting further increases in food costs, globally, this is an issue that will only become more urgent.<sup>17</sup>

While many definitions exist as to what qualifies as "healthy" or "healthier" food (including some with exact proportions of fat, sugar and salt), in general experts suggest that: "Healthy food provides an individual with a balanced diet that meets national dietary guidelines and provides plenty of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat

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<sup>13</sup> Olshansky SJ, Passaro DJ, Hershow RC, et al, "A Potential Decline in Life Expectancy in the United States in the 21st Century." *New England Journal of Medicine*, 352(11): 1138–1145, 2005.

<sup>14</sup> Boston Public Health Commission, Research Office "Health of Boston 2010." Boston, MA: Boston Public Health Commission. 2010.  
[http://www.bphc.org/about/research/hob2010/Forms%20%20Documents/Health%20of%20Boston%202010%20Full%20Report\\_Rev16Nov10.pdf](http://www.bphc.org/about/research/hob2010/Forms%20%20Documents/Health%20of%20Boston%202010%20Full%20Report_Rev16Nov10.pdf) Accessed May 17, 2011.

<sup>15</sup> Dietz, William, "Does Hunger Cause Obesity?" *Pediatrics*. 95(5): 766 -767, 1995.

<sup>16</sup> Project Bread, "Status Report on Hunger, 2010."  
[http://www.projectbread.org/site/DocServer/Status\\_Report\\_on\\_Hunger\\_2010.pdf?docID=6603](http://www.projectbread.org/site/DocServer/Status_Report_on_Hunger_2010.pdf?docID=6603). Accessed May 14, 2011.

<sup>17</sup> BBC, "Rising food prices increase squeeze on poor – Oxfam." May 31, 2011.  
*BBC.com*. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-13597657> Accessed June 5, 2011.

dairy products and healthy fats like olive and canola oil and protein such as lean meats and legumes.”<sup>18</sup>

*Food for Every Child* reports that many communities in Massachusetts with poor supermarket access also have a high incidence of diet-related deaths. The report states, “A growing body of research demonstrates that access to supermarkets has a measurable impact on people’s diet and health outcomes. Both the Institute of Medicine and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have independently recommended that increasing the number of supermarkets in low-income neighborhoods would reduce the rate of obesity in the United States<sup>19</sup>.”

Neighborhoods that lack affordable, healthy food, particularly from a year-round full-service grocery store, and with a preponderance of fast food restaurants and corner stores (where healthy food is often lacking, unappealing and/or expensive), are deemed “food deserts<sup>20</sup>.” There is no one definition of food desert, but reports on the matter consider the following issues:<sup>21</sup>

- The availability of full-service grocery store within one mile (*i.e.* walking distance) of all residents in an urban setting
- The quality of produce at groceries or corner stores (*i.e.* is the food rotting or otherwise unappealing)
- The affordability of healthy foods, such as vegetables, fruit and whole grains
- Is the food culturally appropriate (*i.e.* is the food available sufficient for preparing dishes traditional or preferred by all ethnic groups in the neighborhood)?
- The median income of the surrounding neighborhood
- The proportion of national or local fast food and unhealthy food available at corner stores, like chips and soda

Multiple studies and mapping of the Boston area do not cite either Jackson Square or the Hyde Square area as a food desert.<sup>22</sup> In fact, the arrival of the Stop & Shop was heralded by many as a victory in Boston’s campaign to bring full-service grocers to lower-income neighborhoods at a time when many chains had fled inner cities for ostensibly more

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<sup>18</sup> Access to Healthy Foods Coalition. “Opportunities for Increasing Access to Healthy Foods in Washington.” Report published June, 2010. Available at: [http://depts.washington.edu/waaction/tools/featured\\_resources/access\\_report.html](http://depts.washington.edu/waaction/tools/featured_resources/access_report.html) It should be noted that equating mean and legumes only with protein has caused a lot of recent controversy, as dairy, vegetables and whole grains are all sources of protein as well.

<sup>19</sup> *Food for Every Child*

<sup>20</sup> *The Grocery Gap*

<sup>21</sup> Raja S., Ma C., Yadav P. “Beyond Food Deserts: Measuring and Mapping Racial Disparities in Neighborhood Food Environments.” *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 27:469-482, 2008.

<sup>22</sup> *Food for Every Child*

lucrative suburbs.<sup>23</sup> The City of Boston has successfully attracted over a dozen supermarkets back into the city over the past ten years, including several in lower- and moderate-income neighborhoods.<sup>24</sup>

However, it is important to note that *proximity* does not equal *access*, if the proximate supermarket sells goods at a cost that is out of reach for a nearby neighborhood's income level. Supermarkets all have different price points, and it may be that more than one supermarket is needed to serve any given area of Boston.

Additionally, some of the “alternative” food buying strategies mentioned above (such as farmers markets) may provide better access for some neighborhoods, particularly if such markets accept payment through publicly subsidized programs such as SNAP/food stamps, and Bounty Bucks. It may also work best for a particular neighborhood to work with existing corner stores to bring healthy food access. For instance, corner stores may be open to selling healthier foods, but need equipment and training in order to more adequately store healthier foods.<sup>25</sup>

We can also use this opportunity to take a hard look at needs in the rest of Jamaica Plain, cited by *Food for Every Child* as one of the neighborhoods in Boston with the fewest supermarkets as compared to the more supermarket-dense downtown neighborhoods.<sup>26</sup> The proposed addition of Harvest Co-op in Forest Hills may provide additional full-service grocery options to other Jamaica Plain neighborhoods and our recommendations examine how the JPNC can help improve access to healthy food for all JP residents.

### Access to Affordable, Healthy Food

As mentioned above, proximity to healthy food does not always equal access. Affordability is probably the most important metric for our purposes. Can all JP residents afford enough healthy food? Can they afford enough food at all?

The availability and affordability of healthy food to our low-income residents should be an issue of top concern to all of us here in JP.

For families with children, affordability is an especially pressing issue. The most commonly used measure of affordability is the US Department of Agriculture's Thrifty Food Plan (TFP), the national standard for a “nutritious diet at a minimal cost.” This cost-specific food plan for a family of four is used to determine maximum food stamp benefits and was the basis for developing poverty thresholds in the US. Items on the list

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<sup>23</sup> John Ruch, “JP’s last supermarket war.” April 29, 2011, *JPGazette*, online exclusive. Accessed May 14, 2011 at 2:27 pm at <http://jamaicaplaingazette.com/node/4789>.

<sup>24</sup> *Food for Every Child*

<sup>25</sup> Raja, et al.

<sup>26</sup> “Neighborhoods [in Boston] with the fewest supermarkets include East Boston, Roxbury, Mattapan, Jamaica Plain and Roslindale.” *Food for Every Child*, p 5.



are supposed to be available and affordable to low-income families who are enrolled in SNAP (formerly called Food Stamps) to cook 3 meals a day for family members.<sup>27</sup>

However, what the government deems as “affordable” for low-income earners is shockingly low – the maximum SNAP benefits provide only \$1 per meal per person.<sup>28</sup> A recent study shows that on average in the Boston area, the maximum SNAP/food stamp allowance fell short by \$27 per week as a means to buy the ingredients necessary for the TFP, while the cost of a slightly modified “healthier” shopping list was almost \$150 per month more than the maximum food stamp allowance.<sup>29</sup>

Whole Foods’ reputation is that it will cost a family their “Whole Paycheck,” but it does have some basic staples – particularly its “365” store brand items – available at relatively lower prices. Some have argued that this makes its reputation an undeserved one, but others wonder if that selection is enough to make the store accessible to everyone.

There have been two surveys on whether or not price disparity existed between Hi-Lo, Whole Foods, and Stop & Shop. Rob Anderson of the Boston Globe came out with a two-part opinion piece that initially concluded “Whole Foods isn’t as expensive as people think it is,” and that found, improbably, that it was not true that “the organic chain charges much higher prices than Hi-Lo Foods.” The piece characterized assertions of price disparity among staple goods as an “urban myth.”<sup>30</sup> Anderson’s survey compares the prices of flour, pasta, cereal, eggs, soap, milk, and toilet paper.

However, Anderson’s study not only failed to survey culturally-appropriate food (see below) but also neglected basic healthful items with the greatest amount of price disparity: fruits, vegetables, and meats. After much criticism, Anderson embarked upon a second survey, concluding that “on meat and produce [Whole Foods] is pricier than its competition.” Regarding fruits and vegetables, Anderson acknowledged, “[they] can get

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<sup>27</sup> The Real Cost of a Healthy Diet Research Team, “Research Update.” 2007. [http://www.childrenshealthwatch.org/upload/resource/healthy\\_diet\\_wfd\\_10\\_16\\_07.pdf](http://www.childrenshealthwatch.org/upload/resource/healthy_diet_wfd_10_16_07.pdf) Accessed May 17, 2011.

<sup>28</sup> Hampton T. “Food insecurity harms health, well-being of millions in the United States.” JAMA. 298(16):1851-3, 2007.

<sup>29</sup> Neault N, Cook JT, Morris V, Frank DA. The Real Cost of a Healthy Diet: Healthful Foods Are Out of Reach for Low-Income Families in Boston, Massachusetts. Report published August, 2005 by the Boston Medical Center Department of Pediatrics. Available at: [http://dcc2.bumc.bu.edu/csnappublic/HealthyDiet\\_Aug2005.pdf](http://dcc2.bumc.bu.edu/csnappublic/HealthyDiet_Aug2005.pdf) Accessed May 17, 2011.

<sup>30</sup> Rob Anderson, “Resolved: Whole Foods isn't as expensive as people think it is.” February 14, 2011. The Boston Globe. Available at [http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial\\_opinion/blogs/the\\_angle/2011/02/whole\\_foods.html](http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/blogs/the_angle/2011/02/whole_foods.html). Accessed June 5, 2011.

pricey [at Whole Foods] if you buy the wrong items.” Because Hi-Lo was no longer selling produce or meat at the time of this survey, its pricing was not included.<sup>31</sup>

The JPNDC also produced a “Supermarket Comparison” (located in the appendix). The JPNDC examined fruits, vegetables, meat, culturally-appropriate items, and other basic items. Its report found that among 13 staple items, Whole Food’s prices were 39% higher than Hi-Lo’s, while Stop & Shop’s prices were 12% higher than Hi-Lo’s. Two items (plantains and white cheese) were not available at Whole Foods (and therefore not factored into the total). Despite these not being factored in, there was a \$15 total price difference between Hi-Lo and Whole Foods.<sup>32</sup>

Because the owners of Hi-Lo also owned the building, and did not invest in improvements, it is unclear whether even another low-cost grocer could match Hi-Lo’s prices had it moved into the Hi-Lo space. Taking these factors into account, it is difficult to envision a scenario in which Whole Foods could fill the affordability gap for Latino and low-income residents left by Hi-Lo’s closing. More JP residents may now be relying on corner stores to fill more of their grocery needs. Studies have shown that corner stores are consistently more expensive than supermarkets, and that low-income shoppers who rely on corner stores will have trouble making ends meet, particularly if they are trying to purchase healthier items.<sup>33</sup> Low-income residents may have to leave the neighborhood entirely to get groceries.

Whole Foods’ strengths include good-quality, organic- or conventionally-grown produce and meats, as well as a range of foods and supplements made from organic materials. For residents with the financial means, this will improve shopping options. However, given its relatively high pricing, we are left with the conclusion that much or most of Whole Foods’ inventory will remain out of reach for many local residents. One of the unfortunate ironies of Whole Foods’ proposed move to Hyde Square is that while it will restore the *proximity* of healthier foods, including fresh produce, to all residents, it will not improve *access* to healthy foods for the many low-income households in the Hyde/Jackson Square or Egleston Square neighborhoods.

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<sup>31</sup> Rob Anderson, “Is Whole Foods really more expensive?, part two” February 18, 2011. The Boston Globe. Available at [http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial\\_opinion/blogs/the\\_angle/2011/02/by\\_rob\\_anderson\\_5.html](http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/blogs/the_angle/2011/02/by_rob_anderson_5.html). Accessed June 5, 2011.

<sup>32</sup> Wagner Riós, “Community Says Farewell to Hi-Lo/La Comunidad Dijo Adiós a Hi-Lo.” <http://jamaicaplain.patch.com/articles/community-says-farewell-to-hi-lo-la-comunidad-dijo-adios-a-hi-lo#pdf-4812386>. Accessed June 5, 2011. The items surveyed were: bread, a gallon of milk, plantains, white cheese, a whole chicken (4lbs), tomatoes, tortillas, eggs, black beans, limes, tide, corn oil, and rice.

<sup>33</sup> *Real Cost of a Healthy Diet*

## Food Security and the Latino Community in JP

Food security is defined as “access to affordable, nutritious, **culturally appropriate and personally acceptable food** without the need to resort to emergency food or other coping strategies,”<sup>34</sup> (emphasis added). How has the closing of Hi-Lo affected the food security of JP’s Latino community?

The broad designation of “Latino” covers countries and nations from different continents, different food biodiversity, and descended from different indigenous peoples. While the majority of JP’s Latino population is Caribbean, Hi-Lo also offered one of the largest selections of Mexican, Central American, and South American foods and other products in all of New England.

