

INCOME-RESTRICTED *Housing in Boston 2021*



SUMMARY

The City of Boston has the highest percentage of income-restricted housing of any major city in the country, with 19.2 percent of its total housing stock designated as income-restricted. In the past 10 years, Boston has permitted 8,420 income-restricted units, which is 28 percent of total housing production during that time. In 2021, 36 percent of all housing production was income-restricted (767 units).

Boston is fortunate to have such a large number of income-restricted units – and the City of Boston has been expanding this stock in order to address the growing demand for housing and high housing costs. The COVID-19 pandemic has drawn attention to and exacerbated the ongoing housing insecurity many Bostonians do and will continue to face.

To meet these needs, income-restricted housing is created and maintained by a combination of federal, state, and city funds, requiring private residential and large commercial development to support income-restricted housing, and implementing innovative new programs and policies. In addition to federal and state dollars, the City invests approximately \$70 million per year toward the

preservation of existing and production of new income-restricted housing, including General Fund, Inclusionary Development Policy, Community Preservation Act, and Neighborhood Housing Trust (“Linkage”) funds.

Federal Resources have declined over the last 30 years, forcing states and cities to pick up more of the costs of building and maintaining income-restricted housing. New funds for housing have become available from the federal CARES Act and the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), providing Boston with the opportunity to do more in the short term, but still not guaranteeing long-term funding for new housing.

The Mayor’s Office of Housing (MOH, formerly DND) maintains an inventory of all income-restricted units in Boston. This report provides a summary of Boston’s current income-restricted housing stock to help residents and housing professionals better understand the geographic distribution, affordability levels, and other characteristics of this important sector of housing stock.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- **56,695 units are income-restricted in Boston – that’s 19.2 percent, or nearly one in five units in the city.**
- **64 percent of all of Boston’s income-restricted units are affordable to low-income households making less than 50 percent of Area Median Income (AMI).**
- **The neighborhoods where income-restricted units make up the highest percentage of the housing stock are Roxbury (54 percent), Chinatown (50 percent), Mission Hill (37 percent), and the South End (33 percent).**
- **36 percent of the housing units permitted in 2021 were income-restricted.**
- **80 percent of the income-restricted units completed since 2011 are within a 10 minute walk to transit.**



WHAT IS INCOME-RESTRICTED HOUSING?

Income-restricted rental housing, commonly referred to as affordable housing, has the rent capped at a price affordable to a qualified household. This restriction may be for 20, 30, or 50 years, or in perpetuity, though the majority of units are restricted in perpetuity or for 50 years. Housing built by MOH almost always have restrictions in perpetuity.

For income-restricted homeownership units, the sales price is limited so as to remain affordable to buyers of a particular income, and there is a restriction on the deed that requires the current owner to sell the home at an affordable/below market price to an income eligible buyer. The deed restrictions on homeownership units are generally for 50 years.

Some units in the city may be renting or selling at affordable market-rate prices (known as naturally occurring affordable housing), but data in this report reflects only those that have a legal covenant dictating their maximum rents or prices.

Income-restricted units provide affordable housing options to Boston residents and help protect households against rising market prices that could potentially displace them from their homes and neighborhoods. Income-restricted housing helps both low- and middle-income households who are struggling to find units they can afford in Boston's expensive housing market.



Cote Village Townhomes, Mattapan, 24 income-restricted rental units



DATA & METHODS

MOH maintains a database of all income-restricted units in Boston. This data includes:

- public housing owned by the Boston Housing Authority (BHA),
- privately-owned housing built with funding from MOH and/or on land that was formerly City-owned,
- privately-owned housing built without any City subsidy, e.g., created using Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) or as part of the Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP), and
- privately-owned properties with no City subsidy but with a subsidy from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) or from the Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD), such as Section 202 elderly housing.

Information is gathered from a variety of sources, including:

- the City's IDP list,
- permitting and completion data from the Inspectional Services Department (ISD),
- Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation's (CEDAC) Expiring Use list, and
- project lists from the BHA, DHCD, MassHousing, and HUD, among others.

The data is meant to be as exhaustive and up-to-date as possible, but since many units are not required to report data to the City of Boston, MOH is constantly working to verify and update the data.

Project information, including older projects, are updated on a rolling basis, making it difficult to compare this report to prior reports or view trends over time. The database only includes units that have a deed restriction. It does not include tenant-based (also known as mobile) vouchers, which subsidize rent, but move with the tenant and are not attached to a particular unit. There are approximately 20,017 tenant-based vouchers in the city of Boston that provide additional affordability to low- and moderate-income households.



OVERVIEW OF INCOME-RESTRICTED UNITS IN BOSTON



Talbot Commons Phase I, Dorchester, 19 income-restricted rental units

Boston currently has 56,695 income-restricted units in its housing stock; that's 19.2 percent of all units, or nearly one in every five units. The income-restricted stock consists of both rental and ownership units. Twenty seven percent of all rental units in the city are income-restricted, while only three percent of all ownership units are income-restricted (**Table 1**).

TABLE 1. INCOME-RESTRICTED UNITS AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL HOUSING STOCK

| | ALL UNITS | RENTAL | OWNER |
|--|-----------|---------|--------|
| Total Housing Units in Boston ¹ | 296,035 | 198,189 | 97,846 |
| Total Income-Restricted Units | 56,695 | 53,898 | 2,797 |
| % Income-Restricted | 19.2% | 27% | 3% |

The income-restricted stock itself is mostly rental units (95 percent) (**Table 2**); that's a significantly higher share than the overall housing stock, where 65 percent of units are rental and 35 percent are ownership². This is largely because demand for rental housing among low- and moderate-income tenants is very high, and many more funding sources are available for rental development and preservation than for ownership housing development.

TABLE 2. INCOME-RESTRICTED UNITS BY TENURE

| | | |
|-------------------------|--------|------|
| Total Income Restricted | 56,695 | 100% |
| Rental | 53,898 | 95% |
| Owner | 2,797 | 5% |

1 2010 Decennial Census (includes all occupied housing units, rented/sold not occupied, and vacant for rent/sale) + permitting data (units completed between 2011-2020).

2 American Community Survey 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates, Table B25007



NATIONAL COMPARISON

Boston has one of the highest percentages of income-restricted units in the country. There is no centralized database of all income-restricted units in the country, but units in HUD programs are published in the “Picture of Subsidized Households” report.

According to this data, Boston has the highest percentage of subsidized housing with 17 percent, followed by New York and Washington D.C., each with 11 percent. The 17 percent reported for Boston is lower than the 19.2 percent found using the MOH database, as the MOH database includes units that HUD would not capture in their data, such as units created under the Inclusionary Development Policy.

TABLE 3. HUD-FUNDED UNITS BY CITY

| CITY | TOTAL HOUSING UNITS | INCOME-RESTRICTED UNITS | PERCENT INCOME-RESTRICTED |
|------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Boston | 294,418 | 49,916 | 17% |
| New York | 3,494,228 | 393,052 | 11% |
| Washington, D.C. | 315,176 | 33,986 | 11% |
| Atlanta | 303,168 | 29,802 | 10% |
| Chicago | 1,214,450 | 103,964 | 9% |
| Los Angeles | 1,044,666 | 82,158 | 8% |
| Detroit | 362,947 | 26,465 | 7% |
| Philadelphia | 685,956 | 47,215 | 7% |
| San Francisco | 397,812 | 24,733 | 6% |
| Miami | 417,931 | 16,236 | 4% |
| Seattle | 501,836 | 20,689 | 4% |
| Dallas | 653,020 | 21,699 | 3% |
| Riverside, California | 139,610 | 2,762 | 2% |
| Houston | 1,334,555 | 25,022 | 2% |
| Phoenix | 1,350,034 | 12,980 | 1% |

Source: HUD Picture of Subsidized Households; ACS 2019 5-year estimates



TENANT-BASED VOUCHERS

In addition to the 56,695 units with a deed restriction, there are more than 20,017³ tenant-based vouchers in Boston that provide additional affordability to low- and moderate-income households. Tenant-based (also known as mobile) vouchers, subsidize rent but move with the tenant and are not attached to a particular unit. These include federally funded vouchers through the Housing Choice Voucher Program (also known as a “Section 8 Voucher”) and the HOPWA Program (Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS), vouchers through the Continuum of Care for supportive housing, and state-funded vouchers through the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program. In January 2020, the City announced the creation of a City-funded rental voucher program. This program has since provided 93 mobile vouchers to residents, about one third of whom are Boston Public Schools families who had been experiencing homelessness or overcrowded housing situations.

