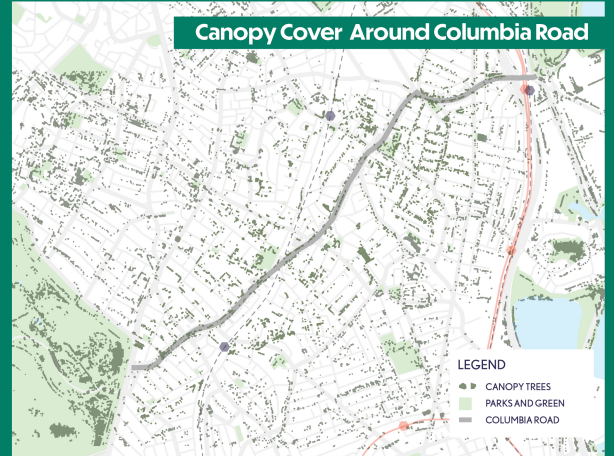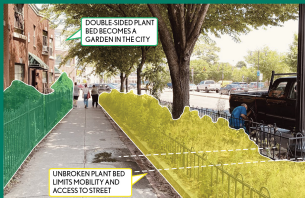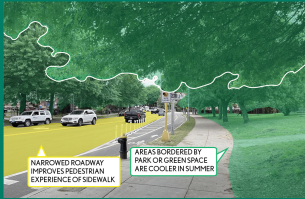# Ecology and Greening

The trees along Columbia Road are part of Boston's urban forest. Where there are more trees, temperatures are lower, creating healthier environments in which to move and gather. Green streets need maintenance so the landscape feels cared for and safe.
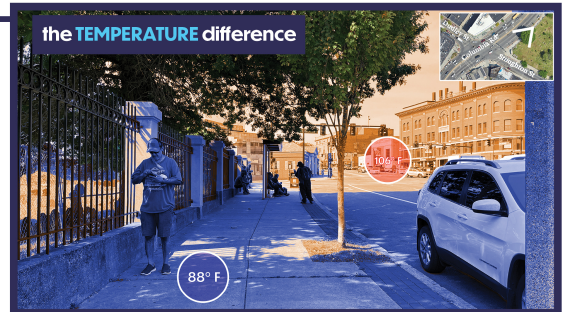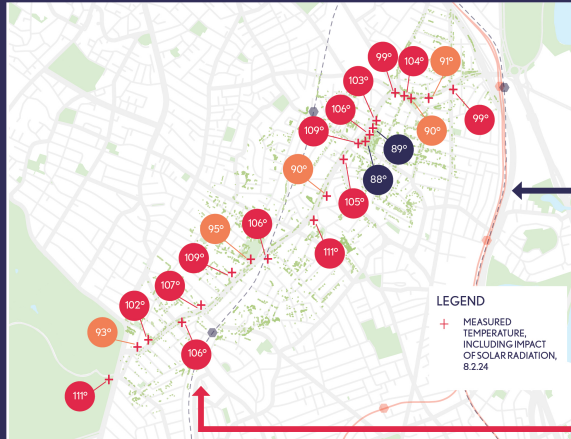
Columbia Road
TRANSPORTATION ACTION PLAN

Part of the Urban Forest

TREES have a profound effect on how hot our cities feel. Planted areas also REDUCE urban RUNOFF and localized FLOODING.

NARROWED ROADWAY IMPROVES PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE OF SIDEWALK

