

An aerial photograph of East Boston, showing a dense residential neighborhood with rows of multi-story houses. To the left, a large green park area with a swimming pool and playground is visible, adjacent to a multi-lane highway bridge. In the background, the Boston skyline with various skyscrapers is visible across the water. The text 'East Boston Today' is overlaid in large white letters.

East Boston Today

An Interim Report of PLAN: East Boston



boston planning &
development agency

PLAN: East Boston is the result of a collaborative effort with the dedicated members of the Advisory Group, wider community members, planning enthusiasts, and an Interdepartmental Working Group that represented City and State Departments. This document would not be possible without the generous contribution of time and insight by these participants.

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To members of the East Boston community,

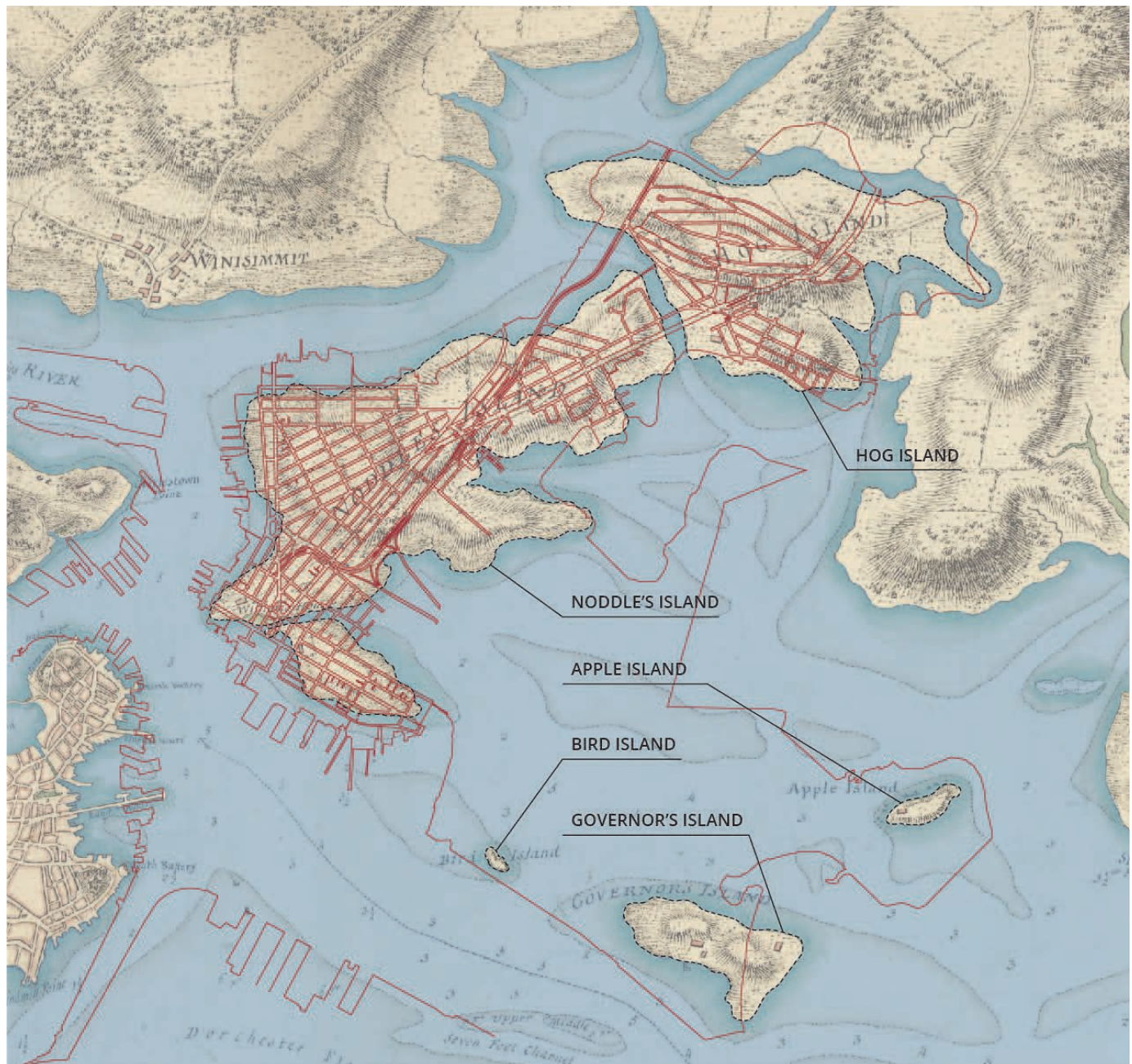
Neighborhood planning presents an important and exciting opportunity to imagine the future of our community. It asks us to consider our shared values, and to assess where we are today, where we would like to be tomorrow, and importantly, how we get there from here.

Measuring the neighborhood as it exists today is a critical first step. This document presents data and trends across six planning topics to establish various “baseline” conditions in the neighborhood. These measurements establish important reference points for developing future plan actions, and eventually, measuring progress towards our goals. The goals set out in this document are a reflection of our shared values and present an ambitious vision of the future of East Boston.

Having established where we are today and where we would like to be in the future, our remaining task is to plan for how we get there from here. Future community engagement will focus on refining strategies and identifying specific actions needed to move towards our goals. All stages of the planning process rely on the robust participation of the East Boston community to be both meaningful and sustainable and we look forward to continuing the dialogue.

Best Regards,

Lauren N. Shurtleff
Director of Planning



East Boston has evolved dramatically since development began in the 1830s. This image shows a historic map of the neighborhood with the original land area circa 1630, which consisted of 5 islands. Today's land area and streets are outlined in red and demonstrate the neighborhood's substantial expansion.

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PLAN: East Boston Overview

PLAN: East Boston is a community-driven, neighborhood-wide planning initiative. Guided by Imagine Boston 2030 and several citywide strategic plans, PLAN: East Boston will produce a framework to predictably shape the future of East Boston and identify opportunities to preserve, enhance, and grow.


In this section, learn about:

- » Updating the Neighborhood Plan on page 4
- » Changing Context on page 6
- » Planning Process on page 8
- » Engaging the Community on page 10
- » Building on Citywide Planning on page 14
- » Planning Framework on page 18



PLAN: East Boston Study Area

This document analyzes key planning and development trends across the entire neighborhood. PLAN: East Boston will ultimately make specific recommendations for the geography highlighted here. This area is referred to as the “Study Area Boundary.”

 PLAN: East Boston Study Area

Updating the Neighborhood Plan

Much has changed in East Boston since the most recent neighborhood plan was adopted. PLAN: East Boston will update the neighborhood plan and make recommendations for updating neighborhood zoning.

The most recent neighborhood plan, the East Boston Master Plan, was initiated in 1998 and adopted in 2000.

The Plan is organized around the following five focus areas:

- » Reviving the East Boston waterfront;
- » Strengthening the residential neighborhoods;
- » Enhancing the neighborhood's commercial districts;
- » Energizing the McClellan Highway - Upper Chelsea Creek Corridor; and
- » Shoring up the Airport edge.

Each focus area offers land use, open space and public environment, historic resources and heritage, and transportation recommendations. The Plan also provides development guidance and addresses regulatory standards for each focus area.

Many of the recommendations from the Master Plan have been implemented, including renovated or new open spaces at Central Square, Piers Park, Noyes Playground, American Legion Playground, and LoPresti Park. Mixed-use development proposals along the waterfront have responded to the planning framework set forth by the Plan.

East Boston's built environment is regulated by Article 53 of the Boston Zoning Code. While the purpose of zoning is to encode a neighborhood plan, Article 53 was last updated in 1993 and predates the neighborhood plan.

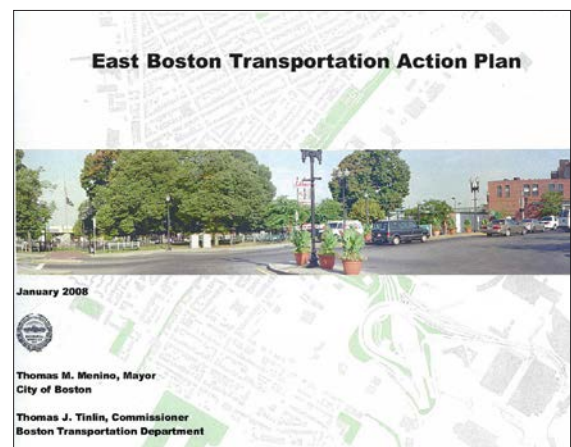
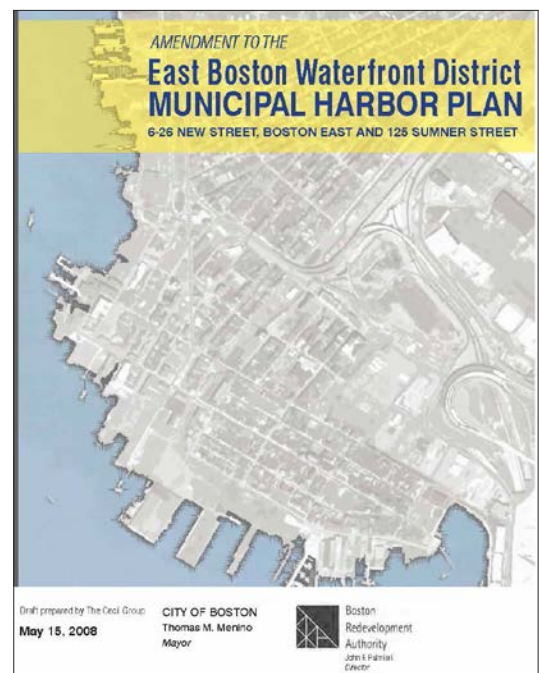
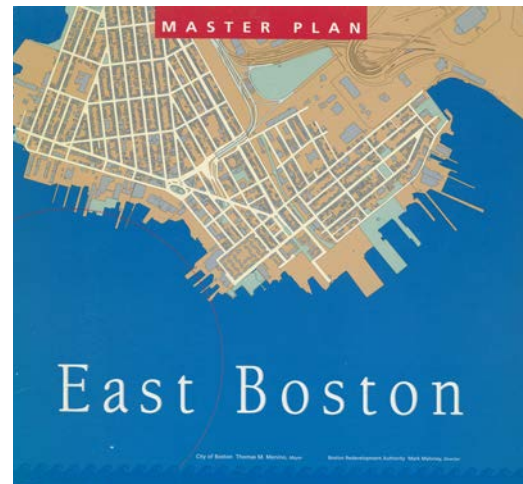
The East Boston Municipal Harbor Plan was adopted in 2002 and amended in 2008.

The document provides guidance to the community, developers, and to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Chapter 91 licensing process, and was built on findings published in the East Boston Master Plan in April 2000. Chapter 91 is a State regulation that guides waterfront development to promote public access to the harbor, prioritize water-dependent uses, and ensure private development advances public programming and use of the waterfront. Municipal Harbor Plans (MHPs) involve a public planning process to allow for changes to the uniform Chapter 91 use and dimensional requirements.

Through an MHP, the height, mass, and setback of new buildings, and location of open space can be altered to address community objectives and neighborhood character. An MHP can also specify the types of waterfront amenities, programming, and ground-floor uses residents would like to see with new development.