Due to this variety, Latinos from a large geographic area and all socioeconomic backgrounds shopped at Hi-Lo. The diversity of Hi-Lo’s products acted as a symbol of the cultural diversity of JP and the Latino community in one of the largest retail spaces in the neighborhood; its loss is keenly felt both as a matter of need for non-Caribbean Latinos and as a JP cultural icon.

It seems on that point alone, Latinos in Jamaica Plain have lost food security. One coping strategy has been greater dependence upon the local bodegas. While this has certainly been a positive for some Latino business owners, others in the community are concerned about higher prices for staple goods and the inability to purchase all or most needed items at one location. In reality, one bodega – even many bodegas – may not ever compensate for the loss of a Hi-Lo. Food security also includes access to culturally-appropriate foods at a reasonable price. Sixty-five percent of the Latino community in JP earns less than \$35,000 a year.<sup>35</sup> Like small corner stores in general, bodegas tend to have higher prices than full-service supermarkets and offer a smaller range of food items. Some have suggested that Whole Foods sell Latino products wholesale to the local stores, so that the bodegas can keep their prices down. However, this doesn’t solve the problem of Latinos potentially having to shop in two, three, or four different places – some in JP, some not – to get the ingredients they are used to purchasing. This is a particular challenge for the elderly and disabled.

In the event that Whole Foods is able to provide even a portion of the culturally-appropriate food at their JP location that Hi-Lo offered, there is no evidence that they would sell these at prices affordable to the vast majority of Latinos in JP. As the JPNDC’s price comparison shows, Whole Foods is not only financially inaccessible to many in the Latino community, but also lacks basic culturally-appropriate foods. In an “Open Letter to JP”, Whole Foods made the following statement regarding their desire to carry culturally-appropriate foods:

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<sup>34</sup> *Anti-racist practice and the Work of Community Food Organizations*, Rachel Slocum

<sup>35</sup> [http://www.jpndc.org/docs/Income\\_JP\\_by\\_race\\_ethnicity.pdf](http://www.jpndc.org/docs/Income_JP_by_race_ethnicity.pdf). Accessed June 5, 2011.

“We believe that everyone has the right to have access to affordable, high quality, clean food free of artificial ingredients and additives. This includes carrying a wide variety of Latino products. As with all of our stores, we will carry products that cater to the diverse demands of the community. If shoppers express interest in a product *and it meets our quality standards*, we will carry it.”<sup>36</sup> (Emphasis added.)

It is not possible for the Committee to predict in advance which “Latino products,” even if requested by the community, would be found to meet the “quality standards” of Whole Foods.

With most Latinos in JP priced out of Whole Foods, or in need of affordable, culturally appropriate alternatives, many may leave the neighborhood in search of groceries. National figures show that in 2003, only 8.6% of all households lacked access to a vehicle, but 13.4% of Latino households and 26.6% of Black households had no such access. Additionally, in many one-car households, family members use vehicles to commute to work, limiting the time that households make car trips for other purposes such as food shopping. Reliance on public transit often limits the frequency of low-income families’ trips to purchase food as well as the quantity of food that can be transported, which poses a particular problem for perishable food items.<sup>37</sup> These increased transportation costs and logistical challenges will create a further barrier to food security.

### Elderly/Disabled Food Security

The median age of JP residents is rising; between 2000 and 2010 the age bracket between 40 and 64 was the only one in JP to actually increase.<sup>38</sup> As those over 50 age, and their health becomes less robust, convenient grocery shopping and the local accessibility of an array of healthy foods and nutrition supplements becomes an increasingly important point of concern.

The elderly are among those at greatest risk for food insecurity, for a myriad of reasons, including high poverty rates, stigma associated with accepting government assistance,

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<sup>36</sup> <http://jamaicaplain.patch.com/articles/an-open-letter-from-whole-foods-to-jamaica-plain>. Accessed June 5, 2011.

<sup>37</sup> Bureau of Transportation Statistics, "Table 4-3a Households Without a Vehicle," *Transportation Statistics Annual Report*. Bureau of Transportation Statistics. Washington, DC, 2005.

<sup>38</sup> Boston Indicators Project. <http://www.bostonindicators.org/Indicators2008/ProfilesPeoplePlaces/Default.aspx?id=10452>. Accessed June 8, 2011.

chronic diseases (including cognitive impairment and depression), poor dentition, and geographic inaccessibility to food stores.<sup>39</sup>

But the risk for food insecurity is not borne equally by all elderly. In one study, elderly minority women were over six times more likely than their White counterparts to report financial difficulty acquiring food.<sup>40</sup> A study comparing low-income elderly to high-income elderly revealed that the former were significantly more likely to consume fewer 1) calories; 2) servings of whole grains, vegetables, fruit, milk, and meat; and 3) micro- and macronutrients.<sup>41</sup>

The disabled and their families have similar concerns. One study found that as family income rose above the federal poverty level, hardship declined sharply for families of children without disabilities, but not for families raising children with disabilities. In other words, regardless of income, families with disabled children are more likely to suffer food insecurity.<sup>42</sup> On the other hand, some disabled and their families may rely on foods and other goods from stores like Whole Foods that are not available at mainstream grocers.

The arrival of Whole Foods may therefore affect our elderly and disabled residents differently; some, who already rely on Whole Foods for groceries and supplements will welcome the relief of out-of-neighborhood trips, because driving or riding the T encumbered with groceries is more arduous for them than for others, or is simply impossible. For the elderly and disabled population who relied on Hi-Lo for groceries, the need for affordable, local grocery access has now become acute. Reliance on higher-priced corner stores may be unsustainable, and could literally drive some into the hospital.

As we think about food access in JP, we should keep in mind which groups of elderly and disabled may need the most urgent consideration. Unfortunately, there will be older and disabled residents in all of JP's neighborhoods who have food insecurity. However, lower-income sections of JP, and those with a higher number of minority residents may need the most urgent attention. The solution may lie in additional supermarkets, or it

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<sup>39</sup> Wellman NS, Weddle DO, Kranz S, and Brain CT. (1997). "Elder insecurities: Poverty, hunger, and malnutrition." *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 97(10 Suppl 2): S120–2, 1997.

<sup>40</sup> Klesges LM, Pahor M, Shorr RI, Wan JY, Williamson JD, and Guralnik JM. "Financial difficulty in acquiring food among elderly disabled women: results from the Women's Health and Aging Study." *American Journal of Public Health*. 91(1):68-75, 2001.

<sup>41</sup> Guthrie JF, and Lin BH. "Overview of the diets of lower- and higher-income elderly and their food assistance options." *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*. 34(Suppl 1):S31–41, 2002.

<sup>42</sup> Parish SL, Rose RA, Andrews ME, Grinstein-Weiss M, Richman EL. "Material hardship among U.S. families raising children with disabilities." *Except Child*. 75:(1);71–92, 2008.

may lie in other programs targeted toward these groups; the recommendations below discuss some options for the JPNC to consider.

### Recommendations for the JPNC and the Community

- Recognize the potential positive impact of Whole Foods on some in the community's access to healthy food.
- The JPNC should continue its strong support of the recommendation of the Forest Hills Improvement Initiative (FHII) to bring a grocery store to Forest Hills, including continuing to ask the developer of Parcels 'W' and 'V' to bring a grocery store to that space as originally proposed.
- Partner with a public health body – such as the Boston Public Health Association's Boston Food and Fitness Collaborative or The Food Project – to evaluate healthy and sustainable food needs in all JP neighborhoods, with a particular focus on low-income residents, residents of color, and elderly and disabled populations, and develop further recommendations that can fit into the JPNC's work.
- Identify what healthy food opportunities can directly benefit the local economy, with an emphasis on locally-owned businesses and farms.
- Partner with City of Boston officials and agencies and local non-profits to identify ways the JPNC can promote healthy eating and strong local food economies for all JP residents, including:
  - Improving food access and helping to develop different areas of JP by attracting or developing anchor tenant grocery stores and supermarkets as anchor tenants that are affordable to residents of all incomes;
  - Developing other retail outlets such as farmers' markets, public markets, cooperatives, farm stands, community supported agriculture programs, and mobile vendors/food trucks – and ensuring public benefits such as SNAP/food stamps can be used at these venues, particularly in areas of greatest need;
  - Increasing the stock of fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods at neighborhood corner stores or small groceries, and encouraging shopping at those stores;
  - Promoting the growing of food locally through backyard and community gardens and larger-scale urban agriculture;
  - Looking to improve transportation to grocery stores and farmers' markets for those at greater distance;
  - Working to support healthier school lunches and breakfasts in the BPS; and
  - Working to increase education about healthy eating and cooking habits.

Recommendations for a Community Benefits Agreement with Whole Foods:

- Commit to the broadest acceptance of food programs and coupons, including SNAP, WIC and EBT.
- Provide non-branded education about the benefits of eating fresh produce and related nutritional information, and healthy cooking across cultural contexts, possibly as part of campaign to support the JP Bucks program (see Local and Livable Employment section for an overview of JP Bucks).
- Provide a salad bar to the Curley School and expand this program to other Jamaica Plain schools.

## **Gentrification**

### **Gentrification in Jamaica Plain**

Jamaica Plain is a historic neighborhood of Boston and a vibrant community known for its racial, ethnic, and economic diversity. The 2010 Census reported its population at 37,468. The gentrification that began thirty years ago in JP has yielded the rich mix of restaurants and stores that now line Centre and South Streets. It has also led to rapidly rising home prices and rents, and to the current debate concerning the planned arrival of a Whole Foods Market in the Hyde Square building where Hi-Lo Foods recently closed.

Gentrification—as distinguished from community revitalization—has been defined in a report for the Brookings Institute and PolicyLink as “the process by which higher-income households displace lower-income residents of a neighborhood, changing the essential character and flavor of that neighborhood.”<sup>43</sup> Gentrification in Boston, generally, and Jamaica Plain, specifically, began in the 1980’s. Boston has been growing steadily since 1980, after a 50-year period of losing population. The trend of “white flight” from the urban areas in the years following World War II has been well-documented. Jamaica Plain was hit particularly hard due to plans to bring an Interstate highway through JP. Although virulent resident protests eventually prevented I-95 from cutting through JP, more than 700 homes and 300 businesses were demolished to make way for the highway.<sup>44</sup> When the highway plan was officially abandoned in 1972, Jamaica Plain was left with a gaping hole and residents left trying to rebuild their community. By the late 1980s, the work of local residents, non-profits, and community groups, succeeded in building affordable housing, reducing crime, and making the community more vibrant. These changes, coupled with 1987’s arrival of the MBTA’s Orange Line and low rents began attracting college students, artists, gays and lesbians. Since then, home prices in Jamaica Plain have gradually risen. Indeed, national home prices trended sharply upward from around 1980 until 2005, but Boston’s rose more.

Gentrification in Jamaica Plain has been amplified during the past decade. Unfortunately, information about incomes is not yet available from the 2010 Census, but data for 2009 is available through the American Community Survey. In the period from 1999 through 2009 median income, adjusted for inflation, dropped both nationally and statewide. During the same period, the median income for the City of Boston increased slightly, but the median income for Jamaica Plain increased by nearly 10%.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> M. Kennedy and P. Leonard. *Dealing with Neighborhood Change: A Primer on Gentrification and Policy Choices*. Prepared for The Brookings Institution for the Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy and PolicyLink. April, 2001. Available at: [http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2001/04metropolitanpolicy\\_maureen%20kennedy%20and%20paul%20leonard/gentrification.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2001/04metropolitanpolicy_maureen%20kennedy%20and%20paul%20leonard/gentrification.pdf) Accessed 6/17/2011.

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.jpshs.org/sources/a-brief-history-of-jamaica-plain.html>

<sup>45</sup> [http://www.jpndc.org/docs/Change\\_in\\_MHI\\_1999-2009\\_JP\\_&beyond.pdf](http://www.jpndc.org/docs/Change_in_MHI_1999-2009_JP_&beyond.pdf)



Demographic info from the 2010 Census is available. The following statistics about population change show that although Boston has gained residents in the past decade, mostly Latino residents, Jamaica Plain has lost residents over this time period:<sup>46</sup>

	Boston	Jamaica Plain
Change in white residents	-1,249	+1,031
Change in Latino residents	+22,838	-1,041
Change in African-American residents	-2,232	-862
Total Change in residents	+28,000	-708

Essentially, while Boston is becoming more diverse, Jamaica Plain is becoming more white. Nearly all of Boston's population growth over the past decade has come from an influx of Latino residents, while the only demographic to grow in Jamaica Plain during the same period is whites. Furthermore, in the period from 1999-2009, the increase in median income in Jamaica Plain has come exclusively from a wealthier, white population, as the median incomes of both Latinos and African-Americans has decreased.<sup>47</sup>

### The Pressures that Drive JP's Gentrification

As the real incomes of people of color in Jamaica Plain have declined in the past ten years, the price of housing has increased dramatically. The median sales price for condominiums and single-family homes doubled in the period from 1999-2009.<sup>48</sup> Similarly, the median rent in Jamaica Plain was less than \$1,000 per month in 1999, and by 2009 it had increased to over \$1,700 per month. If median rents had increased at the same pace as inflation, the 2009 median rent would have been less than \$1,300 per month.<sup>49</sup> As of 2009, 53% of Jamaica Plain's housing units were renter-occupied, and 64% of Hyde Square's housing units were renter-occupied.<sup>50</sup> This means that the majority of Jamaica Plain's population – and especially of Hyde Square's population – is vulnerable to displacement from relatively sudden and potentially dramatic increases in rent.