AREAS BORDERED BY PARK OR GREEN SPACE ARE COOLER IN SUMMER

OPPORTUNITY FOR TREES IN FRONT YARDS TO IMPROVE COOLING ON SIDEWALK

LARGE TREE PIT ALLOWS FOR LARGER STREET TREES AT MATURITY

DOUBLE-SIDED PLANT BED BECOMES A GARDEN IN THE CITY

UNBROKEN PLANT BED LIMITS MOBILITY AND ACCESS TO STREET

BROAD SIDEWALK WITH SETBACK BUILDING FEELS EXPOSED

LACK OF TREES CONTRIBUTE TO HEAT AND EXPOSURE ON SIDEWALK

ABANDONED TREE PIT IS NEGLECTED RESOURCE AND TRIP HAZARD

Canopy Cover Around Columbia Road

LEGEND
- CANOPY TREES
- PARKS AND GREEN
- COLUMBIA ROAD

Heat Mapping

The Ambient Temperature in Locations of Sun and Shade

LEGEND
+ MEASURED TEMPERATURE, INCLUDING IMPACT OF SOLAR RADIATION, 8.2.24

Temperatures shown: 99°, 104°, 91°, 103°, 106°, 90°, 99°, 109°, 89°, 90°, 88°, 105°, 95°, 106°, 111°, 109°, 107°, 102°, 93°, 106°, 111°

the TEMPERATURE difference

88° F

106°

the TEMPERATURE difference

92° F

106°

More SHADE means more cooling, increasing COMFORT and leading to BETTER HEALTH outcomes for residents.

Gathering and Community Use

When traveling down Columbia Road, you experience many different kinds of activity. Many different building types and uses influence the speed of traffic, the flow of pedestrians, and the level of activity. The corridor also transforms depending on the time of day or day of the week.
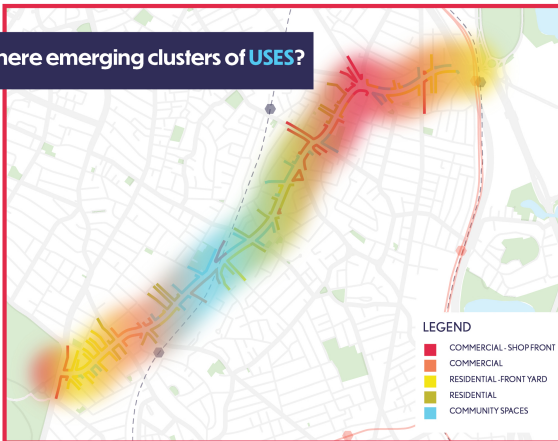
B

Columbia Road
TRANSPORTATION ACTION PLAN

What are some examples of GATHERING?

The presence of shade and informal seating invite lingering.

Active store fronts create hot spots of activity.
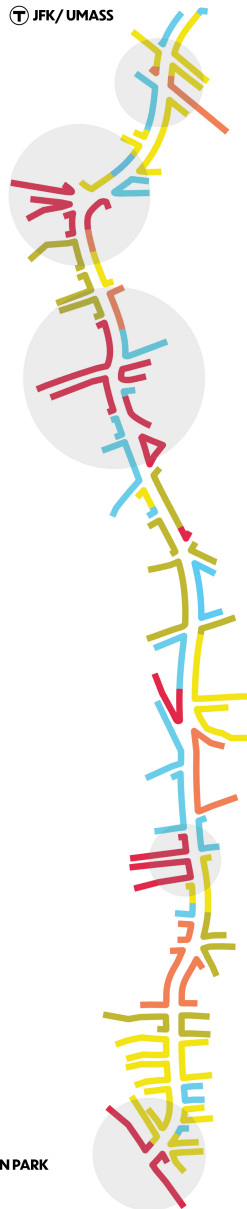
What are we SEEING and FEELING?

LEGEND
- COMMERCIAL - SHOP FRONT
- COMMERCIAL
- RESIDENTIAL - FRONT YARD
- RESIDENTIAL
- COMMUNITY SPACES

Are there emerging clusters of USES?

LEGEND
- COMMERCIAL - SHOP FRONT
- COMMERCIAL
- RESIDENTIAL - FRONT YARD
- RESIDENTIAL
- COMMUNITY SPACES

Contact Us
columbiaroad@boston.gov
(617) 635-1705
boston.gov/columbia-road

SCAN TO SIGN UP
FOR UPDATES

Where are these uses happening along COLUMBIA ROAD?