Anecdotally, it is known that some households living in income-restricted units also use a mobile voucher to help pay for rent. There is very little data on this doubling-up of subsidies, but HUD’s most recent report⁴ on LIHTC units shows that 19.6 percent of all households in LIHTC units also use a tenant-based subsidy. If this rate was applied to the income-restricted private-market rental stock of 18,088⁵ units in Boston, approximately 3,545 units would have a household also utilizing a mobile voucher. Of the 20,017 mobile voucher households in Boston, that would leave about 16,472 households using tenant-based vouchers only. These vouchers are not captured in MOH’s inventory, but are an important tool for increasing access to affordable housing options in the city.

3 Approximately 17,082 HUD Housing Choice Vouchers (HUD eGIS), approximately 1,166 Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program vouchers administered by Metro Boston and 172 administered by Boston Housing Authority, 80 HOPWA (Housing Opportunities for Persons with Aids) vouchers, and 1,424 Continuum of Care (CoC) vouchers.

4 HUD Low Income Housing Tax Credit: Tenant-Level Data, 2019: <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/lihtc/tenant.html>

5 Excludes project-based Section 8, 202, and 811-funded units, which cannot house mobile voucher holders.



GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Income-restricted units are distributed throughout the city, but some neighborhoods have much higher concentrations than others. **Table 4**, **Map 1**, and **Map 2** show the distribution of units by neighborhood. Roxbury has the most income-restricted units as a percent of its total housing stock (54 percent), followed by Chinatown (50 percent), Mission Hill (37 percent), and the South End (33 percent). Longwood Medical Area has no income-restricted housing, and only five percent of the Leather District is income-restricted; however, these neighborhoods have very few total residential units. Other neighborhoods with low income-restricted percentages include the Back Bay (6 percent), Bay Village (6 percent), Beacon Hill (6 percent), the North End (6 percent), Hyde Park (7 percent), and the South Boston Waterfront (8 percent).

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Permit Law (Chapter 40B) aims for every municipality in the state to income-restrict at least ten percent of its housing stock for low- and middle-income households. Boston far surpasses this threshold, with nearly double that percentage of income-restricted units. While individual neighborhoods are not subject to Chapter 40B, 17 out of 25 Boston neighborhoods meet this threshold. Eight neighborhoods do not meet the ten percent threshold: Back Bay, Bay Village, Beacon Hill, Hyde Park, the Leather District, the Longwood Medical Area, the North End, and the South Boston Waterfront (Seaport).



The Boston skyline from Blue Hill Avenue



GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

TABLE 4. INCOME-RESTRICTED HOUSING BY NEIGHBORHOOD

| NEIGHBORHOOD | INCOME-RESTRICTED UNITS | TOTAL HOUSING UNITS ⁶ | % INCOME RESTRICTED |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Allston | 966 | 9,019 | 11% |
| Back Bay | 681 | 11,074 | 6% |
| Bay Village | 154 | 2,666 | 6% |
| Beacon Hill | 343 | 5,746 | 6% |
| Brighton | 3,500 | 25,419 | 14% |
| Charlestown | 2,405 | 9,440 | 25% |
| Chinatown | 1,227 | 2,474 | 50% |
| Dorchester | 8,625 | 46,408 | 19% |
| Downtown | 816 | 8,072 | 10% |
| East Boston | 2,761 | 17,539 | 16% |
| Fenway | 2,066 | 14,912 | 14% |
| Hyde Park | 908 | 12,436 | 7% |
| Jamaica Plain | 3,879 | 18,565 | 21% |
| Leather District | 19 | 372 | 5% |
| Longwood Medical Area | 0 | 561 | 0% |
| Mattapan | 1,765 | 9,301 | 19% |
| Mission Hill | 2,654 | 7,228 | 37% |
| North End | 321 | 5,686 | 6% |
| Roslindale | 1,377 | 10,203 | 13% |
| Roxbury | 10,850 | 20,073 | 54% |
| South Boston | 3,390 | 18,029 | 19% |
| South Boston Waterfront | 415 | 5,293 | 8% |
| South End | 5,292 | 16,162 | 33% |
| West End | 867 | 5,579 | 16% |
| West Roxbury | 1,414 | 13,778 | 10% |
| CITYWIDE | 56,695 | 296,035 | 19.2% |

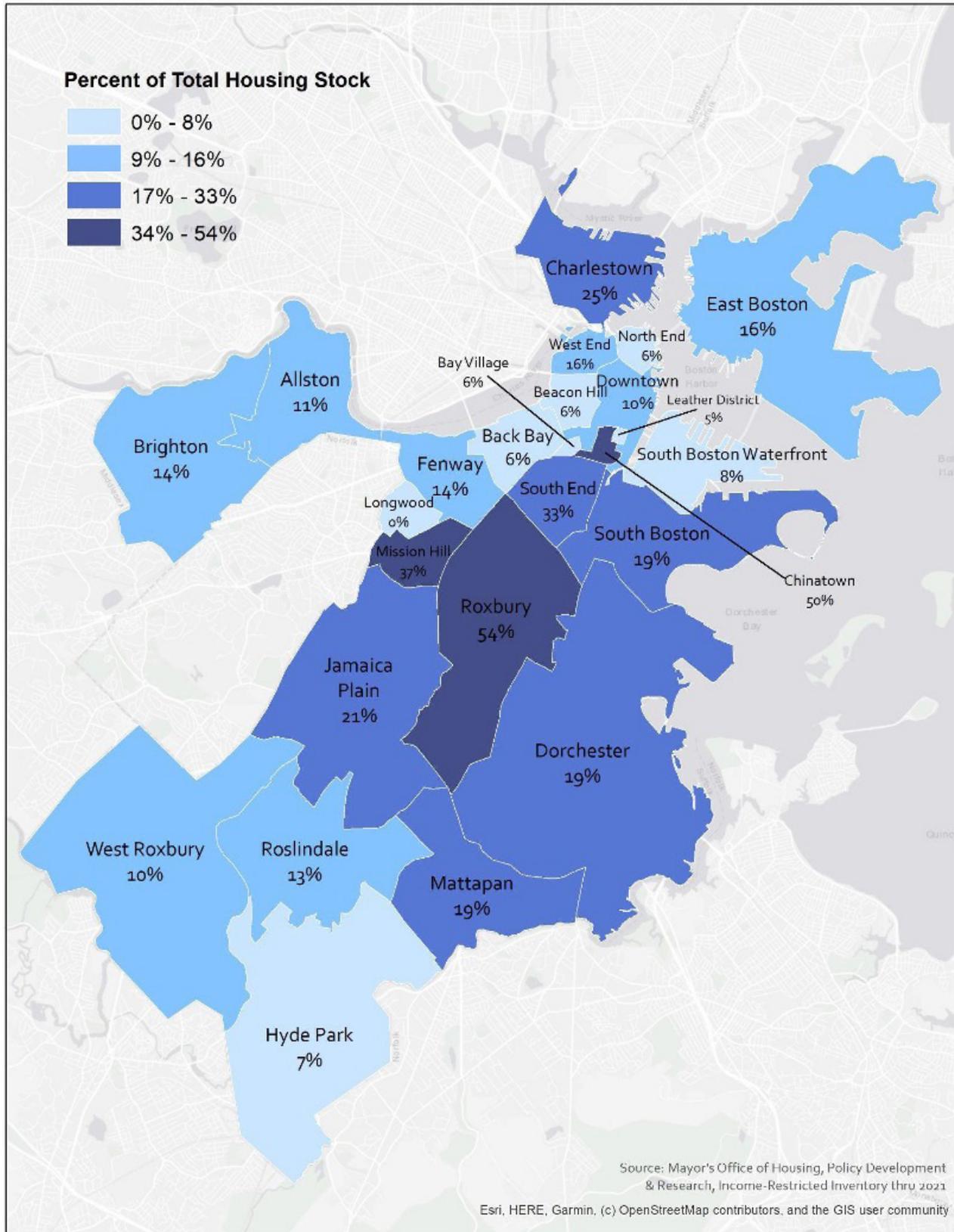
SOURCE: MOH income-restricted Housing Database; 2010 Decennial Census + City Permitting Data; Neighborhoods defined using BPDA boundaries.

6 Total Housing Units = Total Occupied Units by Tenure from 2010 Decennial Census + Total Vacant Units for rent/sale or rented/sold but not occupied from 2010 Decennial Census + housing units completed 2011-2021 from City Permitting data. Rental and ownership totals do not add up to total housing units because tenure is unable to be determined for some vacant units. Total Housing units for Leather District were pulled solely from Assessing data, as the margin of error for Census Data was too high.