Displacement of residential tenants in Hyde Square might be expected to impact Jamaica Plain's Latino and African American populations in particular. Latinos and African Americans combined comprise 52% of Hyde Square's residents, and in the areas of Hyde

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<sup>46</sup> Boston Redevelopment Authority, *Boston 2010 Census Population Neighborhood Comparison*,  
<http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/PDF/ResearchPublications/NBRHDPercntChange.pdf>

<sup>47</sup> [http://www.jpndc.org/docs/Change\\_in\\_MHI\\_JP\\_by\\_race.pdf](http://www.jpndc.org/docs/Change_in_MHI_JP_by_race.pdf)

<sup>48</sup> [http://www.jpndc.org/docs/Change\\_in\\_sales\\_price\\_vs\\_MHI\\_1999-2009.pdf](http://www.jpndc.org/docs/Change_in_sales_price_vs_MHI_1999-2009.pdf)

<sup>49</sup> [http://www.jpndc.org/docs/increase\\_in\\_median\\_rent.pdf](http://www.jpndc.org/docs/increase_in_median_rent.pdf)

<sup>50</sup> Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation (JPNDC), "Housing Tenure in JP"

Square where housing units are predominantly rental (US Census tracts 812 and 1205), Latinos and African Americans combined comprise 72% of residents.<sup>51</sup>

Jamaica Plain's housing stock has also seen significant changes over the past decade, significantly decreasing the amount of housing affordable to residents of moderate means. Jamaica Plain gained 875 housing units from 2000 to 2010, but lost rental units. Between 2000 and 2005, 226 rental units in just the Hyde Square-Jackson Square neighborhoods of JP were converted to condominiums.<sup>52</sup> Rental housing is generally more affordable than ownership housing, thus each apartment converted to a condominium is likely to see a lower-income resident displaced to make room for someone with greater economic resources. Ben Forman, Research Director at MassInc,<sup>53</sup> cited condo-conversions as the main engine of gentrification in Jamaica Plain, and the main cause of displacement of low-income residents.

The impact of fairly significant development of new affordable housing was not enough to offset the dramatically increasing price of housing and number of condo conversions. In the past 10 years, Jamaica Plain has seen the creation of 190 units of affordable housing.<sup>54</sup> All 190 units are within a mile of Hyde/Jackson Square and 174 of these homes are apartments.

The creation of affordable housing is important, but much affordable housing, especially affordable housing created in the 1960s and 1970s, is only guaranteed to be affordable for a finite period of time. Jamaica Plain has 431 units of so-called expiring use properties.<sup>55</sup> One hundred and twenty six of these units will expire in 2011 and 148 more within the next ten years. We must make it a priority to maintain our current stock of affordable housing.

There is considerable anecdotal evidence that institutional expansion, particularly of universities and medical facilities has also contributed to gentrification in Jamaica Plain and especially Hyde Square, which is closer to the Longwood Medical Center and Northeastern University than other parts of the neighborhood.

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<sup>51</sup> U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, based on samples from 2005 to 2009, see "Mapping America: Every City, Every Block," <http://projects.nytimes.com/census/2010/explorer>; Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation (JPND), "Housing Tenure in JP"

<sup>52</sup> Boston Redevelopment Authority, *Boston 2010 Census Population Neighborhood Comparison*

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.massinc.org/>

<sup>54</sup> 55 units at the Julia Martin House, 25 at the Catherine Gallagher Housing Cooperative, 30 at 270 Centre Street, 36 at Dona Betsaida Gutierrez Cooperative, 28 at Sr. Virginia House and 16 at Creighton Commons.

<sup>55</sup> <http://CWC.cedac.org/Uploads/Files/CEDACExpiringUseReportFeb11.pdf>; 11 units at the Angela Westover House, 90 at Forestvale, 103 at Jamaica Plain Apartments, 61 at Jamaica Plains Coop Serv, 45 at the Nate Smith House, 56 at Pondview Apartments and 65 at Walnut/Washington Apartments.

## Potential Impact of Whole Foods on Gentrification in Jamaica Plain

Clearly Jamaica Plain has been undergoing a period of gentrification since the 1980s and that trend has increased in the past decade or so. Whole Foods did not cause this gentrification, in fact Whole Foods is most likely responding to this gentrification. With or without a Whole Foods Market, Jamaica Plain is likely to see more gentrification over the next few years. However, it is highly likely that Whole Foods, a retailer that is often seen as an amenity to middle- to upper-class urban dwellers, will increase the pace of gentrification.

Other amenities – bookstores, cinemas, specialty grocers, cafes, coffee shops, bakeries, and restaurants – also play a role in gentrification, though a smaller one. As they make surrounding homes more desirable, they contribute to a rise in property values. A study in Portland, Oregon, “An Assessment of the Marginal Impact of Urban Amenities on Residential Pricing,” found that specialty grocers (similar to Whole Foods) raised property values in the immediate area between 6 and 29 percent. Actually, any grocery store that replaced Hi-Lo would likely lift property values slightly, and a few uses (a cinema, a wine bar or shop or a garden store) would raise them more. Urban improvements such as parks, street trees, paving, and attractive street lighting also raise property values by making a neighborhood more attractive.

In other areas, Whole Foods has had a particular effect in real estate values, dubbed “The Whole Foods Effect.” Perhaps the most well-known commenter on this subject is the CEO of Whole Foods himself, John Mackey, who in a 2007 CNNMoney.com article said, “when we opened in Chelsea [in New York City], condos above the store went up 10% in price on the first day. I can look out my window in Austin, where we have our flagship store, and people are building condos all around. The joke is that we could have made a lot more money just buying up real estate around our stores and developing it than we could make selling groceries.”<sup>56</sup>

Whole Foods can be expected to bring an increase in property values and rents up to 15-20%. Greg Badishkanian, an analyst with Citigroup who tracks Whole Foods, said in a 2006 NPR story, “When Whole Foods opens up a store in a particular market, all of the real estate in the area gets a nice uplift. It could be a few percent to ten, fifteen, twenty percent in terms of the real estate value.”<sup>57</sup> Anecdotally, it appears that local real estate brokers are already using the prospect of a new Whole Foods to market Jamaica Plain real estate listings.

Perhaps the most well-reported case of the gentrifying impact of Whole Foods is the story of a Washington D.C. Whole Foods. In the late 1990s, residents of a Washington, D.C. neighborhood advocated bringing a Whole Foods Market into their area, Ward 2. The founder of this campaign, Wayne Dickson, explained some years later in an interview

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<sup>56</sup> CNNMoney.com, “The man who brought organics to Main Street,” July 12, 2007

<sup>57</sup> National Public Radio, “The ‘Whole Foods Effect’: A Grocery's Role in Transforming Cities,” Nov. 30, 2006

with the *Washington Post*, “We're losing a great number of our poorer neighbors and our African American neighbors. Today there are only two remaining African American families on this block. There have been people [homeowners] who have cashed out, who have done very, very well – but! They won't ever get back in.”<sup>58</sup>

P Street Whole Foods Market's Community Liaison, Zachary Stein, explained on National Public Radio, “How do I see our store as part of the gentrification? The newer residents wanted us to come, so we came and we catered to the newer residents. . . . While we didn't cause it, it was already happening before we got here . . . it was well on its way by the time we showed up, but I guess we sort of helped the process along.”<sup>59</sup> As one real estate columnist writes, “. . . A grocery store is oxygen for new or resurgent areas, and causes the real estate to – pardon the pun – fly off the shelves,” writes one real estate columnist. “. . . The most obvious example of all [is] Whole Foods on P Street in Logan Circle, which is widely credited with catalyzing the redevelopment of what has become one of DC's hottest neighborhoods.”<sup>60</sup> Similarly, Whole Foods did not cause gentrification in Jamaica Plain, nor will it be solely responsible for continued gentrification in Jamaica Plain, but without a concerted effort by our community to counter this impact, evidence indicates that it will increase the pace of gentrification in Jamaica Plain.

#### Recommendations for the JPNC and the Community:

- Continue to support the creation of new affordable housing, including the following current proposals:
  - Jackson Square Community Advisory Committee
  - Forest Hills Improvement Initiative
  - 461 Walnut Ave
- Establish the goal of creating more affordable housing in the next ten years than the previous ten (190 units).
- Prioritize the creation of affordable rental housing.
- Hold residential developers accountable to the affordable housing policies of the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council
  - Inclusionary Zoning (Appendix G)
  - Transit-Oriented Development (Appendix H)
  - Healthy Housing Guidelines (Appendix I)
- Work to reduce condominium conversions by considering promotion of a tax or fee levied on those who convert apartments to condominiums
- Make a priority to preserve all existing affordable units

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<sup>58</sup> National Public Radio, *ibid*.

<sup>59</sup> Public Radio Exchange, National Public Radio, “Gentrification on Logan Circle” <http://www.prx.org/pieces/41515-gentrification-on-logan-circle#description>

<sup>60</sup> “Grocery Stores Make Neighborhood's Explode”, *Urban Turf: The DC Real Estate Guide*, [http://dc.urbanturf.com/articles/blog/grocery\\_stores\\_make\\_neighborhoods\\_explode/2020](http://dc.urbanturf.com/articles/blog/grocery_stores_make_neighborhoods_explode/2020)

Recommendations for a Community Benefits Agreement with Whole Foods:

- Create a fund to be used by credible local organizations for anti-displacement work, foreclosure prevention, tenants' rights counseling, and the creation and preservation of affordable housing.
- Provide bonuses for first-time homebuyers who purchase homes in Jamaica Plain or in immediately abutting neighborhoods.
- Allocate funds for youth training and development to be used for increasing the financial literacy of residents. (Appendix K)

## **Local and Livable Employment**

### **Former Hi-Lo Employees**

The first and most obvious economic impact of Hi-Lo closing was the loss of the jobs of the former Hi-Lo employees. Various newspaper articles have presented conflicting information about the number of workers employed at Hi-Lo when it announced its intentions to close, however most reports had the number between 45 and 47. In its first open letter to the community (Appendix L), Whole Foods stated that it would be “guaranteeing (former Hi-Lo employees) priority interviews at any of our store locations and facilities.” While this commitment is certainly laudable, especially in Whole Foods’ willingness to interview former Hi-Lo employees for positions at stores already in existence (rather than making them wait until a Jamaica Plain store opens), many feel the gesture does not go far enough.

### **Jobs Whole Foods Will Bring**

Whole Foods has consistently said that its new store would allow it to hire about 100 Team Members, approximately 70 of which would be full-time with benefits.<sup>61</sup> The entry-level starting salary would be \$10/hour. Whole Foods lists employee benefits on its website,<sup>62</sup> and these benefits include medical, dental, vision, personal wellness, health reimbursement and dependant care reimbursement accounts, life insurance, disability insurance, 401(k) retirement savings, and team member discounts. For the past 14 years, Whole Foods has been listed in Fortune 500’s “100 Best Companies to Work For” for the past 14 years, ranking #24 in 2011.<sup>63</sup>

Whole Foods should be applauded for its openness in discussing its hiring and wage goals for its JP store and also for its transparent benefits policy. We can debate the value of the benefits, but few companies are so open with their policies.

Despite the accolades, Whole Foods has come under fire from union activists, as it has remained almost entirely “union-free” throughout its 31-year history. Of the nearly 300 franchises operated by Whole Foods Market in the United States, only one has been represented by a union. In Madison, Wisconsin, the United Food and Commercial Workers union represented the local store's employees for a time, but the employees in Madison are no longer unionized. A 2007 article in *The Nation* named Whole Foods Market “the second-biggest union-free food retailer, behind Wal-Mart.”<sup>64</sup> In 2009, Whole Foods Market publically opposed two major components of the Employee Free Choice Act – a provision that would allow workers to form a union if a majority signs pro-union cards, without having to hold a secret-ballot election, and one that would

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<sup>61</sup> <http://jamaicaplain.patch.com/articles/an-open-letter-from-whole-foods-to-jamaica-plain>

<sup>62</sup> [http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/careers/benefits\\_us.php](http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/careers/benefits_us.php)

<sup>63</sup> <http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/careers/fortune100.php>

<sup>64</sup> <http://www.thenation.com/article/whole-foods-ceo-sows-wild-oats>

impose binding arbitration when employers and unions fail to reach a contract after 120 days.<sup>65</sup>

### Local Hiring

Jamaica Plain, like any other community, would like to benefit as much as possible from any jobs created within its boundaries. Naturally, this means that the community would like to see Whole Foods hire as many Jamaica Plain residents as possible. Additionally, Jamaica Plain is very concerned about youth jobs and would hope that Whole Foods would make an effort to hire local youths when appropriate.

Whole Foods has stated that “Once renovations are underway and we have an opening date set, we will be holding job screenings at the store location that will be open to the public, as is our standard practice.”<sup>66</sup> The practice of holding job fairs at the site of a future store tends to skew new hires toward the local community. However, Whole Foods has not yet committed to any goals regarding local hiring. This committee would recommend that Whole Foods commit to hiring, across all staffing levels at least 75% Jamaica Plain residents at this location over the first five years the store is in operation. It should be noted that the committee has deliberately decided not to ask Whole Foods to commit to employing a specific number of Jamaica Plain residents at the store, primarily because we are aware that Whole Foods encourages cross-training employees at various stores as part of the advancement process. Asking Whole Foods to maintain specific percentages of Jamaica Plain residents may negatively affect our neighbors’ advancement opportunities.

