

Context

Boston has been a city of ideas and strong ideals for centuries. Today, Imagine Boston 2030 builds on the city's strengths—including its dynamic economy, diverse population, and recent growth—to address key challenges.

Boston is acting now to take advantage of our greatest strengths and respond to key challenges.

Six key trends inform planning for 2030

Productive Economy

Boston's economy has grown on the strength of its small businesses and vibrant healthcare, education, and finance sectors. These sectors have enabled Boston to bounce back from recent economic shocks. Continued growth and diversification of Boston's economy will be critical for the city to thrive during the economic transformation of the future.

[See page 70](#)

Affordability

Housing prices have increased rapidly in recent years and many low- and middle-income residents are concerned about affordability and displacement in the neighborhoods they have called home for generations.

[See page 90](#)

Growing Population

Boston's population is growing rapidly and has become more diverse. Today, the city is majority people of color and more than a quarter of Boston residents were born outside of the United States. This population growth is a reflection of Boston's economic vitality and a testament to the city's diversity.

[See page 78](#)

Changing Climate

Boston is the fourth most exposed city in the nation to flooding. Temperature increases, more extreme weather events, and rising sea levels pose significant risks for Boston's highly urbanized coastal job centers and neighborhoods. In the coming century, flooding, storms, and extreme heat will be exacerbated by climate change.

[See page 94](#)

Inequality

There are significant disparities in educational attainment, homeownership, commute times, access to healthy food and healthcare, and a number of other factors. These factors are correlated with major health outcomes and wealth gaps between races and neighborhoods.

[See page 84](#)

Transformative Technology

The way we interact with the city is changing. Traditional home/work and downtown/neighborhood boundaries are changing as preferences for mixed-use neighborhoods increase and technology enables rapid remote communication and new ways of working and getting around the city.

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Boston's History

Boston, the "City of Ideas," has been a center of bold ideas and strong ideals for centuries.

The progressive intellectual culture of Boston has fostered new movements for liberty and equality, from the American Revolution to the abolitionist movement to the legalization of same-sex marriage. Boston has long been a center of education: The first public school in what would become the United States was founded in 1635 in Boston, and Harvard College, the

first college in America, was founded a year later just across the river. The city was a center of abolitionist activism, as Massachusetts became the first state to ban slavery in 1783 and the interracial New England Anti-Slavery Society was founded at the African Meeting House on Beacon Hill in 1832. More than a century later, the city was home to Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X during formative years of their activism. Boston was also a center of early feminist activism, including the founding of the American Woman Suffrage Association in 1869. When the Commonwealth became the first state in the nation to legally recognize same-sex marriage in 2004, Boston was among the first cities to issue marriage licenses.

Boston has been a city of bold ideas and strong ideals for centuries.

However, alongside these enduring achievements, Boston's history also demonstrates the challenge of living up to its ideals. The city desegregated public schools in 1855, eight years before the Emancipation Proclamation, yet we continue to work to fulfill the promise of equality in education. We have also fallen short in key moments of our more recent history, from redlining that reinforced racial segregation to the school busing crisis to flawed attempts at reinventing the city through urban renewal. Today, like most American cities, Boston must continue to address historic income and race divisions proactively.

The city continues to strive to achieve its ideals, while adapting and responding to the

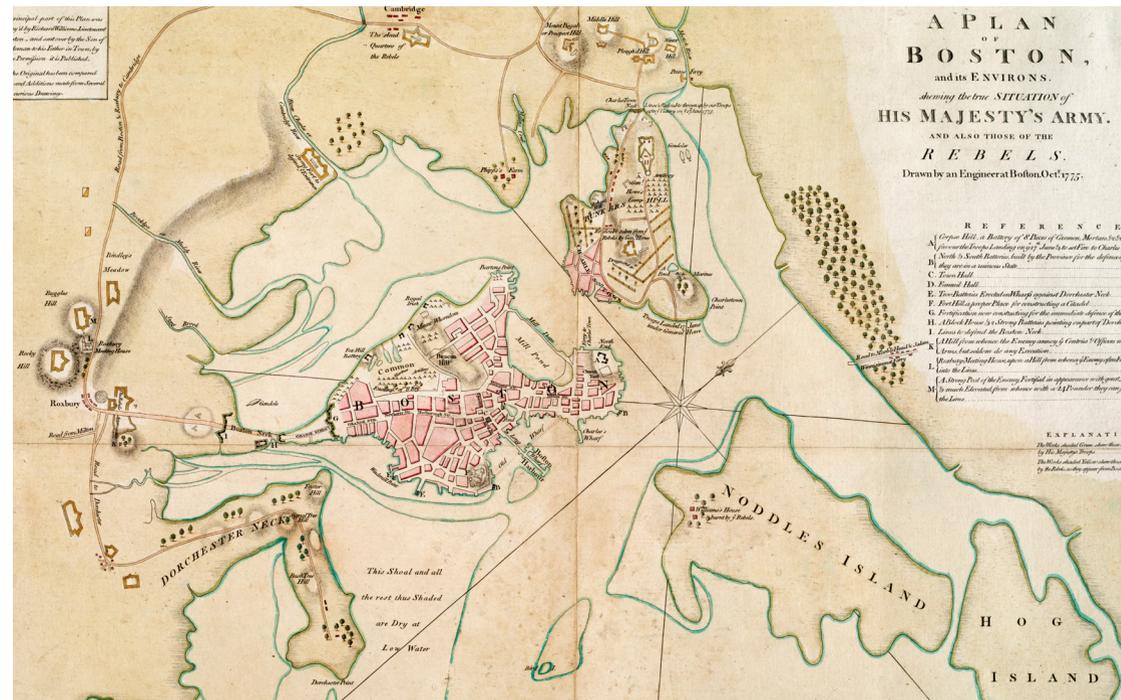
changing context in which we live. As we plan for our future, we must look back and understand how Boston has reinvented itself in the past to inform our decision making.

Growth & Evolution

Since its founding in 1630, Boston has repeatedly reinvented itself, undergoing dramatic transformations to respond to the changing needs of its people and economy.

The first European settlers in what is now Boston made their homes on the Shawmut Peninsula, a cluster of hills surrounded by water and connected to the mainland by a narrow neck of land where Washington Street runs

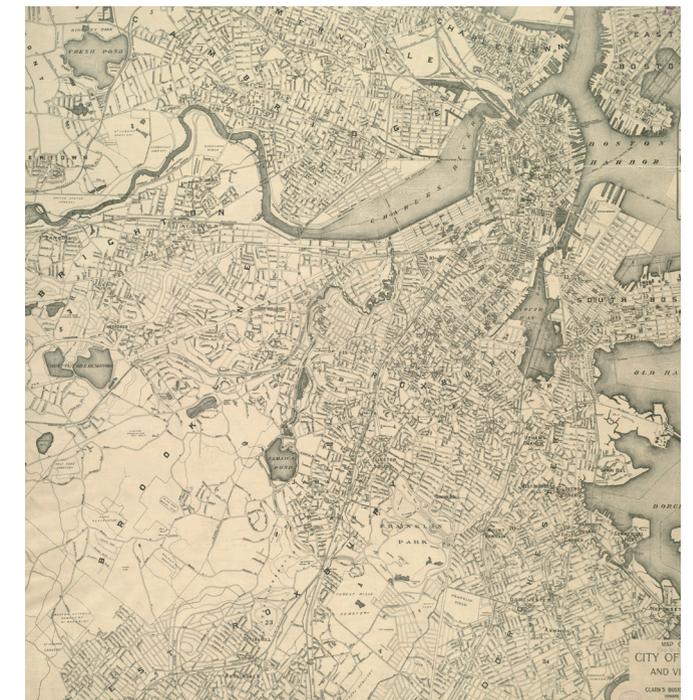
Boston grew physically by filling the coves and low-lying areas and annexing neighboring communities.



1775



1841



1900

Long Wharf, circa 1910



today from Downtown to Roxbury.¹ Boston's seafaring economy flourished, as the town became a major hub for trade, fishing, and shipbuilding.

In the early nineteenth century, Boston's wealth grew as international trade increased, the city's cultural and intellectual life flourished, and the first in a series of demographic shifts transformed Boston. The city became a metropolis with large enclaves of Irish, Italian, Jewish, and other immigrant groups, and a small but prominent African-American population. In the middle and late nineteenth century, the advent of steamships caused major shifts in the maritime economy, and wealthy Bostonians looked for new investment opportunities in manufacturing. This shift to manufacturing and industry was fueled by waves of new immigrants arriving on Boston's shores. During this time period, the city continued to grow rapidly, reaching nearly 750,000 people by 1920—a massive increase from 25,000 people in 1800.² Annexations of neighboring communities also contributed to the city's growth.



today. The development of a streetcar system, followed by the nation's first subway system, enabled residents to move farther from the center of the city. Working-class and wealthy residents alike sought more space and fresh air as the core of Boston industrialized. Housing was concentrated around transit; many of those same buildings remain today and make up some of Boston's denser residential areas, such as along Commonwealth Avenue in Allston and Brighton.

As people moved farther inland in the nineteenth century, the City created a network of parks and open spaces linking neighborhoods. The Emerald Necklace, a groundbreaking system of parks designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, connected existing parks including the Boston Common and the Public Garden to the newly created Arnold Arboretum, Jamaica Pond, and Franklin Park. In addition to creating space for recreation, the Emerald Necklace also channeled the Muddy River and transformed marshy areas in the Fens and the area now known as Charlesgate.

The residents of neighboring communities cast their votes to join Boston in part to gain access to services such as schools, fire protection, and clean water from the expanding system of aqueducts and reservoirs supplying Boston with water from areas west of the city.

Major investments in public transportation during the late nineteenth century also played an enormous role in shaping the city we know