East Boston last underwent a Transportation Action Plan in 2008.

The 2008 Plan lists short and long term recommendations to enhance pedestrian safety, improve traffic, and provide more parking for residents. The redesign of Central Square was identified as a priority project in the 2008 East Boston Transportation Action Plan, and construction was completed in 2017. Other completed projects included reducing cut-through traffic on Bayswater Street, eliminating cut-through traffic on Maverick Street with the construction of the Maverick Street Gate, constructing safer pedestrian crossings at several locations, redesigning the Saratoga Street and Chelsea Street intersection, and adding angled parking on Sumner Street.



Changing Context

Planning starts by establishing a clear picture of the neighborhood today.

These trends demonstrate how the neighborhood is changing.

PLAN: East Boston will holistically consider the challenges and opportunities associated with growth—from the scale of an intersection to the neighborhood as a whole—in order to plan for a sustainable and equitable future for all of its residents. These trends highlight two major challenges facing East Boston's future: a growing population and increasing climate change threats.



22%

Population growth in East Boston from 2000 to 2017

East Boston's population is 46,655. East Boston's annual population growth rate is 2 percent, which is twice as high as the citywide average.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 1950–2010 Decennial Census, 2006–2010 American Community Survey, and 2013–2017 American Community Survey; BPDA Research Division, "Boston's Economy 2019," 2019.; City of Boston, Environment Department, "Climate Ready Boston, Boston Research Advisory Group (BRAG) Report," 2016., Boston Harbor Flood Risk Model, and MassGIS; MBTA; BPDA Research Division analysis; BPDA GIS analysis.

Median sales price for a unit includes 1-FAM, 2-FAM, 3-FAM and Condos and based on Department of Neighborhood Development, City of Boston analysis.

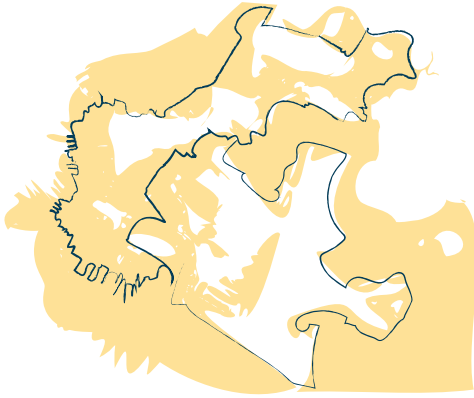
The land area calculated for flood vulnerability is the PLAN: East Boston Study Area, which does not include Suffolk Downs or Logan International Airport.



42%

Increase in average rents from 2000 to 2017

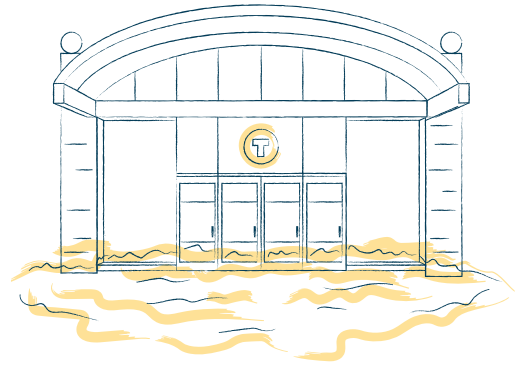
Renting in East Boston has become increasingly expensive. Rental vacancy rates were at 2.2 percent in East Boston and 2.8 percent citywide in 2017. Home sales prices have also risen in recent years: the median sales price for a unit in the neighborhood rose 9 percent from 2017 to 2018.

**58%****of the land area is vulnerable to flooding by the 2070s**

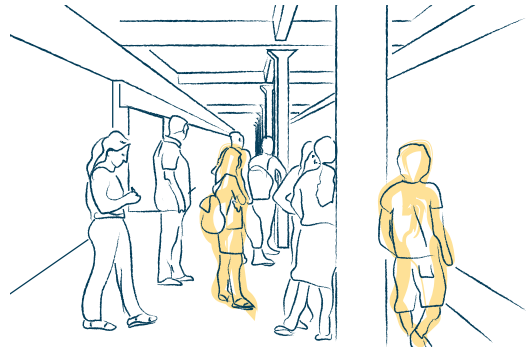
As soon as the 2070s, 58 percent of the land in the PLAN: East Boston study area will be vulnerable to flooding with a 1 percent annual chance event. Today, 38 percent of the land area is vulnerable to flooding with a 1 percent annual chance event.

**55%****Spanish-speaking Population**

The majority of households in East Boston speak Spanish at home. The Hispanic or Latinx population has increased dramatically from 1 percent in 1970 to 57 percent in 2017. More than half of East Boston's residents were foreign born compared to 28 percent of Boston residents.

**80%****of the MBTA Blue Line stations will be at risk of flooding by the 2070s**

By the 2070s, 80 percent of MBTA Blue Line stations, 22 percent of bus stops, and 55 percent of major roads will be vulnerable to flooding with a 1 percent annual chance event.

**1.3%****Annual growth rate for boardings at East Boston MBTA Blue Line stations**

Since 2014, weekday boardings at East Boston Blue Line stations have grown at an annual rate of 1.3 percent (1.1 percent for all Blue Line stations). During this same period, boardings at all other MBTA gated stations on the Red, Orange, Green, and Silver lines have declined.

Planning Process

The process is a collaborative effort of the City of Boston, the Boston Planning & Development Agency, and the community. It balances observable data and planning trends with deep local knowledge.

The following principles guide the planning process:

- » The process must have broad outreach and must be **inclusive and accessible** to all members of the diverse East Boston community.
- » The process must be **transparent**. Documentation of the process must be thorough and publicly available.
- » The process must produce clear outcomes that are **actionable**.

Neighborhood planning is fundamentally a collaborative effort and must balance objective analysis with deep local knowledge.

This document provides an overview of the neighborhood today.

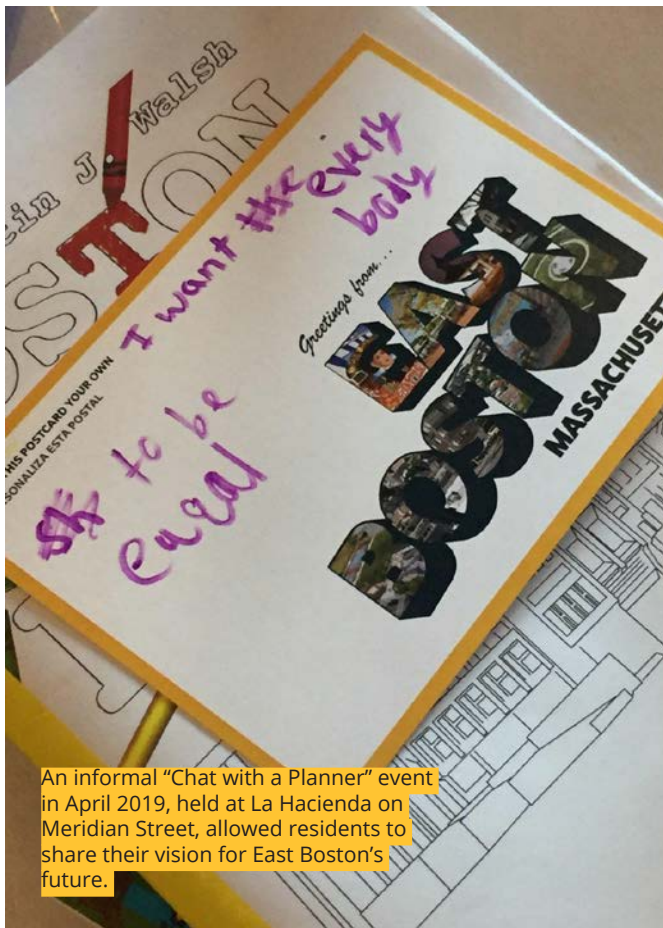
This document is the first volume of a report that will ultimately make specific planning recommendations for East Boston. This document provides an overview of how East Boston has changed and where the neighborhood stands today. It looks at the neighborhood's history, demographics, housing, climate change and environmental factors, transportation, and jobs and economy in relation to national and local trends. This report is intended to facilitate a dialogue about the challenges and opportunities facing the neighborhood.

The planning process will continue to be shaped by neighborhood-wide discussions about high-level priorities across several planning topics, as well as scenario-based discussions in increasingly specific geographies.

PLAN: East Boston will produce a framework to predictably shape the future of East Boston, and identify opportunities to preserve, enhance, and grow.

The planning process works in partnership with the East Boston community to first identify goals, then derive strategies to achieve these goals across several planning topics. Specific deliverables will include:

- » updates to the East Boston Master Plan, published in 2000;
- » recommendations for updating Article 53 of the Boston Zoning Code, published in 1993; and
- » recommendations for near-, medium- and long-term implementation projects for the neighborhood's multimodal transportation network.



Engaging the Community

The planning process relies on a variety of community engagement methods to provide many opportunities for public participation.

These efforts are organized by the BPDA in partnership with several City agencies and rely on the participation of the East Boston community to be both meaningful and sustainable.

Community Workshops and Open Houses

PLAN: East Boston hosted several community workshops and open houses organized around primary planning topics. Workshops included interactive activities and small-group discussions to encourage deeper engagement with planning topics. All materials were produced in English and Spanish and all events included interpretation services.

Do-It-Yourself Workshop

Materials from several workshops were combined and made available as a “do-it-yourself” workshop, which could be deployed by members of the community. These materials were packaged to be self-guided so members of the community who were not able to participate in workshops were able to contribute to the planning process. All materials were produced in English and Spanish.

“Chat With a Planner” Series

Members of the PLAN: East Boston team went out into the neighborhood to answer questions and collect feedback. These pop-up events took place in East Boston schools, parks, street corners, T-stations and local small businesses. The “Chat With a Planner” series was an important opportunity to engage community members who may not otherwise participate in PLAN: East Boston. Engagement at these events focused on giving participants a high-level overview of the planning initiative and included a postcard activity.

Walking Tours

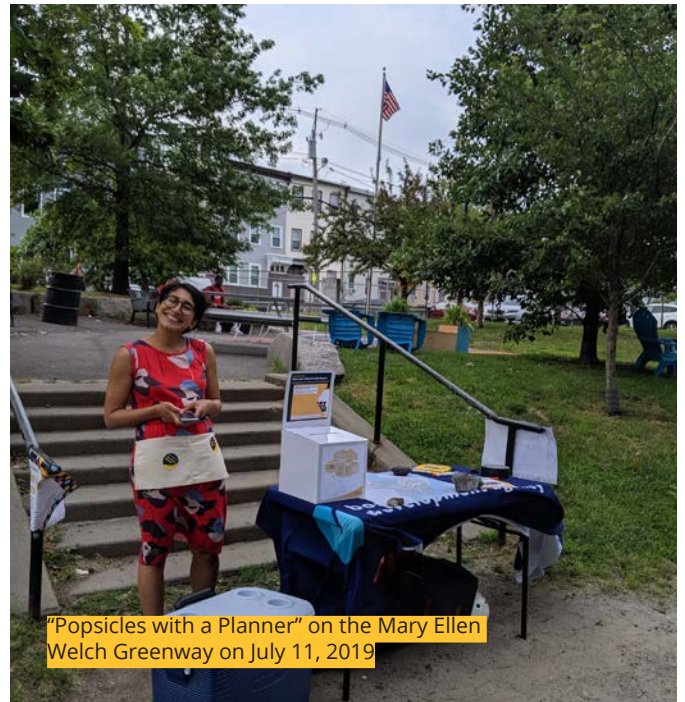
East Boston has several active neighborhood and civic organizations, which together provide deep local knowledge about the neighborhood and its community. These organizations were invited to give the planning team a tour of their neighborhood. The team participated in eight neighborhood tours, including six specific neighborhood geographies, a waterfront tour and a bike tour.

