



**MAY 6-8**

**BIRMINGHAM**  
**ALABAMA**

# MAIN STREET 2024 *Now*





**MAIN  
STREET**  
2024  
*Now*

# Start with Stakeholders

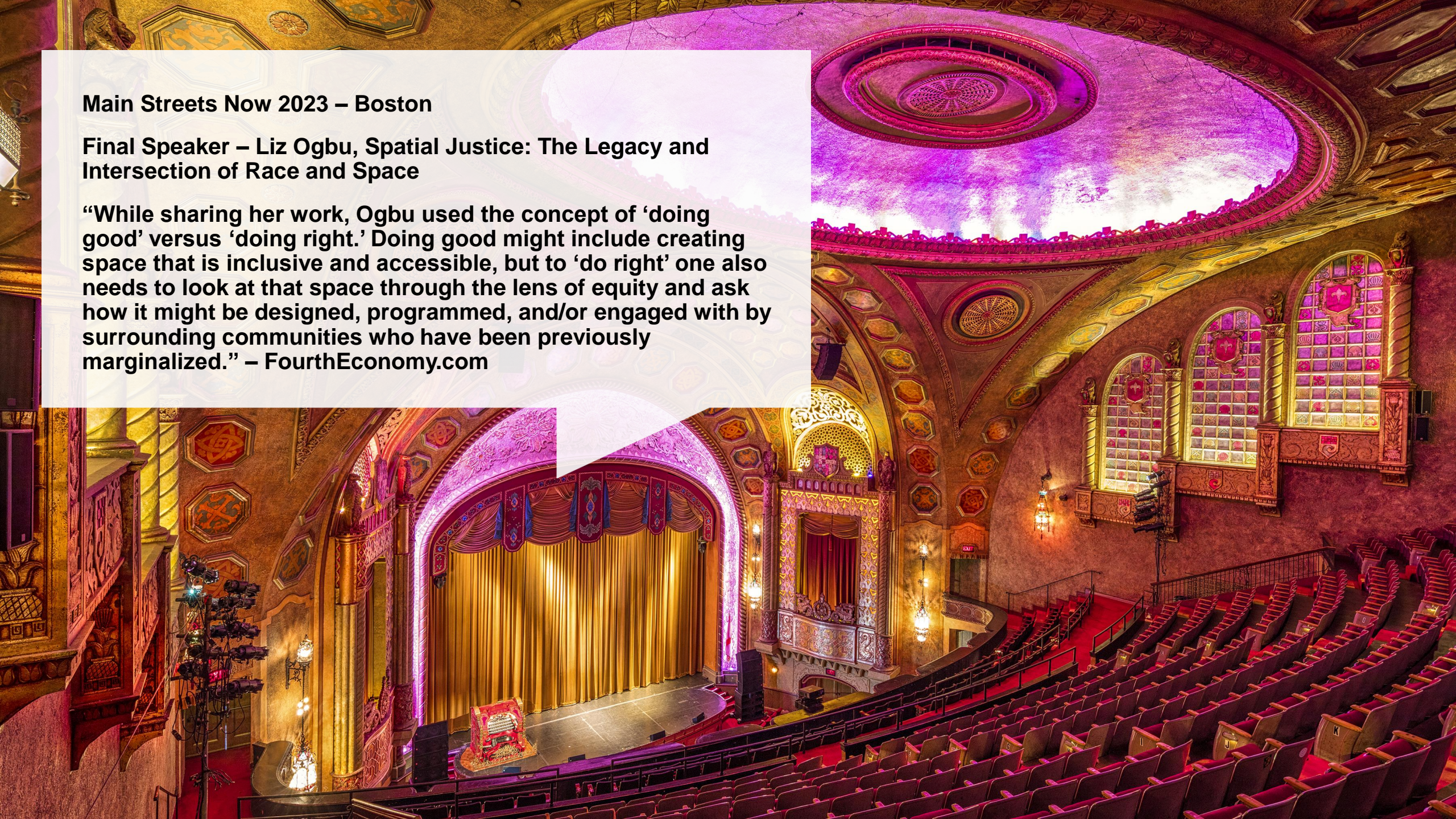
Beautification and Spatial Justice



## Main Streets Now 2023 – Boston

Final Speaker – Liz Ogbu, Spatial Justice: The Legacy and Intersection of Race and Space