### Employee Training and Opportunities for Advancement

As mentioned above, our community would like to benefit as much as possible from any jobs created within its boundaries. Accordingly, it is our hope that Whole Foods hires Jamaica Plain residents to middle and top-level positions, not just entry-level positions. We recognize that Whole Foods’ ability to hire Jamaica Plain residents to higher level positions is dependent on the skills and experience of potential candidates. We ask Whole Foods to partner with local organizations to co-facilitate recruitment and hiring as well as post-hiring support as needed to promote job retention and advancement.

### Diversity in the Workforce

As has been discussed throughout this report, Jamaica Plain is a diverse community. Hyde Square in particular is one of its most diverse areas. Many fear that Whole Foods’ arrival will accelerate gentrification, drive out people of color and result in a less diverse Jamaica Plain and Hyde Square. One way Whole Foods can combat this potential

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<sup>65</sup> “Executives Detail Labor Bill Compromise” <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/21/AR2009032101449.html>

<sup>66</sup> <http://jamaicaplain.patch.com/articles/an-open-letter-from-whole-foods-to-jamaica-plain>

negative impact is by providing jobs to people most at risk of displacement. Therefore we ask Whole Foods to ensure that employee demographics at all staffing levels reflect the racial, ethnic and linguistic demographics of the Hyde/Jackson Square Neighborhood as of the 2010 Census.

#### Recommendations for the JPNC and the Community

- Support the City of Boston and JPNDNC as they continue to work with former Hi-Lo employees and if necessary, provide them with training opportunities to increase their appeal as prospective Whole Foods employees.
- Continue Jamaica Plain's history of supporting organized labor and every employee's free speech, freedom of association, and right to organize and act collectively
- Work with existing community groups to partner with Whole Foods to co-facilitate recruitment and hiring as well as post-hiring support as needed to promote job retention and advancement.

#### Recommendations for a Community Benefits Agreement with Whole Foods

- Commit to hiring, across all staffing levels, 75% JP residents at this location over the first five years the store is in operation.
- Commit to hiring all former Hi-Lo workers who are interested in working at Whole Foods at positions equivalent to or higher than their former positions at Hi-Lo. Provide appropriate training to help workers advance to higher-paying positions over time.
- Partner with local organizations to co-facilitate recruitment and hiring as well as post-hiring support as needed to promote job retention and advancement.
- Employee demographics at all staffing levels should reflect the racial, ethnic and linguistic demographics of the Hyde/Jackson Square Neighborhood as of the 2010 Census.
- Offer a living wage, as defined by the City of Boston,<sup>67</sup> and a competitive benefits package for full-time employees.
- Develop training and employment opportunities for local youths, especially youths of color from low- and moderate-income families.

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<sup>67</sup> [http://www.cityofboston.gov/Images/Documents/Requirements\\_tcm3-18392.pdf](http://www.cityofboston.gov/Images/Documents/Requirements_tcm3-18392.pdf)



## **Small Businesses**

### **Health of Jamaica Plain's Local Business Economy**

The health of Jamaica Plain's local business economy has been much debated but less frequently studied. It is clear that Jamaica Plain has not been immune to the economic issues that have plagued the rest of the country during the current recession. There are obvious examples of the economic downturn, especially in Hyde Square, where prominent vacant spaces remain at the former homes of June Bug Café and Bella Luna/Milky Way. However, several new businesses have also opened in the last few months in Hyde Square, including The Haven, Canary Square,<sup>68</sup> Tres Gatos<sup>69</sup> and Slice O' Pie.<sup>70</sup> In fact, as of March 15, 2001, the vacancy rate in Hyde Square was 6%, slightly above the citywide average of 5.1% and well-below harder hit areas, such as Downtown Crossing.<sup>71</sup> It's fair to say that although Hyde Square is not currently struggling, like most other business districts in this current economic climate, if it were to lose several businesses, especially several high-profile business, it could be at risk of losing some of its current vitality.

Hi-Lo was an anchor business of Hyde Square and Whole Foods would continue to anchor the Hyde/Jackson business district. It is without question that having such a large, prominent site vacant would negatively affect the vitality of the business community around it.

### **Whole Foods' Potential Impact on Locally-Owned Small Businesses**

The local arrival of Whole Foods Market can be expected to accelerate the rising costs of commercial tenancy in Jamaica Plain. Approximately 75% of Hyde Square's businesses lease (rather than own) their space, and a strong majority of businesses in JP as a whole lease their space.<sup>72</sup> These businesses are vulnerable to displacement.

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<sup>68</sup> <http://jamaicaplain.patch.com/articles/canary-square-nearly-set-to-open-in-early-november>

<sup>69</sup> <http://jamaicaplain.patch.com/articles/jamaica-plains-tres-gatos-soon-to-offer-books-music-and-tapas>

<sup>70</sup> <http://jamaicaplain.patch.com/articles/jamaica-plains-newest-pizzeria-offers-a-slice-of-hyde-square>

<sup>71</sup> <http://jamaicaplain.patch.com/articles/carlos-schillaci-of-hyde-jackson-main-street-the-latin-quarter-is-alive-and-thriving>

<sup>72</sup> According to Carlos Schillaci, Executive Director of the Hyde Jackson Square Main Street organization, "over 75%" of the businesses in Hyde Square are renters. "Very few [businesses in the area] are owners," he says. According to a 2011 survey by Hyde Jackson Main Street, approximately 75% of Hyde-Jackson businesses are renters. The 2011 average and median commercial rent in Hyde/Jackson Squares is \$27/square foot, according to the organization's report "Hyde Jackson Square: Still Boston's Latin Quarter, Still Vibrant."

Displacement of commercial tenants in Hyde Square can be expected to impact Jamaica Plain's Latino and African American populations in particular. In the Hyde-Jackson business district, nearly 40% of businesses are Latino-owned, and over half cater to a Latino market.<sup>73</sup>

Newer consumers drawn to the area will increase foot traffic and, in turn, benefit some businesses, though it is unclear what bearing this new traffic will have on specific local businesses that may not cater to (or appeal to) Whole Foods' customers.<sup>74</sup> Whole Foods might potentially also catalyze a wave of chain stores opening in the neighborhood.<sup>75</sup> While it can be said that Whole Foods will have a positive impact overall on the business climate in Hyde Square, the concern is that the food retailer may attract other, more expensive, large chains, driving out many of the local, small business that give Jamaica Plain (and Hyde Square in particular) its character.

#### Effect on the "Latin Quarter"

As discussed above, Whole Foods would likely draw more people into the Latin Quarter. It is likely that some new customers will also frequent other local businesses. What is unknown and indeed unknowable is whether these new customers will frequent the "50 percent of businesses (that) are Latino-owned, and over 60 percent (that) cater to the Latino market segment."<sup>76</sup>

This question is not new in Jamaica Plain. In 1992, there was a similar debate when Stop & Shop prepared to open in Jackson Square and some were concerned that the supermarket would negatively impact the Latino community and the bodegas.<sup>77</sup> Although documentation of the ultimate impact of Stop & Shop on the Latino community and Latino-focused businesses is thin, the Jamaica Plain Gazette has reported that "Stop & Shop turned out to be one of JP's success stories. The bodegas stayed open, some doing better business than before. And the project provided a community benefits package—including local jobs and a \$500,000 trust fund."<sup>78</sup> Obviously, this is a different situation. Stop & Shop was built on vacant land next to the Bromley-Heath public

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<sup>73</sup> "Hyde Jackson Square: Still Boston's Latin Quarter, Still Vibrant," Hyde Jackson Main Street.

<sup>74</sup> "Highly Anticipated Whole Foods Has Had Limited Impact on Downtown Business" Novato Patch, Dec 22, 2010. *See also* Lamorinda Weekly, "What Impact Will Whole Foods Have on Lafayette Businesses?" June 23, 2010; Potrero View, "Whole Foods' Launch Slows Local Business" Jan 2008; "Washington, DC: The Impact of Whole Foods on the 14th St. and Greater Logan Circle Area" by Kristen Degan and Jason Haber May 9, 2005.

<sup>75</sup> The Villager, "Whole Foods' impact is felt by shoppers, and stores," Vol. 76 Num. 46 April 11-17, 2007; Degan and Haber, *ibid*.

<sup>76</sup> <http://jamaicaplain.patch.com/articles/carlos-schillaci-of-hyde-jackson-main-street-the-latin-quarter-is-alive-and-thriving>

<sup>77</sup> [http://jamaicaplainingazette.com/2011/04/29/jp's\\_last\\_supermarket\\_war/](http://jamaicaplainingazette.com/2011/04/29/jp's_last_supermarket_war/)

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*

housing development, while Whole Foods would replace Hi-Lo, a relatively affordable grocer that was, for many years, the largest business catering to the diverse Latino community in Hyde Square and JP. According to Jose Duran, former Executive Director of the Jamaica Plain-based Hispanic Office of Planning and Evaluation, “There are people who have been going to Hi-Lo from all throughout the Greater Boston Metropolitan area because it's one of the few places where their indigenous foods and spices can be found.”<sup>79</sup> Those customers presumably did additional spending while in the Latin Quarter, which likely benefited Latino-focused businesses. Without Hi-Lo as an anchor tenant, presumably some of those customers from outside JP will be lost. Whole Foods will have some overlap in its customer base, but it is likely to also attract a new demographic of shoppers. If those shoppers continue to support Latino-focused businesses, Whole Foods could be a boon for the Latin Quarter. However, if Whole Foods customers do not frequent the Latino-focused businesses, those businesses may be replaced by chain businesses or others that can afford rising rents, which would be expected to diminish the character of the Latin Quarter.

The Jamaica Plain community can have a significant impact in the continued vitality of the Latin Quarter. We must continue to support our local businesses and the organizations that support them. The Latin Quarter is fortunate to have a specific non-profit focused on its commercial success – Hyde/Jackson Square Main Street has been working for over a decade to create “a safe, visually vibrant, economically sound business district in the Hyde/Jackson Square; a district known as the heart of Latino life in Boston and that reflects the full diversity of Jamaica Plain.”<sup>80</sup> Programs such as its Storefront Improvement Program help local businesses remain competitive, while programs such as their Business Directory<sup>81</sup> help customers support their local businesses. Other vibrant local groups that support local businesses include Egleston Square Main Streets<sup>82</sup>, Centre/South Main Streets,<sup>83</sup> and Buy Local JP.<sup>84</sup> These groups sponsor events such as the Tasting Tour of Hyde Jackson Square,<sup>85</sup> First Thursdays,<sup>86</sup> and the JP Shopping Spree.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> <http://jamaicaplain.patch.com/articles/business-leaders-welcome-whole-foods>

<sup>80</sup> <http://www.hydejacksonsquare.org/>

<sup>81</sup> <http://www.hydejacksonsquare.org/Full4.html>

<sup>82</sup> <http://www.eglestonesquare.org/>

<sup>83</sup> <http://www.jpcentresouthmainstreets.org/>

<sup>84</sup> <http://BuyLocalJP.com/>

<sup>85</sup> <http://www.bostonlatinquarter.com/>

<sup>86</sup> <http://www.jpcentresouthmainstreets.org/first-thursdays.php>

<sup>87</sup> <http://jamaicaplain.patch.com/articles/jp-shopping-spree-jp-compra-aqui-spotlights-jamaica-plain-food-vendors>

## Effect on Food-Related Businesses

As a food retailer, Whole Foods is most likely to affect other food-related businesses in the area. This report will focus on three types of food establishments: retailers, restaurateurs and producers. Retailers can further be divided into three categories: grocery markets, traditional convenience stores (which will not be examined in this report) and bodegas.

The impact Whole Foods might have on Jamaica Plain's grocers may be best summed up by Mike St. Clair, general manager at Harvest Co-op Markets, who stated "Obviously I think that we'd be better off without a big strong national health food store coming in for competition on our street, but we also have a history of competing with Whole Foods in Cambridge."<sup>88</sup> Whole Foods will certainly make it more difficult for Harvest, City Feed and Supply and even Stop & Shop. David Warner, Owner of City Feed and Supply notes that Whole Foods is "the biggest national player . . . and what most people don't realize is that they pretty much control the distribution channels of nationally-branded natural foods. . . . Not only can they come into our market and compete with us and take away our convenience advantage . . . they also control the prices we have to pay at the wholesale level for those foods." Since the announcement that Whole Foods is coming to Jamaica Plain, both Harvest and City Feed have made substantial announcements of their own, with Harvest announcing it will open two new stores,<sup>89</sup> one in Jamaica Plain and one in Fenway, and City Feed seeking a license to sell beer and wine.<sup>90</sup> These business decisions reflect the challenges these two comparatively small businesses will face in competing with Whole Foods, but also the innovative entrepreneurial spirit that benefits a community when its businesses compete.