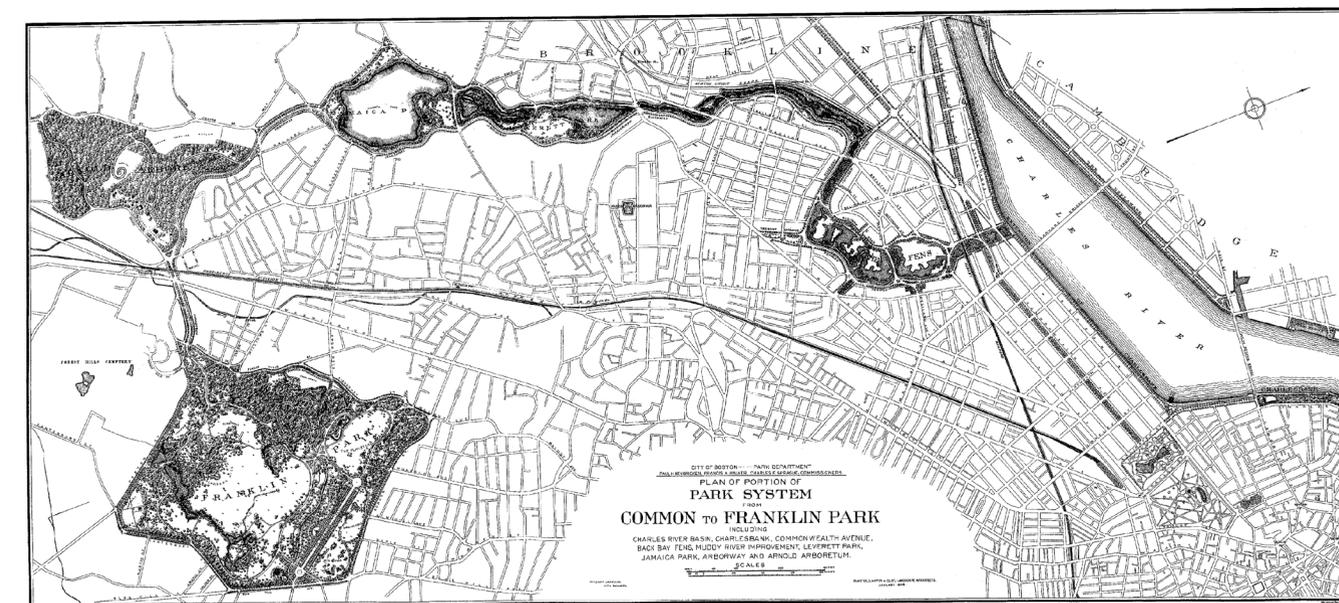
Washington Street, 1895



Frederick Law Olmsted's plan for a portion of the Emerald Necklace

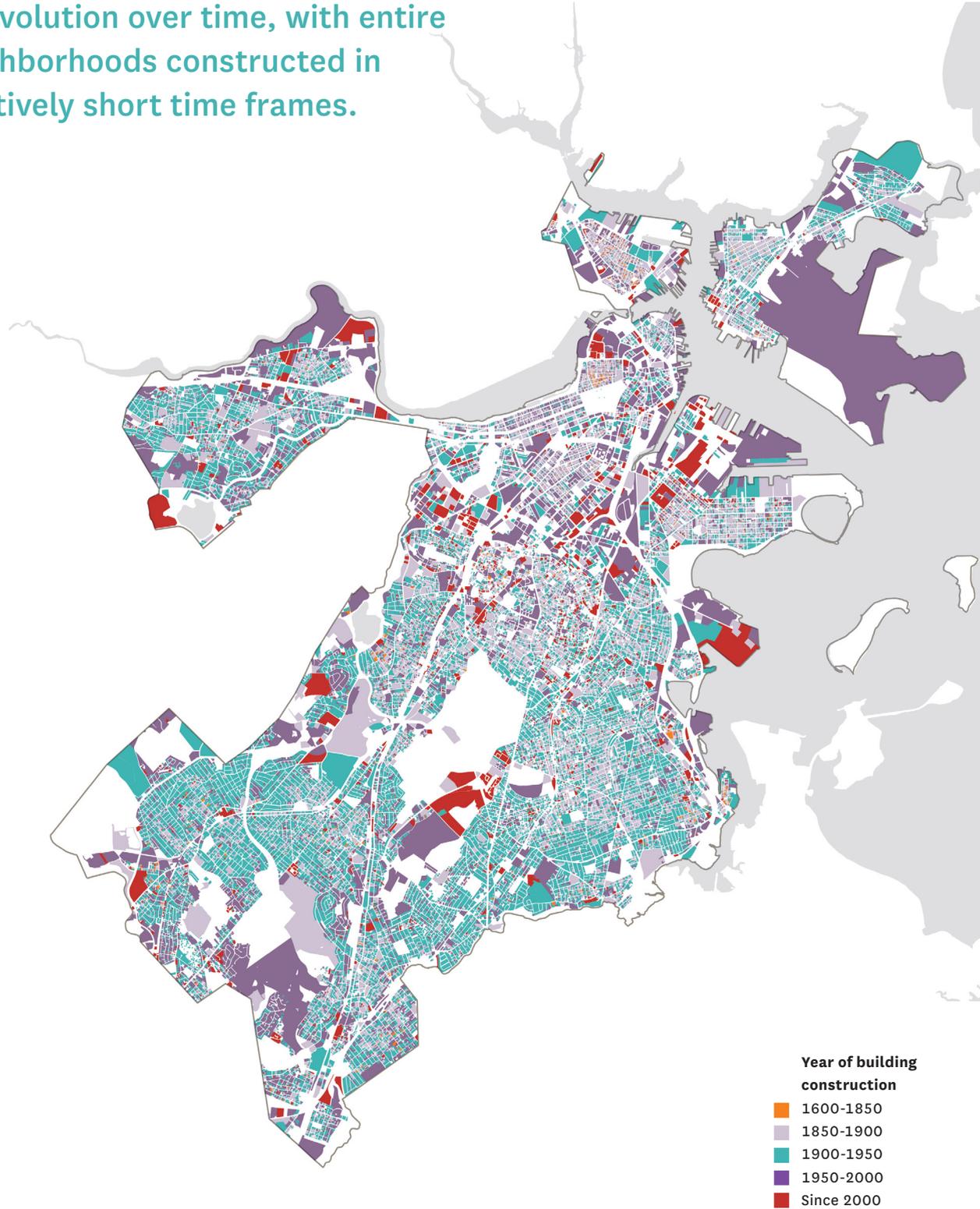


Since its founding in 1630, Boston has repeatedly reinvented itself, undergoing dramatic transformations to respond to the changing needs of its people and economy.



Boston's Construction Over Time

Boston's building fabric reflects its evolution over time, with entire neighborhoods constructed in relatively short time frames.



Source: City of Boston 2015 Tax Assessor and Parcel Data, BPDA

Physical Form

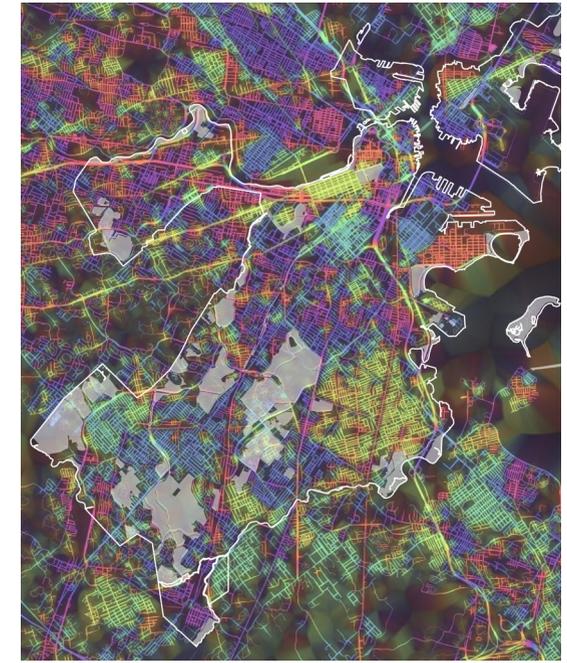
Boston annexed neighboring communities, leveled hills, and filled marshes to accommodate job and population growth, eventually tripling the land area of the city.

The Back Bay, formerly a marshland submerged at high tide, was filled in with dirt and landfill to create a new residential neighborhood beginning in 1857. Much of South Boston and the South End were similarly constructed in former wetlands, while the existing communities of East Boston (annexed in 1836) and Charlestown (annexed in 1873) were expanded through landfill in low-lying areas. The Town of Roxbury, which at the time included all of present-day Mission Hill, Fenway, Kenmore Square, and part of the Back Bay, was annexed by Boston in 1868. Dorchester (which included present-day Mattapan), West Roxbury (which included present-day Roslindale and Jamaica Plain), and Brighton (which included Allston), became part of Boston soon after.³

This pattern of annexation and fill gave Boston its unique neighborhood structure. Today, many neighborhoods have similar layouts—residential areas surrounding a main street that serves as the commercial and cultural heart of the neighborhood—but the density and character of each neighborhood is different. The history of many neighborhoods as independent towns is one of the reasons for the strong community identity of each Boston neighborhood.

The buildings, street patterns, and urban form that define each neighborhood trace the city's expansion, from the colonial-era neighborhoods of Beacon Hill, Charlestown, and the North End, to the late nineteenth-century row-houses of the Back Bay and South End, to the three-deckers throughout Dorchester, Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, and Brighton that were built in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to house Boston's rapidly growing working-class population.

Source: DataPointed.net Methodology: <http://www.datapointed.net/2014/10/maps-of-street-grids-by-orientation/>



Boston's street grid reflects its patterns of development, from the original hills and parishes to the filling in of coves and bays to the construction of rails and highways. These shifting street patterns, like shifts in the building fabric, reflect different eras of city-building and reinforce boundaries between neighborhoods. The different colors on the map represent the changing street orientation, with respect to the north.



The buildings, street patterns, and urban form that define each neighborhood trace the city's expansion.

Decline & Reinvention

After the industrial boom of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Boston's growth slowed significantly beginning in the 1920s as the automobile enabled the growth of the suburbs. Three decades of slower growth brought Boston to its peak population of 801,444 in 1950.⁴

The postwar nationwide explosion of the suburbs took an enormous toll on Boston; after reaching its peak population in 1950, Boston entered three decades of significant population decline until 1980.⁵

The last citywide plan in 1965 came in the middle of this decline and was aimed at stemming the loss of residents and employers to the surrounding region. The City's attempts to stave off population decline and encourage integration relied on blunt tools of urban renewal, highway construction, and policies like busing. Entire communities like the West End were razed in the name of clearing blight, and new public housing concentrated poverty and compounded segregation. Homes and businesses were razed to make way for the Massachusetts Turnpike and the Central Artery. In the 1970s,

Elevated rail, Dudley Square, 1901
→

After the industrial boom of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Boston's growth slowed significantly beginning in the 1920s as the automobile enabled the growth of the suburbs.



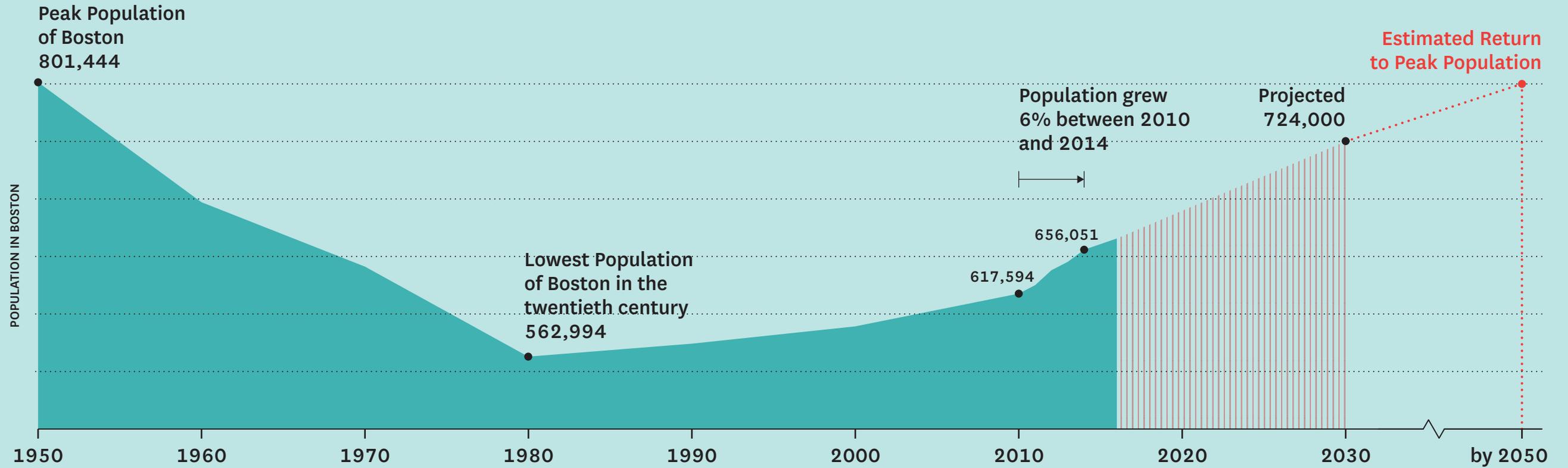
Demolition of the West End, 1959
→
Construction of City Hall, 1960s
↓

Central Artery, c. 1980s
↓



Dudley St Switch tower Apr. 26, 1901

Boston's history has been a story of growth, decline, and reinvention.



1950–1980

Decline

National trends of suburbanization and deindustrialization, coupled with a local race-relations crisis, strained the city and led to a period of significant job and population loss. While many Northeast cities struggled during this time period, Boston fared comparatively worse than East Coast peers like New York City, Baltimore, Washington D.C., and Philadelphia between 1950 and 1980.⁶

1980–2010

Recovery

Beginning slowly in the 1980s and with greater force in the 1990s, Boston's story began to change. Spurred by talented workers, vibrant neighborhoods, and a foundation of hospitals, universities, and knowledge-economy business, Boston began to recover jobs and add population.

2010–Present

Acceleration

Since the recession, Boston's growth has accelerated. Between 2010 and 2014, Boston's population grew by 6 percent, faster than Massachusetts and twice as fast as the nation as a whole.⁷ By 2030, Boston is projected to be home to approximately 724,000 residents.⁸

Source: Decennial Census; ACS 1-Year Estimates (2011-2015), U.S. Census Bureau; BPDA Research Department, September 2016

latent racial tensions exploded as school desegregation pitted neighborhoods and residents of different races against one another.

These decades of decline took a toll on the physical form of the city. In the late 1960s, land was cleared to make way for a new southwest expressway, but residents in Jamaica Plain, Roxbury, the South End, and Cambridge rose up and protested the destruction of their neighborhoods, leading to a moratorium on highway construction inside Route 128. The Southwest Corridor Park and the new Orange Line, which replaced the older elevated route that had connected Roxbury to South Station, are a positive legacy of this community activism. However, communities that had depended upon the elevated Orange Line, including many low-income residents and people of color, were left without reliable transportation to Downtown. The scars of this era remain today in the physical gaps

between neighborhoods and in the social and economic gaps between different communities.

Recent Growth

Beginning in the 1980s, the region and the city began a period of increasing growth and economic vibrancy. Boston's universities and hospitals, many established centuries earlier, formed a strong "eds and meds" cluster that fueled the city's reinvention as a highly productive knowledge economy. By the 1990s, unemployment had fallen significantly and incomes were rising as professional services, financial services, and technology firms flourished Downtown and along Route 128.⁹

The 2000s were the first decade since the 1910s during which Boston's population grew faster than the population of the Commonwealth as a whole. Boston's population has become markedly more diverse; only about a third of Boston residents were people of color in 1980, but by

2010, the majority of residents in Boston were people of color.¹⁰ In 2010, foreign-born residents comprised nearly 27 percent of the city population, up from 20 percent two decades prior.¹¹

Major reinvestment in the city's environmental quality and infrastructure enhanced the city's quality of life and supported this period of growth. These unprecedented efforts included constructing the Deer Island Wastewater Treatment Plant, cleaning up Boston Harbor, reconnecting the city to the harbor by putting the Central Artery underground, and creating the Rose Kennedy Greenway. Other efforts, such as restoring transit service along the old elevated Orange Line corridor with the opening of the Silver Line, have yet to fully meet the needs they set out to address.

Since 2010, Boston's rapid growth has reaffirmed the city's national prominence. Boston added nearly as many residents in the past five years as it did over the previous 20, with population growth outpacing both the Commonwealth and the nation as a whole.¹² The city's population growth has been complemented by a diversifying economy, driven by an expanding knowledge economy and a strong healthcare sector. The employment growth that Boston has experienced since 2010 puts it in a league with

other coastal knowledge economies, including Seattle, San Francisco, and New York.¹³

Boston's private businesses and institutions have been a major driver of the city's increasing desirability. This economic momentum provides the city a chance to set a proactive vision for the future. To live up to our ideals, we must invest proactively in priority areas and sectors to expand opportunity for all residents

Boston has grown twice as quickly as the nation since 2010, creating an opportunity to imagine—and to enact—major policies that create a thriving city for future generations.

and shape a thriving city for the next generation. Like we have for centuries before, we can leverage the city's policies and resources and make investments in and changes to the city's physical form to respond to our challenges and strengthen the communities we cherish.