“While sharing her work, Ogbu used the concept of ‘doing good’ versus ‘doing right.’ Doing good might include creating space that is inclusive and accessible, but to ‘do right’ one also needs to look at that space through the lens of equity and ask how it might be designed, programmed, and/or engaged with by surrounding communities who have been previously marginalized.” – [FourthEconomy.com](https://www.fourtheconomy.com)





# South Street Apartments, 125 South St







ONE WAY

DO NOT ENTER

TENANT PARKING ONLY

P Street Cleaning

Hand-drawn graffiti on a black mailbox, including a stylized figure and other markings.

Mural on the side of a brick building, depicting a landscape with trees and a person.















METCALF CT

ONE WAY

DO NOT ENTER

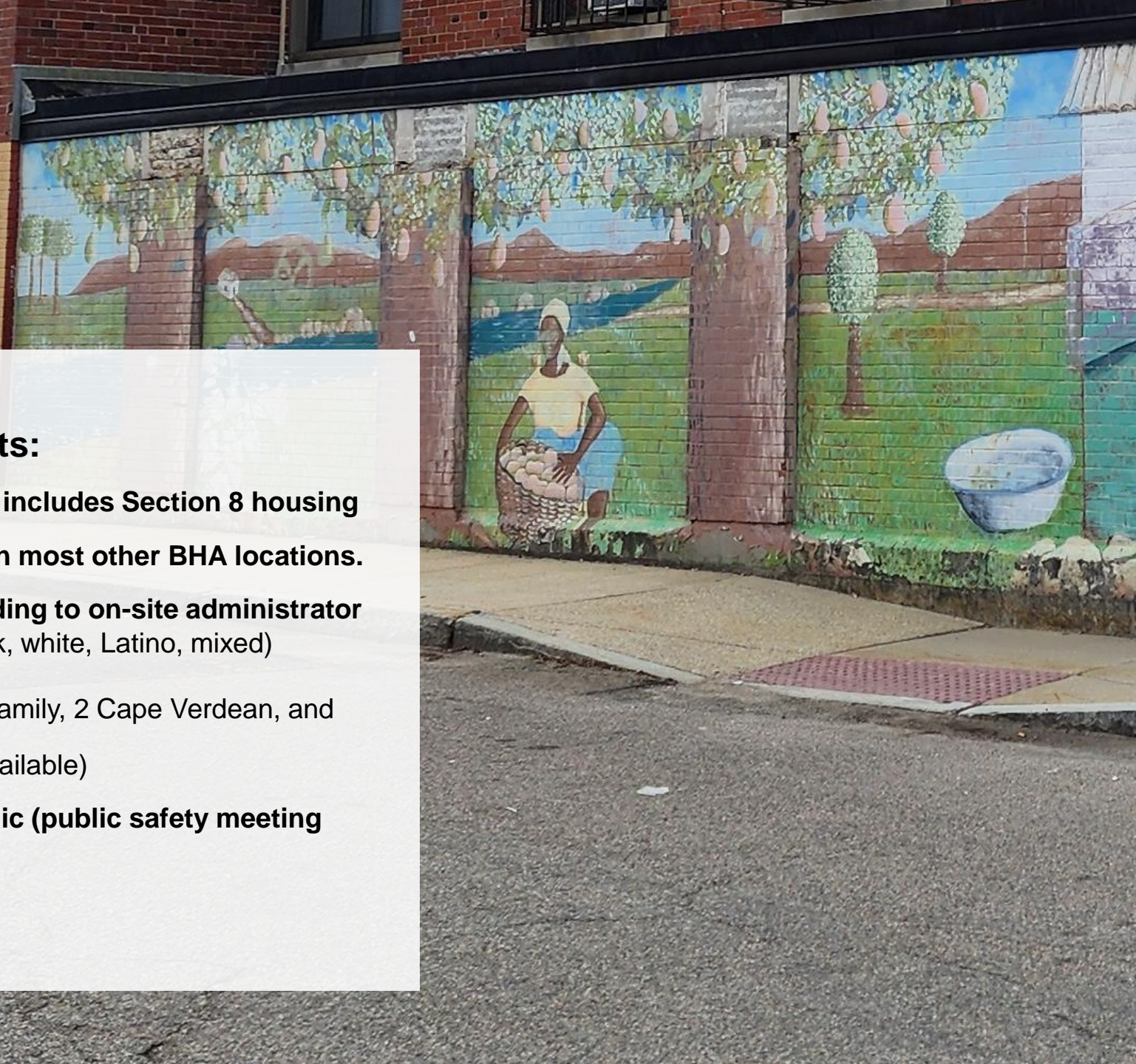
TENANT PARKING ONLY

POST



## Some facts about the South Street Apts:

- **Boston Housing Authority development, includes Section 8 housing**
- **Approximately 150 families - smaller than most other BHA locations.**
- **Demographics by race/ethnicity – according to on-site administrator**
  - Approx. 80% Spanish-speaking (black, white, Latino, mixed)
  - Approx 10% Haitian
  - Approx 10% other, including 1 Asian family, 2 Cape Verdean, and some White Families.
  - (breakdown of ages, needs, etc. unavailable)
- **Some violence/drugs during the pandemic (public safety meeting reports), but relatively quiet.**
- **South Street Youth Center**





# Community Engagement + Boston Housing Authority Parking Lot

Civic Space Collaborative (CSC) is excited to submit this proposal to the JP Centre/South Main Streets for community engagement service public realm improvements and activation of the Boston Housing Authority (BHA) development parking lot at 125 South Street.



BPA Parking Lot at 125 South Main Street

Civic Space has extensive experience in community engagement, project management and implementing community-led initiatives throughout Massachusetts, from placemaking and public spaces improvements to arts and cultural projects. We have worked on several public realm projects in Boston, including overseeing the Green Street Parklet's design, permitting, and implementation process through Michelle Moon's work with A Better City. As a result, we have a wide breadth of experience of types, scales, and budgets for public realm projects that we can draw upon.

We enjoy collaborating with communities to implement the projects they want to see in their communities, and we are pleased to present this proposal to JP Centre/South Main Streets.