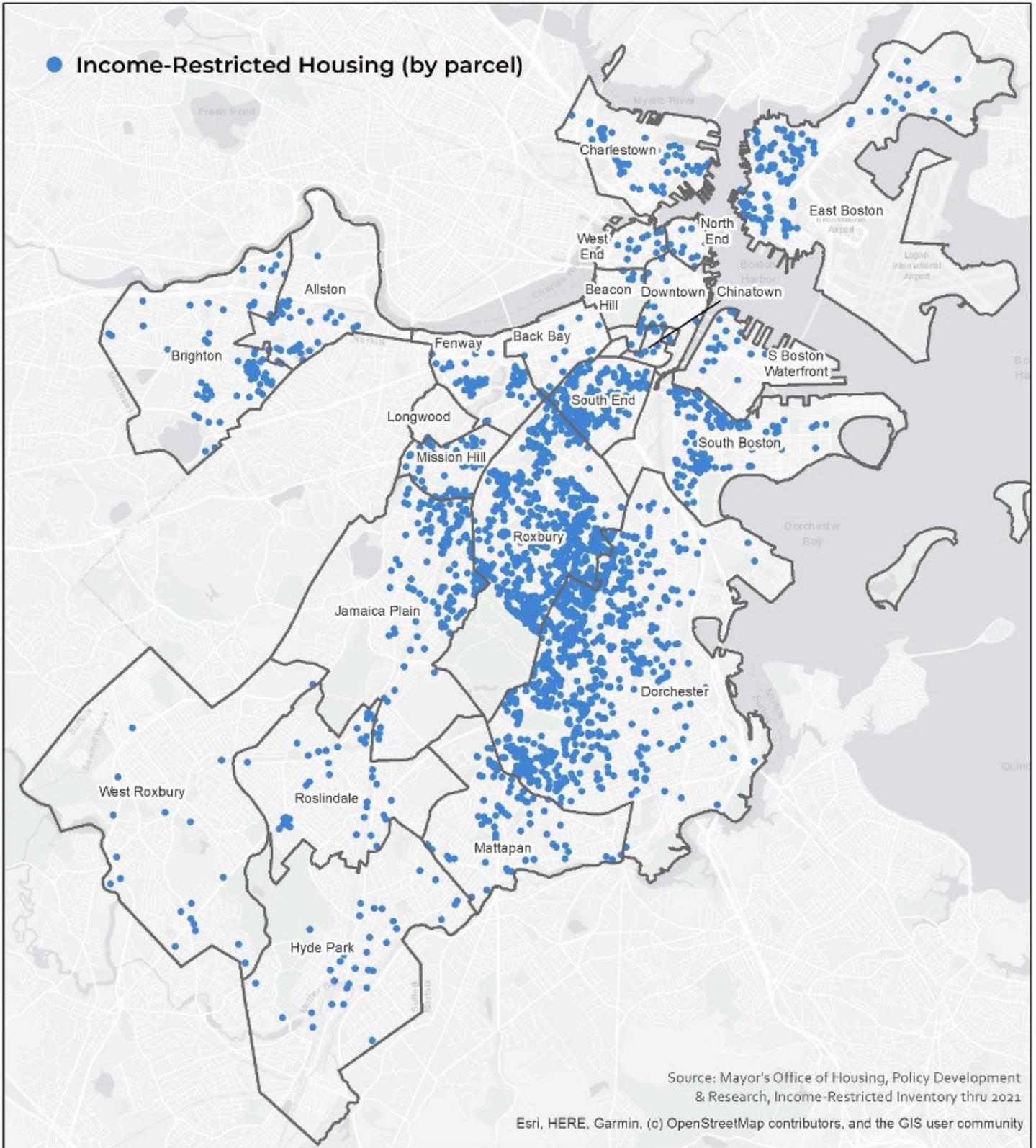
GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

MAP 1. CONCENTRATION OF INCOME-RESTRICTED HOUSING BY NEIGHBORHOOD



GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

MAP 2. INCOME-RESTRICTED HOUSING BY PARCEL



GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

The number of income-restricted rentals as a percent of the total rental units varies across neighborhoods. Some neighborhoods have a large rental stock, but not many of those units are income-restricted, such as Allston, where 90 percent of the units are rental, but only 12 percent are income-restricted. In other neighborhoods, much higher percentages of the rental stock are income-restricted, such as Roxbury, where 80 percent of the stock is rental, and 64 percent of those units are income-restricted (Table 5).

TABLE 5. SHARE OF RESTRICTED RENTAL UNITS BY NEIGHBORHOOD

| NEIGHBORHOOD | PERCENT OF HOUSING THAT ARE RENTAL UNITS | PERCENT OF RENTAL UNITS THAT ARE INCOME-RESTRICTED | NUMBER OF INCOME-RESTRICTED RENTAL UNITS |
|-------------------------|--|--|--|
| Allston | 90% | 12% | 936 |
| Back Bay | 66% | 9% | 675 |
| Bay Village | 55% | 11% | 154 |
| Beacon Hill | 65% | 9% | 342 |
| Brighton | 76% | 18% | 3,387 |
| Charlestown | 57% | 43% | 2,296 |
| Chinatown | 89% | 52% | 1,135 |
| Dorchester | 67% | 26% | 8,045 |
| Downtown | 65% | 15% | 780 |
| East Boston | 71% | 21% | 2,599 |
| Fenway | 89% | 15% | 2,051 |
| Hyde Park | 44% | 16% | 878 |
| Jamaica Plain | 57% | 35% | 3,715 |
| Leather District | 0% | 0% | 0 |
| Longwood Medical Area | 73% | 0% | 0 |
| Mattapan | 62% | 30% | 1,718 |
| Mission Hill | 89% | 39% | 2,476 |
| North End | 76% | 7% | 304 |
| Roslindale | 49% | 27% | 1,340 |
| Roxbury | 80% | 64% | 10,376 |
| South Boston | 56% | 31% | 3,134 |
| South Boston Waterfront | 73% | 10% | 370 |
| South End | 66% | 46% | 4,927 |
| West End | 83% | 18% | 859 |
| West Roxbury | 38% | 27% | 1,401 |
| CITYWIDE | 67% | 27% | 53,898 |

SOURCE: MOH income-restricted Housing Inventory; 2010 Decennial Census; Permitting Data



GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Although when compared to rental units there are far fewer income-restricted ownership units, the same trend found above applies to ownership units. The neighborhoods with the most owner units do not necessarily have the most income-restricted owner units. West Roxbury, for example, has the second highest percentage of owner units (62 percent) but one of the lowest percentages of income-restricted owner units (0.2 percent, or only 13 units). Conversely, Chinatown has one of the lowest percentages of owner units (11 percent), but one of the highest percentage of income-restricted (33 percent) owner units in the city (**Table 6**).

TABLE 6. SHARE OF RESTRICTED OWNERSHIP UNITS BY NEIGHBORHOOD

| NEIGHBORHOOD | PERCENT OF HOUSING THAT ARE OWNER UNITS | PERCENT OF OWNER UNITS THAT ARE INCOME RESTRICTED | NUMBER OF INCOME RESTRICTED OWNER UNITS |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|
| Allston | 10% | 3% | 30 |
| Back Bay | 34% | 0.16% | 6 |
| Bay Village | 45% | 0% | 0 |
| Beacon Hill | 35% | 0% | 1 |
| Brighton | 24% | 2% | 113 |
| Charlestown | 43% | 3% | 109 |
| Chinatown | 11% | 33% | 92 |
| Dorchester | 33% | 4% | 580 |
| Downtown | 35% | 1% | 36 |
| East Boston | 29% | 3% | 162 |
| Fenway | 11% | 1% | 15 |
| Hyde Park | 56% | 0.4% | 30 |
| Jamaica Plain | 43% | 2% | 164 |
| Leather District | 100% | 5% | 19 |
| Longwood Medical Area | 27% | 0% | 0 |
| Mattapan | 38% | 1% | 47 |
| Mission Hill | 11% | 22% | 178 |
| North End | 24% | 1% | 17 |
| Roslindale | 51% | 1% | 37 |
| Roxbury | 20% | 12% | 474 |
| South Boston | 44% | 3% | 256 |
| South Boston Waterfront | 27% | 3% | 45 |
| South End | 34% | 7% | 365 |
| West End | 17% | 1% | 8 |
| West Roxbury | 62% | 0.2% | 13 |
| CITYWIDE | 33% | 3% | 2,797 |

SOURCE: MOH income-restricted Housing Database; 2010 Decennial Census + Permitting Data



GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Map 3 shows the spread of income-restricted units across the city by tenure. Unlike the tables above, which show tenure as a percentage of the total housing stock in each neighborhood, this map shows the absolute number of units by tenure. It shows that there are many projects that include both owner and rental units, particularly in Dorchester, Roxbury, Mission Hill, and Jamaica Plain. Many of these are small multi-family homes (e.g. two- and three-family homes) where the owner occupies one unit and rents out the others.