Ⓣ JFK / UMASS

FRANKLIN PARK

commercial

STOREFRONTS CONNECT TO PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY

TREES PROVIDE SHADE FOR SIDEWALKS AND PARKING

STREET PARKING IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO LOCAL BUSINESSES

community spaces

BROAD SIDEWALK AT CORNER ALLOWS FOR INFORMAL OR ORGANIZED GATHERING

PLANT BEDS BUFFER TRAFFIC BUT WHO MAINTAINS THEM?

multi-use

6 LANES (TRAVEL, TURNING + PARKING) MAKES CROSSING ROADWAY DIFFICULT

PARKING AT CURB CAN PROVIDE BUFFER FROM TRAFFIC

INFORMAL SEATING IS WELCOME ALONG STRETCHES OF RESIDENTIAL STREET FRONTAGE

residential

CLUSTER OF TREES IN FRONT YARD AND CLOSE TO SIDEWALK COOL PUBLIC REALM

SHADE AND SEATING FROM BUS STOP SHELTER

LOW WALL OFFERS INFORMAL SEATING AREA

SIDEWALK SHADE PROVIDED BY TREES IN FRONT YARDS

Safety and Well-being

Feelings of safety and comfort are vital to healthy and vibrant communities. Where spaces along Columbia Road feel too cut off, dark, or invisible, they can feel unsafe. Uneven sidewalks and obstacles in pathways can inhibit movement. Areas of vegetation and defined pathways, can buffer traffic speeds and noise, create spaces to gather, and transform the experience of being on the sidewalk.

Columbia Road
TRANSPORTATION ACTION PLAN

1

TRASH CAN IN LESS VISIBLE AND FUNCTIONAL POSITION, AWAY FROM CORNER

PROTECTED BIKE LANE HELPS PREVENT CAR-CYCLISTS CONFLICTS AND ACCIDENTS

2

MATURE STREET TREES CAST SIGNIFICANT SHADE

TRAFFIC SIGNAL BOX IN THE MIDDLE OF SIDEWALKS IS AN OBSTRUCTION TO PASSAGE

3

STREET LIGHTS PROVIDE SAFETY FOR VEHICLES AND COMFORT FOR PEDESTRIANS AT NIGHT

WALL HOLDS BACK HILL ABOVE AND OFFERS A UNIQUE BACKDROP AT SIDEWALK

T JFK/ UMASS

FRANKLIN PARK

the SAFETY focus zones

COLUMBIA ROAD

LEGEND
- ACTIVITY ZONES
- SAFETY FOCUS ZONES

4

OVERPASS PROVIDES SHADE AND SHELTER

WALL IS OPPORTUNITY FOR ART OR IDENTITY SIGNAGE

COVERED SIDEWALK MAY FEEL DARK AND UNSEEN AT NIGHT

5

OVERPASS PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY FOR IDENTITY OR SIGNAGE

EXPANSIVE SIDEWALK ALLOWS FOR GROUP GATHERING, PERCEIVED COMFORT VARIES DAY TO NIGHT

6

IMPROVISED SEATING OUTSIDE OF BUSINESSES ACTIVATES THE SIDEWALK

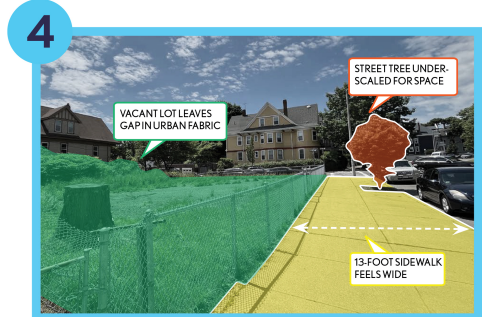EMPTY TREE PITS ARE A TRIP HAZARD, BUT ALSO AN OPPORTUNITY FOR NEW PLANTING

Spatial Structure

The perceived width of Columbia Road changes along its length — sometimes through narrow pinch points where buildings are close to the sidewalk, sometimes a wider corridor with parks and yards on either side. The changes animate its character and are a product of a history of changing patterns of industry, development, infrastructure, and traffic planning.