## Project Understanding

It is Civic Space's understanding that the main goal is to improve the aesthetic appeal of a streetscape plaza and parking lot at 125 South Main Street and to activate the Space and improve public safety for BHA residents, seniors, and visitors to the area. The site at 125 Main Street serves as the parking lot for residents living at BHA housing units, the Community Center that is attached to the building.

To successfully improve the space, BHA property management and residents must be engaged to help shape the overall design direction for the parking lot activation. Initial project meetings to further refine the scope would be set up with the following key stakeholders:

- The property owner and manager – to discuss what is allowed or could be allowed on site.
- The Community Center staff – to learn about their capacity to help engage participation from local residents and to manage the installation after project implementation.

Throughout the community engagement process, Civic Space will collect ideas from residents and visitors to Centre Street about how to activate the site. This information be collected into a set of guidelines that the site designer can use in the next phase to design the site. It is our understanding that JP Centre/South Main Streets has some funds available for implementation. Civic Space can work towards recommending design solutions that are within the existing budget, as well as help to identify additional funds.

# Civic Space Collaborative

- Expensive
- Board Discussion
  - Is expense necessary?



# Key Stakeholders

- BHA Property Manager
- BHA residents
- Youth Center Coordinator + Youth
- Nearby business owners, such as the business owner from Happy Market
- State representatives + other elected officials

Another Board Discussion – Inclusion vs. Justice



# Proposed vs Actual Timeline

- **Phase 1:** Collecting Background Information+ Listening (June – Mid-July)
  - **Phase 2:** Community Engagement / Collecting + Brainstorming (Mid-July to August)
  - **Phase 3:** Final Presentation + Sharing (September)
- **Phase 1:** June - July
  - **Phase 2:** July to November
  - **Phase 3:** March 2024



# First Step: Boston Housing Authority

- Started with contact with Boston Housing Authority staff and administration
- June 27, 2023 - site visit with apartment administrator, BHA Maintenance (local and regional), Assistant Director of Property Management (regional), Chief of Media and Engagement for BHA, BHA Chief of Staff/Chief Procurement Officer.
- Cautious but optimistic cooperation



# South Street Youth Center Engagement

- “Project Manager for CSC (and faculty member at Olin College of Engineering where he teaches human-centered design) will lead the students through a design process to analyze the current conditions of the site, brainstorm a range of ideas, narrow to the most desirable, and present them to the JP Main Streets Design Team.”