Citywide, approximately 77 percent of the mixed owner/rental income-restricted properties are small multi-family homes, and approximately 23 percent are larger buildings that include both ownership and rental components. There are also concentrations of ownership projects in Dorchester, Roxbury, and South Boston. As the tables above show, however, these units are still a small percentage of the housing stock in those neighborhoods.

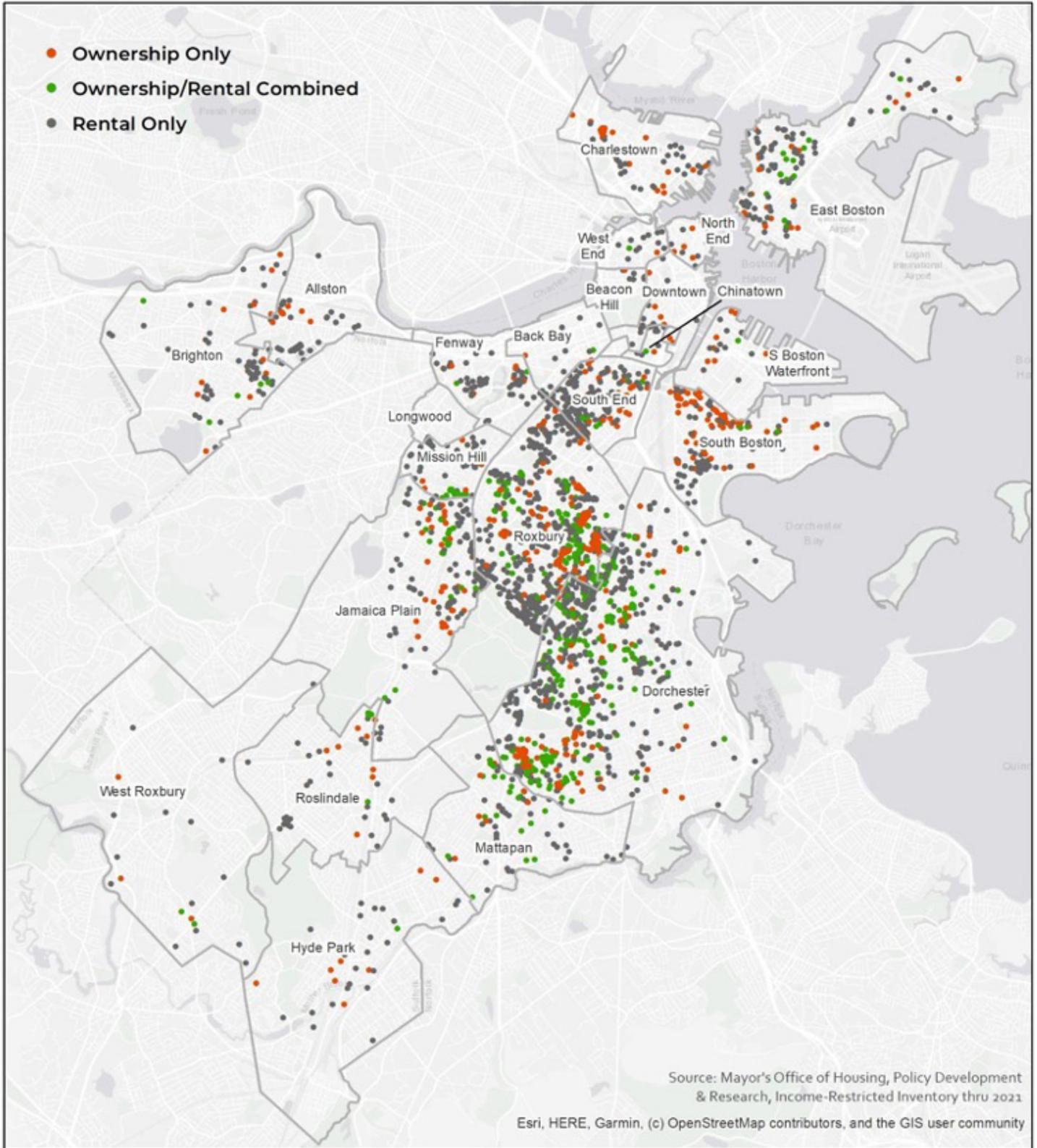


East Boston



GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

MAP 3. INCOME-RESTRICTED HOUSING BY TENURE



LEVELS OF AFFORDABILITY

Income-restricted units are affordable because the rents or sales prices are capped at prices affordable to households at specific income levels. A household must meet certain income restrictions to qualify. **Table 7** explains income limits by household size. For example, a one person household making \$55,000 per year would fall in the 60 percent of AMI bracket, and would be income eligible for a unit restricted up to 60 percent of AMI.

The unit restricted at 60 percent of AMI would have the rent capped at a price that is affordable to a household making 60 percent of AMI. The maximum affordable rent for income-restricted units is generally 30 percent of the income limit. Therefore, a one bedroom unit at 60 percent of AMI would have a maximum rent of \$1,510 (**Table 8**). Maximum affordable rents and sales prices vary by funding program, but **Table 8** provides rent prices commonly used in MOH and BPDA programs, and **Table 9** provides sales prices used for BPDA programs.

TABLE 7. 2021 INCOME LIMITS⁷

| PERCENT OF AREA MEDIAN INCOME (AMI) | HOUSEHOLD SIZE | | | |
|--|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 30% | \$28,200 | \$32,200 | \$36,250 | \$40,250 |
| 50% | \$47,000 | \$53,700 | \$60,400 | \$67,100 |
| 60% | \$56,400 | \$64,440 | \$72,480 | \$80,520 |
| 80% | \$67,700 | \$77,350 | \$87,000 | \$96,650 |
| 100% | \$84,600 | \$96,650 | \$108,750 | \$120,800 |
| 120% | \$101,500 | \$116,000 | \$130,500 | \$144,950 |

TABLE 8. 2021 MAXIMUM AFFORDABLE RENTS

| PERCENT OF AREA MEDIAN INCOME (AMI) | NUMBER OF BEDROOMS | | | | | |
|---|--------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | SRO | STUDIO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 30% | \$528 | \$705 | \$754 | \$906 | \$1,047 | \$1,167 |
| 50% | \$881 | \$1,175 | \$1,258 | \$1,510 | \$1,745 | \$1,946 |
| 60% | \$1,057 | \$1,410 | \$1,510 | \$1,812 | \$2,094 | \$2,335 |
| 80% | \$1,269 | \$1,693 | \$1,813 | \$2,175 | \$2,513 | \$2,804 |
| 100% | \$1,586 | \$2,115 | \$2,266 | \$2,719 | \$3,141 | \$3,504 |
| 120% | \$1,903 | \$2,538 | \$2,719 | \$3,263 | \$3,769 | \$4,204 |

⁷ MOH Income limits. These vary slightly from the BPDA income limits and maximum rents for Inclusionary Development Policy units.



LEVELS OF AFFORDABILITY

TABLE 9. 2021 MAXIMUM AFFORDABLE SALES PRICES

| PERCENT OF AREA MEDIAN INCOME (AMI) | NUMBER OF BEDROOMS | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | STUDIO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 50% | \$79,400 | \$103,200 | \$126,900 | \$150,700 | \$174,200 |
| 60% | \$107,900 | \$136,400 | \$164,800 | \$193,300 | \$221,700 |
| 80% | \$164,800 | \$202,900 | \$240,800 | \$278,700 | \$314,000 |
| 100% | \$221,700 | \$269,200 | \$314,000 | \$355,600 | \$397,100 |
| 120% | \$278,700 | \$330,700 | \$380,600 | \$430,600 | \$480,300 |

Sixty-four percent of income-restricted units are set aside for low-income residents making less than 50 percent of AMI. 15,483 units (27 percent) are restricted for households making less than 30 percent of AMI, and 21,065 units (37 percent) are restricted for households making between 31-50 percent of AMI. This stock is integral in keeping households most in need of housing assistance safely and affordably housed.



Mayor Wu announces new commitments to income-restricted housing at a press conference.