August Moon Festival, Chinatown, August 14, 2016

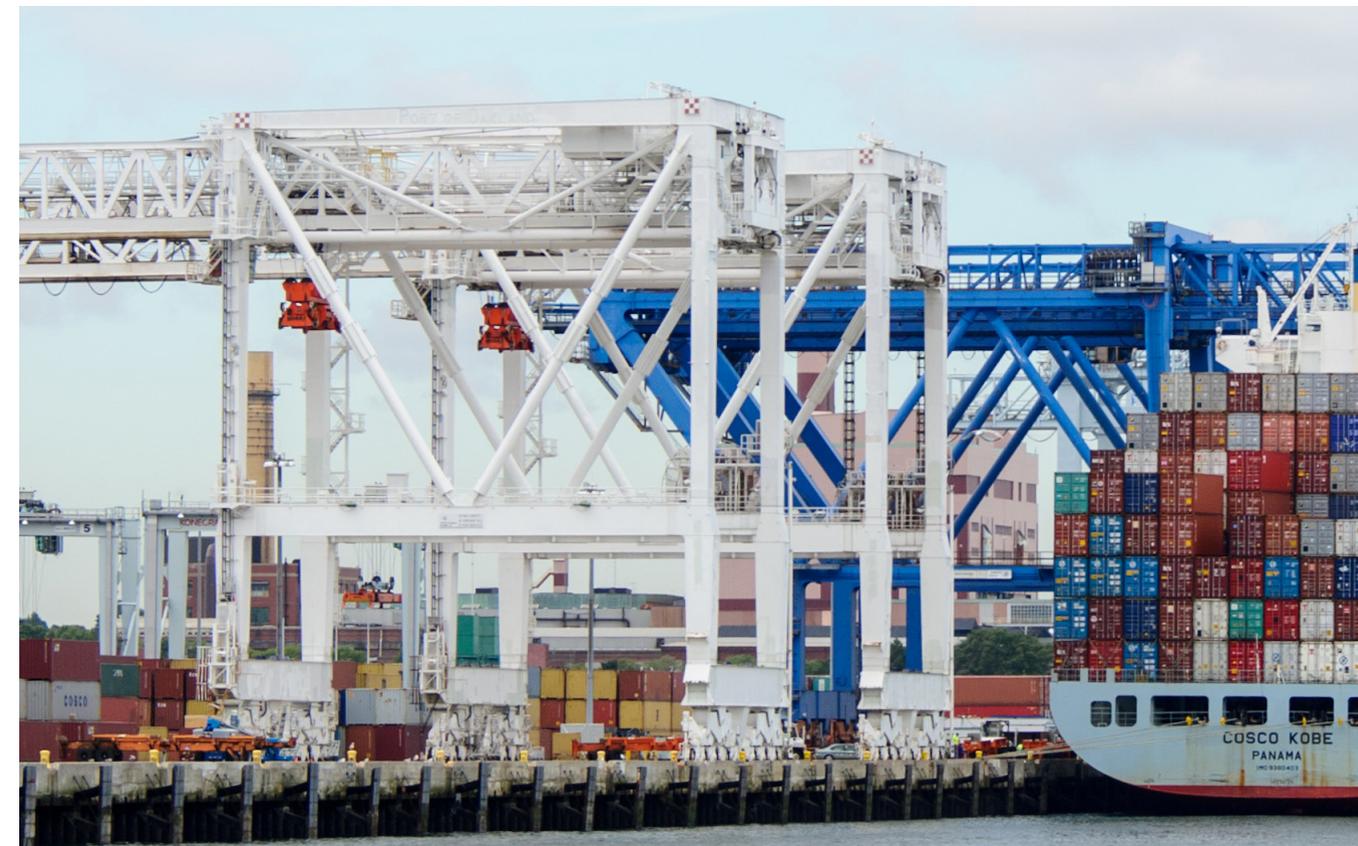
Productive Economy

Boston's knowledge economy is expanding. A thriving life sciences sector and an increasing number of startups are emerging from Boston's storied educational and medical institutions, and global brands from Converse to General Electric are locating in the heart of Boston. The city's recent economic growth has been

fueled by the region's highly skilled workers. People who work in Boston are more productive than the average U.S. worker; as a result of this incremental productivity, Boston's annual economic output is \$27 billion higher than it would be if its workers were only as productive as the average U.S. worker.¹⁴ The high-paying jobs in

Boston's fastest-growing industries often require a high level of education and job training. As Boston grows, there must be a continued focus on making sure Bostonians have the training and education they need to participate in growing sectors.¹⁵

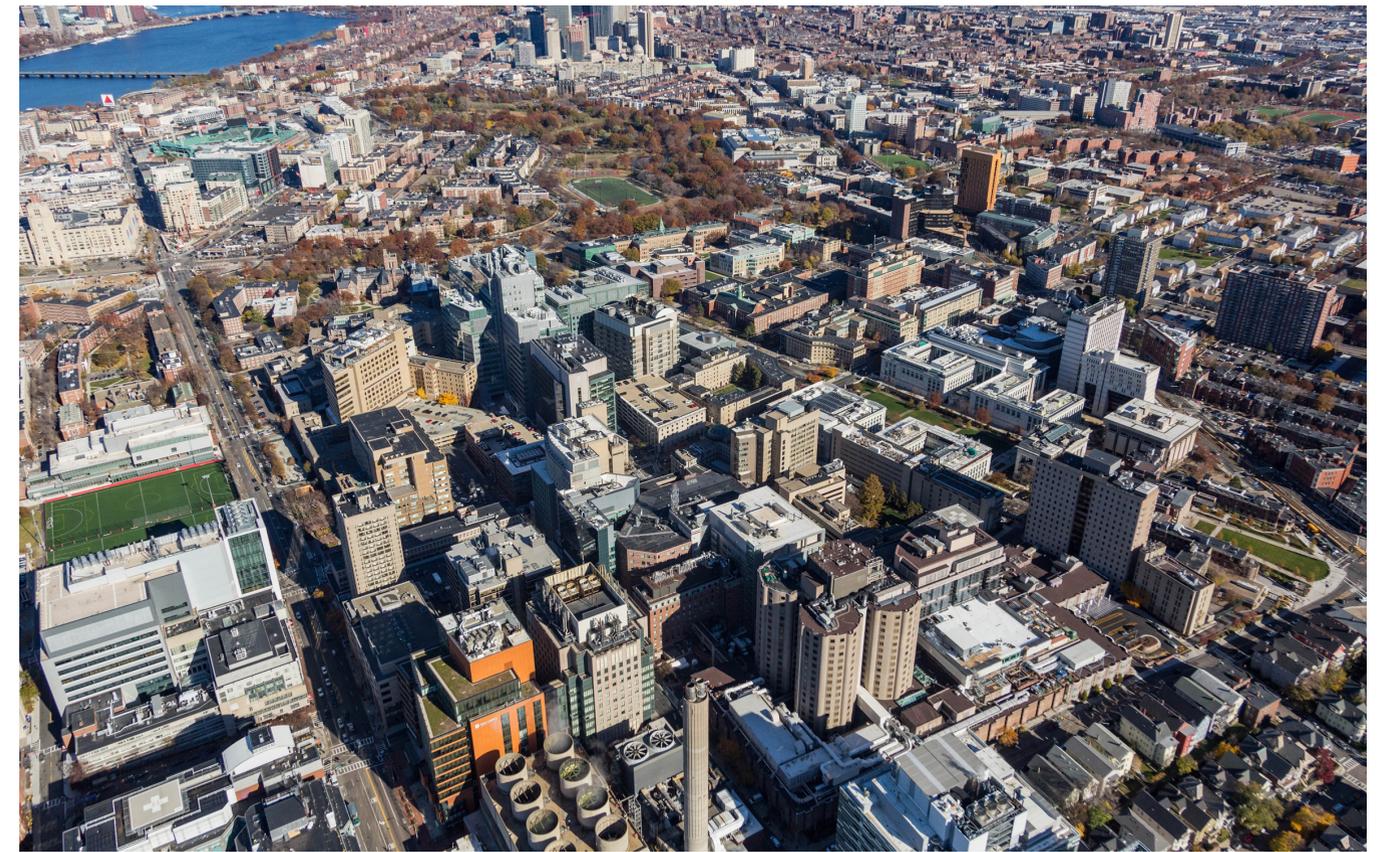
Conley Terminal, South Boston



Longwood Medical Area



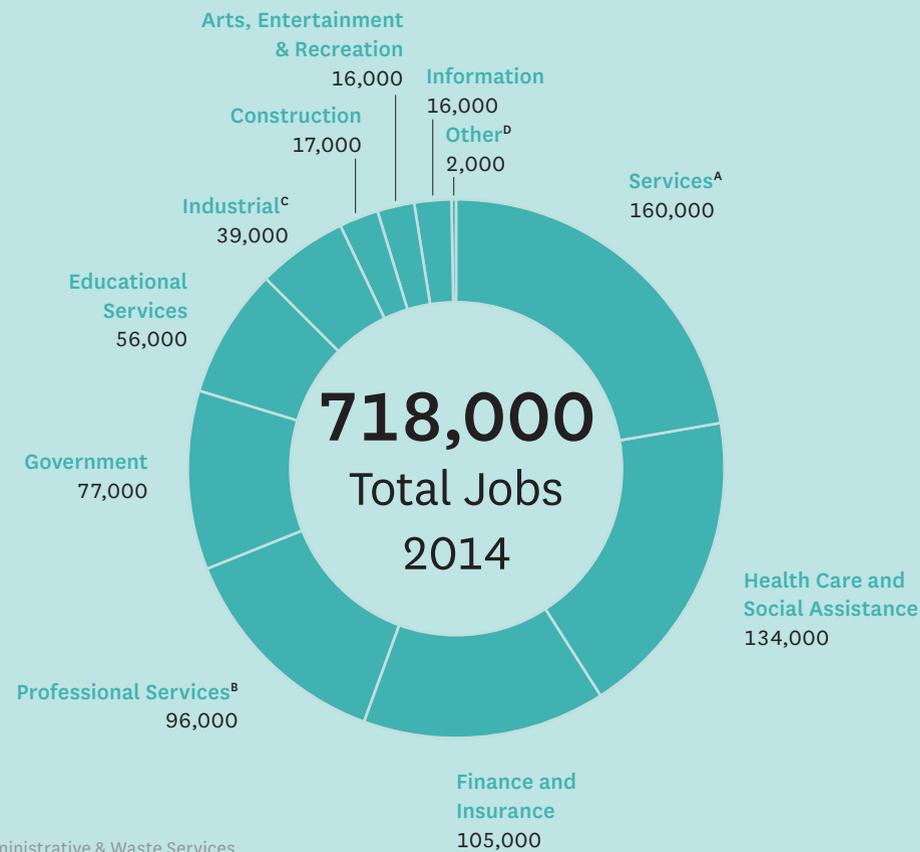
Gracenote Coffee, Leather District



Boston Jobs by Sector, 2014

Healthcare, education, professional services, financial services, tourism, and government provide the foundation of Boston's economy.

Boston is expected to add more than 180,000 jobs by 2050, a 25 percent increase from 2014.



A Includes Retail Trade, Administrative & Waste Services, Accommodation & Food Services, and Other Services
 B Includes Professional & Technical Services and Management of Companies & Enterprises
 C Includes Manufacturing, Transportation and Warehousing, and Wholesale Trade
 D Includes Natural Resources & Mining, and Utilities

Several industries, such as tourism and biotech, are comprised of jobs in multiple sectors.

Source: BPDA Research Department

Healthcare, education, professional services, financial services, tourism, and government provide the foundation of Boston's economy.

Growth in Boston's professional services, healthcare, and education sectors has outpaced national growth since 2010.¹⁶ These core sectors are expected to see strong continued growth through 2030.¹⁷

← See opposite page

Recent job growth has been robust.

Nearly all sectors in Boston outpaced their national growth rates between 2010 and 2014. Knowledge sectors have been the foundation of Boston's recent growth. Today, healthcare is the city's single largest sector, comprising 20 percent of jobs and growing nearly 10 percent since 2010.¹⁸

See "Sectors of Growth and Competitiveness" on page 74

Boston's established industries are spurring growth in emerging subsectors.

Emerging subsectors—such as financial technology, education technology, digital health, and advanced manufacturing—are creating jobs and developing new products through innovation and cutting-edge technologies.

Boston's small businesses account for 44 percent of for-profit employment.

Small businesses are a powerful generator of jobs and wealth for the city's residents. Small businesses are dispersed throughout Boston's neighborhoods where they are a key source of neighborhood vibrancy and contribute to the social and cultural fabric of the city.¹⁹

See "Small Businesses" on page 76

Boston's residents are under-represented in high-paying industries.

Boston residents hold only 39 percent of jobs located in the city and are notably underrepresented in the city's fast-growing, high-paying knowledge sectors, which also tend to be the sectors that have seen more significant wage increases since 2001.²⁰ Bostonians make up the majority of the workforce only in the retail and accommodation and food service industries, the sectors of the city's economy with the lowest average wages. As a result, many Boston residents struggle with higher costs of living spurred by a fast-growing economy, without reaping the benefits of higher wages.