Project Website

All materials produced for these events are packaged with any subsequent feedback to create a thorough archive of the process. These materials are posted online and are publicly accessible at bit.ly/PlanEastBoston. The website includes a comment feature which Materials are posted in English and Spanish.

Advisory Group

The Advisory Group is comprised of twenty members of the East Boston community and six ex-officio members. (See the Advisory Group list on page ii). Members of the committee were nominated by the community and appointed by Mayor Martin J. Walsh. The group is charged with guiding the overall planning initiative, including both the process and its outcomes.



"Popsicles with a Planner" on the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway on July 11, 2019



Community members work on a mapping exercise at the Open Space Workshop held at the Ashley Street YMCA on January 29, 2019.

Boston Planning & Development Agency

East Boston Today

Date	Activity / Meeting	Notes
9/25/18	PLAN: East Boston Open House	PLAN process and Interim Planning Overlay District (IPOD) introduction
9/26/18	Eagle Hill Civic Association Visit	Discussed PLAN and IPOD processes
10/1/18	Harbor View Neighborhood Association Visit	Discussed PLAN and IPOD processes
10/9/18	Jeffries Point Neighborhood Association Visit	Discussed PLAN and IPOD processes
10/15/18	Orient Heights Neighborhood Association Visit	Discussed PLAN and IPOD processes
10/17/18	Maverick Central Neighborhood Association Visit	Discussed PLAN and IPOD processes
10/20/18	Zumix: East Boston Storytelling	Attended to promote planning process
10/22/18	Gove Street Citizens Association Visit	Discussed PLAN and IPOD processes
11/1/18	Climate Resiliency Event at Aquarium	Attended to promote planning process
11/8/18	Zumix Story Loft Event	Attended to promote planning process
11/14/18	PLAN: East Boston Preserve, Enhance, and Grow Workshop	Introduced preserve, enhance, and grow framework and identified corresponding geographies
11/21/18	Zumix: What's up Eastie? PSA	Attended to promote planning process
12/15/18	Posada (Navidad Latina) at Veronica Robles Cultural Center	Attended to promote planning process
12/18/18	East Boston Soup Kitchen	Attended to volunteer and promote planning process
12/18/18	Pizza with a Planner	"Chat with a Planner" series at Kelly's Pub
1/6/19	Tres Reyes Magos at Veronica Robles Cultural Center	Attended to promote planning process
1/22/19	Advisory Group Meeting	Advisory Group introduction and kick off
1/29/19	PLAN: East Boston Open Space Workshop	Gathered feedback on open space needs and values
2/4/19	Union Capital Boston Network Night	Attended to promote planning process
2/13/19	Zumix: What's up Eastie? PSA	Attended to promote planning process
2/28/19	Advisory Group Meeting	Reviewed workshop feedback and previewed future PLAN content
3/12/19	PLAN: East Boston Transportation Open House	Introduction to transportation focused needs and initiatives
3/15/19	Donald McKay School Visit	Overview of Planning presentation and activities
3/23/19	East Boston Resource Fair	Attended to answer questions and engage community in PLAN process
3/28/19	Friends of the East Boston Greenway	Attended to answer questions and engage community in PLAN process
4/4/19	Pupusas With a Planner	"Chat with a Planner" series at La Hacienda
4/11/19	Curtis Guild School Open House	Attended to answer questions and engage community in PLAN process
4/20/19	Walking Tour: Orient Heights	Saturday morning walking tour led in partnership with community members
4/25/19	Advisory Group Meeting	Reviewed workshop feedback and previewed future PLAN content
4/27/19	Walking Tour: Gove Street	Saturday morning walking tour led in partnership with community members
5/1/19	Eagle Hill Beautification Committee	Attended to answer questions and engage community in PLAN process
5/10/19	Host East Boston High School visit at the BPDA	11th-12th Grade Students Model Room Tour + PLAN: EB Activities
5/11/19	Walking Tour: Harbor View	Saturday morning walking tour led in partnership with community members
5/18/19	Walking Tour: Jeffries Point	Saturday morning walking tour led in partnership with community members

Date	Activity / Meeting	Notes
5/21/19	Chamber of Commerce: Business Coffee Connect	Attended to discuss PLAN: East Boston and job creation
6/4/19	PLAN: East Boston Affordable Housing 101	Overview of City of Boston housing programs to create and preserve affordable housing
6/8/19	Walking Tour: Orient Heights	Saturday morning walking tour led in partnership with community members
6/18/19	PLAN: East Boston Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP) Deep Dive	Follow up to Affordable Housing 101 on IDP policy
6/22/19	Walking Tour: Maverick-Central	Saturday morning walking tour led in partnership with community members
6/27/19	Advisory Group Meeting	Reviewed workshop feedback, previewed future PLAN content, and introduced PLAN consultants
6/29/19	Walking Tour: Eagle Hill	Saturday morning walking tour led in partnership with community members
7/11/19	Popsicles with a Planner	"Chat with a Planner" series on the East Boston Greenway
7/19/19	Day Square Public Realm Pop-up Table	Attended to answer questions and engage community in PLAN process
7/20/19	Harborkeepers Marine and Maritime Festival	Attended to answer questions and engage community in PLAN process
7/24/19	PLAN: East Boston Small Business Roundtable	Discussion of City-funded resources and opportunities for small businesses
7/24/19	Boston by Bike Ride	Attended to answer questions and engage community in PLAN process
7/30/19	Mayor on Main	Attended to answer questions and engage community in PLAN process
8/12/19	Jeffries Point Neighborhood Association Visit	Attended to recap planning process to date and preview outlook
8/17/19	Eastie Pride Day	Attended to answer questions and engage community in PLAN process
9/4/19	Advisory Group Meeting	1 Year PLAN recap and outlook
9/9/19	Harbor View Neighborhood Association Visit	Attended to recap PLAN process to date and preview outlook
9/16/19	Orient Heights Neighborhood Association Visit	Attended to recap PLAN process to date and preview outlook
9/18/19	Maverick Central Neighborhood Association Visit	Attended to recap PLAN process to date and preview outlook
9/25/19	Eagle Hill Civic Association Visit	Attended to recap PLAN process to date and preview outlook
9/30/19	Gove Street Citizens Association Visit	Attended to recap PLAN process and outlook
10/8/19	PLAN: East Boston Where We've Been, Where We're Going	Review of PLAN process to date and introduction to character area geographies
10/24/19	PLAN: East Boston Neighborhood Residential Workshop	In-depth review of zoning Article 53 and Complete Streets Guidelines as they apply to residential areas
11/6/19	PLAN: East Boston Mixed-Use Nodes and Corridors Workshop	In-depth review of zoning and regulations that apply to mixed-use nodes, corridors, and commercial areas
11/21/19	PLAN: East Boston Waterfront Industrial and Economic Development Areas Workshop	In-depth review of zoning and state-level regulations that apply to waterfront, industrial, and EDAs
12/3/19	Advisory Group Meeting	Reviewed feedback from Fall workshops
2/12/20	Pins with a Planner	"Chat with a Planner" series at Central Park Lanes
2/25/20	PLAN: East Boston Today's Transportation Open House	Presented neighborhood-wide transportation data analysis of existing conditions
7/1/20	Virtual "Chat with a Planner"	First online engagement to provide updates on the planning process
7/15/20	Virtual Advisory Group Meeting	Existing Conditions report update, fall engagement outlook, and COVID-19 response

8 Workshops and Open Houses

3 Round-table discussions

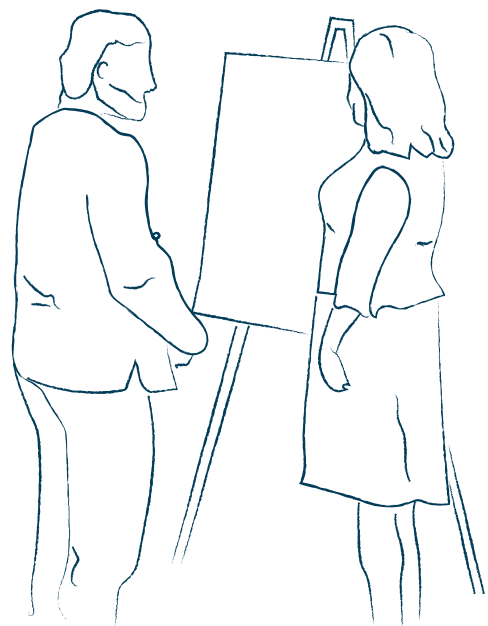
7 Advisory Group meetings

6 Neighborhood walking tours

4 “Chat with a Planner” events

13 Neighborhood association visits

30+ Discussions at
community events



Building on Citywide Planning

Neighborhood planning builds on the vision and goals established by Imagine Boston 2030, the citywide plan to “boost equity, resilience, quality of life in every neighborhood across Boston.”

Imagine Boston 2030

Imagine Boston 2030 is our citywide plan, the first in 50 years, that holistically pulls together planning initiatives in housing, health, education, economy, transportation, energy and the environment, technology, and arts and culture. The plan points to growth areas and strategies for supporting our dynamic economy, expanding opportunity for all residents, creating livable neighborhoods, and ensuring that Boston remains a thriving waterfront city for generations to come. An earlier document, Guiding Growth, describes the expanding population pressures and the need to carefully preserve, enhance, and grow our neighborhoods with an emphasis on housing affordability and reducing displacement.