LEVELS OF AFFORDABILITY

The bulk of income-restricted stock assists low-income households most in need of affordable housing, but also provides some affordable housing opportunities for those households should their income rise above their current income categories. It also provides options for current middle-income households struggling to afford rent. Units in the higher AMI brackets, particularly above 80 percent of AMI, are largely ownership housing opportunities for middle-income households.

Most of the data in this assessment includes information on income levels. However, one percent (615 units) of the data – mostly older projects – do not have income-level information. Most of these units are likely restricted to low-income households and MOH continues to update this information as it is verified.

TABLE 10. UNITS BY INCOME RESTRICTION

| INCOME LEVEL (PERCENT OF AMI) | UNITS | PERCENT OF TOTAL |
|-------------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| <30% | 15,483 | 27% |
| 31-50% | 21,065 | 37% |
| 51-60% | 11,908 | 21% |
| 61-80% | 5,736 | 10% |
| 81-120% | 1,745 | 3% |
| >120% | 143 | 0.3% |
| Unknown | 615 | 1% |
| TOTAL* | 56,695 | 100% |

*Percentages add up to slightly over 100% due to rounding



SPECIAL SET-ASIDES



Elizabeth Stone House

Roxbury, 32 income-restricted rental units for women and their children in need of housing

Some units are set-aside for homeless, senior, and disabled households. These units are generally restricted to households with incomes of less than 30 percent of AMI. Three percent of the entire income-restricted stock is set-aside for homeless households, 22 percent is set-aside for senior households (age 64+), and a little over one percent is set-aside for disabled households.

In their efforts to increase the number of deed-restricted units accessible to disabled households, the Disability Housing Task Force worked with the BPDA in 2019 to update the IDP policy. New developments of more than 20 units must now make 15 percent of the IDP units accessible to households with physical disabilities or sensory impairments. Many senior units, as well as Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units, which are single rooms with shared amenities like kitchens and bathrooms, are also available to persons with disabilities. There are approximately 926 SRO units restricted to households with incomes under 30 percent of AMI.

TABLE II. SPECIAL SET-ASIDES

| UNIT TYPE | UNITS | % TOTAL |
|-----------|--------|---------|
| Homeless | 1,687 | 3% |
| Senior | 12,689 | 22% |
| Disabled | 712 | 1.3% |
| SROs | 926 | 1.6% |

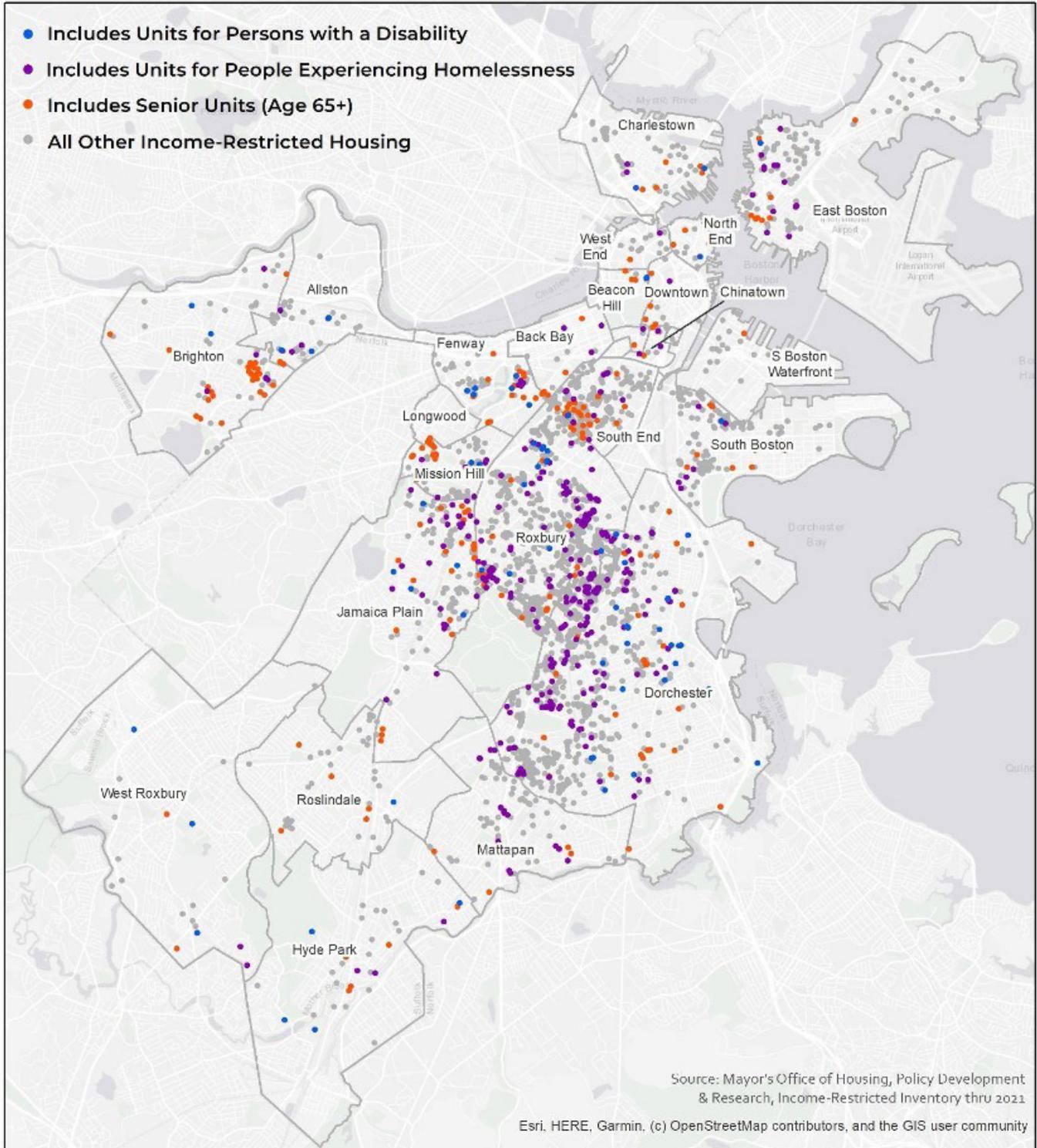
*Numbers are approximate given the best data available at the time of this report.



SPECIAL SET-ASIDES

Map 4 shows the geographic distribution of projects that include units for designated populations. It highlights the number of units for people experiencing homelessness in Roxbury and Dorchester, and the concentration of senior units in the South End, Brighton, and Mission Hill.

MAP 4. INCOME-RESTRICTED HOUSING WITH SET-ASIDE UNITS



OWNERSHIP STRUCTURE

Most of the income-restricted housing stock is privately owned (78 percent), while 22 percent is publicly owned by the Boston Housing Authority (BHA). Less than one percent of units have a public/private partnership, where the BHA has partnered with the private sector to redevelop and manage public housing developments.

TABLE 12. INCOME-RESTRICTED UNITS BY OWNERSHIP TYPE*

| | TOTAL INCOME-RESTRICTED | PERCENT OF TOTAL | RENTAL | PERCENT RENTER | OWNER | PERCENT OWNER |
|----------------|----------------------------|---------------------|--------|-------------------|-------|------------------|
| Private | 44,017 | 78% | 41,245 | 77% | 2,772 | 99% |
| Public | 12,168 | 22% | 12,143 | 23% | 25 | 1% |
| Public/Private | 510 | 0.8% | 510 | 0.9% | 0 | 0% |

*Percentages may add to over 100% due to rounding.

While affordability restrictions for most of the 44,017 private rental units are not at imminent risk of expiring, 3,883 privately owned rental units were identified in 2014 as at-risk of expiring before 2030. Since 2014, 2,829 units have been preserved with extended expiry dates, and 333 units lost their deed-restriction. Today, only 721 of the original 3,883 units remain at-risk and in MOH's portfolio of units to preserve before 2030. The City dedicates significant resources towards extending these restrictions and preserving units for all at-risk properties, ultimately protecting low-income tenants.



Balina Place, Dorchester, 3 income-restricted home ownership units

The City also works hard to maintain and preserve publicly-owned units, which house many of the City's lowest income residents. The BHA has undertaken an ambitious reinvestment strategy to redevelop approximately 4,500 units, for which a significant amount of capital investment will be required to redevelop and preserve these critically important units. To date, 1,641 of those units have been redeveloped and preserved.



NEIGHBORHOOD DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

This section looks at the geographic distribution of income-restricted units in conjunction with the demographic and economic characteristics of the census tracts⁸ in which they are located. **Table 13** and **Map 5** show where income-restricted units fall with respect to poverty levels.