The bodegas have been discussed earlier in this report. Those retailers were concerned about Stop & Shop's arrival nearly 20 years ago, although they appear to have benefited from that store.<sup>91</sup> Today, they seem less concerned about a potential Whole Foods than they did about Stop & Shop or even than they did about a potential Latino grocery store at the Blessed Sacrament space.<sup>92</sup>

Most area Whole Foods Markets serve prepared food, though it is unclear whether the company will seek to do so in Jamaica Plain. In order to do so, Whole Foods would presumably need to apply for a common victualler license, which as of the date of this report, it has yet to do. If Whole Foods were to serve prepared food, this line of business would compete directly with restaurants in Hyde Square that offer similar items such as

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<sup>88</sup> <http://jamaicaplain.patch.com/articles/direct-local-competitors-speak-about-whole-foods-entry-into-jp>

<sup>89</sup> [http://jamaicaplainingazette.com/2011/04/29/harvest\\_co-op\\_plans\\_new\\_jp\\_store/](http://jamaicaplainingazette.com/2011/04/29/harvest_co-op_plans_new_jp_store/)

<sup>90</sup> <http://jamaicaplain.patch.com/articles/city-feed-moves-step-closer-to-beer-and-wine-package-sales>

<sup>91</sup> [http://jamaicaplainingazette.com/2011/04/29/jp's\\_last\\_supermarket\\_war/](http://jamaicaplainingazette.com/2011/04/29/jp's_last_supermarket_war/)

<sup>92</sup> <http://jamaicaplain.patch.com/articles/some-hyde-jackson-merchants-wary-of-new-latino-supermarket-traduccin-estar-disponible-prximamente>

sandwiches or pizza, though it is unclear whether Whole Foods would attempt to compete on price for such items. Apart from this direct form of competition, restaurateurs will of course be affected as locally-owned small businesses, as discussed above.

If Whole Foods does apply for a common victualler license, and projects more than 10% of its gross sales to come from the sale of prepared foods to be consumed off-site, it would also need to obtain zoning relief for take-out. Bodies responsible for administering the zoning process, including the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council, should appropriately consider what impact it may have on area restaurants. The JPNC should also consider establishing general policy guidelines to inform its licensing and zoning decisions, much as it has done for housing.

Whole Foods could have an overwhelming positive impact on local food producers, through two programs, their local producer loan program (LPLP) and their eco czar/regional forager.<sup>93</sup> The LPLP “provides up to \$10 million in low-interest loans to small, local producers . . . to make it easier for them to grow their businesses and bring more local products to market. . . .” Loans range from \$1,000 to \$100,000 and can be used for a variety of purposes to grow businesses that specialize in the growth or production of local food (we have not found that these loans have been given to Massachusetts businesses). As Whole Foods writes of this program, “We minimize the fees, interest rates and paperwork that can often get in the way of a small local farm or business taking the next step to expand its operations.”<sup>94</sup> The eco czar/food forager is a full-time Whole Foods employee whose job is to seek out local food producers whose products could be carried in Whole Foods stores. Local food producers such as Batch Ice Cream are already wholesaling to Whole Foods and will presumably benefit further from being able to supply a Jamaica Plain location.

#### Recommendations for the JPNC and the Community

- Monitor the effect of Whole Foods on the Hyde-Jackson Business District, also known as the Latin Quarter, for at least 5 years, focusing on vacancy rates, percentage of Latino-owned businesses, percentage of businesses catering to the Latino community, and percentage of businesses owned locally.
- Support locally-owned small businesses, particularly those that reflect the diversity of our community
- Support Hyde Jackson Square Main Streets and other local non-profits that support local businesses.
- Support events such as the Tasting Tour of Hyde Jackson Square, First Thursdays, and the JP Shopping Spree.
- If Whole Foods applies for a common victualler license or a zoning relief to provide takeout, consider the impact these licenses and variances might have on local restaurants.

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<sup>93</sup> <http://jamaicaplain.patch.com/articles/whole-foods-presentation-to-jamaica-plain-pdf#pdf-6397777>

<sup>94</sup> <http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/values/local-producer-loan-program.php>

- The JPNC should establish guidelines that would inform its licensing and zoning decisions with regard to commercial development, much like it has done for housing

#### Recommendations for a Community Benefits Agreement with Whole Foods

- Fund a program that would assist low- and moderate-income residents in buying healthy foods at locally-owned, non-chain, retail food sellers and farmers' markets, such as the JP Bucks program described in Appendix J.
- Share parking with neighboring tenants after hours.
- Create a workforce development/small business fund for training programs that target low- and moderate-income residents, such as the sample program described in Appendix K.
- Prioritize purchasing products made by small food manufacturers and other businesses in Jamaica Plain and surrounding neighborhoods

## **Parking and Traffic**

The City has acknowledged that there is a traffic problem on Centre Street, and has been working on a Centre/South Street Action Plan<sup>95</sup> to combat the problem and create a new vision for Centre South. The report is being finalized and another set of consultants has been hired to create the final report and plan.<sup>96</sup> The goals for Hyde Square include: reducing expansive paved area, supporting existing vibrancy, preserving iconic elements, and making Hyde Square accessible, sustainable and maintainable.

The Boston Traffic Department has requested that Whole Foods provide a traffic report. At this time, Whole Foods has not applied for any licenses or Zoning Variances, so the Department cannot require it to submit a Traffic Study, only request that one be completed. Whole Foods has indicated to Boston Traffic that it would look into completing a Traffic Study, but as of the date of this report, has not yet committed to doing so.

Absent a traffic study, it is difficult to assess how Whole Foods may impact traffic and parking in Hyde Square. This committee would like Whole Foods to provide a traffic study that would include information about traffic flow, peak hour traffic management, parking and its impact on the surrounding community, the environmental impact on air quality and deliveries to and from the store. A traffic study would help Whole Foods and the community determine if there will be any traffic or parking issues related to the new store, and if so, how we can solve or mitigate them.

No matter what impacts, if any, a traffic study would suggest the Whole Foods store may create, this committee would also like Whole Foods to consider ways to encourage both employees and customers to reach the store by means other than an automobile. Some ideas to encourage use of alternative means of transportation include providing bicycle parking, being a Hubway<sup>97</sup> kiosk, and providing delivery services by bicycle.

## **Recommendations for the JPNC and the Community**

- Encourage/enable customers and employees of Whole Foods to walk, bicycle, or take public transit to Jamaica Plain location.

## **Recommendations for a Community Benefits Agreement with Whole Foods**

- Provide the Traffic Study requested by the City of Boston, which should include the following:
  - Traffic Flow

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<http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/pdf/PlanningPublications/Jamaica%20Plain%20Centre%20and%20South%20Street%20121310presentationFINAL.pdf>

<sup>96</sup> Interview with Vineet Gupta, Director of Planning, Boston Transportation Department

<sup>97</sup> [http://articles.boston.com/2011-04-21/news/29460074\\_1\\_bike-bicycles-kiosks](http://articles.boston.com/2011-04-21/news/29460074_1_bike-bicycles-kiosks)

- Peak hour traffic management
  - Parking Impact on surrounding community
  - Environmental Impact/Air Quality
  - Deliveries
- Commit to addressing any issues brought up by the Traffic Study prior to opening.
- Commit to a professionally-facilitated community meeting to discuss traffic and parking 12 months after opening.
- Develop programs and incentives to encourage use of alternative means of transportation and delivery, including providing bicycle parking, serving as a Hubway kiosk, and offering grocery delivery by bike.



## Alternatives

### Vacant Space

Hi-Lo has closed and 415 Centre Street is currently a vacant property. If Whole Foods were to decide not to open its proposed store at this location, the property would remain vacant until some other use was found for it. How long the property would remain vacant is difficult to predict.

As noted earlier, the Hyde/Jackson Business District currently has a 5% vacancy rate,<sup>98</sup> on par with other areas in the city of Boston. The district is too small, with too few newly-occupied commercial spaces, to provide an accurate or useful absorption rate.

Many have expressed concerns about other properties that have been vacant for a relatively long period of time, including the former Milky Way/Bella Luna space and the new construction retail space at Blessed Sacrament. Additionally, the Knapp Family, which owns the property and has entered into a lease with Whole Foods, also owned the Omni Foods store on Boylston Street in Chestnut Hill, a space that has remained vacant and unused for several years. Some fear that the Knapp Family would deliberately keep 415 Centre Street vacant to spite the community if opposition to Whole Foods were to stymie this proposal.

Others are more optimistic about prospects for the space, citing the low vacancy rate in the Hyde/Jackson area, the fact that the Milky Way/Bella Luna space is vacant partially due to decisions by the landlord.<sup>99</sup> The Milky Way has been a successful Jamaica Plain business for over a decade and moved to another location in Jamaica Plain, rather than endure a rent increase of 85%.<sup>100</sup> Also, the Omni Foods has been seen a development proposal that was initially conceived in 2002, and although modified substantially since then, has still not been approved.<sup>101</sup>

No matter how long 415 Centre Street remained vacant if Whole Foods chose not to open a store there, a vacant property at such a prominent location would not be good for the community. The Hyde Square business district appears to be healthy enough to sustain a vacant anchor store for some period of time, but it is not in the community's interest for the space to remain vacant for very long, especially given the current state of the economy.

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<sup>98</sup> <http://jamaicaplain.patch.com/articles/some-hyde-jackson-merchants-wary-of-new-latino-supermarket-traduccin-estar-disponible-prximamente>

<sup>99</sup> <http://bostonist.com/2008/05/02/milky-way-jp-closing.php>

<sup>100</sup> [http://articles.boston.com/2010-07-15/news/29300254\\_1\\_rent-hikes-bella-luna-high-rent](http://articles.boston.com/2010-07-15/news/29300254_1_rent-hikes-bella-luna-high-rent)

<sup>101</sup> <http://www.wickedlocal.com/newton/news/business/x1123437576/Chestnut-Hill-project-scaled-down#axzz1Ooo7Y3PI>

## Alternative Uses

The alternatives working group concluded that the best method for researching best uses of the space was to generate a discussion among neighbors through an open public forum. This forum took place at the Kennedy School in Hyde Square on the evening of May 12th. The event involved 31 people in an open dialogue on alternative uses of the space as they relate to the needs of the Hyde Square community. It is our hope that the information generated by this forum can help the community create a vision for the type of development we would like to encourage in other spaces in Hyde Square and Jamaica Plain.

The forum generated a list of eight major community needs and concerns: crime reduction, recreational options, healthy/affordable food, community involvement/input from low-income people of color, affordable housing options, commercial landlord rent hikes, arts and entertainment, and shelter options for families and individuals.

Participants also generated the following four recommendations for 415 Centre Street:

1. **a Low-Income Housing Development** to address the need for affordable housing options;
2. **a Year-Round Indoor Farmers' Market** to address the need for affordable, healthy food including either locally-oriented or international products;
3. **a Sports/Recreation/Youth Neighborhood Center** including sporting facilities (swimming pool, courts, fields, equipment), out-of-school-time programs and sports teams that are affordable and a study center with Wi-Fi and computer access; and
4. **an Independent Arts/Entertainment Center** (performing arts and films) which would include an independent movie theater with drop-down screens, a stage(s) for *multicultural* performing arts (for both local and traveling performers), and out-of-school-time art, performance, sound and lighting youth training programs.

Two other ideas that seemed to have less momentum were a public gardening space and a homeless shelter for women.

## **Conclusion**

The debate around Whole Foods replacing Hi-Lo has so far been contentious, emotional and divisive. Too often neighbors who share a desire to see their community thrive have found themselves pitted against one another as they debate the potential impacts of Whole Foods in Hyde Square. This report is an attempt to move beyond the divisive debate and begin a new conversation. Such a conversation must recognize that our community is changing, and Whole Foods' desire to open a store here is a reflection of that change. With or without Whole Foods, our neighborhood will continue to evolve. Many of the issues raised by the Whole Foods debate are issues that have been boiling beneath the surface for several years. As Whole Foods has drawn considerable attention to these underlying issues, we have a unique opportunity to discuss them as a community of neighbors, and begin working toward solutions.

This report is the result of significant work by many volunteers over a very short period of time. Although an enormous amount of research was put into this report, it is not a professional research paper and should not be seen as one. It should be treated as the start of a conversation about who we, as Jamaica Plain residents, are and want to be as we enter the second decade of the 21st Century.

### **Appendix A: Text of JPNC Motion Passed March 8**

As a Council, we have committed ourselves to preserving affordable housing through residential use policies, and have consistently expressed concern in our zoning and public licensing decisions to preserve the rich character of Jamaica Plain. We therefore commit ourselves to working with the established business community, community organizations and public officials to explore alternative uses of the property at 415 Centre St. Based on what we know now, we are concerned that Whole Foods is not a good fit for Hyde Square. We hope that it will reconsider its decision to move into the neighborhood, and we hope that our community can work together to find an alternative to Whole Foods that will strengthen Jamaica Plain's culture of diversity, locally owned businesses, and welcome to people of all economic status

## **Appendix B: JPNC Ad-hoc Whole Foods Committee Mandate**

1. To build off the community input the JPNC has received to date and the community input the Council continues to solicit and receive, to come up with a list of questions and concerns about the future of 415 Centre, and to explore with the community how these concerns may be addressed by the community, Whole Foods, Knapp Foods, and any other relevant actors.
2. To generate (based on community input, historical research, research of similar situations in other neighborhoods and communities, suggestions from elected officials, and other appropriate sources) a report containing a prioritized summary of potential responses to community concerns and/or community benefits for each of the following scenarios: (1) a Whole Foods Market in the 415 Centre Street space, and (2) such other scenario(s) as the Committee may deem likely and/or feasible. Such report shall be made to the full Council at its May 2011 meeting.
3. To consider in what ways the JPNC may appropriately and effectively follow up on our resolution from February's meeting and address concerns about vacant spaces, including expressing that we are open to suggestions from public, private, or non-profit entities as to how we could be helpful in exploring alternative uses of the 415 Centre St. site.
4. To plan, organize, and implement any necessary meetings between Whole Foods representatives and the JPNC, including open community meetings.