Planning efforts for Boston follow the framework laid out by Imagine Boston 2030's five major goals:

- » Encourage affordability, reduce displacement, and improve quality of life
- » Increase access to opportunity
- » Drive inclusive economic growth
- » Promote a healthy environment and prepare for climate change
- » Invest in open space, arts & culture, transportation, and infrastructure

Equity

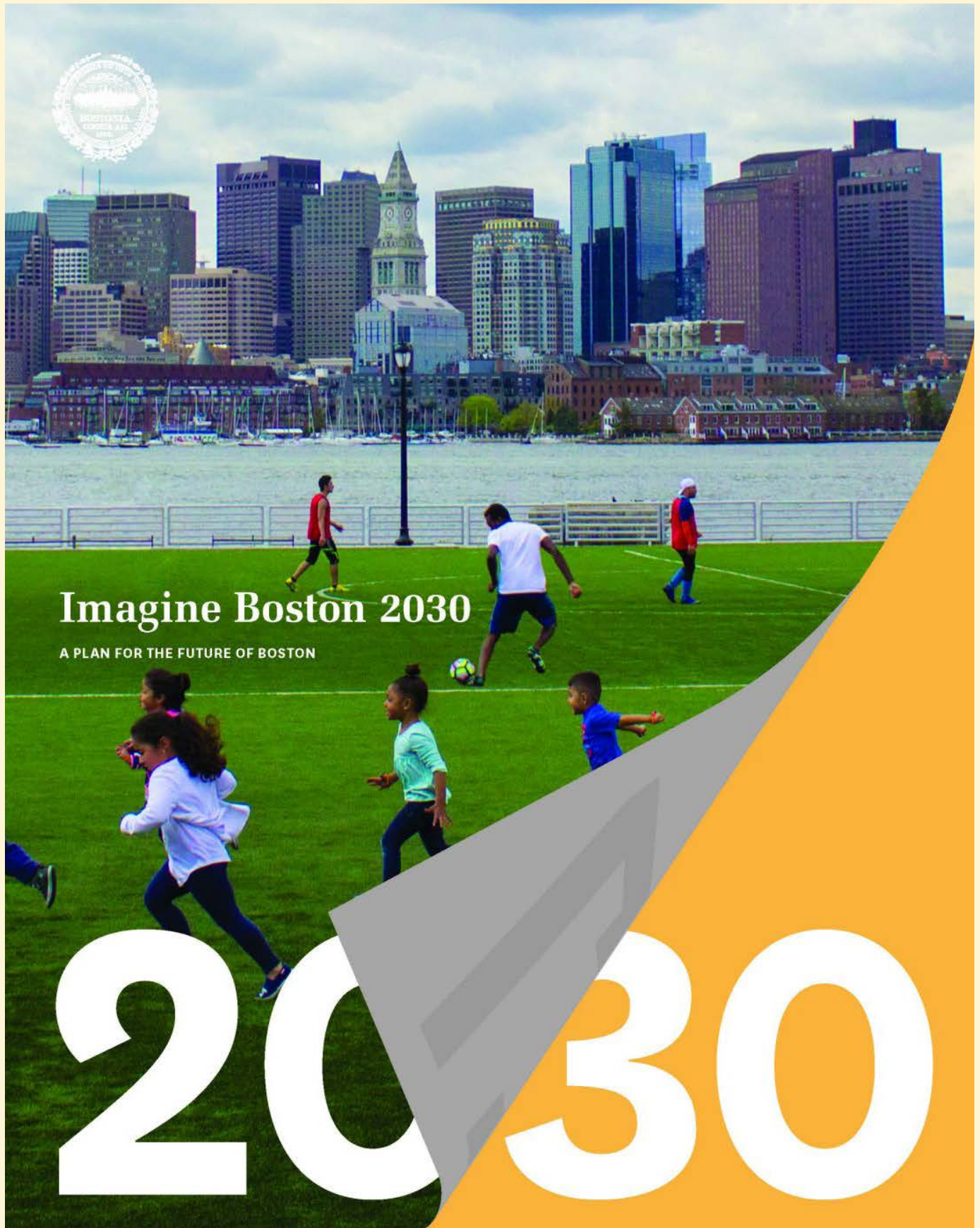
Immigrant populations have always been central to the narrative of the East Boston community, and today it is one of Boston's most diverse neighborhoods. Half of the neighborhood's residents are foreign-born, the highest proportion of any neighborhood in Boston, making it especially important that planning in East Boston continue to address fundamental quality of life issues related to equity, including but not limited to livability, accessibility, and affordability.

Resilience

East Boston's topography consists largely of low-lying infilled land. Waterfront bounds every edge of the neighborhood except for the northernmost boundary with Revere. These features make East Boston particularly susceptible to climate change and sea level rise, which will result in more than half the land area in the neighborhood being vulnerable to flooding as soon as the 2070s.

Quality of Life

Like many neighborhoods in Boston, East Boston is experiencing a period of tremendous growth. From 2000 to 2017, East Boston's population grew about twice as fast as the City of Boston's growth rate over the same time period, contributing substantially to an increase in market demand for development. Although growth has brought welcome investment, increased development pressure has rendered the neighborhood's existing zoning framework insufficient, producing highly variable and often unpredictable outcomes in the built environment.



Building on Citywide Planning

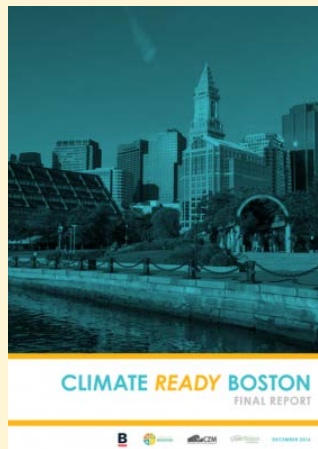
Several citywide plans focus on the efforts of individual City departments. PLAN: East Boston takes the goals established by these plans and helps translate them to the neighborhood scale.



Boston Creates

Arts and Culture
2016

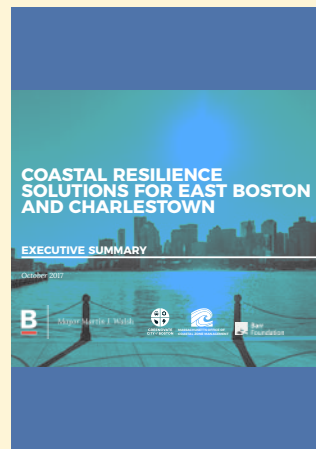
Boston Creates is the City's first arts and culture plan. Developed in response to a surging interest in our vibrant arts and culture scene, as well as an awareness of the need for increased attention and public support, the plan outlines goals, strategies, and tactics for overcoming the barriers to Boston's creative potential. Implementation of the plan focuses on supporting a sustainable arts and culture ecosystem, retaining and attracting creative talent, cultivating respect for many forms of cultural expression, integrating arts into many facets of civic life, and mobilizing partnerships.



Climate Ready Boston

Environment, Energy, and
Open Space
2016

Climate Ready Boston is an ongoing initiative to develop resilient solutions to prepare our City for climate change. The report evaluates how climate change is likely to affect the city and outlines recommendations to ensure Boston will be climate-ready. This work builds on the Climate Action Plan from 2014, which focused on making Boston more sustainable. The focus now, as outlined in the 2019 Climate Action Plan update, is on resilient solutions for buildings, infrastructure, environmental systems, and residents to ensure that the city reduces carbon emissions and continues to prosper in the face of long-term climate uncertainties.

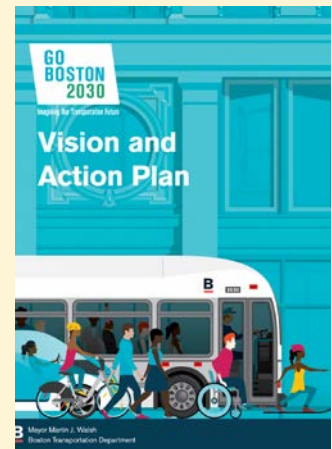


Coastal Resilience Solutions for East Boston and Charlestown

Environment, Energy, and
Open Space
2017

This is the first neighborhood coastal resilience plan to come out of Climate Ready Boston. The plan presents near-and long-term strategies and implementation road-maps for protecting East Boston and Charlestown from sea level rise and coastal flooding. These study areas were selected first because they are currently at risk from 1% annual chance coastal flooding, have high concentrations of vulnerable residents and critical infrastructure, and are affected by relatively narrow and well-defined flood pathways.

The next phase of Climate Ready Boston will commence in late 2020 and study the northern portion of East Boston. PLAN: East Boston will be closely coordinating with this study.



Go Boston 2030

Streets
2017

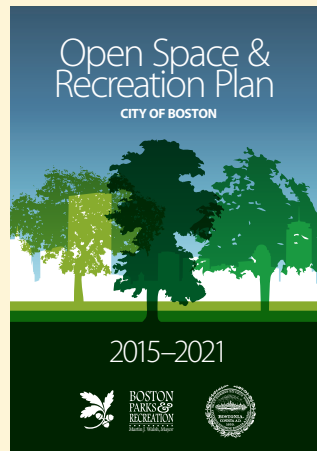
Go Boston 2030 is the City of Boston's comprehensive transportation plan. Guided by increasing equity, economic opportunity, and climate responsiveness, the plan is comprised of 58 projects and policies that are designed to expand access to a variety of connected transportation options, improve traffic-related safety on Boston's streets, and ensure reliability of service for the City's residents, commuters and visitors for the next decade and beyond. More than half of the 58 projects in the Action Plan are underway.



Housing a Changing City: Boston 2030

Housing and Neighborhood Development
2014, Updated in 2018

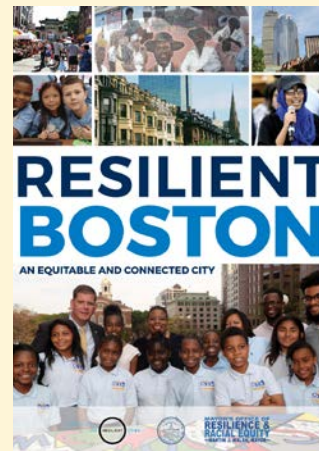
Housing a Changing City is a comprehensive plan designed to address the housing needs of Boston's growing population. In 2018, an assessment found that Boston's population was growing faster than expected, with 759,000 residents expected to live in Boston by 2030. The 2018 update sets new goals for housing production, including increased income-restricted housing for a range of incomes, strategic growth that preserves and enhances existing neighborhoods, and a focus on preventing displacement, increasing homeownership, and promoting fair and equitable access to housing.



Open Space & Recreation Plan, 2015 - 2021

Environment, Energy, and Open Space
2014

The Boston Parks and Recreation Department mission focuses on access, equity and excellence — so that every neighborhood is home to beautiful spaces that serve both the people and the environment. Through in-depth environmental inventory and analysis, The Open Space and Recreation Plan lays out an action plan that guides Boston Parks and Recreation's efforts from 2015 through the year 2021. It informs investment, programming, operations, citywide initiatives, and evaluation of ongoing policy work with three broad challenge areas present throughout the plan: open space access and quantity; open space quality; and climate change and resilience



Resilient Boston

Resilience and Racial Equity
2017

In 2014, the City of Boston was selected for inclusion in 100 Resilient Cities—Pioneered by The Rockefeller Foundation, a global network that helps member cities around the world become more resilient to the physical, social, and economic challenges that are a growing part of the twenty-first century. Resilient Boston is the City's first ever strategy for advancing resilience and racial equity. In the coming decades, Boston's population could well exceed 800,000 people. As Resilient Boston makes clear, race is central to the success of nearly every planning and policy issue. Through long-term visions for Boston, the plan articulates our collective aspirations for our city and our future, and the resources needed to get there.



Small Business Plan

Economic Development
2016

The Boston Small Business Plan has three primary goals: to make the small business economy thrive, to enhance neighborhood vibrancy, and to foster economic and social inclusion and equity. To accomplish these goals, the Plan proposes policies and programs to foster a high-quality, efficient support system for all small businesses; to develop tools, programs, and policies to address specific gaps in key small business segments that are vital to the city's economic growth; and to enhance the ability of minority, immigrant, and women entrepreneurs to successfully launch and grow small businesses across the city.