"Share of Employees Residing in Boston by Industry" on page 77

Strong job growth is projected to continue through 2030.

Moving forward, Boston expects to add more than 100,000 jobs by 2030.²¹ Growth is expected to be especially robust in sectors like healthcare and professional services. Sectors like advanced manufacturing can build off synergies with the growing knowledge economy and institutional anchors.

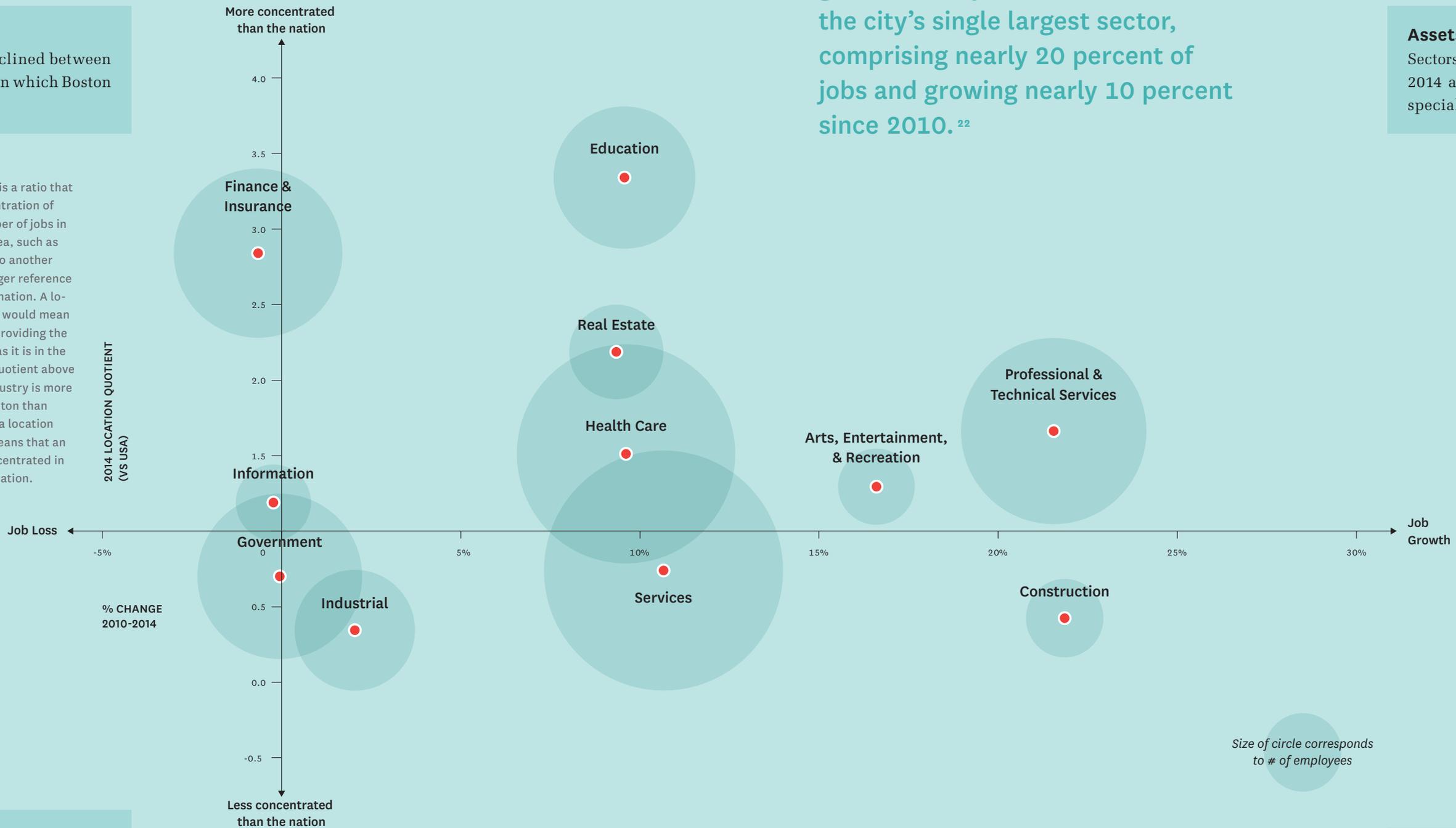
"Programs to train Boston residents for emerging industries—health care, tech, pharmaceuticals, etc."
Roxbury resident via community workshop

Sectors of Growth and Competitiveness

Legacy

Sectors that declined between 2010-2014 and in which Boston is specialized.

A location quotient is a ratio that refers to the concentration of an industry or number of jobs in an industry in an area, such as Boston, compared to another area, typically a larger reference region, such as the nation. A location quotient of 1 would mean that an industry is providing the same share of jobs as it is in the nation. A location quotient above 1 means that an industry is more concentrated in Boston than in the nation, while a location quotient below 1 means that an industry is less concentrated in Boston than in the nation.



Knowledge sectors have been the foundation of Boston's recent growth. Today, healthcare is the city's single largest sector, comprising nearly 20 percent of jobs and growing nearly 10 percent since 2010.²²

Assets

Sectors that grew between 2010-2014 and in which Boston is specialized.

Uncompetitive

Sectors that declined between 2010-2014 and in which Boston has not specialized.

Emerging

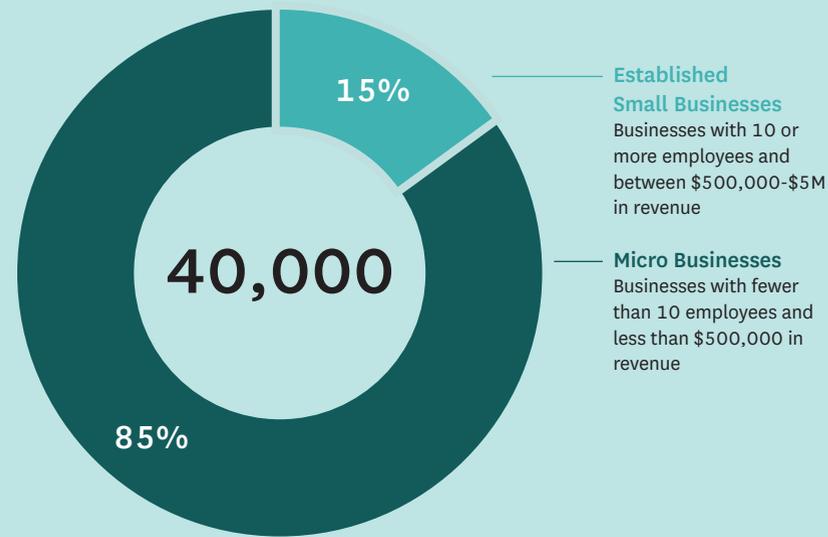
Sectors that grew between 2010-2014 and in which Boston has not specialized.

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc.

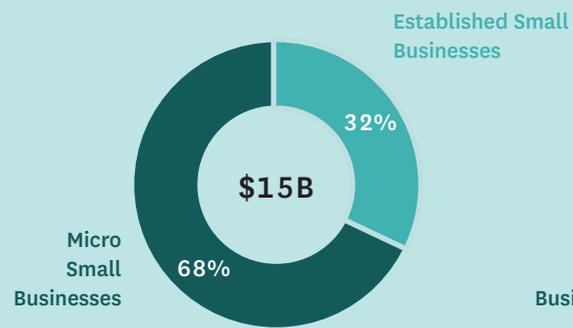
Small Businesses

Together, Boston's more than 40,000 small businesses generate about \$15 billion in annual revenue and approximately 170,000 jobs.

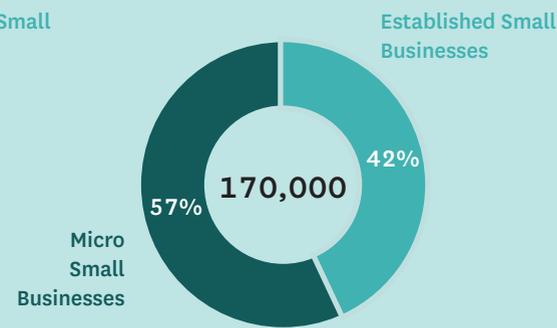
TOTAL SMALL BUSINESSES



TOTAL SMALL BUSINESS REVENUE

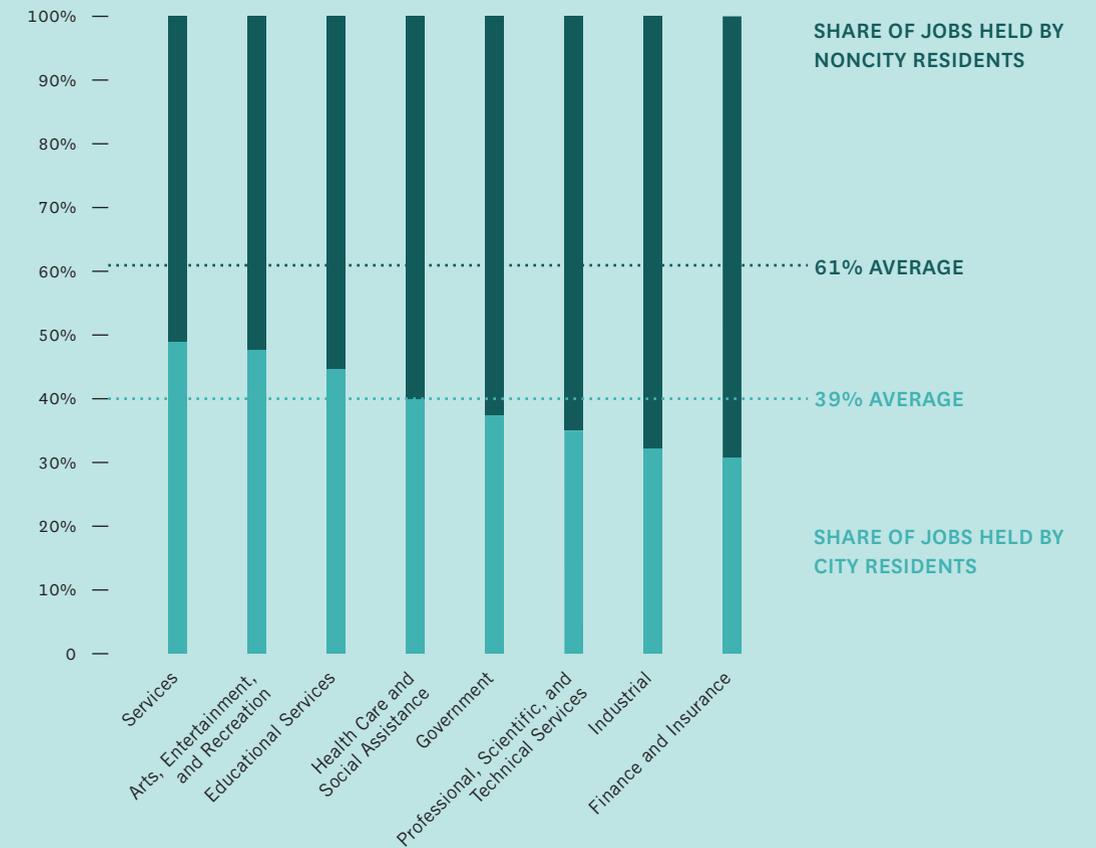


TOTAL EMPLOYEES



Share of Employees Residing in Boston by Industry

Boston's residents are under-represented in high-paying industries.