Columbia Road
TRANSPORTATION ACTION PLAN
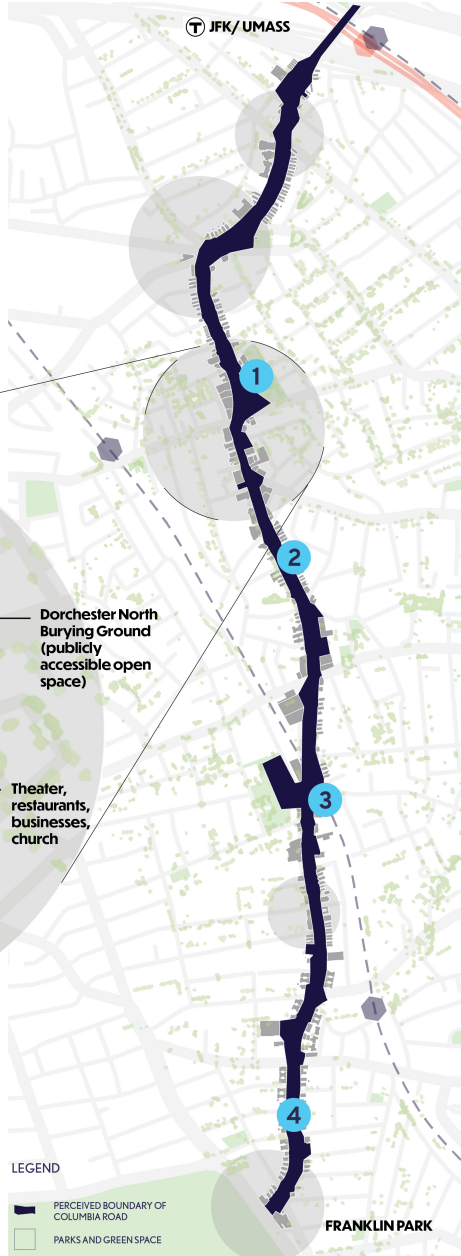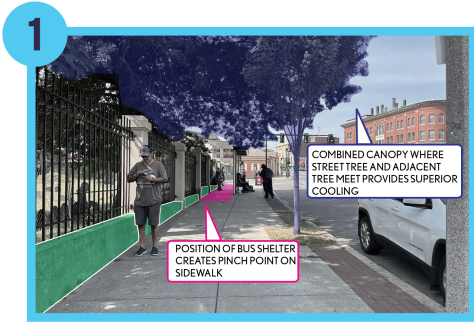
Where do USE and SPACE overlap to contribute to the life of the street?

Building setbacks and adjacent open spaces create different conditions.

1

COMBINED CANOPY WHERE STREET TREE AND ADJACENT TREE MEET PROVIDES SUPERIOR COOLING

POSITION OF BUS SHELTER CREATES PINCH POINT ON SIDEWALK

JFK/UMASS

Residential

Retail, restaurants, youth organization

Dorchester North Burying Ground (publicly accessible open space)

Theater, restaurants, businesses, church

Residential

2

BROAD ROADWAY AT NODES FEELS IMPASSABLE

DEEP SETBACKS, TREES, AND ADJACENT OPEN SPACES MAKE PUBLIC REALM FEEL LARGER

3

OVERPASS PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY FOR IDENTITY OR SIGNAGE

EXPANSIVE SIDEWALK ALLOWS FOR GROUP GATHERING, PERCEIVED COMFORT VARIES DAY TO NIGHT

4

VACANT LOT LEAVES GAP IN URBAN FABRIC

STREET TREE UNDER-SCALED FOR SPACE

13-FOOT SIDEWALK FEELS WIDE

FRANKLIN PARK

LEGEND

PERCEIVED BOUNDARY OF COLUMBIA ROAD

PARKS AND GREEN SPACE