Planning Framework

The planning framework builds on principles articulated in Imagine Boston 2030.

Principles are reflective of collective values, and give direction to planning goals.

The following principles are derived from the citywide plan, and are applied to each planning topic:

- » East Boston is **livable**. The neighborhood is a safe, healthy, affordable and enjoyable place to live, work and play.
- » East Boston is **equitable**. The neighborhood's resources and opportunities are universally accessible and inclusive.
- » East Boston is **resilient**. The neighborhood's environment and community are protected from the risks associated with climate change.

The planning framework is structured around goals, strategies, and actions.

Planning goals reflect shared values and are established for each planning topic. They are fundamentally qualitative and provide strategic direction to the plan. Strategies are approaches taken to achieve a goal. An action is the specific policy, program, project, or other deliverable that contributes to each goal. Actions may require different levels of effort or resources to implement, and as such, may occur along several different timelines.

The following are draft goal statements for PLAN: East Boston:

Housing

Expand access to housing options in East Boston that are affordable, stable, and able to meet households' needs as they change over time.

Climate & Environment

Advance climate preparedness and promote a healthy environment.

Transportation

Ensure access to travel choices in East Boston that connect all parts of the neighborhood to all parts of the city both safely and reliably.

Jobs & Economy

Support neighborhood economies that meet the needs of local communities as well as regional industries.

Urban Form & Zoning

Guide neighborhood growth that is predictable and contextual and contributes to a public realm that is active and connected.



Residents and BPDA staff first discussed transportation priorities at an Open House meeting on March 12, 2019.

East Boston's Past & Present

East Boston has been a continuously evolving neighborhood since its founding in the 1830s. Its working waterfront contributed to the local and regional economy, and immigrants have called the neighborhood home for nearly two centuries. Residential and commercial areas have followed patterns of growth that were laid out in the original plan for the neighborhood. Understanding the cultural, topographic, and development history of East Boston can help creative, strategic ways to address the neighborhood's growing vulnerability to climate change.

In this section, learn about:

- » From Landfill to Planned Development on page 22
- » Industry and Infrastructure Shape the Neighborhood on page 26
- » A Community Organizes on page 28



Bennington Street showing
the God of Assembly
Church and streetcar
tracks, circa 1920

From Landfill to Planned Development

East Boston's topography of highlands and lowlands, formed over two centuries, is linked by four neighborhood squares.

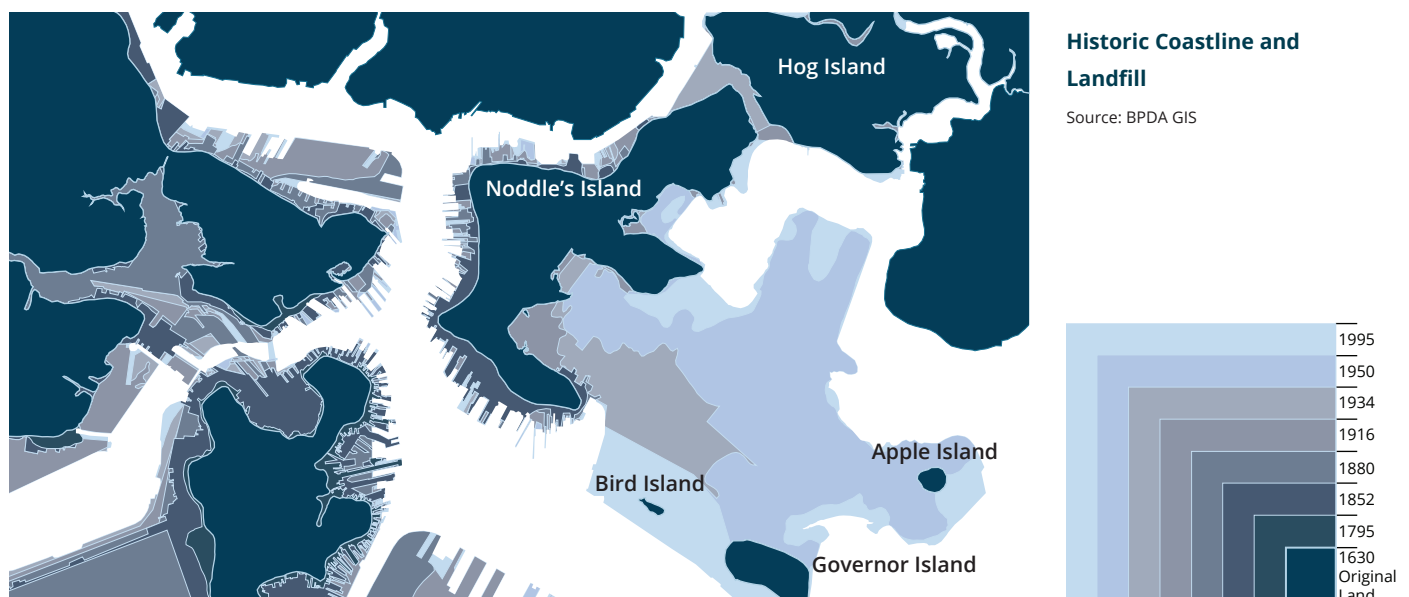
East Boston's pattern of dense development supports walkable neighborhoods, successful retail and small businesses, strong community ties, and more.

The growing desirability of the neighborhood can be attributed to the mix of uses, density, design of streets and squares, and pattern of open spaces in addition to the advocacy and efforts of engaged residents, non-profits, and City and State agencies over the last several decades. Downtown Boston is accessible from East Boston by the Sumner and Callahan Tunnels, MBTA Blue Line, and water transportation, which contributes to the neighborhood's appeal.

The landmass that is East Boston today was originally made up of five separate islands.

The historic Noddle's, Hog, Governor's, Bird, and Apple islands were connected using landfill over the course of 150 years to comprise what is now known today as East Boston. Noddle's Island and Hog Island, the two largest, form the basis of the current residential and commercial areas of East Boston—the residential areas of Maverick, Central, Eagle Hill, Jeffries Point, and Orient Heights. The latter three islands were infilled and connected for the expansion of Logan Airport during World War II.¹ East Boston is 4.74 square miles, 10 percent of Boston's total land area.²

¹ City of Boston, Boston Landmarks Commission, "Exploring Boston's Neighborhoods: East Boston," 1994, p.2.
² Total land area includes Logan Airport and Suffolk Downs, which are not included in the boundary of PLAN: East Boston. Department of Neighborhood Development, East Boston Data Profile (2011). Excluding Logan Airport and Suffolk Downs, the total area is 2.12 square miles. The PLAN: East Boston study area excludes Logan Airport and Suffolk Downs.



As a neighborhood connected by landfill, East Boston has a distinct physical form.

The neighborhood's highlands and lowlands correspond with East Boston's mature residential neighborhoods and emerging edges. The low-lying landfilled areas of East Boston are largely industrial or transportation oriented with a waterfront that has historically served industrial and maritime uses. The historic residential neighborhoods are concentrated on the original hills of East Boston that comprise the neighborhood highlands. Commercial nodes emerge where neighborhood fabric intersects and long corridors connect each of East Boston's commercial nodes.



Image reproduction courtesy of the Boston Pictorial Archive at the Boston Public Library



Aerial view of East Boston
from 2012

East Boston was a cohesively planned neighborhood from as early as the 1830s.

East Boston was annexed to the City of Boston in 1836, and development for homes and businesses began at this time under the direction of the East Boston Company, a privately held company started by General William Sumner. The company envisioned a neighborhood of residences organized by a grid system with squares connecting today's neighborhoods of Jeffries Point, Maverick and Central, and Eagle Hill. Orient Heights was laid out and divided into single-family lots along its hilly terrain. The East Boston Company oversaw residential and commercial development of the neighborhood for nearly a century before it disbanded in 1928.³



Map reproduction courtesy of the Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center at the Boston Public Library

³ City of Boston, Boston Landmarks Commission, "Exploring Boston's Neighborhoods: East Boston," 1994, p.2.; Historic Boston Incorporated, "Commercial Casebook: East Boston, Maverick and Central Squares," 2015, pp. 2-3.



Aerial view of East Boston in 1925, from the Fairchild Aerial Survey

Image reproduction courtesy of the Boston Pictorial Archive at the Boston Public Library



Map reproduction courtesy of the Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center at the Boston Public Library

Industry and Infrastructure Shape the Neighborhood

East Boston grew rapidly in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, driven by shipbuilding and private development. This was followed by a long period of decline and, recently, reinvestment and growth.

East Boston's waterfront industrial uses drove development.

East Boston grew rapidly in the mid-1800s, becoming a major site for the construction of world-famous clipper ships by builders like Donald McKay and Samuel Hall. During this time, most housing was located in what is known today as Eagle Hill. The waterfront became a significant transportation center and shipping port, attracting immigrants seeking jobs in the shipbuilding industry. The Boston Sugar refinery was the first manufacturing business to open in East Boston in the late 1800s and spurred further industrial use along the waterfront.

Historically, the biggest challenge facing the neighborhood was transportation access.

Beginning in the 1830s, ferry service offered the only connection to mainland Boston until the first subway tunnel to downtown opened in 1905. At the time of its completion, the East Boston Tunnel was the world's longest underwater subway tunnel, first served by streetcar, which would eventually become the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Blue Line.⁴ Connections to mainland Boston followed with the completion of the Sumner Tunnel in 1934, followed by the Callahan Tunnel in 1961. A third tunnel across Boston Harbor, the Ted Williams Tunnel, was completed as part of the Central Artery Tunnel (CA/T) project and opened in 1995 to connect South Boston to Logan Airport and provide a route for the Silver Line.



Source: Boston City Archives, Boston Landmarks Commission, Collection 5210.004

Construction, particularly that of new housing, slowed in the mid-twentieth century.

As the manufacturing economy began to slow locally and nationally after World War II, much of East Boston's industry shrank. Local plants closed, corresponding with population decline. Between 1940 and 1960, fewer than 900 new units of housing were built in East Boston.⁵ After reaching a peak in the 1920s, the neighborhood's population bottomed out in the 1980s at around 32,000 residents. (See Growing Population on page 36 for more information.)

⁴ Historic Boston Incorporated, "Commercial Casebook: East Boston, Maverick and Central Squares," 2015, p. 2.

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5-year estimates, 2013-2017 (Table S2504 Physical Characteristics for Occupied Housing Units), BPDA Research Division Analysis.

Major infrastructure construction triggered growth and development in the early twentieth century.

As shipbuilding, manufacturing, and trade industries grew, Maverick and Central Squares were developed as commercial centers. Brick residential and commercial buildings emerged around these neighborhood squares. The neighborhood saw continued investment in industrial and infrastructural uses. The airport opened in 1923, created largely on land infilled between the small Governor's and Apple Islands, and continued expansion through the 1940s. In the 1950s, a land exchange between the City and Massport resulted in the loss of the Frederick Law Olmsted-designed Wood Island Park and the Amerena Playground in exchange for new facilities at Constitution Beach and East Boston Memorial Park, MBTA stations (at Airport, Wood Island, and Orient Heights), and the expansion of Logan International Airport's runway.⁶ The Sumner and Callahan Tunnels were completed during the same time period. Each of these projects required the taking of housing and land in exchange for public infrastructure. (See *Traveling in East Boston Today* on page 90 for more about the development of East Boston's street and transit network.)