# Surprising revelations from the youth:

- “There is a lot of overgrown plants”
- It’s hot out there
- Parking lot paint is old and faded (speed bumps and parking spots)
- “I learned that there used to be weekly events that used to happen here”
- “I learned that after COVID the community started to drive away”
- “There are never kids outside”
- People move around and in and out so it’s hard to get to know the community
- People don’t hang out as much



# Hot Dog Nights





# Basketball Court

**JULY 27TH**  
ENGLISH HIGH OUTDOOR  
BASKETBALL COURT

SOUTH STREET YOUTH CENTER  
**HOT SHOTS 3-ON-3**  
BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

T-SHIRTS AVAILABLE  
FOR REGISTERED TEAMS

FOOD & DRINKS  
50/50 RAFFLE & PRIZES



**TOURNAMENT INCLUDES:**

CHAMPIONSHIP TROPHIES  
REFS  
TEAM SHIRTS

**SPECIAL EVENTS:**

POINTS SHOOTOUT  
SKILLS & DRILLS  
(CASH PRIZE)

**Tournament Divisions:**

Boys 13 & Under (8-13) - Boys 16 & Under (11-16)  
Girls 13 & Under (8-13) - Girls 16 & Under (11-16)

For More information contact: 617-477-8263 or email: southstreetyouthcenter@gmail.com

[SSYCBASKETBALL.COM](http://SSYCBASKETBALL.COM)





# Basketball Court





# Unity Day – August 2023

- Survey of Residents





VOTE  
HERE

### SEATING/ASIENTOS

1



Tables/Mesas

2



Chairs/Sillas

3



Bench/Banco

4



Umbrella Tables/  
Mesa con Sombrilla

5



Tiered Seating with Planters/  
Asientos Escalonados con Jardinera

VOTE  
HERE

### LANDSCAPING/PAISAJISMO

1



Planters/Jardinera

2



Trees/Arboles

3



Raised Planter/  
Jardinera Elevada

4



Flowers/Flores

5



Clear Overgrowth/  
Claro Sobrecrecimiento

6



Fix Existing Planter/  
Arreglar la Jardinera Existente







# Revitalized Hot Dog Nights – Aug & Sept





# Halloween Event – October 2023





# Online Spanish Language Survey – Nov-Dec 2023

How could we improve our public space at BHA?

Please take our survey!

¿Cómo podríamos mejorar nuestro espacio público en BHA?

¡Por favor responda a nuestra encuesta!



Complete the survey and  
receive a \$20 gift card to  
Happy Market!

¡Completa la encuesta y  
recibe una tarjeta de  
regalo de \$20 para  
Happy Market!

Scan the QR code  
to take the survey.