Note: Data is based only on payroll employees. Services include Retail Trade, Administrative and Waste Services, Accommodation and Food Services, and Other Services

Source: "Small Business Plan," City of Boston

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates (2009-2013), BPDA Research Department

Growing Population

Boston's population is growing rapidly: The city added nearly as many residents in the past five years as it did over the previous 20.²³ Between 2010 and 2014, Boston's population grew by 6 percent, compared with 3 percent growth in Massachusetts and the nation as a whole.²⁴ By 2030, Boston is projected to be home to

approximately 724,000 residents, on track to reach—and likely exceed—its previous peak population of 801,000 by 2050.²⁵ Today, Boston's population composition is changing as new residents come to the city. Boston is an increasingly diverse, well-educated city with a large student population. As Boston grows, it must remain a

place of opportunity for all residents including Boston's large immigrant, elderly, and low-income communities and more than 25,000 Boston residents who live in public housing.²⁶

Students at the Hennigan Elementary School, Jamaica Plain



Imagine Boston 2030

Annual Senior Walk at Joe Moakley Park, August 2015

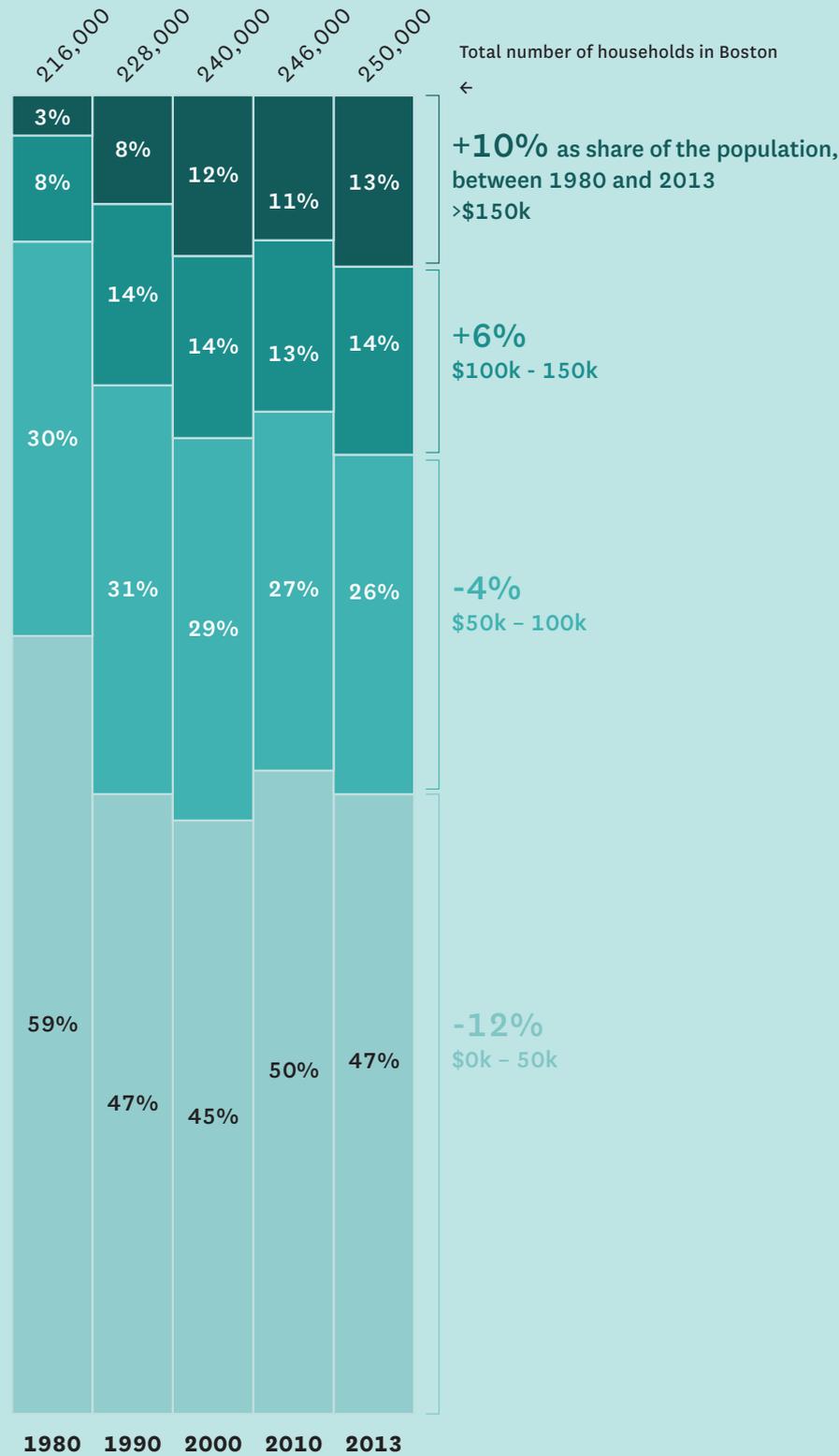


Clougherty Pool, Charlestown



Percent of Households by Income Bracket (Inflation Adjusted \$2013)

Bostonians' household incomes are shifting, with a greater proportion of households earning more than \$100,000.



1950-2010 Decennial Census, ACS 5-Year Estimates (2006-2010, 2009-2013), U.S. Census Bureau. BPDA Research Department

Boston has become more diverse.

In 1980, about two-thirds of Boston's population was white. Today, more than half of our residents are people of color.²⁷ Foreign-born Bostonians comprise more than a quarter of the population,²⁸ and 51 percent of Boston's children live with at least one foreign-born parent.²⁹

51%

of Boston's children live with at least one foreign-born parent

Boston's immigrants are coming from new places.

Boston's immigrant population is changing. In 1970, the majority of Boston immigrants came from Europe; today, immigrants from the Americas make up half of the city's foreign-born population and residents from Asia represent a quarter.³⁰ The Dominican Republic, China, and Haiti are the three most common countries of origin for the city's foreign-born residents.³¹

Many Bostonians are young

39 percent of the city is between 18 and 34 years old, a segment that has been stable since 1980.³² With many universities, Boston has the highest concentration of young adults of any of the 25 largest cities in the country.³³

39%

of residents are between 18 and 34 years old

Bostonians have a high rate of college completion.

47 percent of our adult population has a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with 30 percent nationwide. The share of Boston's adult population with a college degree has more than doubled since 1980.³⁴

Boston has a sizable elderly population.

Boston's senior population has remained stable, accounting for 11 percent of the total population, but it is expected to rise to 14 percent by 2030 as the population as a whole lives longer.³⁵

Bostonians' household incomes are shifting.

Since 1980, the city's share of high-income earners has increased while the proportion of middle-income households has declined. A significant portion of this change occurred between 1980 and 1990. However, subsequent decades saw modest changes in the share of household earnings above \$100,000 and a corresponding decrease in household earnings between \$50,000 and \$100,000. The proportion of households earning less than \$50,000 has remained relatively stable, in part due to Boston's proactive policies to retain significant public and affordable housing for many low-income residents.³⁶

← See opposite page

Immigrant Advancement Commitment

Boston is a city of immigrants. The city was founded by immigrants, and communities of new Americans continue to shape Boston’s workforce, culture, and city fabric today.

In the 19th century, immigrants made up over one third of Boston’s population. Although the city’s foreign-born share fell to 13 percent in 1970, today—once again—almost one in every three Bostonians is an immigrant and almost half of all children in Boston have a foreign-born parent.³⁷ Boston’s foreign-born population hails from almost 150 different countries and speaks more than 80 different languages.³⁸

Boston’s immigrants play a critical role in the city’s economic success by providing critical skills and services. Foreign-born Bostonians are integral to Boston’s core and growing industries, including education, health care, and technology. They make up a quarter of all postsecondary education students, a third of college professors and physicians, and two-thirds of all medical and life scientists.³⁹ In the tech sector, foreign-born Bostonians comprise over a quarter of computer scientists.⁴⁰ Immigrants are also key to Boston’s entrepreneurial strengths—foreign-born Bostonians account for a third of business owners, together employing 18,000 workers in the city.⁴¹ Despite contributions from immigrant communities, many of Boston’s immigrants are often more exposed to hardship and structural challenges than nonimmigrants. Foreign-born residents experience higher housing cost burdens, lower rates of home and car ownership, and greater risks of childhood poverty, discrimination, and documentation instability.⁴²

Boston fortifies its commitment to support immigrant communities—recognizing Boston’s heritage as an immigrant city, the increased hardships many immigrants face, and immigrants’ value to Boston’s economic and cultural fabric. To ensure that immigrants have the resources they need to thrive in Boston, the City is committed to the following key objectives:

Support a diverse and vibrant culture

We will create environments that enable foreign-born Bostonians to integrate into the city’s vibrant community fabric while simultaneously fostering the full expression of the cultural diversity that our immigrants bring to Boston.

Ensure safety

We will ensure that immigrants feel safe, welcomed, and celebrated, with full access to city services and comfort reporting public safety concerns regardless of resident status.

Facilitate economic mobility

We will expand access to economic opportunity by providing certification and training programs, language acquisition programs, resources to encourage homeownership, and safe, fair labor practices.

Ensure access to government resources

We will ensure that immigrants and all of Boston’s diverse cultural and linguistic groups have equal access to critical services including healthcare, education, and legal services while strengthening their ability to fully participate in economic, civic, social, and cultural life.

Foster equality of opportunity

We will work to identify and address disparities across key outcomes the City tracks, including health, education, income, and homeownership.



↑ Immigrant Community Conversations at the Islamic Center of Boston, February 2017.

Promote naturalization

We will promote naturalization through community education and application assistance for residents who are eligible to apply.

Facilitate legal access

We will facilitate access to reliable information about immigration law and policy and to legal services for immigrants.

"Provide ESL classes/workshops and job training to the immigrant community in Dorchester"

Dorchester resident via community workshop

Inequality

Although a growing city creates new opportunities for economic and social prosperity, enduring inequities in Boston limit some residents from sharing in these opportunities. Significant disparities endure within the city, especially along racial lines. Among Boston residents, people of color complete a college or graduate degree at significantly lower rates than white residents, at a time when college or advanced degrees have

increasingly become a requirement for employment in Boston's growing industries. Lower wages and lower rates of homeownership among Boston residents of color have led to a significant wealth gap by race.

These disparities are consistent with national trends and represent challenges that other growing cities face. Solutions to address these trends must respond to Boston's history of race relations and current geographic

segregation. The legacy of busing, redlining, and urban renewal policies that concentrated poverty and uprooted communities is still affecting many of Boston's communities of color. These inequities endure today and have not been sufficiently addressed by government policies and investments.

As we plan for Boston's future, we will address the disparities of the past and the present.

As part of President Obama's My Brother's Keeper Initiative, Boston is working to close the achievement gap for the city's black and Latino boys and young men.



Annual City of Boston Homeless Census →



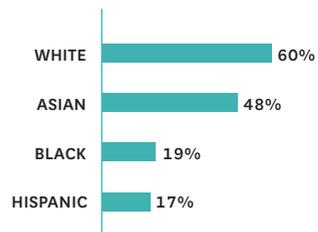
"I want this city to be a place where we see vibrancy and life. Where opportunity and equality are hand in hand."
Mattapan resident via web survey



"A city that is equitable where the bountiful resources we have are enjoyed equally by all residents: access to reliable and efficient public transportation...affordable stable neighborhoods, quality schools, fair wages, and diverse employment opportunities."
Roslindale resident via web survey

Educational attainment varies significantly by race in Boston.

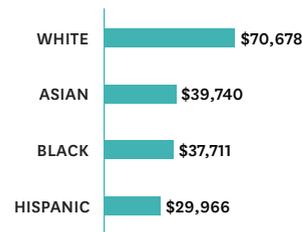
White residents are more than three times as likely to have a Bachelor's degree as black or Hispanic residents.⁴³



Share of population holding a bachelor's degree or above, by race⁴⁴

Disparities in income persist between races.

Even among residents who have the same educational background, people of color earn less. Asian, Hispanic, and black residents with a bachelor's degree alone earn a median income between 15 percent and 25 percent less than white residents who hold a bachelor's degree.⁴⁵



Median income by race among residents with bachelor's degrees⁴⁶

Income disparities endure between men and women.

Across education levels, women in Boston earn median incomes of 13 percent to 25 percent less than men with the same educational backgrounds.⁴⁷

See "Median Income by Gender and Educational Attainment" on page 88

Incomes have stagnated for many Bostonians, and poverty rates remain high.

In Boston and nationwide, low-income households have seen their incomes stagnate since 1980, when adjusted for inflation. Today, 36 percent of Hispanics, 31 percent of Asians, and 27 percent of black residents live in poverty, compared with 16 percent of Boston's white population.⁴⁸

See "Percentage of Population Living in Poverty" on page 88

Financial disparities are even starker when it comes to building wealth.

White residents in the Boston metro area have a median net worth of \$247,000, compared with \$2,700 for Hispanics and just \$8 for U.S.-born black residents, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston.⁴⁹ Moreover, more than one third of black residents do not have a bank account or credit card, compared to only 2 percent of white residents.⁵⁰

See opposite page →

Rates of homeownership, a key source of wealth, are lower among people of color.

Among homes with a white head of household, 42 percent are owner-occupied, compared to 30 percent of homes with a black head of household, 28 percent of Asian and 16 percent of Hispanic-occupied housing units.⁵¹

Health outcomes vary significantly by neighborhood, as well as by race.