**Appendix C: Letter from JPNC ad-hoc Whole Foods Committee Chair**  
**April 8, 2011**

As chair of the new Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council (JPNC) Ad-Hoc Whole Foods Committee. I would like to inform you about what the committee will be doing and invite your continued participation.

As many people are aware, after hosting two community forums, receiving numerous emails and website comments, and debating at a special meeting on March 8, the JPNC voted 9-8 to approve a motion stating in part that “based on what we know now, we are concerned that Whole Foods is not a good fit for Hyde Square.” Lost in the controversy over this vote was the fact that the JPNC concurrently passed a motion to form an Ad-hoc Committee to continue to gather information and to reflect the community’s voice about this important issue.

On Tuesday, March 29, the JPNC approved the following charge for its Ad-hoc Whole Foods Committee:

1. To build off the community input the JPNC has received to date and the community input the Council continues to solicit and receive, to come up with a list of questions and concerns about the future of 415 Centre, and to explore with the community how these concerns may be addressed by the community, Whole Foods, Knapp Foods, and any other relevant actors.
2. To generate (based on community input, historical research, research of similar situations in other neighborhoods and communities, suggestions from elected officials, and other appropriate sources) a report containing a prioritized summary of potential responses to community concerns and/or community benefits for each of the following scenarios: (1) a Whole Foods Market in the 415 Centre Street space, and (2) such other scenario(s) as the Committee may deem likely and/or feasible. Such report shall be made to the full Council at its May 2011 meeting.
3. To consider in what ways the JPNC may appropriately and effectively follow up on our resolution from February's meeting and address concerns about vacant spaces, including expressing that we are open to suggestions from public, private, or non-profit entities as to how we could be helpful in exploring alternative uses of the 415 Centre St. site.
4. To plan, organize, and implement any necessary meetings between Whole Foods representatives and the JPNC, including open community meetings.

This mandate reflects the Council's commitment to move from the intense debate that has occurred to find common ground and explore a community vision for the type of development we want to encourage in our neighborhood. We’ve heard

many arguments from both supporters of Whole Foods and those opposed to it. Now is the time take the concerns we've heard, whether about gentrification, investment in our community, jobs, or vacant retail space, and seek to generate solutions for the space at 415 Centre Street, whether that space becomes a Whole Foods Market or something else.

We are looking for energetic and creative people who are interested in serving on this committee and working hard over a short period of time to find innovative solutions to bring people together and create an outcome for 415 Centre Street that a majority of our community can feel good about. If you are interested in being a part of this committee, please do one of two things: 1) send an email to us at [info.jpnc@gmail.com](mailto:info.jpnc@gmail.com) stating that you'd like to be on this committee or 2) attend the committees next meeting on Tuesday, April 12 at 7:00 PM at the Bowditch School. Council members appointed to the Committee will formalize community members' participation early in the meeting, so please be sure to be on-time! Our by-laws permit Council committees to have up to five Council members and up to 10 additional voting community members.

Based on the mandate above, we expect the specific tasks committee members may take on to include research and writing, outreach to local business owners, planning of meetings, liaison between the Council and the city and principal parties on conditions and requirements for occupancy of the space, and continued coordination with the JPNC.

Whether you are excited or appalled about the potential of Whole Foods located in Hyde Square, the debate around this issue is an opportunity for all of us to talk about what makes Jamaica Plain a wonderful community and to create a positive vision for the 415 Centre Street space. Thank you to all those who have participated in this process so far, and I look forward to working with you all to continue to improve this place that we love so much.

Sincerely,

Steve Laferriere  
Gartland Street

**Appendix D; Letter from Councilor Felix Arroyo April 28, 2011**



**FELIX G. ARROYO  
BOSTON CITY COUNCILOR  
AT-LARGE**

Steve Laferriere, Chair  
JPNC Whole Foods Ad-hoc Committee

April 28, 2011

Dear Chair Laferriere,

I want to thank you and all of the members of the committee and the Neighborhood Council for your dedication to our community. As a former member of the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council, I know firsthand the many hours each of you devote to improving our neighborhood. Your service is greatly appreciated.

News of Whole Foods Market moving into the Hyde Square section of Jamaica Plain has caused much discussion and debate in our neighborhood. The views range from complete support to complete opposition to everywhere in between.

We must recognize that the arrival of Whole Foods Market brings some immediate positive impacts to the neighborhood including jobs, a larger variety of organic and natural foods, and for property owners, a quick increase in property value.

However, along with these benefits come some concerns that need to be addressed. The same increase in property value can potentially lead to the rapid displacement of low and moderate income renters in the neighborhood. Many of these residents have worked hard to make Jamaica Plain the attractive and desirable neighborhood we are proud to call home. There are also concerns about local employment, the potential parking and traffic congestion, the impact on neighboring small businesses, opportunities for area youth, and preservation of the culture and identity of the community.

After many hours of reflection and conversations with my Jamaica Plain neighbors, I have come to the conclusion that there is an opportunity to take Whole Foods Market up on their offer to be a good community partner. The following are a few ideas, but in the end, I believe this should be an inclusive community-led effort in concert with Whole Foods Market.

- 1) **Local Hiring** – Whole Foods Market has stated there will be 100 jobs at the Whole Foods Market in Hyde Square. Of the 100 jobs, they stated to me that 75 are entry level positions. Whole Foods could commit to hiring a significant percentage of local residents for all 100 jobs. By hiring locally, our community can benefit from the new jobs in the neighborhood.

**BOSTON CITY HALL, ONE CITY HALL SQUARE, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS, 02201  
617-635-4205 FAX: 617-635-4203 [Felix.Arroyo@cityofboston.gov](mailto:Felix.Arroyo@cityofboston.gov)**



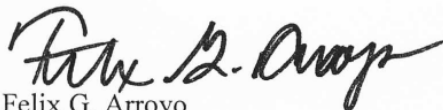
- 2) **Parking /Traffic** – Whole Foods Market in Hyde Square will attract hundreds of customers that do not normally drive through Jamaica Plain. This will undoubtedly create parking and traffic issues. If Whole Foods hires locally, they can ensure that their workforce walk, bike or take public transit to work. Also, Whole Foods Market could play a role in solving traffic and parking concerns in the neighborhood.
- 3) **Neighboring Small Businesses** – There are numerous small and locally owned businesses in Hyde Square. By partnering with neighboring businesses, Whole Foods Market can help ensure that these businesses benefit from their arrival.
- 4) **The Latin Quarter** – Whole Foods Market has stated that every store is reflective of the neighborhood in which they do business. They are planning to move into an area commonly referred to as Boston's Latin Quarter. Whole Foods Market can best reflect the Latin Quarter by offering traditional Latin foods and by helping to promote the many cultures that help make up Boston's Latin Quarter.

Whole Foods Market has expressed willingness to financially support local efforts in communities they enter. I laud this position. I would urge Whole Foods Market to support two very important causes in our community.

- 1) **Affordable Housing** – There are great organizations in Jamaica Plain that work to create and preserve affordable housing. Whole Foods Market could partner with them and help ensure that Jamaica Plain remain the economically diverse community we all love.
- 2) **Youth Development and Training** – Whole Foods Market has shown willingness in word and in action to support youth development and training in our community. I am grateful for that support. Whole Foods Market can continue and expand its support of youth development and training in Jamaica Plain.

Our community is home to many residents and organizations that have dedicated themselves to making Jamaica Plain the great community it is today. It is my hope that Jamaica Plain residents, community based organizations, and Whole Foods Market will agree to come together to ensure that all of Jamaica Plain benefits from a Whole Foods Market in Hyde Square.

Sincerely,



Felix G. Arroyo  
Boston City Councilor At-Large

cc: Members of the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council  
Members of the JPNC Whole Foods Ad-hoc Committee

**Appendix E: Letter from Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz April 28, 2011**

April 28, 2011

Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council  
Whole Foods Ad-Hoc Committee

Dear Chair Steve Laferriere and Members of the JPNC Whole Foods Ad-Hoc Committee:

Thank you for your service to the Jamaica Plain community by taking on this new role within the JP Neighborhood Council. I write today to outline what I hope will serve as constructive suggestions for addressing the controversies that have divided our neighborhood since the release of the news that Whole Foods intended to move into the space of the former Hi-Lo Market.

The planned expansion of a Whole Foods Market into the Hyde Square section of Jamaica Plain has generated heated debate among my constituents. Since I first learned of Hi-Lo Foods' closing, my office has done its best to understand from all sides the different perspectives on this highly divisive issue. I've met with representatives from Whole Foods, spoken with former employees of Hi-Lo, heard from members of the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council, and spoken with staff at the JPNC and local Main Streets organizations. My staff members and I attended community meetings at the Blessed Sacrament development, the Kennedy Elementary, and the First Baptist Church, where we listened to the concerns of community activists both for and against the expansion, and in the middle. Most important, we read hundreds of emails and letters from ordinary residents throughout Jamaica Plain detailing how the opening of a Whole Foods in Hyde Square would affect their lives—for better and for worse.

As many residents expressed, there are several positives to bringing a retailer such as Whole Foods to JP. We stand to gain potentially dozens of new jobs in the neighborhood, at rates of pay and with benefits that will likely exceed those paid by Hi-Lo. This is no small thing for the workers and families who will be touched by employment, especially at a time of still-fragile recovery for our economy. Whole Foods could also increase access to healthy food to the Hyde/Jackson area, especially for those without cars, at a time when many other low-income neighborhoods suffer dire health impacts because of the lack of such access. I believe firmly that all people deserve to have realistic healthful food options, no matter what zip code or socio-economic bracket they live in.

Unfortunately, there are also serious negative impacts that Whole Foods' entry into the neighborhood is likely to bring. I believe, with a heavy heart, that these disadvantages outweigh the advantages.

Looking at data from other instances where Whole Foods has located in low- and middle-income neighborhoods, it's clear that the presence of Whole Foods rapidly and substantially raises property values in its surrounding areas. This is the inherent problem.

Even if Whole Foods behaves as the best corporate citizen, the best neighbor possible by all of our usual standards, its presence will still light a fire under the gentrification process that will displace low- and moderate- income residents from JP.

Increasing property values in our community is not always bad. Indeed, this is something every home owner in JP—low- or high-income, white, brown, or black—probably hopes for. But pace matters. A lot. There are families who have spent generations building JP into the incredible neighborhood it is today. We stand to lose many of these families, and their friends and neighbors, if property taxes and rents balloon so fast that their incomes can't keep up. In order to preserve the character of JP that we all love and believe in so deeply, development has to happen at a pace our neighbors can benefit from, not be displaced by.

Whole Foods has said many times that they aspire to be a positive neighbor and a responsible corporate citizen in the JP community. I believe this is true and therefore ask Whole Foods to recognize that their typical strategy for integrating into new neighborhoods is not designed to protect economically and socially diverse communities. In action, this requires Whole Foods to take some specific steps to help mitigate the impacts described above.

1. Whole Foods has stated that they expect to hire about 100 workers at their planned JP location. In order for local residents to actually benefit from this job creation, and for Whole Foods' presence to contribute to local wealth creation, Whole Foods needs to commit to hiring locally for a specific percentage of these jobs.
2. Whole Foods should also work with credible community groups in the Hyde/Jackson area to set up and endow a community preservation fund for the purpose of keeping Hyde/Jackson area properties affordable for current residents. This will mean front-loading Whole Foods' typical neighborhood philanthropy, replacing its current strategy of rolling "5% days" and small donations to a variety of groups. The trouble with that existing strategy is that, not too long from now, Whole Foods' corporate giving in JP will be benefitting the future neighborhood that its presence will create—not the current neighbors who've worked so hard to make JP what it is today and who stand to be displaced. Endowing a fund that could buy available property in the Hyde/Jackson area with a commitment to keeping it affordable will require a serious financial commitment—no doubt. But Whole Foods' detrimental impact on the neighborhood in the *absence* of such an investment would be of a far greater magnitude.

If making commitments of this size is beyond Whole Foods' reach, the simplest way to protect the neighborhood would be for Whole Foods to break their lease on the Hyde Square space, or sublet it to another grocer specializing in Latino foods.

I make these proposals as an elected official who represents all of the JP community, and who is committed to stewarding its long-term interests. But I also make them as a JP resident who deeply loves this community—with all its blemishes, all its character, and all its complexities. As JPNC members, I know you share this passion for our community. I thank you again for your service in tackling these difficult issues and look forward to working with you to find solutions that reflect the pride, creativity, and mutual respect that are the fundamental values of our neighborhood.

