

Hyde Park's Written Report:

Hyde Park stands true to its nickname as a small town in a big city since it is made up of mostly suburban areas alongside a few urban centers. One of its most notable slogans; “it is a place for families,” stands true as Hyde Park is home to people from a range of various racial and ethnic backgrounds. This helps to explain why Hyde Park is a well forested neighborhood with numerous parks and recreational areas for activities such as tennis, hiking, and golf. When compared to areas that are closer to the inner-city landscape, Hyde Park is doing much better in terms of its urban environment. However, this does not necessarily mean that we do not have room to improve and grow. Not only should we at a minimum help to maintain, replace, and add new trees onto properties, but strive to support environmental organizations as well. With community’s help, these groups will aid in elevating Hyde Park’s green spaces, while lessening both the health and environmental impacts of having a lack of urban tree canopy. We need to give the community and its residents a reason to care and pay attention to the trees around them. One way we can achieve this is by allowing people to observe how a neighborhood’s tree canopy can correlate to population factors such as income and racial backgrounds. The BLM movement and coronavirus pandemic are also major issues currently impacting the Hyde Park community. In this report, we aim to connect the community to these topics so that the residents of Hyde Park can become more involved and informed about the environmental issues in their neighborhood.

- Hyde Park's Past:

Hyde Park was developed from the farms and open lands along the Neponset River during the 1850's. Its suburban and industrial growth began as the Boston and Providence Railroad made the area accessible to city dwellers who were looking for affordable housing. Today, Hyde Park continues to be a primarily residential neighborhood with local shopping districts, a manufacturing area in the Readville section, and green spaces such as the Stony Brook Reservation. Hyde Park was also home to the 54th regiment, which was significant as it was the first group of African-American troops to serve in the army. The training of the regiment was held at Camp Meigs (located below), which was surrounded by plenty of trees and other



green spaces during that time. This green space provided various benefits such as providing much cleaner air and shade to reduce surface temperatures. Hyde Park's history of advocacy is prevalent to this day as African-Americans continue to fight for recognition and justice. Throughout

the 1890's, Hyde Park also saw the development of many of its other green spaces. For instance, the Metropolitan Park Commission, now the MDC, opened a green space known today as the

Stony Brook Reservation. The Stony Brook Reservation incorporated a popular golf course as well as the regionally famous Readville Trotting Park to the public. During this time, the Hyde Park and Fairmount Society for Mutual Improvement not only helped to provide these green
Reservation)

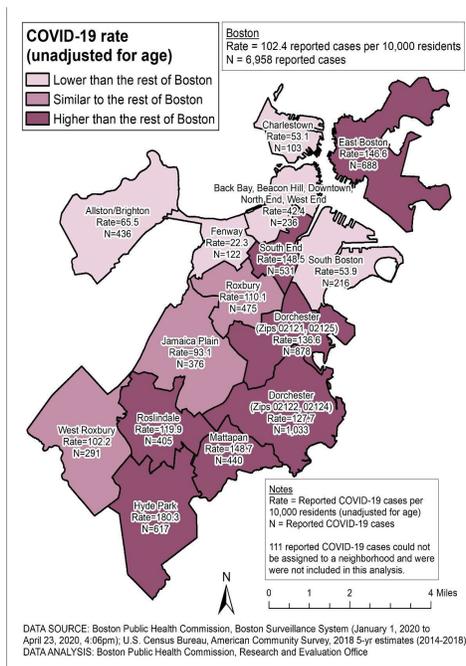


(Small pond within Stony Brook

spaces, but maintained them as well. During its existence, trees were placed upon both sides of Fairmount avenue; many of these trees remain to the present day. Although Hyde Park was founded as a primarily residential community, there was also a history of manufacturing in the neighborhood. This relates back to the income-status of the residents and how wealthier neighborhoods are more likely to have more trees. Hyde Park's development throughout the years has led to what we see Hyde Park as today, green spaces such as the Neponset River, the municipal George Wright Golf Course, and the Stony Brook Reservation.

- Hyde Park's Present:

Presently, Hyde Park is heavily connected to the Black Lives Matter(BLM) movement and the coronavirus outbreak. Hyde Park is one of the many predominantly black/Latinx neighborhoods



that was hit hardest by the pandemic in Boston, along with Dorchester, Mattapan, and East Boston. This can be seen in the map to the left, with the areas with the highest rates being shaded dark purple. Hyde Park has a total of six hundred thirty-seven reported cases which is more than two times the amount of cases as our neighbor West Roxbury (with a total of two hundred ninety-one). Additionally, the BLM movement is especially important in Hyde Park because it has a 49.9% African American population which can be seen visually through the dramatic spike of BLM signs popping up in the neighborhood over the last month.

We know that both the BLM movement and the coronavirus outbreak are connected to environmental injustice. Raquel Jimenez, Boston University researcher, created maps conveying

the race, population/tree density, and income(seen below) to be used in our reports. Through these maps, I found that African Americans tend to live in neighborhoods that are densely populated and low income like Readville and along Hyde Park Ave. Consequently, these areas have higher rates of air pollution and heat island effects because of the lack of tree canopy than compared to low density and higher-income areas which typically are majority white. This causes higher rates of asthma and heat stroke which kills three times as many African Americans than it does White Americans. This environmental racism can also be seen through the 2020 pandemic. African Americans are 4 times more likely to die from coronavirus than White Americans. Due to the fact that they tend to work as essential workers and can't afford to take time off nor do they work jobs that can be done from home. Environmental Racism is a huge injustice occurring in the African American community and should be addressed in the BLM movement just like mass incarceration and the killing of African Americans.

- Hyde Park's Future:

We want the future of our community to finally be equitable. Everybody in Hyde park can not only help our own ecosystem, but we can also make sure that things like the black lives matter movement do not need to exist. In the future, we hope that the city of Boston will embrace systematic changes around community health and environmental justice that will allow communities like Hyde Park to function effectively during a crisis.

Hyde Park has the potential to thrive if we improve the environment and urban spaces in the neighborhood. We will not only make Hyde park more eco-friendly by using more space for actual plant life, but by also getting rid of any kind of building or random area that isn't serving a substantial purpose. Informing local residents and other people like city planners about the benefits of trees will also help to support this goal. Along with the community, we can make sure that anybody can contribute to planting either trees or other plant life. As a result of lower

temperatures from the abundance of tree canopies, anyone can work just as effectively as somebody else. This means that not all black essential workers have to do everything in their respective jobs and careers. We want to see a future where we can all at least have respect for one another and come together as a community to care for our urban green spaces.



(Plans within the Readville Campus)



(Aerial View of Hyde Park Currently)

Sources:

- https://www.cityofboston.gov/Images_Documents/Hyde_Park_brochure_tcm3-19119.pdf
- https://archive.org/stream/hydeparkhistoric03hyde/hydeparkhistoric03hyde_djvu.txt
- <https://www.hydeparkhistoricalsociety.org/founding/>
- <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-04-09/a-new-study-in-plos-one-shows-strong-correlation-between-urban-tree-canopy-cover-and-income-level>