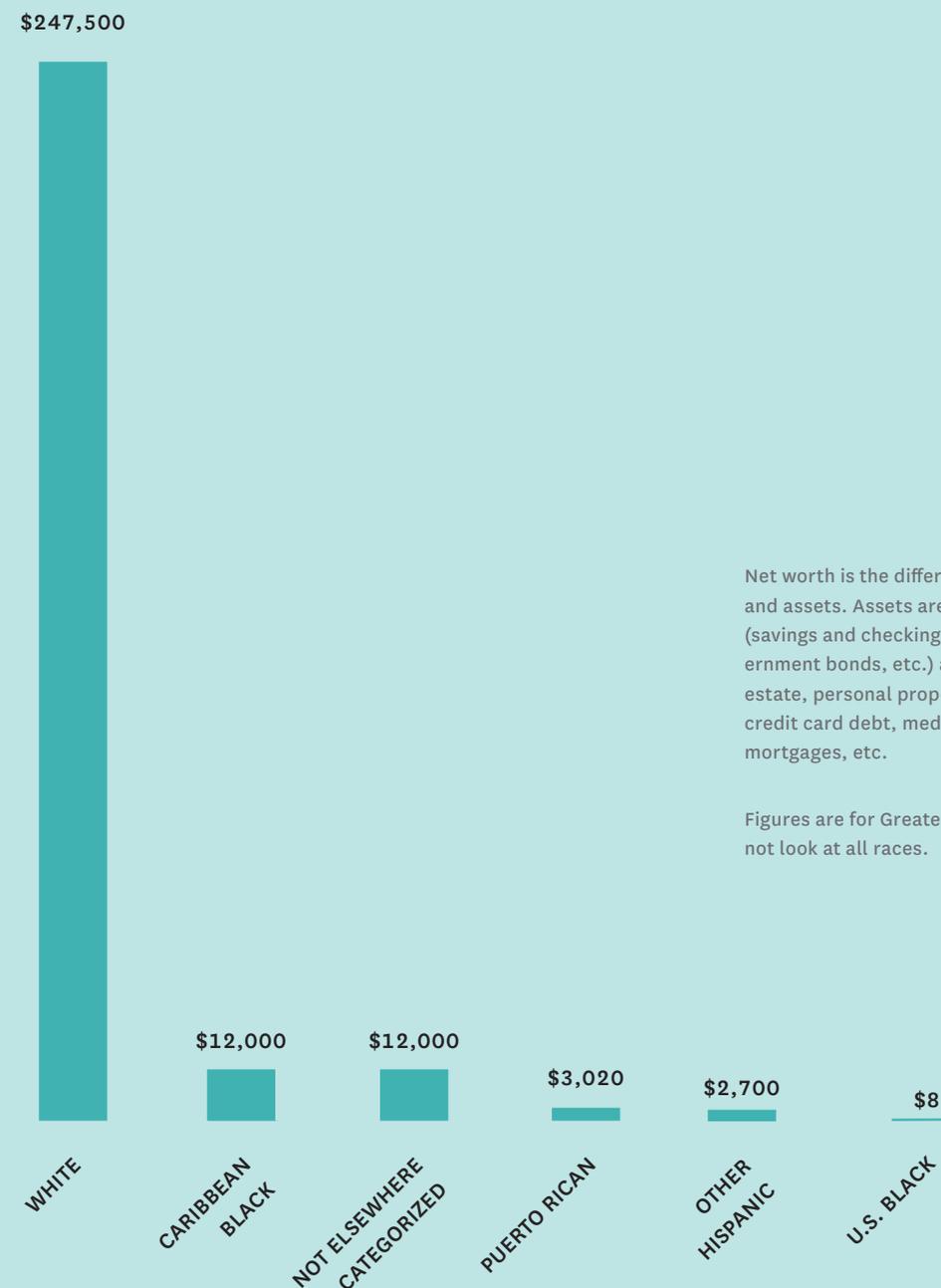
Roxbury, South Boston, Dorchester, and Mattapan have some of the highest rates of premature mortality, defined as residents dying before the age of 65. Chronic health issues such as hypertension and obesity disproportionately affect Boston's black and Hispanic populations.⁵²

See "Premature Mortality Rates by Boston Neighborhood" on page 89

Foreign-born Bostonians are more exposed to structural challenges than non-immigrants.

Immigrants in Boston are more likely to be housing cost burdened, with over half of immigrants spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs.⁵³ Immigrant communities also face higher rates of premature mortality, are significantly less likely to earn a family-sustaining wage than native-born Bostonians, and often live in neighborhoods with lower walkability and transit access.⁵⁴

Median Net Worth by Race



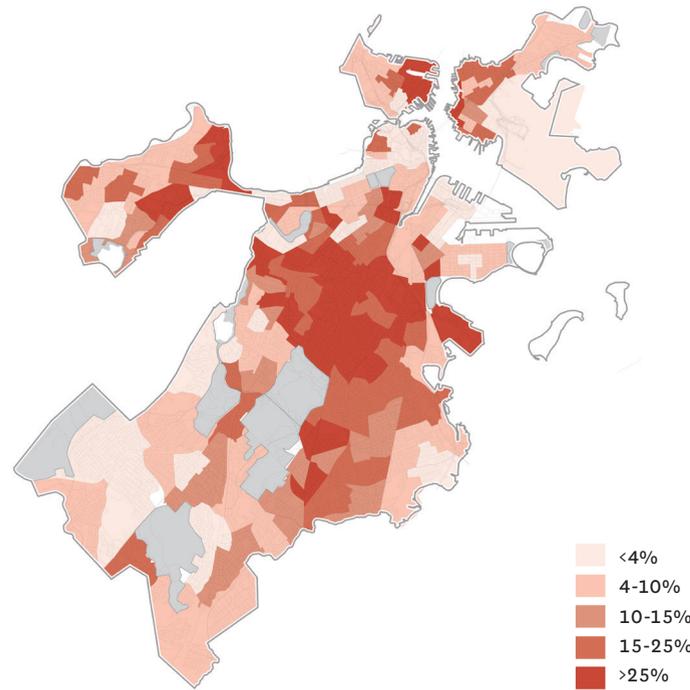
Source: "The Color of Wealth," Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, 2015.

There is a stark wealth gap between white people and people of color.

Net worth is the difference between debts and assets. Assets are both financial assets (savings and checking accounts, stocks, government bonds, etc.) and tangible assets (real estate, personal property, etc.). Debts include credit card debt, medical debt, student loans, mortgages, etc.

Figures are for Greater Boston. Analysis did not look at all races.

Percentage of Population Living in Poverty

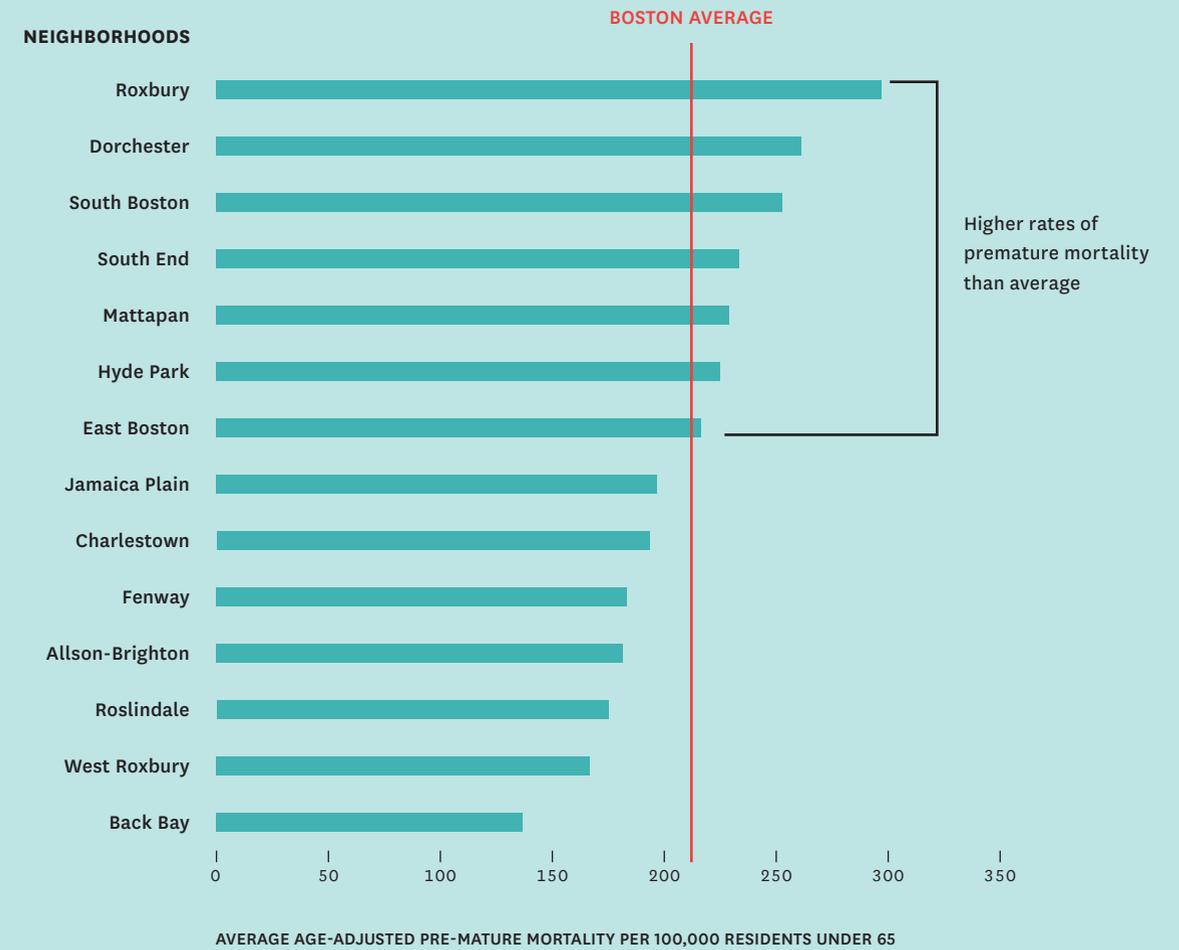


23%
of the population is living in poverty, but poverty rates are higher in some areas

Source: ACS 1-Year Estimate (2014), U.S. Census Bureau; BPDA Research Department

Premature Mortality Rates by Boston Neighborhood

Health outcomes vary significantly by neighborhood, as well as by race.



Source: Boston Public Health Commission

Median Income by Gender and Educational Attainment

Income disparities endure between men and women with similar education levels.



Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates (2009-2013), Public Use Microdata Sample, U.S. Census Bureau. BPDA Research Department

Affordability

Boston's economic recovery and population growth have contributed to an increase in the cost of living in Boston. Housing prices have increased in tandem with rising demand as the construction of new housing stock has lagged behind population growth. Households in every

neighborhood are feeling the strain of rising prices, and many historically affordable neighborhoods, including areas with large low-income populations and communities of color, are becoming less affordable. Boston's high cost of living is a testament to people's desire to live in the city, but

these high costs are challenging for the families and communities who have long called Boston home.

Boston must focus on the needs of these residents as we work to prevent displacement and make Boston affordable for all.

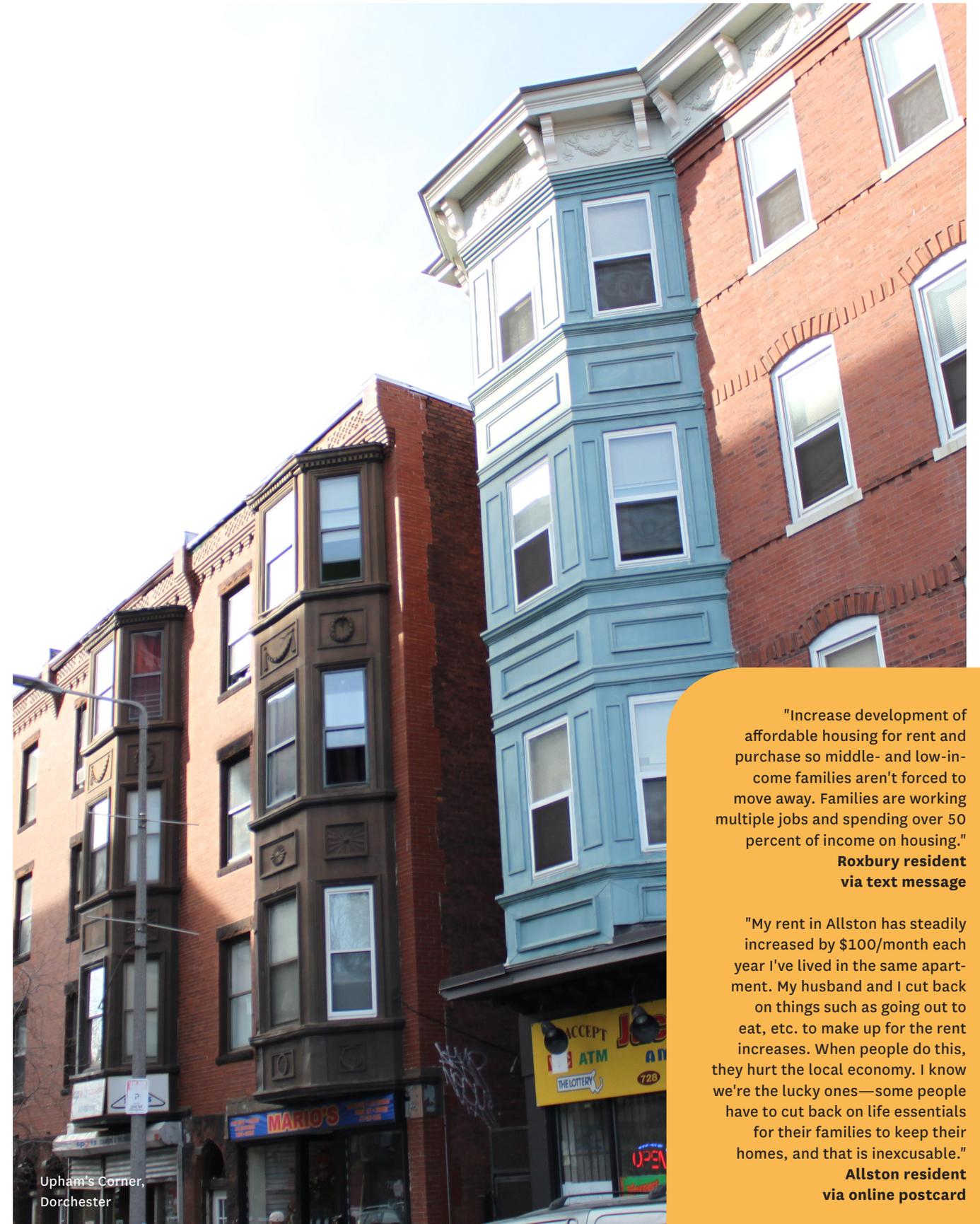


New construction near the Forest Hills MBTA stop, Jamaica Plain

→

Chinatown has varied housing stock, from older three- to four-story buildings to new high-rises.

↓



Upham's Corner, Dorchester

"Increase development of affordable housing for rent and purchase so middle- and low-income families aren't forced to move away. Families are working multiple jobs and spending over 50 percent of income on housing."