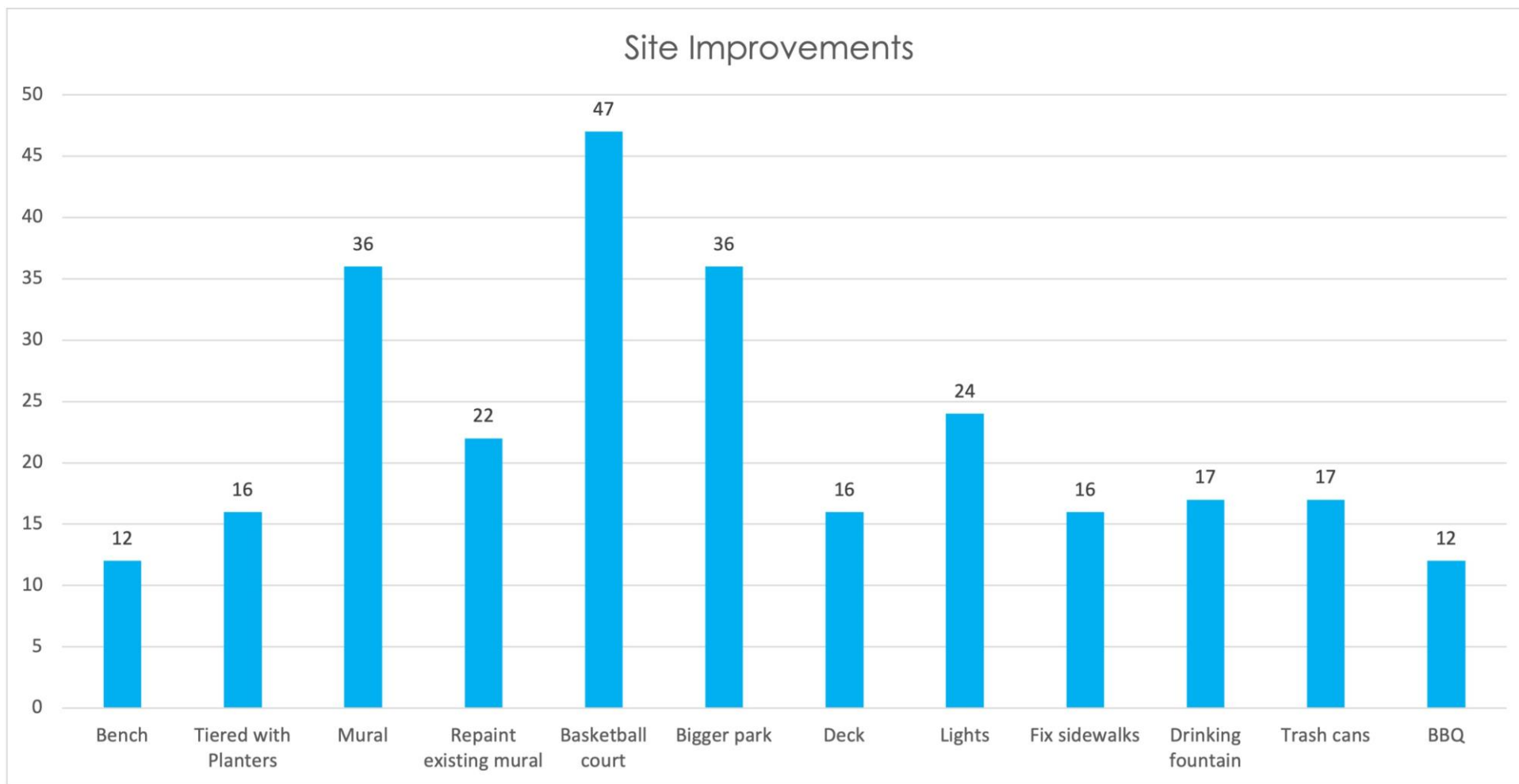
Escanee el código QR  
para completar la encuesta.