Saludos,

Sonia Chang-Díaz  
State Senator  
Second Suffolk District

## **Appendix F: Letter from JPNDC May 23, 2011**



May 23, 2011

Dear JPNC Ad-Hoc Committee:

We are writing to share the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation's thoughts on a potential Community Benefit Agreement (CBA) with Whole Foods. Over the past few weeks our staff and board members have received numerous calls from Committee members asking for our opinion on priorities for the Jamaica Plain community, especially in areas in which we specialize (economic & workforce development, real estate, community organizing and leadership development). To make the process more efficient and transparent, we would like to provide our opinions in writing.

First, here is an update on what we've been working on over the past few months.

Our number one priority continues to be the re-employment of Hi-Lo's employees. Our Workforce Development Program Director, Karla Torrez, has worked closely with about one-third of the laid-off workers. This has resulted in seven workers being employed at existing Whole Foods stores and five people being referred to ESOL classes. Karla continues to work with the former workers as a cross-cultural job search agent, coach, and advocate.

We've also continued to pursue locating a Latin/Caribbean American grocery store in Hyde Square. We are negotiating a non-binding letter of intent with such a grocery store. We've begun reaching out to community stakeholders, including Hyde/Jackson Square merchants, residents, and abutters to the Blessed Sacrament campus, to inform them of this possibility. When we've signed a letter of intent with the prospective business tenant, and prior to signing a lease, we will hold a community meeting for JP residents to learn more about the store.

The following are some of our priorities for a community benefit agreement:

### **Local Employment**

- Offer employment to all former Hi-Lo workers who are interested in working at Whole Foods. Appropriate training should be made available in order for these employees to take on or earn promotion to positions equivalent to or higher than their former positions at Hi-Lo.
- Prioritize JP residents for jobs at the JP store. Employee demographics should reflect the racial/ethnic demographics of the Hyde/Jackson Square neighborhood.
- Develop training and employment opportunities for local youth.
- To maximize the hiring of JP residents, partner with a local organization to co-facilitate recruitment and hiring as well as post-hiring support as needed to promote job retention.

### **Support for Local Small Businesses**

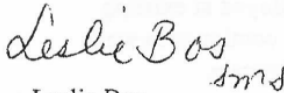
- There are many small food manufacturers in Jamaica Plain, including some whose products are carried in other Boston Whole Foods stores. Whole Foods should prioritize purchasing products made by these and other JP businesses.

### **Housing for Low-Income Residents**

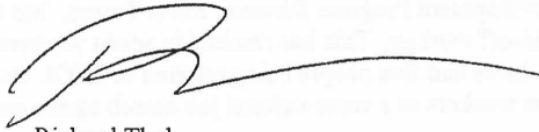
- It is our opinion that the cost of creating new housing or acquiring existing housing stock to preserve it as affordable is such that a financial contribution by Whole Foods would have little impact on overall housing affordability in Hyde/Jackson.
- We recommend that Whole Foods partner with the community by contributing resources toward foreclosure prevention work, anti-displacement research and organizing, and tenants' rights counseling. These efforts should focus on the Hyde/Jackson Square neighborhood.

The above areas are our areas of expertise and by no means do they represent a full list of important issues in the community. Many of our community partners are working on critically important issues and we hope they are also sharing their ideas and opinions with the Committee. We look forward to continuing to work with our partners, the JPNC, and JP residents and merchants to ensure that Jamaica Plain remains an equitable and healthy community.

Sincerely,



Leslie Bos  
President, Board of Directors



Richard Thal  
Executive Director

### **Appendix G: JPNC Inclusionary Zoning**

**On June 29, 2004 the following proposal was passed unanimously by the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council (JPNC.)**

The Housing and Development Committee of the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council was formed to assist the city in the disposition of city-owned land in Jamaica Plain. At that time both the Committee and the JPNC made affordable housing a priority for the use of that land. Now, most of that land has been developed and there are very few opportunities left to build affordable housing in JP.

To ensure that there are affordable housing options for Boston residents, inclusionary zoning was created. The current inclusionary zoning policy requires housing developers of 10 units or more to make 13% of the units affordable to households earning between 80% to 120% of the Boston Area Median Income (AMI). But, the median income in JP is approximately \$39,000 which is 50% of the Boston Area Median Income. There is also a pay-out option of \$50,000 per unit for developers who choose not to make their units affordable. Compared with other Inclusionary Zoning Programs in other cities, Boston's requirements are rather low. Many cities require higher percentages and most require the units to be affordable to those with lower incomes. (See the PolicyLink Report, "Expanding Housing Opportunity in Washington, DC; The Case for Inclusionary Zoning.")

The JPNC urges the City through the Boston Redevelopment Authority to amend the Mayor's Executive Order on affordable housing as it affects the Jamaica Plain Zoning District as follows:

- **All private developers of housing of 10 units or more will provide 25% of the units in their development as affordable to persons earning 80% or less of the area median income (AMI) with the average household income of all the affordable units being 65% of AMI.**
- **Require all affordable units to be constructed or reconstructed within the proposed development.**
- **Require all affordable units to remain affordable for 50 years.**
- **Accept no cash payments in lieu of providing the affordable units.**

Effective immediately, the JPNC will use the following process.

1. Any developer intending to develop 10 units or more in Jamaica Plain would be required to meet with the Housing and Development Committee to present their proposal to commit to providing 25% of the units in their development as affordable according to this policy. (The BRA has been requested to send notification of developments to the chair of the JPNC and the chairs of the Housing & Development Committee and the Zoning Committee.) Notice for these meeting will include advertisements in local papers, mailings to all property owners within 300 feet of the property and community groups and flyers to abutters. All notices will include the address of the property, be bilingual and give two weeks notice of the meetings. The meetings will be translated.

2. Approval of the Housing & Development Committee would be a prerequisite for the Boston Redevelopment Authority's recommendation of approval; if the proposed development requires either variance(s) from Article 55 of the Zoning Code or conditional use permit(s), approval of the Housing & Development Committee would be a prerequisite to the developer's appearance before the JPNC Zoning Committee.
3. The proposal would be brought to the full JPNC for final action before being sent to the BRA or ZBA respectively.



## **Appendix H: JPNC Transit-oriented Development**

### **Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council Guidelines for Equitable Transit Oriented Development for Jamaica Plain**

Adopted January 30, 2007; Revised September 18, 2007

Transit oriented development can address environmental, land use, and economic concerns in communities throughout the Commonwealth. It is a complex, challenging, and potentially rewarding development approach that links planning for affordable housing and transportation investment in ways that connect residents to economic and social opportunities. Because any development that revitalizes a town center or urban core can fuel gentrification, the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council has adopted a set of principles to guide transit oriented development in the neighborhood that energize communities without displacing the people who live there. The principles, developed with the local constituencies represented by Action!, serve as guidelines for local governments, regional authorities, the state, residents, and the nonprofits that represent them. Their participation is essential throughout the planning processes that result in new developments. If Massachusetts aligns its public policy to these equity principles, everyone can benefit from equitable transit oriented development. On January 30, 2007, the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council (JPNC) voted to adopt the following principles as guidelines for future transit oriented development in Jamaica Plain.

- **Ensure community benefit.** Because it taps public investment or regulatory relief, transit oriented development should provide measurable community benefit, including connections to productive employment opportunities, access to public amenities, increase in local affordable housing, affordable housing of sufficient size for families, and enrichment activities and services for area youth.
- **Maintain affordability/inclusionary zoning.** Any new development of 10 units or more will include affordable housing consistent with the JPNC's Inclusionary Zoning Proposal approved by the JPNC on June 29, 2004: At least 25% of all units in developments of 10 units or more will be affordable to persons earning 80% or less of the area median income (AMI) with the average household income limit of all affordable units being 65% of AMI. *In addition, any new development of 10 units or more on publicly-owned land or land sold by a public entity for the purposes of transit-oriented development will include affordable housing such that: the percentage of units affordable to those earning 80% AMI or less will be equal to the percentage of Jamaica Plain residents earning 80% AMI or less; or 50% of units will be affordable to persons earning 80% or less of the AMI, whichever number is greater. In either case, the average household income limit of all affordable units to be 65% of AMI.*
- **Prevent displacement.** Structure state and local regulations so that transit oriented development enables anyone who wants to remain in the community to do so.
- **Encourage community controlled housing.** Priority for state funding should be given to jurisdictions that are working to guarantee that at least 20 percent of housing units within one mile of a transit oriented development will be held in community control as a permanently affordable community asset.
- **Improve environmental quality.** Design projects that maximize environmental benefit, reduce automobile trips, measurably improve air quality, and reduce the incidence of health issues related to atmospheric pollution.
- **Promote environmental justice.** Prioritize equitable transit oriented development and improved public transit for environmental justice neighborhoods as designated by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs' Environmental Justice Policy.

- **Achieve full accessibility.** Any development that results from transit investment must be completely accessible to riders regardless of age or physical condition.
- **Boost transit use.** Prioritize transit oriented development that increases ridership both for urban and suburban communities that rely heavily on existing public transit and those that have a clear need for greater transit access.
- **Plan for transit growth.** Communities embarking on significant development projects must have fully integrated transit options built into their planning, including improved accessibility for riders with disabilities.
- **Encourage local economic development.** Land uses resulting from redevelopment near transit should encourage local economic development, effective private partnerships with the nonprofit and public sectors, enhance community-serving establishments, and discourage displacement of existing residents and small businesses.
- **Understand local context.** Transit oriented development must take into account regional variations in development patterns and transit modes in different regions of the state.

## **Appendix I: JPNC Healthy Housing Guidelines**

### **Healthy Home Building Guidelines for Developers and Contractors**

The following steps are strongly recommended:

#### **Control moisture to prevent mold growth**

1. Insulate all water piping. *This will reduce condensation.*
2. Do not put plumbing in exterior walls. *It is easier to detect and repair leaks in interior walls.*
3. Provide adequate storage space. *Storage in damp basements can lead to mold growth. If storage space is only available in the basement, provide shelving to keep items off the floor.*
4. Install hot water heaters and clothes washer in rooms with pans, drains and floor coverings that will not absorb water. Install shut-off valves for clothes washers and hot water heaters. *These precautions will minimize damage from leaks.*
5. Apply window and door pan flashing and corner patches over sheathing wrap or building paper at sill. *Flashing helps directs water away from wall cavities and to exterior.*
6. Ensure all exterior claddings and trim are backprimed. *Backpriming helps prevent wood clapboard from absorbing moisture and makes the sheathing wrap or building paper more effective.*
7. Install properly lapped sheathing wrap or building paper between the cladding and wall sheathing. *Sheathing wrap or building paper provides resistance to water that gets behind cladding, and it must be properly lapped to direct water away from the building.*
8. Do not use gypsum board with paper facing – of any color – in moisture prone areas such as bathrooms and basements. Instead use a board with fiberglass such as Duorock. *Most paper facings can support mold growth.*
9. Provide adequate drainage for the basement and grade site and install gutters/downspouts to move water away from the home. A vapor barrier with crushed stone and/or gravel should be placed under basement. Avoid construction below the water table as this will necessitate extensive water control and drainage measures. *Effective groundwater management is one of the most important factors in controlling moisture and humidity in the building. Basements are defined as spaces that have the potential to be occupied.*
10. DO NOT put living quarters, or permit occupancy in basements that do not have adequate drainage and water management and site grading. Foundation walls in occupied basements must be properly insulated (see below) *For healthy indoor environments it is critical that residents not be subject to the hazards of damp basements.*
11. Install continuous rigid insulation under concrete floor slabs or above concrete floor slabs coupled with a floating floor. Insulate the wall assemblies in wet areas with semi-vapor permeable foam (e.g., rigid foam). Foundation insulation should not include a vapor barrier. Do not use ceiling basement insulation. Instead, insulate basements at their perimeters. *This will minimize movement of moisture inside; allow moisture below grade to dry out; help keep space comfortable and reduces condensation. Note there is a discrepancy between how building inspectors enforce this section of the code and what the code requires. If there is a problem, please let us know.*
12. Install a capillary break on top of footing, between footing and perimeter foundation wall. *This helps minimize movement of moisture from the ground to building assemblies.*

13. Provide outlets for window air conditioners in bedrooms and living rooms, and outlets in basements for dehumidifiers. *Air conditioners will decrease the need for open windows and can reduce the indoor humidity level. Dehumidifiers in basements help with moisture control.*

#### **Manage dust**

14. Do not install carpet—except where required for safety purposes. Instead use a smooth, easy to clean surface such as wood or natural linoleum. *Carpets can trap dust and moisture and become a breeding ground for mold and dust mites.*
15. Maximize wipeable surfaces. Use semi-gloss paint that can withstand cleaning. Install wipeable window shades. *Smooth cleanable surfaces are easier to clean and will reduce the amount of dust in the home.*

#### **Ventilate home to keep it free of combustion products and toxins**

16. Provide continuous mechanical background ventilation (supply or exhaust) at a rate of 7.5 CFM per person plus 0.1 CFM per square feet of living space (as indicated in ASHRAE standard 62.2). This can be accomplished through a bathroom fan with proper timer or speed controls. *Mechanical background ventilation is essential to assure adequate fresh air and dilution of general indoor contaminants.*
17. Install low sone bath and kitchen fans (less than 2 sones) directly vented to the outdoors. In addition, provide exhaust venting to the outdoors for other moisture-generating appliances including dryers. *Point source exhaust is needed to remove moisture and harmful fumes from know sources such as cooking, washing and combustion appliances. (Building code requires dryers to be vented outdoors.)*
18. Paint walls with water based paints with low volatile organic compounds (VOC's) and complete all painting before occupants move in. *VOC's are harmful to health and should be minimized.*