Roxbury resident via text message

"My rent in Allston has steadily increased by \$100/month each year I've lived in the same apartment. My husband and I cut back on things such as going out to eat, etc. to make up for the rent increases. When people do this, they hurt the local economy. I know we're the lucky ones—some people have to cut back on life essentials for their families to keep their homes, and that is inexcusable."

Allston resident via online postcard

Boston homes are two-and-a-half times more expensive than the average U.S. home.

However, household incomes are on par with the nation, leading to a high cost of living in Boston.⁵⁵ In 2015, the average monthly rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Boston was nearly \$2,500, up from approximately \$2,100 in 2011.⁵⁶

[See below ↓](#)

65 percent of Bostonians' homes are renter occupied.⁵⁷

Boston has a larger share of renters than peer cities, including San Francisco, Washington D.C., and Seattle.

Nearly 20 percent of Boston's housing stock is designated affordable.

Boston has a higher percentage of a housing stock set aside as deed-restricted affordable units than most cities, including New York and Washington, D.C.⁵⁸ This includes more than 12,000 units of Boston Housing Authority-owned (BHA) public housing, an additional 11,000 BHA-assisted units, and more than 30,000 privately-owned assisted rental units.⁵⁹ However, even with this significant share of affordable housing, more than 40,000 applicants remain on public housing and Section 8 waitlists.⁶⁰

Despite a robust supply of deed-restricted housing, 21 percent of Bostonians are severely housing cost burdened.

In Boston, 21 percent of all households are severely housing-cost burdened—spending 50 percent or more of their income on housing costs.⁶¹ Boston's high housing costs disproportionately impact less wealthy Bostonians: 35 percent of households earning less than the city's median household income are severely cost burdened.⁶² By comparison, just 2 percent of households earning more than the city's median household income are severely cost burdened.⁶³

[See opposite page ↘](#)

Rising housing prices are particularly concerning for neighborhoods with large shares of low-income renters.

Neighborhoods such as Roxbury, East Boston, and Chinatown have high percentages of low-income renters and are also seeing sharp increases in housing prices. Significant housing-price increases threaten the stability of those communities, as renters experience a higher cost burden without the wealth-building benefits that homeowners receive from price increases.⁶⁴

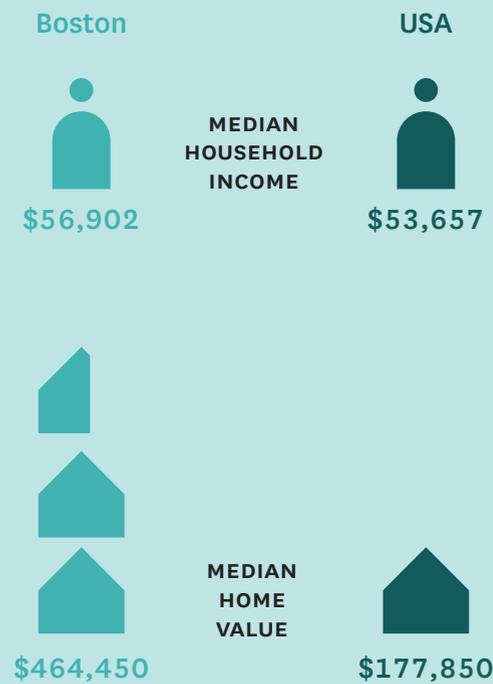
Transportation in Boston is relatively inexpensive.

The cost of transportation is proportionally lower in Boston as a share of income than in many parts of the country. Although robust public transportation provides a more affordable transportation option for many Bostonians, residents in some neighborhoods, including Hyde Park and Roslindale, still spend 15 percent or more of their income on transportation.⁶⁵

Our traditional housing stock can be adapted to meet the needs of Boston's growing population.

Demographic changes over the past decades mean that the three-deckers that once housed upwards of a dozen people in three families today might be inhabited by many fewer residents. As Boston's population grows older and the city continues to be a center for students, Boston's housing stock and zoning must evolve to meet the smaller space needs, lower price points, and distinct preferences of these residents.

Housing price v. Median Household Income, Boston v. U.S., 2015

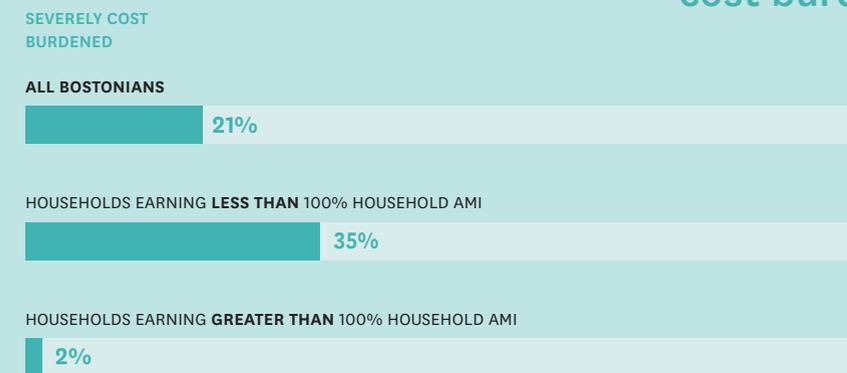


Median household income is the same as the nation, but homes in Boston are two-and-a-half times as expensive.

Source: Zillow Housing Data, Median 2-Bedroom Rent

"The biggest obstacle I see to still living in Boston 15 years from now is the lack of affordable housing options. I would prefer to own a home but given my student debt, difficulty saving a large amount of money for a down payment, and the skyrocketing cost of homes here, I don't see that as being a likely scenario."
Dorchester resident via web survey

Severe Housing Cost Burden by Income Bracket



21 percent of Bostonians are severely housing-cost burdened.

Households that are severely cost burdened spend 50 percent or more of their income on housing costs.

AMI refers to area median income, a measure of income that is often used to determine eligibility for affordable housing.

"Boston needs more affordable housing for lower-income and middle-class individuals...About 70 percent of my salary goes to housing and the amount I pay for a one bedroom is the same that I would be paying for a monthly mortgage on a condo or house, but between other expenses, I'm unable to save enough for a down payment."
West End resident via web survey

Source: HUD CHAS Data (2009-2013)

Changing Climate

As a dense coastal city, Boston faces growing risks as extreme weather becomes more frequent and intense due to climate change. In this century and beyond, the climate hazards that Boston already faces—including coastal and riverine flooding,

stormwater flooding, and extreme weather events—will be exacerbated by climate change. To remain a thriving waterfront city, Boston must take aggressive action to reduce emissions and address climate change impacts. These actions will require

close collaboration between the public and the private sector and must have a particular focus on protecting Boston's most vulnerable populations.

Long Wharf at the King Tide, October 17, 2016



In February 2015, Winter Storm Neptune hit Boston; Amory Street, Jamaica Plain



Boston is a leader in reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and is committed to continued reduction.

Since 2005, Boston has cut emissions by 17 percent, and the City is committed to making Boston a leader in environmental action and responsibility.⁶⁶ Commercial uses, such as large buildings and institutions, are among the largest energy consumers but have made the greatest sectoral contributions to overall reduction. Continued GHG reduction will be substantially more challenging, requiring a concerted effort across many sectors to become more energy efficient and environmentally friendly.

Sea levels are rising.

Over the entire twentieth century, sea levels rose about 9 inches relative to land; between 2000 and 2030, sea level is projected to rise at almost three times that rate. By 2050, the sea level may be as much as one-and-a-half feet higher than it was in 2000, and 3 feet higher in 2070.⁶⁷

[See below and opposite page ↴ →](#)

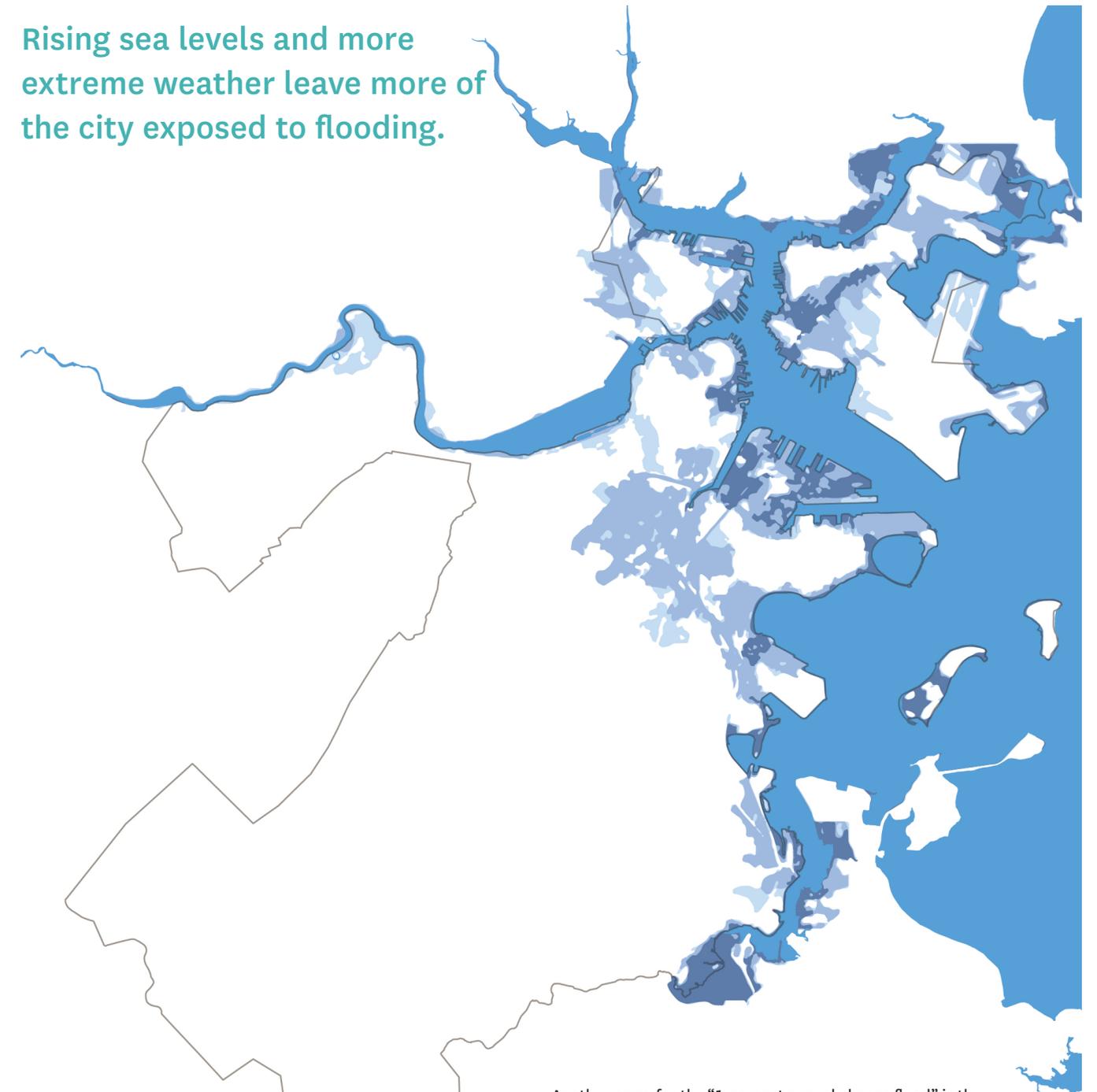
Buildings and residents are exposed to flood risk.

With 9 inches of sea-level rise, which is projected to occur as soon as the 2030s, 5 percent of Boston's land area will be inundated by a 1 percent annual chance storm, exposing 3 percent of the population and

approximately \$20 billion worth of property to flooding. By the 2070s, within the lifetime of many Boston buildings, the 1 percent annual chance storm would impact nearly 15 percent of today's population and more than \$80 billion of property value. This exposure is concentrated in coastal neighborhoods, with almost 25 percent of East Boston and South Boston inundated under these 2030 conditions, increasing to 60-70 percent by the 2070s.⁶⁸

Flood map, 36 inches of sea level rise (2070s or later)

Rising sea levels and more extreme weather leave more of the city exposed to flooding.