<http://tinyurl.com/southstreetsurvey>



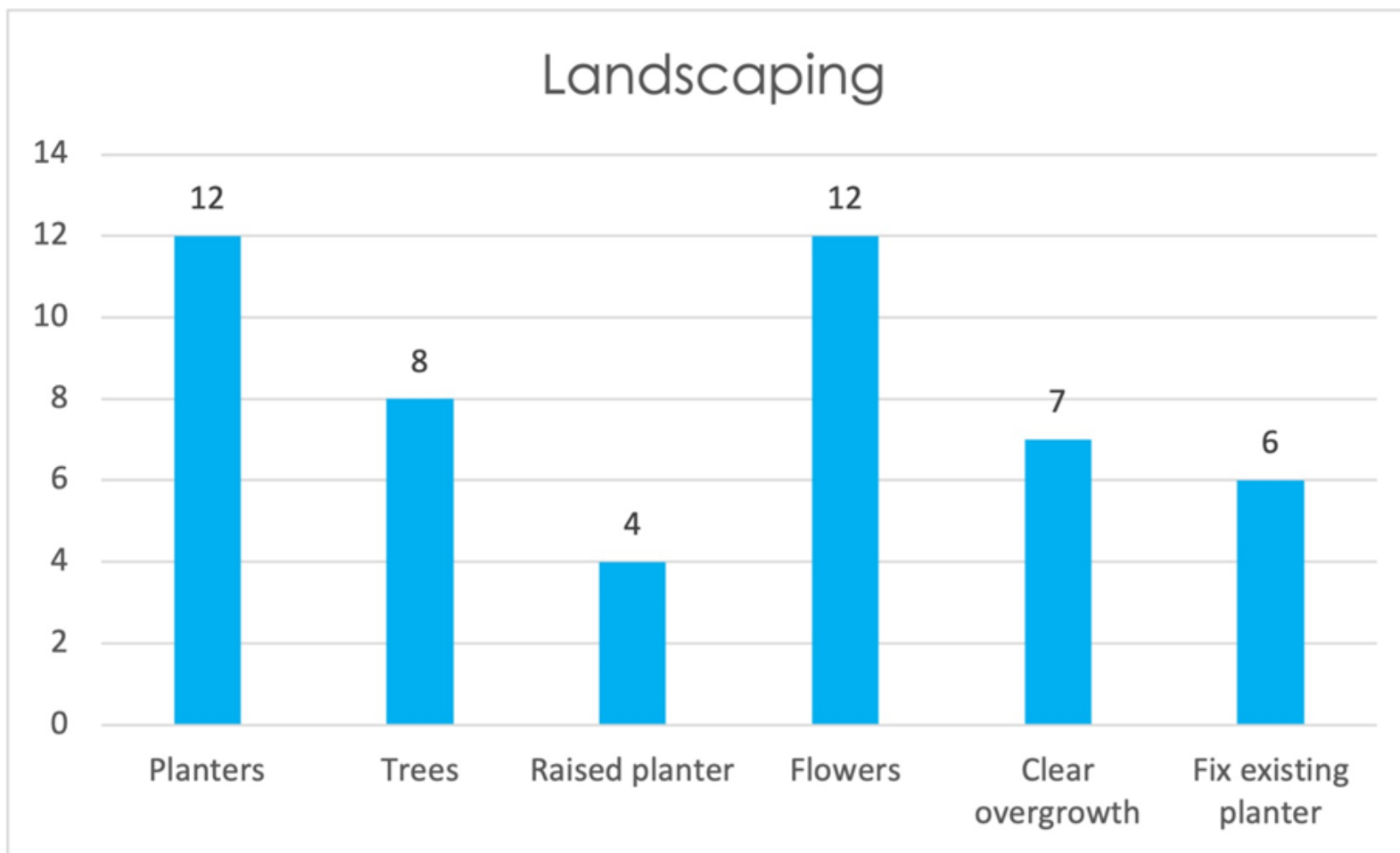


# Survey Results – March 2024





# Survey Results – March 2024





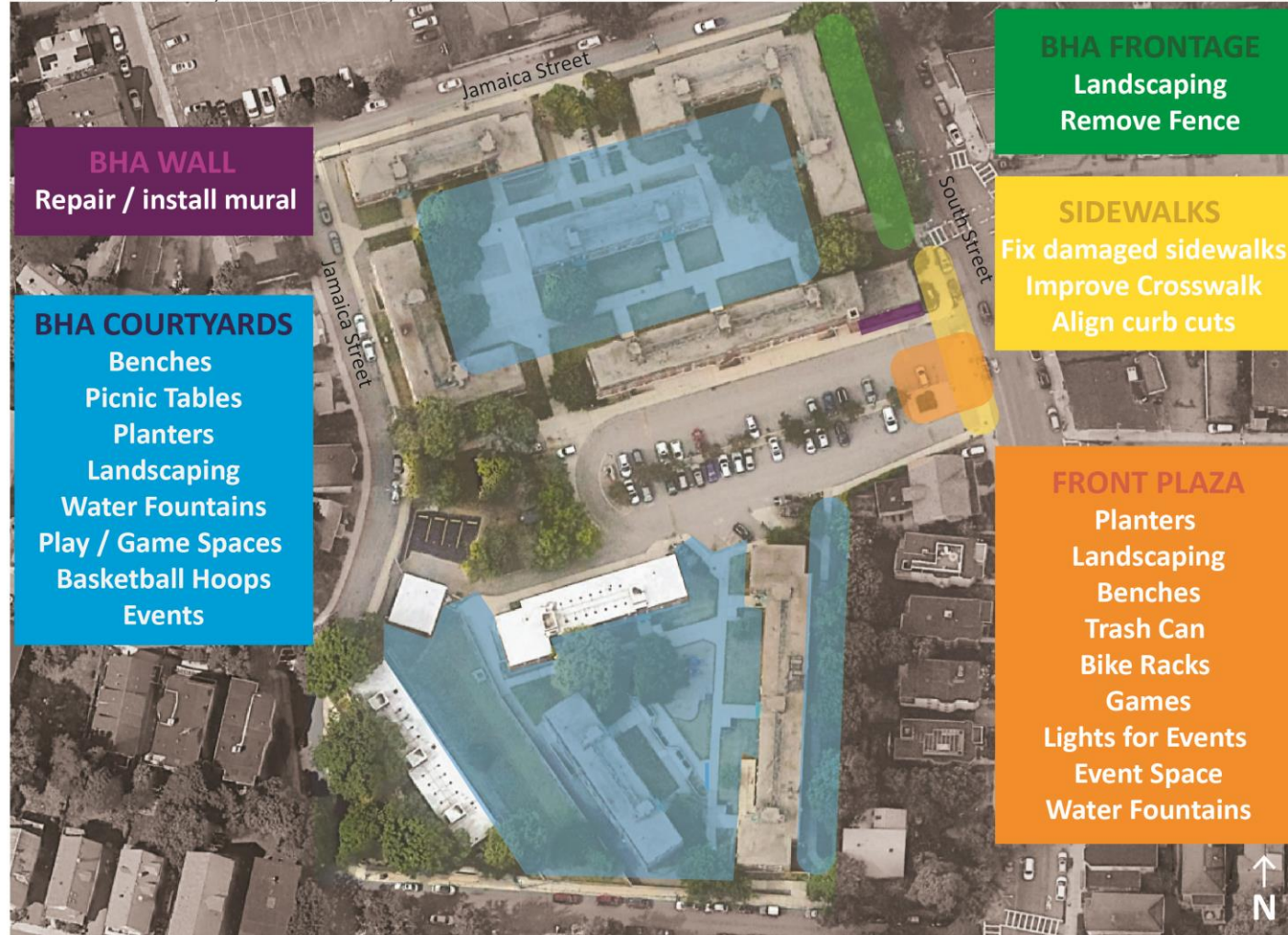
# Presentation of Results – April 2024

- Presented results to SSYC
- Presented results to BHA - BHA Maintenance (regional), Assistant Director of Property Management (regional), Chief of Staff BHA.
  - BHA agreed to every request - remove fencing, remove shipping containers, etc. Divided work into phases. Some findings were outside the scope of our mission.
- BHA will set up meeting with newly formed tenants' task force.



# Three Project Phases

**Boston Housing Authority: Public Space Improvements**  
125 South Street, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts





**Some pushback:**

**Board Discussion &  
On-site Administrator**

**KEEP YOUR  
STAKEHOLDERS  
ENGAGED!**





# Lessons Learned

- Youth are often an overlooked perspective, but they are the continuation of anything that's built, so their involvement and understanding is crucial for long-term success.
- Google Translate is actually pretty good for Spanish.
- Building trust is essential. In marginalized communities, there can be a tendency to tell you what you “want to hear.” Craft your survey carefully to avoid the appearance of “right answers.” Engage **OFTEN** and persistently, and qualitative answers (one-on-one conversations) may be more forthcoming than quantitative answers.
  - Be aware of distrust of authority. Many of the tenants were afraid to speak against the BHA.



**Finally, be prepared to have tough conversations.**





# We want to hear from you!



Help us make the Main Street Now Conference even better by sharing feedback on your conference experience.

Tell us about your favorite sessions and speakers, what you found most valuable, and what you'd like to see next year.

**Look out for the post-conference survey to be released on Wednesday via email and on [mainstreetnow.org](https://mainstreetnow.org).**



*Thank You!*

**Ginger Brown**

Executive Director

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