#### **Additional recommendations:**

19. Keep bushes and trees at least 3 feet from the home. *Bushes and trees near a home provide food, a living place, and sheltered passage for pests such as mice, ants and roaches.*
20. Install a high efficiency heating system that does not use forced air distribution.
21. Install Energy Star qualified windows. *Energy efficient windows have lower condensation potential than less energy efficient windows.*
22. Reduce fossil fuel emissions by installing energy efficient HVAC equipment, lighting and appliances. *In addition to reducing energy costs, energy efficient equipment can help to reduce summer cooling loads.*
23. Install an electric oven/range instead of gas. If a gas range is installed, be sure to vent it to the outside. *This will reduce potential harmful nitrogen dioxide and carbon monoxide emissions.*
24. Install a walk off system at principal entrances by allowing space for a mat or shared lobby with space for a doormat. *2/3 of indoor dust is tracked in from the outside.*

### **Additional Green Changes**

1. **Adhere to Integrated Design Process.** Integrated design requires all the stakeholders – including community members - meet before the design schematics are made. By meeting, larger goals and principals are discussed to set building priorities (such as reduced energy use or no smoking) early. Long-term costs are considered in addition to short term project costs. Design are more likely to meet the needs of the builder and costly change orders avoided.
2. **Water conservation.** Conserve water through installing efficient and effective plumbing fixtures such as low flow toilets and low flow shower heads. Investigate methods of recycling rain water through rain barrels or green roofs.
3. **Conserve energy.** Create homes with energy efficient heating and cooling, lighting, Energy Star appliances and alternativeenergy sources in a tight building shell that has good insulation and ventilation.
4. **Reduce toxins.** Non-toxic and recycled, regional materials
5. **Promote strong communities.** Careful site location that promotes healthy behaviors, open space, public transportation, walking, biking and community involvement

## **Appendix J: JP Bucks Program Proposal**

### **BUYLOCAL J.P. BUCKS – PROGRAM PROPOSAL**

#### **I. Purpose**

The purpose of the Buylocal J.P. money is threefold.

- To infuse much needed money into the local economy, and particularly assist locally-owned retail food businesses, especially in light of an international chain supermarket moving in.

- To assist low income residents in accessing healthy food. Increasing housing costs and skyrocketing commodity food prices make the cost of living unaffordable for many in Jamaica Plain. This program is designed to assist low income residents in the area to get by.

- To encourage area residents to shop locally for healthy food and open a dialogue with local shop keepers on what products they could stock for their neighbors. By working within many local groups and organizations for distribution and execution, the intent is to give the community a voice in the control of its own food supply.

#### **II. Background**

The Food Trust's March 2011 study, "Food For Every Child..." illustrates that Hyde/Jackson Square is a neighborhood which is "Low Income and High Sales" in regards to supermarkets, at least during the time that Hi Lo Market was operating. The study shows parallels between the presence of supermarkets and the accessibility of low-income residents to healthy food. This same report shows data the most of the rest of Jamaica Plain is a 'High Income and Low Sales', which perhaps is a better fit with Whole Foods' traditionally high-end clientele. By entering into a long-term lease with Knapp Provisions, Whole Foods is poised to transform an area (Hyde/Jackson) whose lower-income residents once had above-average access to affordable and healthy food into an area in which affordable and healthy choices are severely limited. This forecasted impact on the community calls for a variety of responses, but particularly solutions that address the availability of affordable and healthy food to the lower-income residents of Jamaica Plain.

#### **III. Program Outline**

##### **A. Costs of Operation**

1. \$10,000 per month to fund, to be paid by Whole Foods Supermarket every month for five years. After five years, Whole Foods and the Program Board will decide whether the Program is meeting important community needs and whether it should be continued. The Board may at that time elect to seek outside funds to continue the project if need be.

2. Whole Foods will also be responsible for program costs – primarily, printing of Buylocal J.P. Bucks or creation of magnetic-swipe voucher cards

3. Whole Foods will pay for all program staff – at a minimum, one full-time staff person to be hired by the Program Board of Directors.

##### **B. Operations**

Buylocal J.P. money Board of Directors will be 5 people (JP residents?) appointed by JPNC to a one-year term who will be chosen based on their representation of the best interest of Jamaica Plain. No Director may be currently or at any time employed by Whole Foods Markets. Whole Foods Markets may also appoint a non-voting observer or liaison to the Board, whose role will be limited to consultation and communication between the Board and Whole Foods Markets.

In the discretion of the Board, Buylocal J.P. Bucks will be distributed to clinics and non-profit groups in Jamaica Plain ("Buylocal Partners") that work with lower-income individuals and are in a position to identify individuals and families who would benefit from the nutrition and food-subsidy aspects of the Program.

-- Buylocal Partners will be entrusted to distribute Buylocal JP Bucks to individuals and families who, in the sound judgment of doctors or other employees of the Buylocal Partner are low income and would benefit from the nutrition and food-subsidy aspects of the program.

-- Buylocal J.P. Bucks will be redeemable ONLY at locally owned J.P. retail food businesses -- Bodegas, groceries, butcher shops, fruit stands, farmer's markets ("Buylocal Redeemers"). Restaurants, cafes, pizza shops etc... will not be eligible to participate in the program, nor will businesses that are not locally owned, such as chain stores. Eligible businesses opening in Jamaica Plain may be added to the list of approved Buylocal Redeemers in the discretion of the Board.

--Buylocal JP Bucks will be redeemable by dollar-for-dollar through the Program by Buylocal Redeemers. The logistics for Buylocal Redeemers to redeem their Buylocal JP Bucks will be set up by the Program staff in consultation with the Board, but at any rate such redemptions will take place no less than weekly.

-- Buylocal J.P. Bucks will not be transferable or redeemable for cash (except by a Buylocal Redeemer in accordance with Program guidelines), and any transaction in Buylocal JP Bucks cannot be offset or converted into cash. If a customer purchases \$8 worth of food and pays with \$10 in Buylocal J.P. money, change may only be paid in Buylocal JP Bucks or store credit, not in cash. -- Buylocal J.P. Bucks may be accepted by Buylocal Redeemers ONLY for fresh produce, dairy products, raw/frozen meat, grains & cereals, and canned fruits and vegetables.

-- The Program will ensure that Buylocal Partners are aware of (and advise users of Buylocal JP Bucks) of the names and locations of Buylocal Redeemers-- Local shops that accept Buylocal J.P. Bucks will clearly post the Buylocal J.P. money logo on the front door and in plain view of the public. --There is no fee to participate in this program.

-- The Program Board may, in its sole discretion, remove any local business from the approved list of Buylocal Redeemers and any individual or organization from the approved list of Buylocal Partners.

--Staff and Board will work on engaging local organizations to engage in training, education, signage, and other programs to encourage local shops to meet demands of an evolving community.

--Office Supplies and any other materials needed to implement the Buylocal JP Bucks should be purchased from local shops whenever possible.

Program staff, under guidance and direction of the Board, will create and maintain:

- Accounting system to monitor use of Buylocal J.P. money, and store participation
- Effective signage for participating shops
- relationships with participating shops, partner neighborhood groups and organizations, and clinics-etc who are distributing the Buylocal J.P. money
- how many Buylocal JP Bucks to distribute to Buylocal Partners.
  
- Basic website with info, map, locations etc...
- Tracking the effectiveness and efficiency of the Program.
- Whole Foods logo or advertising slogans or any other marketing or advertising are forbidden on any of the Buylocal J.P. money, maps, signage, website.
- Buylocal J.P. Bucks will expire one year from the day they are given by a Buylocal Partner to a Program user/consumer. The expiration date will be clearly indicated.
- At the termination of the Program, all Buylocal J.P. Bucks will be void.
- Buylocal J.P. Bucks may be used by anyone to whom they have been given by a Buylocal Partner, regardless of residence, though Partners will be encouraged to use the Program to serve JP residents and persons who work in Jamaica Plain.
- Buylocal Partners will expressly NOT be required to conduct any particular inquiry or complete any qualification process whatsoever in order to determine that an individual is "low-income" and therefore eligible to receive Buylocal JP Bucks. Distribution of Buylocal JP Bucks by Buylocal Partners will be at the Partners sole discretion, subject to the Board's authority to remove any Partner that does not adhere to Program objectives and guidelines. Furthermore, no Buylocal Partner will be permitted to create any bureaucratic or other process for distribution of Buylocal JP Bucks that is overly time-consuming, confusing, or degrading to Program users/consumers.



## **Appendix K: Sample Youth Training and Development**

### **Financial Education**

The threat of displacement as a result of Whole Foods' potential impact on property values and rents in JP has surfaced concerns about the lack of financial literacy in our community, especially among our young people who will one day become renters and/or homeowners in JP or elsewhere. Financial education must be a key piece of any effort to understand and prevent the involuntary displacement of low- and moderate-income residents, disproportionately people of color in JP, and it is closely aligned with many of the other strategies that are noted in this report:

- To help more of our residents increase their income and assets and reduce their vulnerability to displacement, many need information on how to identify and get support for the education and training programs (including English for Speakers of Other Languages classes) that are available to help them advance to a family-supporting career.
- As more of our renters seek to become homeowners (a key strategy to promote neighborhood stabilization and reduce displacement), they must have a keen knowledge of how to prepare themselves for homeownership and make informed decisions about mortgage products and other home-buying issues and resources.
- Current and potential entrepreneurs need a clear understanding of how their personal, financial well-being impacts their ability to effectively launch and sustain a local business that can provide needed products and services in our community.

Whole Foods should support educational/training programs that help to broaden the capacity of community members, especially those from low- and moderate-income families, to effectively build their assets. It should fund programs that, over time, provide these residents with the information, resources, supports, and connections to financial products and services that will improve their financial and general well-being.

Therefore, we recommend the following:

- Whole Foods should make significant annual contributions in this area of financial literacy to benefit JP residents.
- Whole Foods' investments should help organizations who do or are interested in doing this work to create and strengthen financial education programs that address the above goals of building capacity and that align with other community benefits strategies. This training would address topics such as managing debt and credit,

- getting a loan and avoiding predatory lending, planning for education, saving and investing, homeownership, entrepreneurship, and planning for retirement.
- An explicit focus of these education and training resources should be on the financial literacy and well-being of young people, especially JP's middle- and high-school aged students.
  - A variety of organizations should have access to these resources to offer financial literacy programs, including local schools (and after school programs), libraries, community centers, and other organizations.

We believe that these strategies to support increased financial literacy in JP can help to move more residents out of poverty and to better position more low- and moderate-income families to become property owners, entrepreneurs, workers, and ultimately, more informed customers and contributors to our neighborhood and regional economy.

**Appendix L: Letter from Whole Foods February 14, 2011**

Dear Residents of Jamaica Plain,

We are very pleased to be opening a Whole Foods Market on Centre Street. We have met with city officials and followed the media coverage so we understand that while many of you are excited that we're coming to JP, there are also a number of concerns and questions. As the regional president of Whole Foods Market, I want to take this opportunity to have what will be the first of many communications that I hope will serve to clarify several issues and ease your concerns.

HERE'S WHAT HAPPENED: When we learned that the aging ownership at Knapp Foods was closing Hi-Lo Foods and making the lease available, we jumped at the chance to be a part of such a diverse, neighborhood with a passion for great food. Prior to signing the lease, however, the news was leaked to the media, along with a lot of false information. We were enormously disappointed that you were not informed in a more respectful and organized manner. Ideally, we would have had the opportunity to communicate with city and neighborhood officials prior to our announcement, as is our standard policy.

Our design plans will begin when we gain access to the building in late March. While the interior requires extensive renovations, we have absolutely no plans to change the structure of the building or the exterior features that are so important to the community — the mural, the awning and the clock – will all remain intact.

HI-LO STAFF: We understand and appreciate your concerns for the future of Hi-Lo's staff. We have already hired several Hi-Lo employees in our stores, and we are working with the local

unemployment office to make sure that the remaining employees know that Whole Foods Market is guaranteeing them priority interviews at any of our store locations and facilities.

**NEW HIRING:** Once renovations are underway and we have an opening date set, we will be holding job screenings at the store location that will be open to the public, as is our standard practice. We plan to hire around 100 Team Members---approximately 70 percent of those positions will be full-time with benefits.

**PRODUCT OFFERINGS:** We believe that everyone has the right to have access to affordable, high quality, clean food free of artificial ingredients and additives. This includes carrying a wide variety of Latino products. As with all of our stores, we will carry products that cater to the diverse demands of the community. If shoppers express interest in a product and it meets our quality standards, we will carry it.

**YOUR COMMUNITY MARKET:** Being a community partner is a responsibility we take very seriously. We are eager to show our support and commitment to the wonderful organizations that make up the fabric of the JP neighborhood. As a company we give 5 percent back to our local communities through non-profit organizations and community and education groups.

When we solidify our plan for the store, we will host community meetings to answer all of your questions. Please know that our intentions are to be productive and positive members of the JP community and to provide you with high quality food and exceptional customer service at great value. We understand that we will only be able to prove our commitment to you with our actions.

Sincerely,

Laura Derba

President – North Atlantic Region