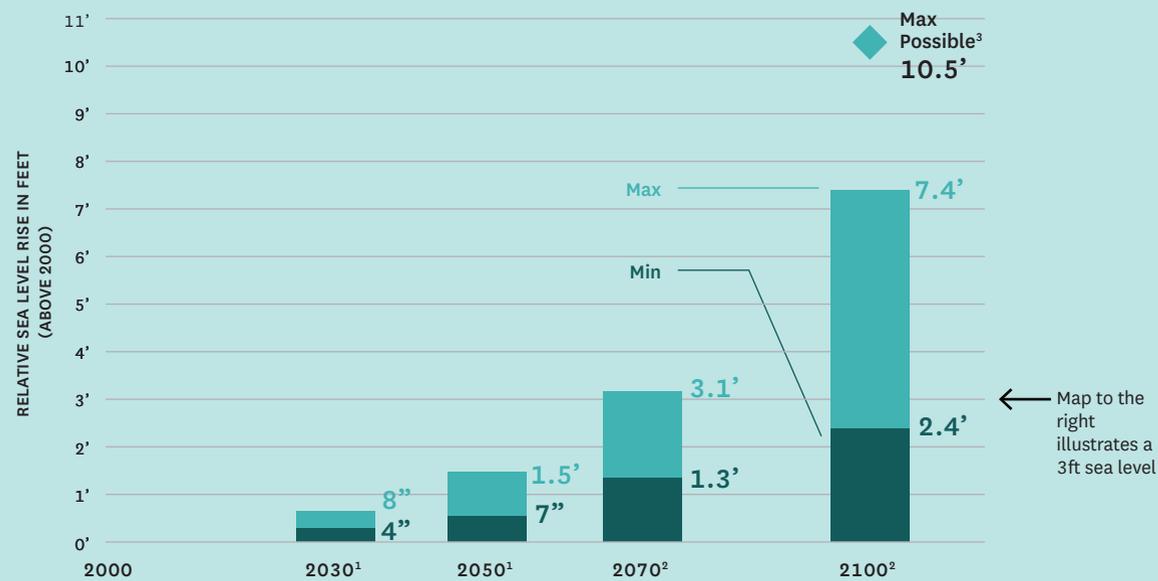
Source: Climate Ready Boston

- Average Monthly High Tide
- Land that has a 10% annual chance of flooding
- Land that has a 1% annual chance of flooding

Another name for the "1 percent annual chance flood" is the "100-year flood." Experts prefer not to use the "100-year" term, since it gives the impression that a certain level of flooding will only occur once every 100 years. In fact, it has a 1 percent chance of occurring in any given year, and can even occur two years in a row. Over a 30-year period, there is almost a 1 in 3 chance that a 1 percent annual chance flood will occur at least once. The average monthly high tide is the area expected to be flooded about once a month even without a storm.

Boston Relative Sea-level Rise Projections

Sea levels are rising.



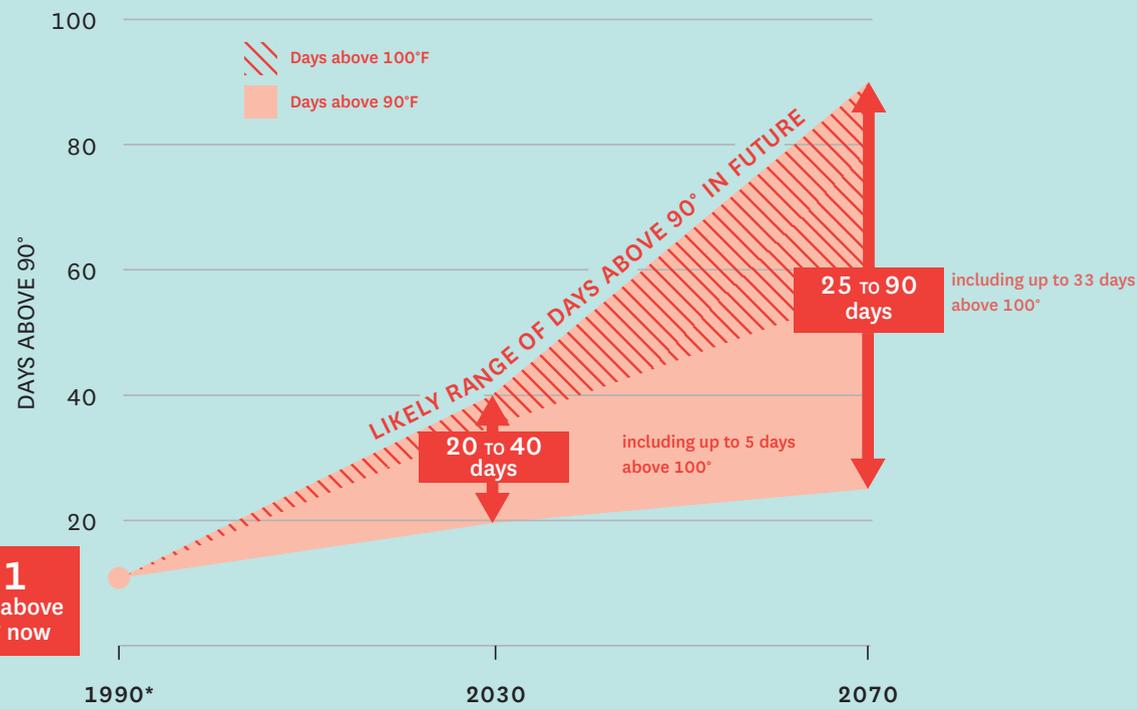
1 - Likely under all emission scenarios
 2 - Likely under moderate- to high-emission scenarios
 3 - Low probability under high-emission scenario

Source: "Climate Change and Sea Level Rise Projections for Boston," Boston Research Advisory Group

Map to the right illustrates a 3ft sea level

Change in Average Summer Temperature, Climate Ready Boston

By 2070, up to 33 days of the year may have temperatures above 100 degrees.



* Baseline represents historical average from 1971-2000
Upper values from high-emissions scenario. Lower values from low-emissions scenario.

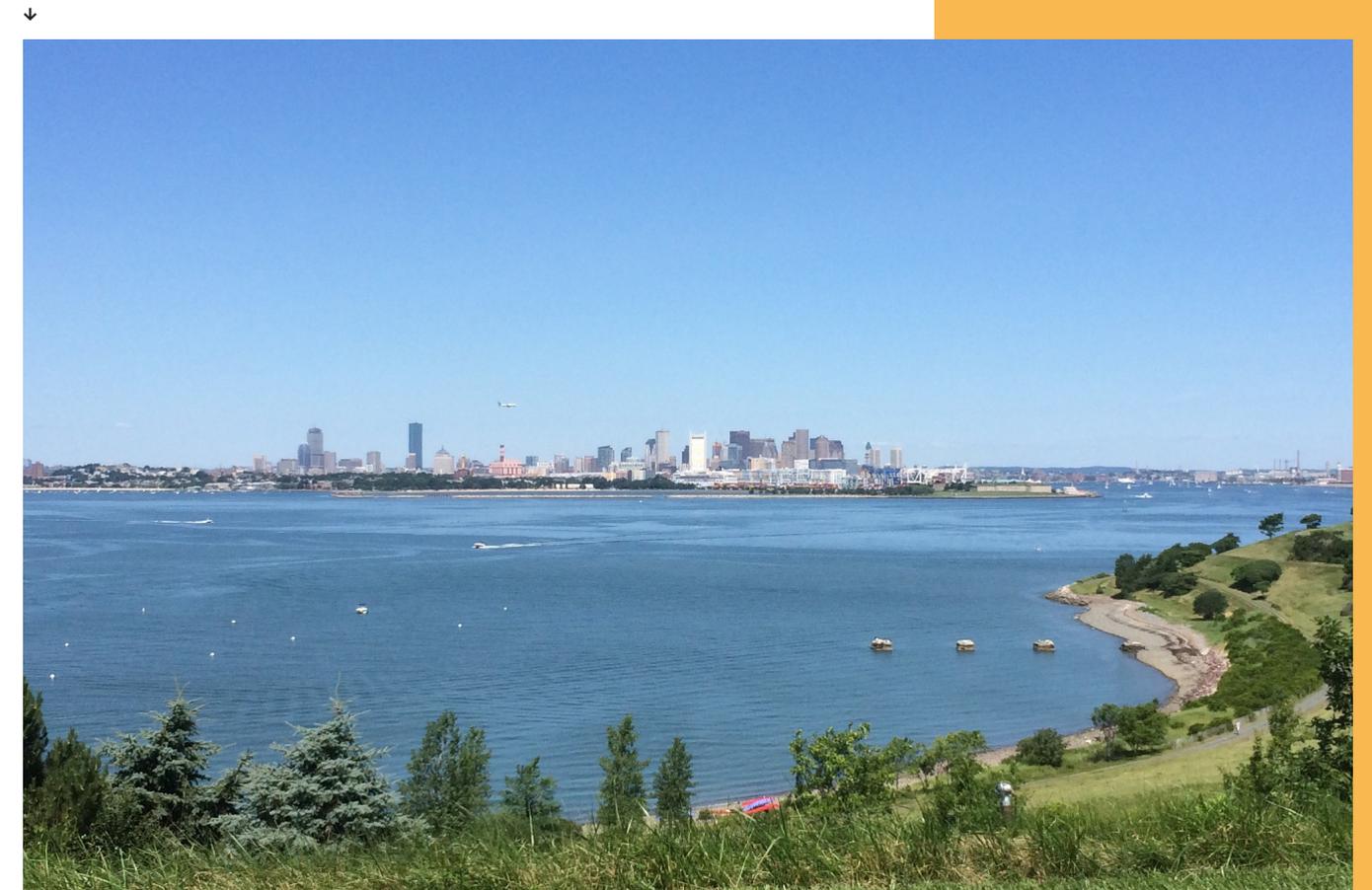
Source: Climate Ready Boston analysis

Temperatures are becoming more extreme.

Compared to the period from 1971 to 2000, when there were 11 days per year over 90 degrees, there may be as many as 40 by the 2030s, and 90 by the 2070s—nearly the entire summer.⁶⁹ The City issues heat advisories when daytime highs are forecasted to reach between 100-104 degrees Fahrenheit for two or more hours.⁷⁰ In the 2030s, rising temperatures could mean that Boston experiences five heat advisories a summer.⁷¹

← See opposite page

Spectacle Island,
Boston Harbor
Islands National
Recreation Area



Precipitation is becoming more extreme.

From 1958 to 2010, there was a 70 percent increase in the amount of precipitation that fell during the biggest storms. This increase is greater in the Northeast than for any other region of the country and is expected to continue.⁷²

Coastal storms will have a greater impact.

Although it is not yet clear how the intensity, frequency, and trajectory of tropical storms and hurricanes will change, sea-level rise will magnify their impact on Boston's shores.

"[The] city needs to be prepared for sea-level rise, hotter summers, colder winters, more extreme storms."

Dorchester resident via community workshop

"Focus on resiliency to climate change and preparation for storm surges."

Roxbury resident via online postcard

Transformative Technology

Boston is at the forefront of national and global changes in the ways that we live and work. The traditional boundaries between home and work, downtown and neighborhoods are changing as technology removes

traditional constraints on how residents communicate and travel and changing demographics necessitate new ways of living. As Boston plans for the future, the City must proactively set policies to ensure that

new technology makes Boston a better place for residents over the long term and enables the city to retain its important function of connecting people and ideas.

Hubway is the regional public bike share system providing bikes for transportation and recreation in Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, and Somerville. Hubway is continuing to grow with stations opening in East Boston in November 2016.



Advances in communication infrastructure and Internet connectivity are changing the way Bostonians work and collaborate.

Today nearly 80 percent of Boston residents are connected to broadband.⁷³ Many commercial districts already have smart features, such as benches equipped to provide solar-powered charging stations, and Wicked Free Wi-Fi, Boston's free outdoor wireless network, which is expected to expand to 130 access points over the next few years.⁷⁴

Nearly
80%

of Boston residents are connected to broadband

Work is increasingly more flexible and distributed.

The number of Bostonians who are classified as “nonpayroll” (jobs not subject to unemployment insurance) has risen from 87,000 (13 percent of the overall workforce) to 123,000 (17 percent of the overall workforce) between 2001 and 2014.⁷⁵ This shift has complex implications; while in part it represents more entrepreneurship and flexible work options, it also represents an increase in the “gig economy” where workers piece together multiple jobs or even individual tasks. “Gig economy” jobs often lack the stability and benefits provided by many full-time jobs, making it more challenging for workers to build wealth and achieve long-term financial security. At the same

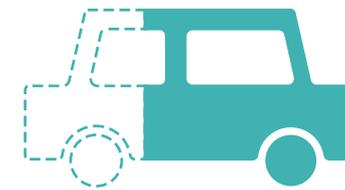
time, a shift away from the traditional patterns of employment provides an opportunity for Boston to encourage job growth in more locations throughout the city and explore how the commercial core can become more mixed-use.

Bostonians are using new transportation options to move through the city.

Car-sharing, ride-sharing, and bike-sharing programs—including Zipcar and Hubway—have grown significantly and are transforming the traditional paradigm of individual vehicle ownership. Flexible transportation systems are filling gaps in existing transportation infrastructure. Anticipated transportation

34%

of households do not own a car



Source: Go Boston 2030, Boston Transportation Department

In partnership with the World Economic Forum, the City of Boston is exploring autonomous vehicle technologies in Boston. The collaboration will include a yearlong engagement focused on creating policy recommendations and supporting on-street testing of autonomous vehicles, to advance the safety, access, and reliability goals identified by Go Boston 2030.

advances, including autonomous vehicles, will necessitate new ways of sharing Boston's roads.

Smart utilities are improving essential services such as energy, transport, water, and waste.

The Boston “Smart Utilities Vision” aims to integrate the planning and implementation of transportation, energy systems, communication infrastructure, and water services. Smart utilities are already making headway through the South Boston Dorchester Avenue planning initiative, in which the City is creating a vision that will guide utility providers to transform their traditional approach of ad-hoc infrastructure planning into a proactive, coordinated system. This coordination will create a more resilient system of underground utilities that will be economically built, efficient to operate, and easy to update as technology changes.

“Embrace technology with policy and modernize things like 911, 311, by finding ways to partner with startups like Airbnb, Uber, and others.”

Dorchester resident via text message

“Capitalize on the ability of new technology to provide data that can make the city function better.”

Jamaica Plain resident via online postcard

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"We are Boston" Gala ↓





Caribbean Festival in
August 2016, Roxbury
and Dorchester

TOW ZONE
NO
STOPPING
ANY



Allston and
Beacon Yards