A higher poverty tract is one where the percent of households whose incomes are under 200 percent of the federal poverty level is above the citywide average of 34 percent. While 47 percent of all housing is located in higher poverty tracts, 72 percent of all income-restricted units are located in higher poverty tracts, showing that income-restricted housing is disproportionately located in higher poverty neighborhoods.

The concentration of income-restricted housing in higher poverty neighborhoods poses a challenge to efforts to provide low-income Boston residents with access to opportunity. This trend, however, has been shifting in the past decade: only 58 percent of the income-restricted housing built between 2011-2021 are in higher poverty areas. This has been an intentional policy shift to help provide residents affordable options in a wider variety of neighborhoods across the city.

TABLE 13. INCOME-RESTRICTED UNITS IN HIGHER POVERTY CENSUS TRACTS*

| ALL HOUSING UNITS | |
|--|---------|
| Number of Higher Poverty Census Tracts | 85 |
| Total Units in Higher Poverty Tracts | 137,779 |
| Total Housing Units, Citywide | 294,406 |
| Percent of Units in Higher Poverty Tracts | 47% |
| ALL INCOME-RESTRICTED UNITS | |
| Total Income-Restricted Units in Higher Poverty Tracts | 40,754 |
| Total Income-Restricted Housing Units, Citywide | 56,695 |
| Percent Income-Restricted Units in Higher Poverty Tracts | 72% |
| INCOME-RESTRICTED UNITS BUILT 2011-2021 | |
| Total Income-Restricted Units in Higher Poverty Tracts | 3,234 |
| Total Income-Restricted Units Built 2011-2021, Citywide | 5,611 |
| Percent Income-Restricted Units in Higher Poverty Tracts | 58% |

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table C17002; MOH Income-Restricted Housing Inventory; Inspectional Services Department Permitting Data

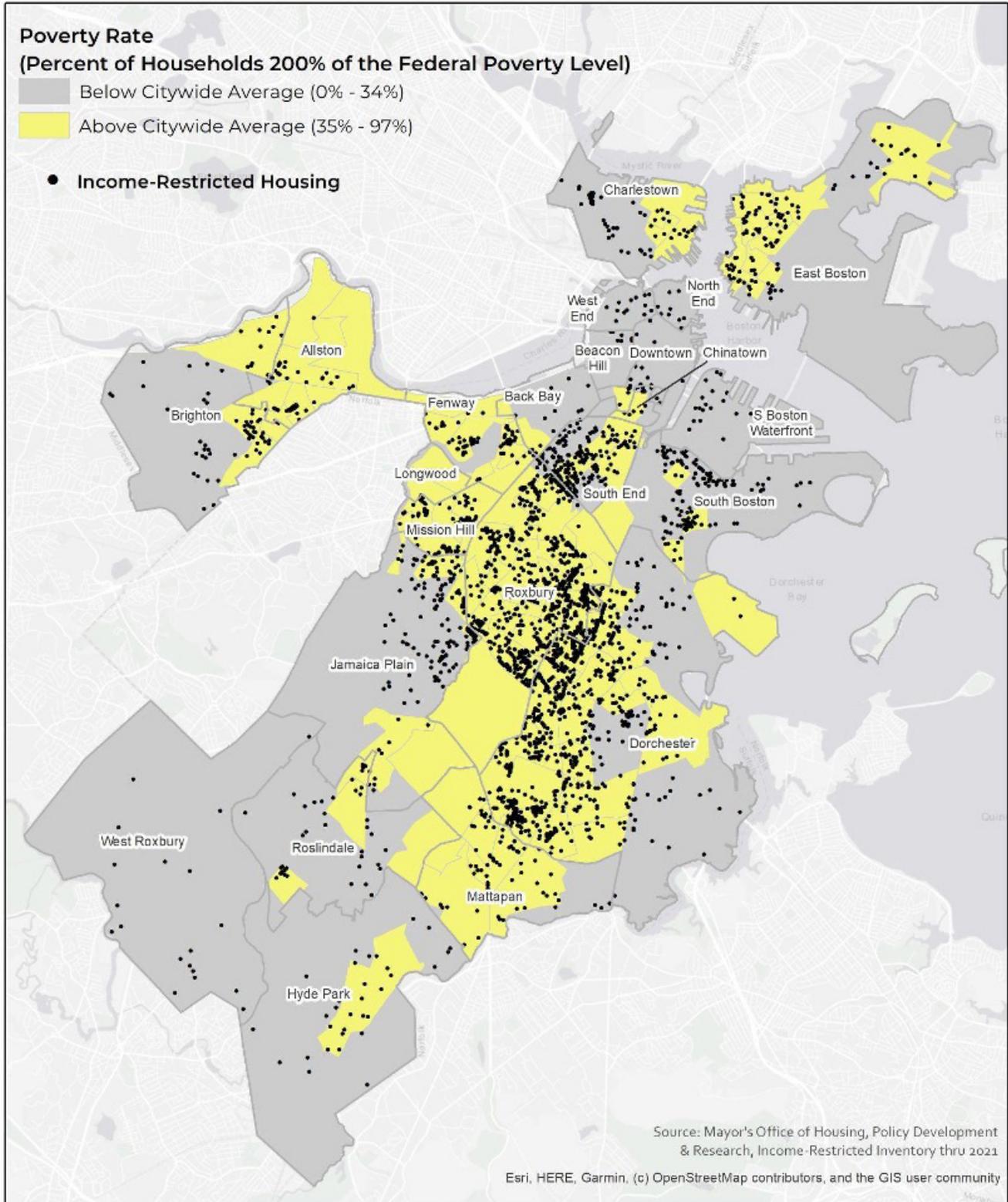
*Higher Poverty Tract: the percent of households whose incomes are under 200% of the federal poverty level is above the citywide average of 34%.

8 Census tracts are small geographic areas defined by the U.S. Census Bureau.



NEIGHBORHOOD DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

MAP 5. INCOME-RESTRICTED HOUSING & POVERTY RATE



NEIGHBORHOOD DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Table 16 and **Map 6** show where income-restricted units fall with respect to the White, non-Hispanic/Latinx population. A predominantly White tract is one where 60 percent or more of the population is White non-Hispanic/Latinx.

There are 62 predominately White tracts in Boston. These tracts contain 38 percent of the City's total housing units, but only 18 percent of the city's income-restricted housing units. This reflects the ongoing segregation of the city by both race and class. This is visualized in **Map 6**.

Income-restricted units built in the past decade (2011-2021), however, are slightly more likely to be located in predominantly White neighborhoods, with 26 percent of this newer stock located in those areas. This reflects an effort to provide affordable opportunities in neighborhoods that have historically been unattainable to lower-income residents.

TABLE 16. INCOME-RESTRICTED UNITS IN PREDOMINANTLY WHITE TRACTS*

| ALL HOUSING UNITS | |
|---|---------|
| Number of Predominantly White Tracts | 62 |
| Total Units in Predominantly White Tracts | 111,036 |
| Total Housing Units, Citywide | 294,406 |
| Percent of Units in Predominantly White Tracts | 38% |
| ALL INCOME-RESTRICTED UNITS | |
| Total Income-Restricted Units in Predominantly White Tracts | 10,052 |
| Total Income-Restricted Housing Units, Citywide | 56,695 |
| Percent Income-Restricted Units in Predominantly White Tracts | 18% |
| INCOME-RESTRICTED UNITS BUILT 2011-2021 | |
| Total Income-Restricted Units in Predominantly White Tracts | 1,465 |
| Total Income-Restricted Units Built 2011-2021, Citywide | 5,611 |
| Percent Income-Restricted Units in Predominantly White Tracts | 26% |