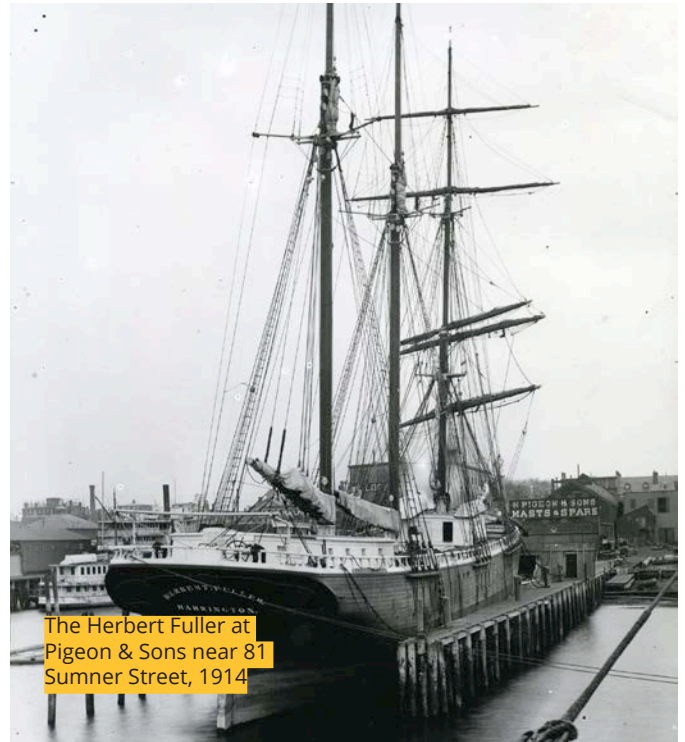
The airport expands.

In the mid-twentieth century, regional planners called for an expansion of the highway system, a second Harbor tunnel, and the expansion of Logan International Airport. These expansions required the demolition of homes and infrastructure that divided neighborhoods in East Boston.⁷ This had a significant impact on the quality of life of many residents. As the *Boston Globe* reported in 1969, "In East Boston, people ask, 'How much more progress can we stand?' Airport opponents contend that some people are living and some children are studying in areas shattered by noise levels of 110 decibels. Women complain that the air pollution dirties their windows and curtains. . . . At times, flights come in at a rate of one a minute."⁸

⁶ Historic Boston Incorporated, "Commercial Casebook: East Boston, Maverick and Central Squares," 2015, p. 3.; Jim Aloisi, *Massport at 60: Shaping the Future since 1956*. (Boston: Massport 2017).

⁷ Jim Aloisi, *Massport at 60: Shaping the Future since 1956*. (Boston: Massport 2017), 66-68.

⁸ *Boston Globe*, September 7, 1969, Sunday Section A17.



The Herbert Fuller at Pigeon & Sons near 81 Sumner Street, 1914

Source: Boston City Archives, Boston Landmarks Commission, Collection 5210.004



Bennington Street with streetcar, 1948

Source: Boston City Archives, Boston Landmarks Commission, Collection 5210.004



Boston Logan Airport, 1929

Source: Boston City Archives, Boston Landmarks Commission, Collection 5210.004

A Community Organizes

In response to the airport's expansion in the 1960s, residents became activists, demanding improvements to the quality of life in the neighborhood. Organized protests helped focus Boston's and Massport's attention on how the airport was impacting residents.

The mothers of Maverick Street take on truck traffic and safety.

The "Battle of Maverick Street" in 1968 began when Massport routed approximately 600 trucks daily down Maverick Street to service the airport. Residents of Maverick Street were worried because their children played in the streets and sidewalks, which now carried heavy, noxious truck traffic. On September 28, 1968, the mothers of Maverick Street became frustrated enough that they had to stop the truck traffic. They "went out into the street wearing their house dresses, some clutching their children by the hand, and blocked the roads with their bodies."⁹ Mayor Kevin White exercised emergency powers to stop the trucks from traveling on Maverick Street, and then-Governor John Volpe forced Massport to find an alternative route for trucks.¹⁰

Wood Island Park is lost.

The removal of Wood Island Park to expand a runway similarly sparked resident uprising and protest, albeit one that was ultimately not successful. Wood Island Park was a 75-acre, Olmstead-designed park with a public beach, walkways, running track, and bathhouse. The entrance to Wood Island Park was through Neptune Road, a tree-lined boulevard lined with triple deckers. Massport's 1964 Master Plan had called for the airport to take Wood Island Park and expand a runway using this land. In late 1968 and early 1969, Massport took part of Neptune Road, relocated 8 families, demolished their triple deckers, and cut down the elm trees that lined the road. On April 27, 1969, hundreds

of residents decided to drive cars at extremely slow speeds through the airport, effectively bringing access to and from the airport to a halt.

East Boston residents form Air Impact Relief, creating a lasting legacy of activism and advocacy.

The Maverick Street mothers and other activists formed Air Impact Relief (Air Inc.), a neighborhood group focused on the impact of the airport.¹¹ As Mary Ellen Welch, a longtime activist and Jeffries Point resident said, "To East Boston people, 'remember Wood Island Park' is like 'remember the Alamo.' It's a war cry. . . . It means we'll do whatever we can to maintain our physical integrity and stop airport expansion. . . . You either fight for your community or you'll be annihilated."¹²

Today, Air Inc. has been joined by many neighborhood associations, nonprofits, community development corporations, and others who are deeply invested in the future of East Boston and its residents. In response to the work of activists, Massport implemented programs like the Residential Sound Insulation Program and opened and maintains several parks in the neighborhood (see page 156 to learn more).

9 *Boston Globe*, September 7, 1969, Sunday Section, pp. 22-26. See also Jim Aloisi, *Massport at 60: Shaping the Future since 1956*, pp. 69-80.

10 Jim Aloisi, *Massport at 60: Shaping the Future since 1956*, pp. 75-76.

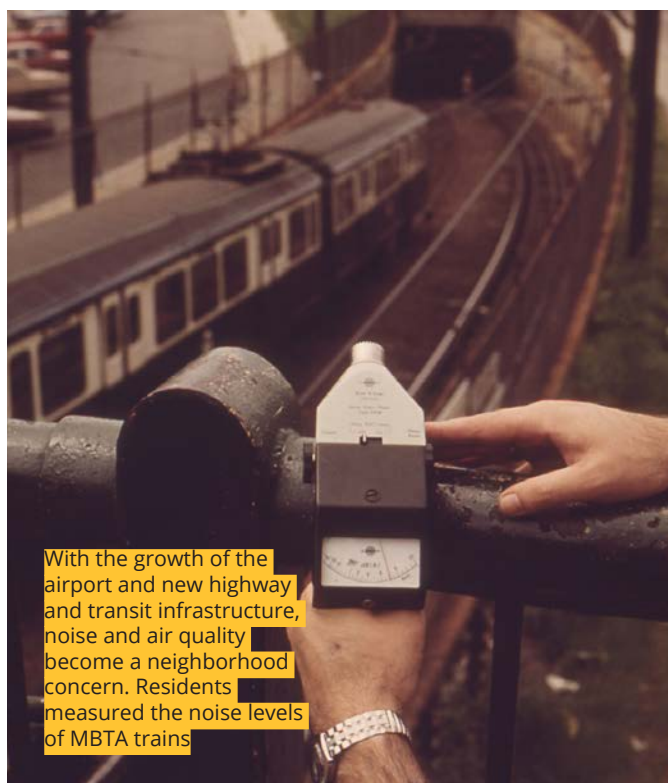
11 *Ibid.*, pp. 76-80.

12 Dianne Dumanoski, "Parks, Lost and Found," *Land & People*, Trust for Public Land, September 2001.



Mary Stack, once of East Boston, (Logan Airport area) demonstrates ear guards that did not bring sufficient relief from aircraft noise, and shows clipping of her meeting with Mayor Kevin White in June 1973

Image reproduction courtesy of the Records of the Environmental Protection Agency Collection at the U.S. National Archives



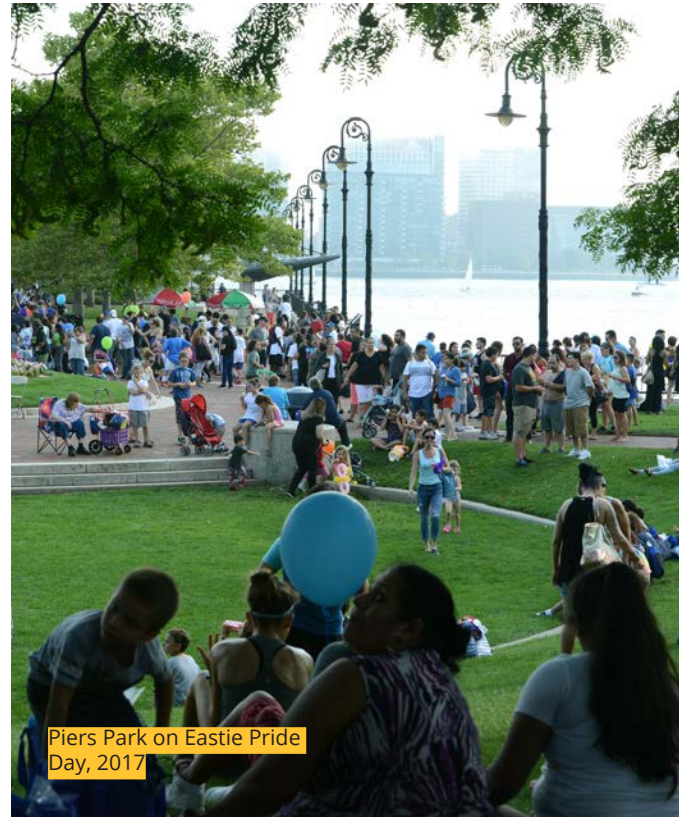
With the growth of the airport and new highway and transit infrastructure, noise and air quality become a neighborhood concern. Residents measured the noise levels of MBTA trains

Image reproduction courtesy of the Records of the Environmental Protection Agency Collection at the U.S. National Archives

