

Summary:

For the neighborhood of Roslindale our narrative focuses on the issue of the tension between developers who want to replace trees with buildings and residents who want to keep the trees.

Roslindale was founded as the "garden suburb" of Boston. It is a quaint community and parks were it's calling card, never boasting the bustling urban feel of neighboring communities. Roslindale has held onto lush and green suburban features that have mostly survived shifting tides in the greater Boston area. The most significant of which is the Arnold Arboretum.

Presently, Roslindale is one of the few neighborhoods in Boston with enough trees to lower summer temperatures and reduce air pollution well enough to provide health benefits to its residents. Data from the summer of 2019 proves trees significantly decrease temperatures in Roslindale, which not only save the residents money, but clean the air all year long. If residents are able to understand the value of trees, we will be able to defend against developers who currently want to knock them down and replace them with apartments or new buildings.

In the future we hope that Roslindale will be filled with greenery. There will be more street trees, community gardens, and greenery on private property. To keep neighborhood green-spaces at their best, we want to see an increase of maintenance in existing green-spaces, such as public gardens and parks. With an increase in vegetation, Roslindale's temperatures will continue to decrease and so will its air pollution, which will hopefully promote the perseverance of its trees.

This report focuses on the past, present, and future of Roslindale by analyzing maps, interviewing residents, taking pictures and videos, and collecting information from an online survey. By analyzing old and new maps we were able to learn how Roslindale may have looked like with redlining and how it looks and feels like now through looking at its current tree coverage. From our online survey and interviews, we learned about how current residents feel about the tree canopy in their neighborhood and potentially how we could improve the neighborhood for the future by combining that with pictures and videos. Through our project, we want to inform people about Roslindale's greenery and preserve the trees in the neighborhood.

Past:

Roslindale is less than 10 miles southwest of Downtown Boston, but it has an entirely different energy than the city. The neighborhood, nicknamed the “garden suburb,” was annexed into Boston in 1873, after having seceded from Roxbury two decades earlier. The name “Roslindale” came somewhat on a whim because the lush hills reminded one resident of a green, hilly Scottish town called Roslin. Large green spaces like the Arnold Arboretum, Healy Field, and Fallon Field anchor Roslindale’s geography, staying true to the neighborhood’s nickname.

As Boston has grown, the number of people seeking refuge in suburban spaces has grown too, and people fleeing the bustle of the city historically find a safe haven in Roslindale. Roslindale greets residents with more space, and with more space residents meet trees and green areas that facilitate healthy lifestyles and greater community engagement. Old pictures of Roslindale Village are full of trees, silhouetting skylines like a background or looming over cars driving down South Street. But these trees have, at times, been taken for granted. Roslindale’s development as a suburban center meant clearing trees and green spaces for buildings. This aerial image of Roslindale in 1925 shows a neighborhood where the trees hide the houses, now, while the number of trees is still impressive, houses often dwarf the trees.



In spite of all this change, Roslindale holds tight to an image as a diverse community where people have ample green space to come together, where they have Roslindale Village to enjoy each other’s company and marvel at what development does, and where they have the Arnold Arboretum to truly consider what benefits their trees have for them. Without these things, Roslindale isn’t “the garden suburb,” it is just another suburb of Boston.

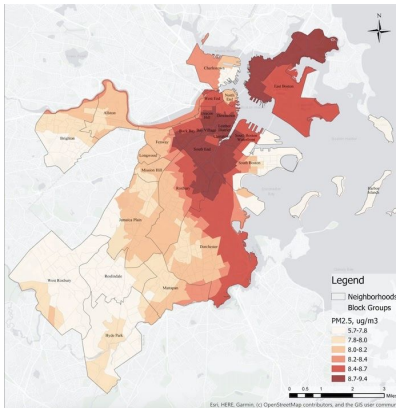
Present:

Currently, Roslindale is one of the few neighborhoods in Boston with extensive tree coverage. Sadly, not many neighborhoods in the Boston area have been able to reap the benefits of the many things that trees can provide for a community. This is due to the lack of knowledge of the positive effects of trees on the environment and the lives of residents. Environmentalism is something rarely prioritized, and every community should strive to educate each other on this important matter. Trees make a big difference for the health and beauty of any neighborhood, but they can be difficult to maintain without the involvement of community members who are willing to care for them. A little more than a decade ago, Urban Ecology Institute (a volunteer group) did an inventory of all the street trees in Boston. Surprisingly, in Roslindale, the amount of trees (especially street trees) has slowly declined in recent years. Being able to convince residents to maintain trees is, of course, a challenge for those who do not see how a lack of trees could negatively affect their health. The issue of trees being removed in Roslindale is partially to blame on developers who may target Roslindale due to its growing home value and its large tree canopy is at risk of being cut down for the sole purpose of developing new apartments/buildings. Although developers may be required to replace trees they have cut down, a big tree replaced by a small one takes decades to provide as many benefits as the big tree— assuming the small tree survives its urban environment. If residents are able to understand the value of trees and see how it could improve their life or the lives of future generations, we will be able to defend against developers who currently want to knock them down, potentially risking our health as climate change worsens.

Future:

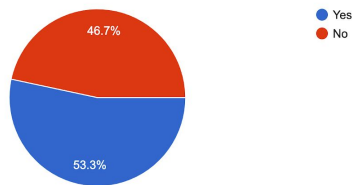
Over the course of time, we hope to see Roslindale steadily improve upon key issues, creating a bright future for the community and its residents. We would like to see areas both public and private lined with greenery, increasing not only the neighborhood's tree coverage, but also the important health benefits to every resident in Roslindale.

A major health benefit of trees is improved air quality. As a result of Roslindale's continued growth in green-space following its "garden suburb" nickname, it is a neighborhood with exceptional air quality compared to other Boston areas, at roughly 5.7-7.8 ug/m3. This means it is even more important that the trees already present in Roslindale are preserved. By increasing the tree coverage in Roslindale, we will be bettering its air quality even further than what it is now. If trees continue to be removed or not properly maintained, benefits like this one will continue to be threatened, hurting the health of Roslindale's residents.



Through an online survey, we learned that almost 50% of participants do not have trees on their street. This is a big issue because that means almost 50% of people are missing out on greater benefits. In addition, 100% of participants stated that they care about trees, so it is important that their opinions are a part of their community.

Are there trees on the street you live on?
15 responses



When developers enter a neighborhood they're required to meet with the community through the Boston Planning Department. However, even if they put more trees and green-space into their

plans they're often not maintained. The City's 311 services have proven to be very helpful when it comes to maintenance and planting new trees. In the future, we hope that when developers finish their projects that the greenery put in place is maintained. Residents and people of the Roslindale community can start helping today by planting things on their own property or calling the 311 hotline to request services.

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