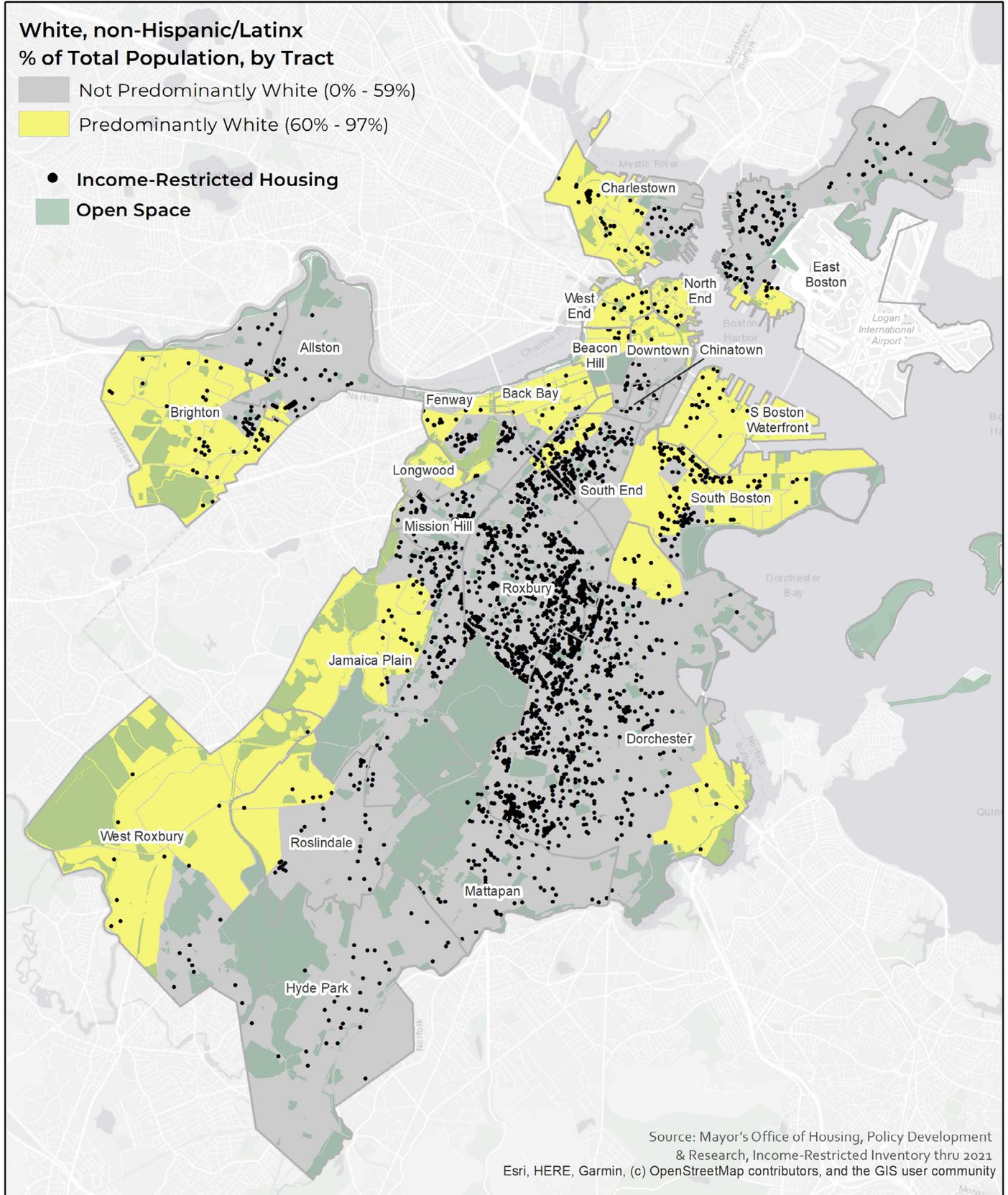
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Tables B25074, B25002; MOH Income-Restricted Housing Inventory; Inspectional Services Department Permitting Data

*Predominantly White Tracts= 60% or more of the population is White, non-Hispanic/Latinx.



NEIGHBORHOOD DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

MAP 6. INCOME-RESTRICTED HOUSING & PREDOMINANTLY WHITE TRACTS



INCOME-RESTRICTED HOUSING PERMITS AND COMPLETIONS

MOH tracks housing permits (the permit to begin construction), as well as completions (when a certificate of occupancy (COO) is issued and the housing can be occupied).

The rates of income-restricted housing permits have increased notably over the past three years (2019, 2020, 2021), reaching its peak at 32 percent in 2021. In addition to having the highest income-restricted percentage, 2021 also boasts the highest absolute number of income-restricted permits at 1,080. (**Table 17** and **Figure A**). Despite the COVID-19 pandemic beginning in 2020, permits for both market-rate and income-restricted housing remained strong throughout 2020 and 2021.

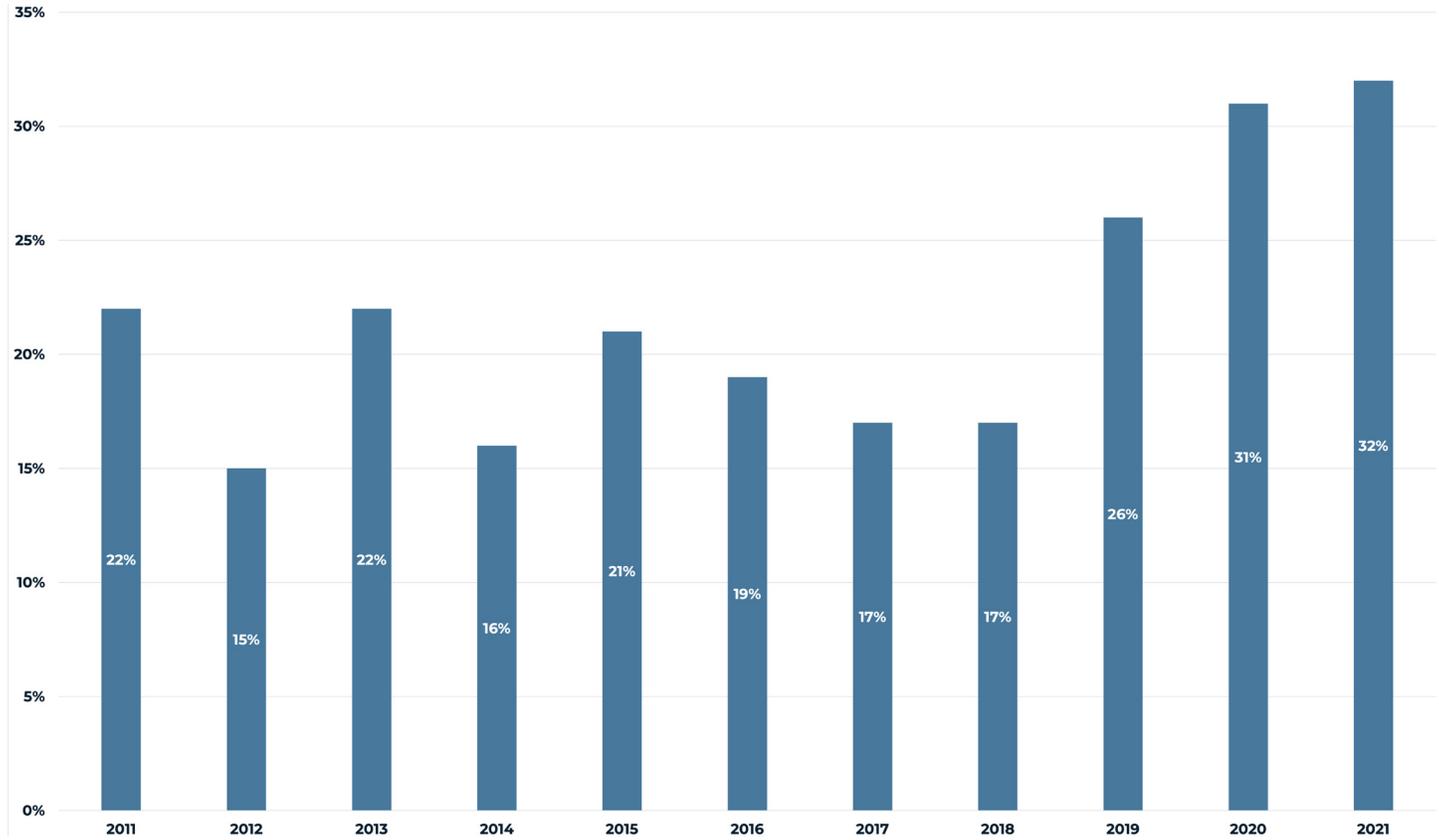
TABLE 17. INCOME-RESTRICTED PERMITS

| YEAR | TOTAL PERMITTED UNITS | INCOME-RESTRICTED PERMITS | PERCENT INCOME-RESTRICTED |
|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2011 | 2,059 | 462 | 22% |
| 2012 | 2,428 | 368 | 15% |
| 2013 | 3,328 | 728 | 22% |
| 2014 | 4,070 | 658 | 16% |
| 2015 | 4,539 | 964 | 21% |
| 2016 | 2,833 | 535 | 19% |
| 2017 | 6,051 | 1,047 | 17% |
| 2018 | 4,201 | 726 | 17% |
| 2019 | 3,161 | 829 | 26% |
| 2020 | 3,252 | 1,023 | 31% |
| 2021 | 3,404 | 1,080 | 32% |
| TOTAL 2011-2021 | 39,326 | 8,420 | 21% |



INCOME-RESTRICTED HOUSING PERMITS AND COMPLETIONS

FIGURE A. PERCENT OF PERMITTED UNITS THAT ARE INCOME-RESTRICTED



In 2021, 19 percent of all housing units completed were income-restricted (767 units) (Table 18), and 25 percent of all rental units completed were income-restricted. Of the 767 completed income-restricted units, 84 percent were rental and 16 percent were ownership.