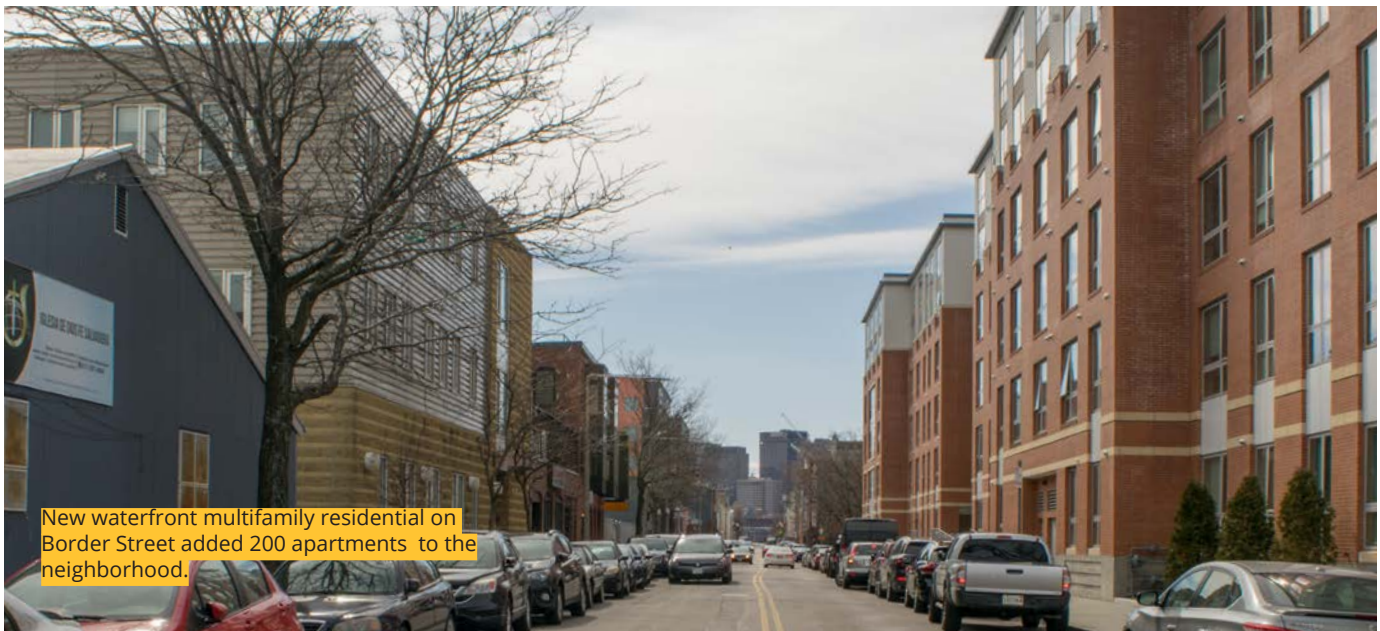
East Boston has seen rapid reinvestment in recent years.

In the 1970s Mary Ellen Welch and the other activists set about trying to create new parkland for East Boston. They doggedly pursued the State legislature and Massport to create a waterfront park, now Piers Park. It took 15 years, but the 6-acre park, planned in concert with neighborhood residents and built and managed by Massport, is one of the many open space gems of East Boston. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, abandoned railyards owned by the Conrail Railroad Corporation were transformed into the Bremen Street Park and East Boston Greenway, renamed in 2019 as the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway.¹³

The 1990s saw little residential development, with less than 400 units of housing built in East Boston.¹⁴ But after 2000, when the last East Boston Master Plan was completed, the neighborhood began to see growth in population and development. East Boston's population grew 22 percent from 2000 to 2017.¹⁵ Local and regional growth has sparked increased development in neighborhoods citywide, and East Boston in particular has become desirable because of its proximity to Downtown and relative affordability (but this has brought challenges as well, see Rising Housing Costs on page 56).



Piers Park on Eastie Pride Day, 2017



New waterfront multifamily residential on Border Street added 200 apartments to the neighborhood.

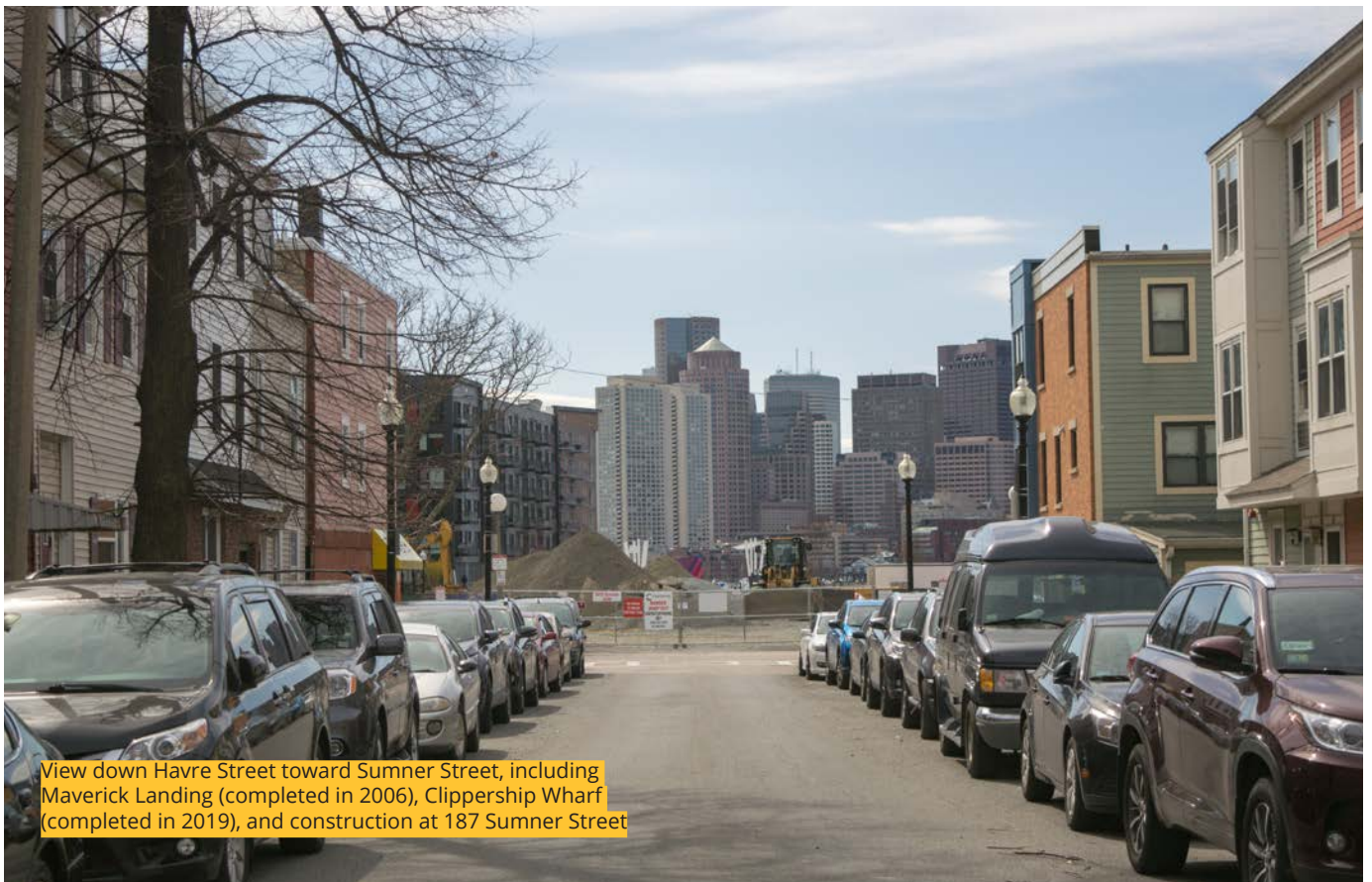
¹³ Dianne Dumanoski, "Parks, Lost and Found," Land & People, Trust for Public Land, September 2001.

¹⁴ U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5-year estimates, 2013-2017 (Table S2504 Physical Characteristics for Occupied Housing Units), BPDA Research Division Analysis.

¹⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, 1910-2010 Decennial Census, NHGIS; 2013-2017 American Community Survey; BPDA Research Division Analysis



Infill construction on Everett Street



View down Havre Street toward Sumner Street, including Maverick Landing (completed in 2006), Clippership Wharf (completed in 2019), and construction at 187 Sumner Street

People

After decades of population decline, East Boston's population has grown since 1980 to approximately 46,000 people. This is still below the neighborhood's peak population of 60,000 in 1920. More than half of East Boston residents are foreign-born, and two-thirds identify as Hispanic or non-white, higher than the citywide average. Some of these changes mirror regional or citywide trends, but others relate to East Boston's jobs, its long history as a community welcoming to immigrants, or its proximity to downtown. As the population continues to grow, PLAN: East Boston will aim to improve the quality of life for all residents, while supporting a diverse population and creating a cohesive community.

In this section, learn about:

- » A History of Immigration on page 34
- » Growing Population on page 36
- » Changing Demographics on page 38
- » Shifting Household Composition on page 42



Residents at the Eastie Week kick-off
in Brophy Park, July 2019.

A History of Immigration

East Boston has long been a welcoming community for immigrants.

East Boston has served as a home to immigrants since the mid-1800s.

East Boston served as a point of entry for many European immigrants because major passenger steamship lines were based in East Boston's ports.¹ Across Boston, Irish migration surged in the 1840s with the Great Famine. As with many other Boston neighborhoods, the Irish were the largest foreign-born population group in East Boston around this time. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Canadian and Irish immigrants settled in East Boston, primarily working in the shipyard as laborers. The neighborhood also held one of New England's largest Jewish communities at the turn of the century.² Several public assistance and social service programs were established in East Boston, like The Immigrants Home on Marginal Street.

By 1901, East Boston became the second-largest point of immigration in America after Ellis Island.³

The East Boston Immigration Station was located on Marginal Street in Jeffries Point. It functioned as a U.S. Immigration Service detention center for 34 years to serve as a centralized point of entry for immigration. East Boston's population peaked in the 1920s with 60,778 residents, at which point it became a largely Italian-American neighborhood.⁴ Nationwide immigration restrictions slowed migrant population growth in the mid-1900s and like most Boston neighborhoods, population declined as families relocated to suburban communities after World War II. (See "Growing Population" on page 36 for more information.)



Image reproduction courtesy of the Boston Pictorial Archive at the Boston Public Library



Source: Boston City Archives, Mayor Raymond L. Flynn records, Collection 0246.001

1 Massport, "The East Boston Immigration Station: A History," 2012, pp. 13-16.

2 Professor Marilyn Johnson's Contested Cities Seminar at Boston College, "East Boston," Global Boston: Immigrant Places, 2016, <https://globalboston.bc.edu/index.php/home/immigrant-places/east-boston/>; Historic Boston Incorporated, "Commercial Casebook: East Boston, Maverick and Central Squares," 2015, p. 6.

3 Massport, "The East Boston Immigration Station: A History," 2012, p. 15.

4 Ibid., p. 67.

Today, East Boston is an extremely diverse neighborhood with the highest percentage of foreign-born people of any Boston neighborhood.

The United States' Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 allowed for a new era of migration. In the 1980s, the largest populations of immigrants settling in East Boston were from Central America and Colombia. East Boston's Latin American population has continued to grow in the last 30 years as migrants have found their home in East Boston. (See "Changing Demographics" on page 38 for more information.)



Mayor's Coffee Hour in Noyes Park, Spring 2019



Mayor Walsh and the Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement unveiled a mural as part of the "To Immigrants With Love" public art campaign. The mural pays tribute to the generations of immigrants who have not only made Boston their home, but the thriving city it is today.

Growing Population

After population decline from 1920 to 1980, East Boston is experiencing robust population growth.

East Boston's population has been growing since 1980, with a recent increase in pace since 2010.