TABLE 18. PROFILE OF INCOME-RESTRICTED PROJECTS COMPLETED IN 2021

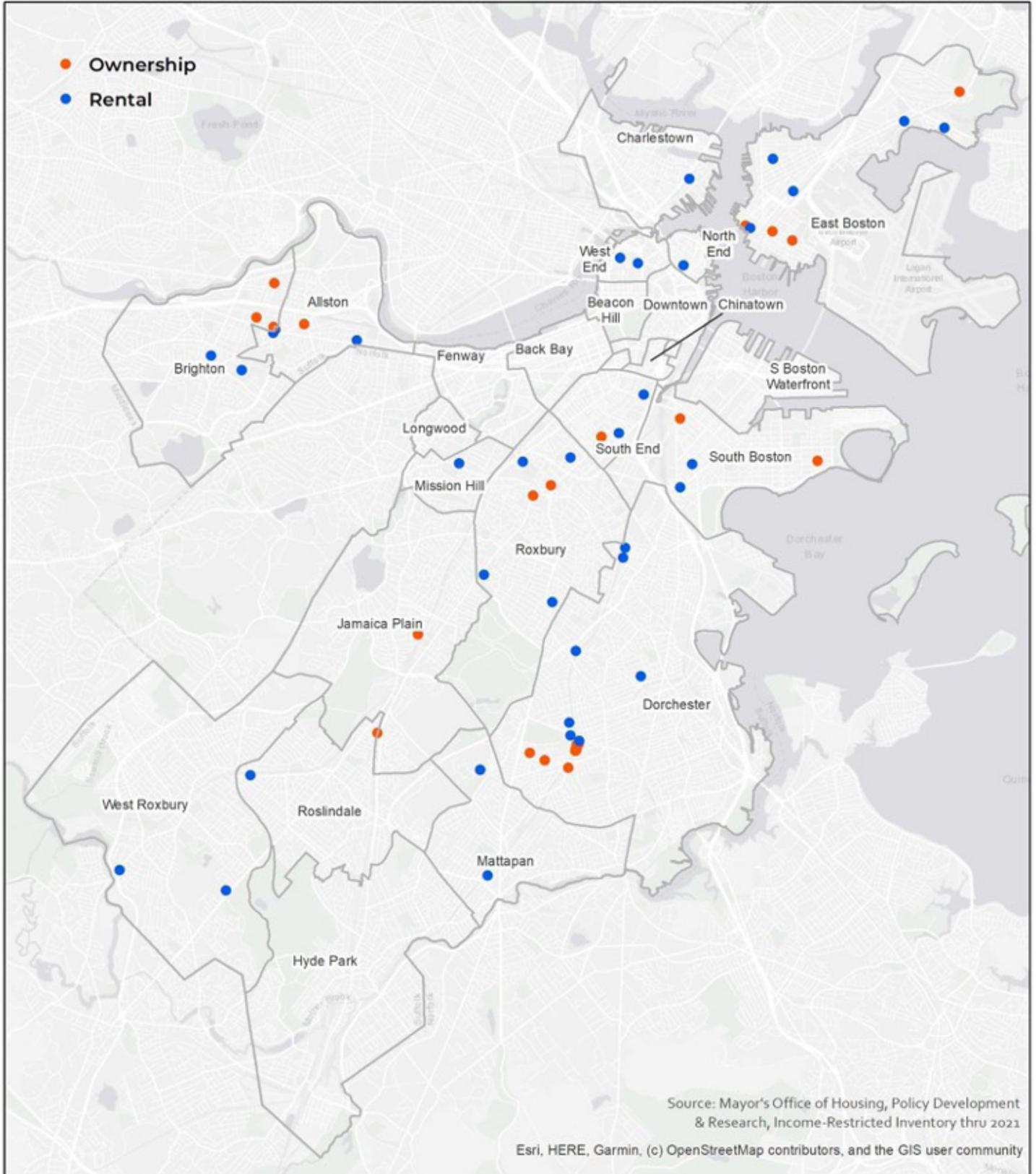
| | ALL HOUSING | INCOME-RESTRICTED | PERCENT OF INCOME-RESTRICTED | PERCENT OF ALL HOUSING |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Total Units | 4,051 | 767 | 100% | 19% |
| Rental Units | 2,585 | 645 | 85% | 25% |
| Ownership Units | 1,466 | 122 | 16% | 8% |

Map 7 displays these units by tenure (renter and ownership) and shows a fairly even geographic distribution of projects across the city. Many parts of the neighborhoods close to downtown, and Hyde Park, did not have any completed income-restricted projects in 2021.



INCOME-RESTRICTED HOUSING PERMITS AND COMPLETIONS

MAP 7. INCOME-RESTRICTED PROJECTS COMPLETED IN 2021



INCOME-RESTRICTED HOUSING PERMITS AND COMPLETIONS

Transit-oriented development (TOD), housing which is within a walkable distance to public transit, helps give residents access to jobs and businesses, and supports the city's environmental goals.

Income-restricted units built in the past decade have a high TOD rate: 66 percent are within a five minute walk to transit, and 80 percent are within a 10 minute walk (Table 19). The TOD rate for income-restricted completions is higher than for market-rate completions (63 percent within a 5-minute walk), and all completed units (64 percent within a 5 minute walk).

Housing prices around public transit are often higher than housing farther from transit, so building income-restricted housing near transit is key to maintaining affordability in those areas.

TABLE 19. TRANSIT PROXIMITY OF HOUSING COMPLETED 2011-2021

| | TOTAL UNITS | 5 MINUTE WALK TO TRANSIT (1/4 MILE) | | 10 MINUTE WALK TO TRANSIT (1/2 MILE) | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|---------|
| | | UNITS | PERCENT | UNITS | PERCENT |
| Income-Restricted Units | 6,445 | 4,230 | 66% | 5,126 | 80% |
| Market-Rate Units | 24,881 | 15,741 | 63% | 19,093 | 77% |
| All Units Completed | 31,326 | 19,971 | 64% | 24,219 | 77% |



CONCLUSION

Boston has the highest percentage of income-restricted housing in the country, with nearly 19.2 percent (56,695 units) of its stock income-restricted. In a city with high housing prices, and an increasing population and growing number of jobs, maintaining a strong stock of income-restricted housing is integral for mitigating potential displacement and helping residents live affordably.

Of the 56,695 income-restricted units, 95 percent are rental and five percent are ownership units. The majority (64 percent) are affordable to households making less than 50 percent of AMI. 22 percent (12,689 units) are set aside for senior households (age 64+), and three percent (1,687 units) are set aside for the homeless. Seventy-eight percent are privately owned, 22 percent are publicly owned, and less than one percent are owned by a public-private partnership.

While income-restricted units are distributed across the city in every neighborhood, some neighborhoods have higher concentrations than others. Roxbury has the most income-restricted units as a percent of its housing stock at 54 percent, followed by Chinatown (50 percent), Mission Hill (37 percent), and the South End (33 percent). Neighborhoods with the smallest percentages include the Back Bay, Bay Village, and Beacon Hill (each at 6 percent); the Leather District (5 percent), and Longwood Medical Area (0 percent) have the lowest percentages but also very little overall housing stock.

Since 2011, 8,420 income-restricted units were permitted, which is 28 percent of all housing permitted during that time. The past three years have seen growth in the number and percent of income-restricted units permitted: 38 percent in 2019, 45 percent in 2020, and 36 percent in 2021. Income-restricted units are highly transit-oriented, with 80 percent of income-restricted units completed in the past decade within a 10 minute walk to transit. In the last decade, units have been intentionally concentrated less in higher poverty areas than in previous decades, helping to distribute affordable housing options across the city. This long-term investment in further strengthening income-restricted housing stock reinforces Boston's commitment to making the city more affordable and accessible for both current and future residents.

Pictured on Cover

UHomes at 90 Antwerp Street, Brighton, 12 income-restricted homeownership units

Call Carolina Homes, Jamaica Plain, 8 income-restricted home ownership units

Indigo Block, Dorchester, 80 income-restricted rental units