From 2000 to 2017, East Boston's population grew 21 percent from 38,413 residents to 46,655. The average annual rate of change in population in that period was 2 percent, which was twice the citywide average annual rate of change. Despite nearly four decades of sustained population growth, East Boston's population is lower today than it was at its peak in 1920, which was approximately 60,000 residents.⁵

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, 1950–2010 Decennial Census and 2013–2017 American Community Survey; BPDA Research Division Analysis.

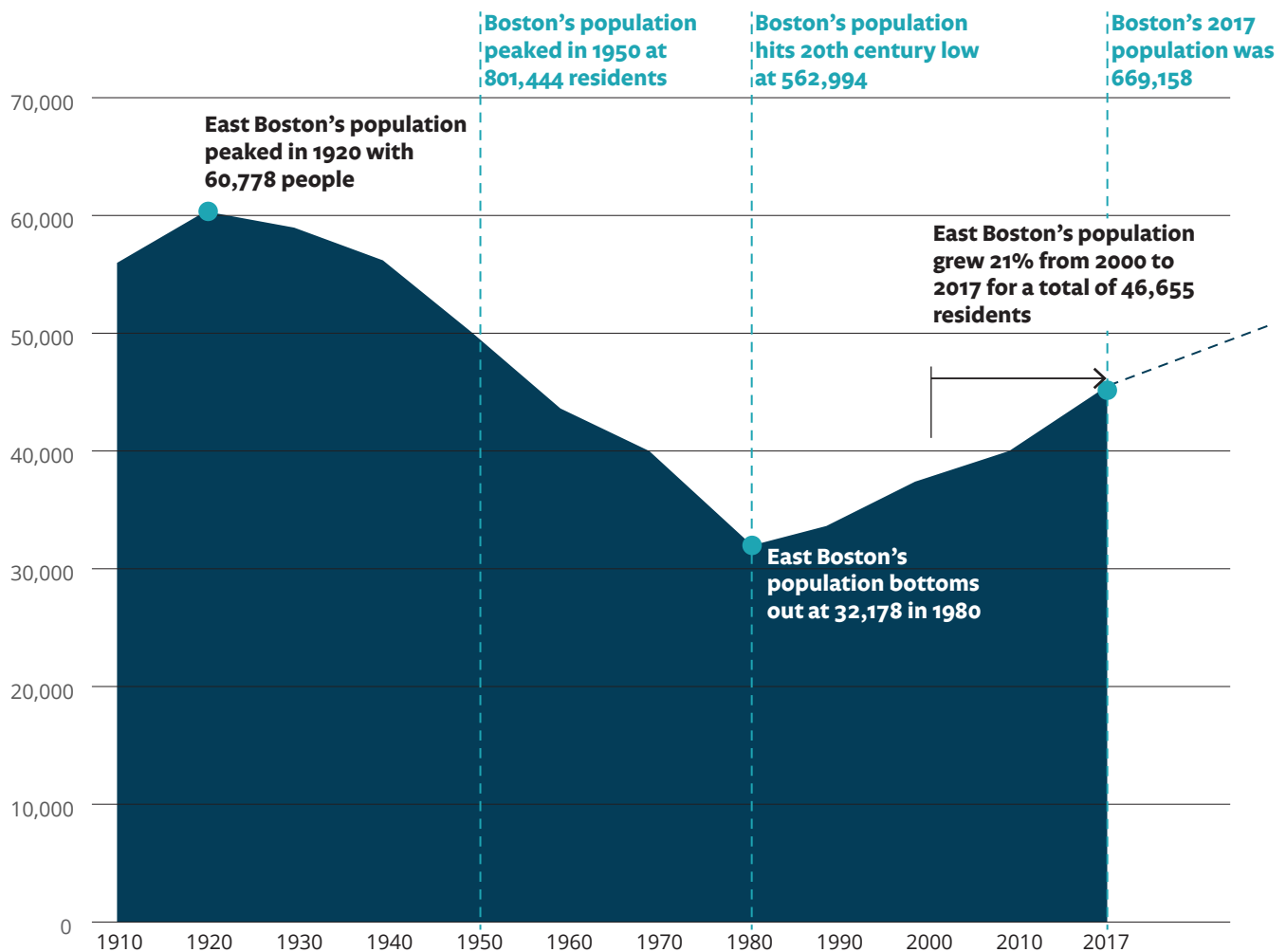


Mayor Walsh and Councilor Edwards with residents at the annual Eastie Pride Day at LoPresti Park in August 2019

East Boston Population 1920–2017

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1910–2010 Decennial Census, NHGIS; 2013–2017 American Community Survey; BPDA Research Division Analysis.

East Boston's population is growing twice as fast as the city's total population.



Boston's citywide population is expected to grow to 760,000 by 2030.

Changing Demographics

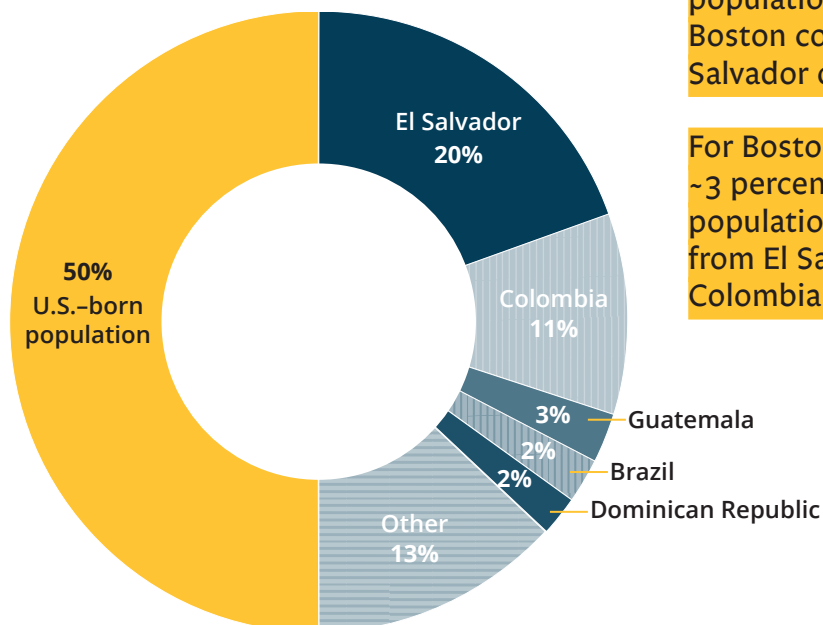
East Boston has a growing foreign-born population and a growing Latinx and Spanish-speaking population.

Half of East Boston's residents are foreign-born.

In 2017, 50 percent of East Boston's population was foreign-born,⁶ compared to 28 percent of residents citywide.⁷ This represents an increase from 2000, when 42 percent of East Boston's residents were foreign-born. Almost all recent population growth (since 1990) is due to growth in foreign-born population.

Country of Birth, East Boston Residents 2017

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1950–2010 Decennial Census and 2013–2017 American Community Survey.



31 percent of the population of East Boston comes from El Salvador or Colombia.

For Boston overall, ~3 percent of the population comes from El Salvador or Colombia.

⁶ Foreign-born populations include those who are not U.S. citizens at birth, although they may become U.S. citizens through naturalization.

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, 1950–2010 Decennial Census and 2013–2017 American Community Survey.

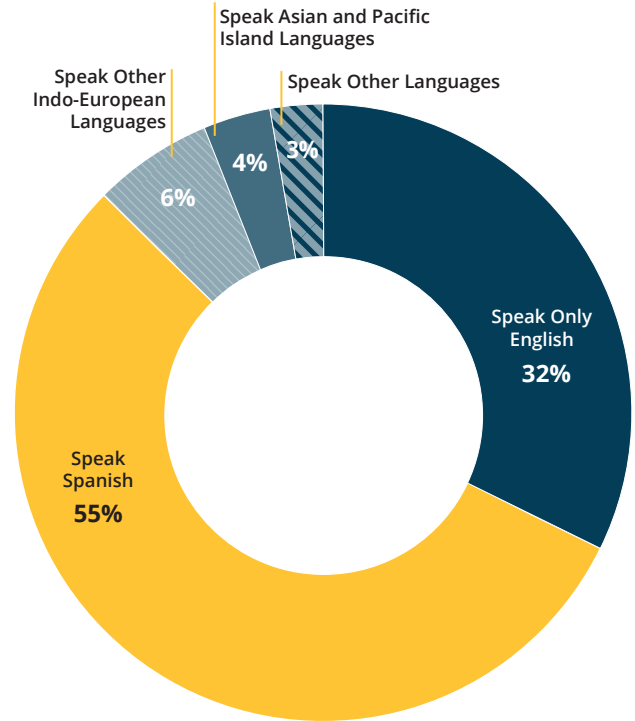
The share of residents identifying as Hispanic or Latinx is increasing.

The neighborhood is racially diverse, with people of color comprising 63 percent of residents, compared to the citywide share of 53 percent. More than 50 percent of residents are Hispanic or Latinx. The share of residents identifying as Hispanic or Latinx increased from 39 percent in 2000 to 57 percent in 2017.⁸ The most common languages spoken in East Boston are English, Spanish, Arabic, and Portuguese. More than half of East Boston households speak Spanish at home.⁹



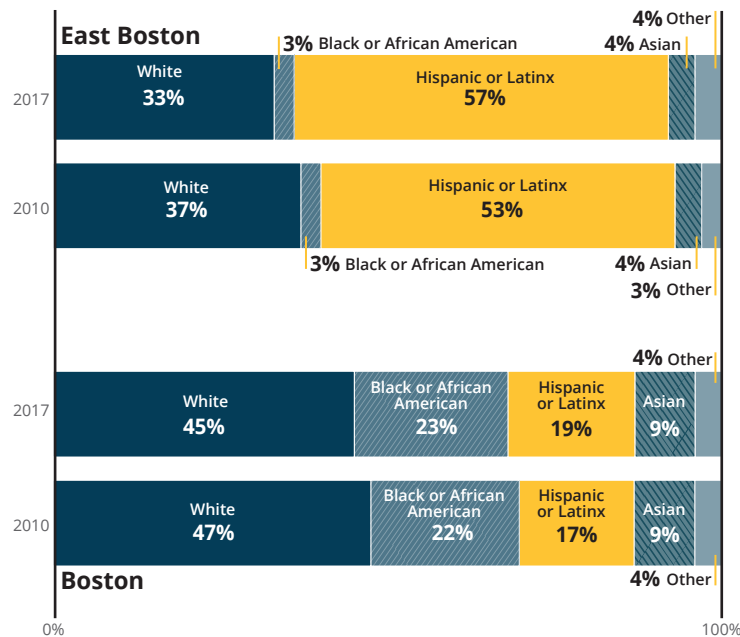
Language Spoken at Home 2017

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013–2017 American Community Survey.



Residents by Race 2017

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Decennial Census and 2013–2017 American Community Survey.



57 percent of East Boston residents identify as Hispanic or Latinx.

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census and 2013–2017 American Community Survey. The Census Bureau uses self-identified categories for race that are generally reflective of the social definition of race recognized in this country. The Census Bureau divides ethnicity into two primary categories, Hispanic and Non-Hispanic. Hispanic populations can be of any race, and are not included in the other racial categories in this analysis.

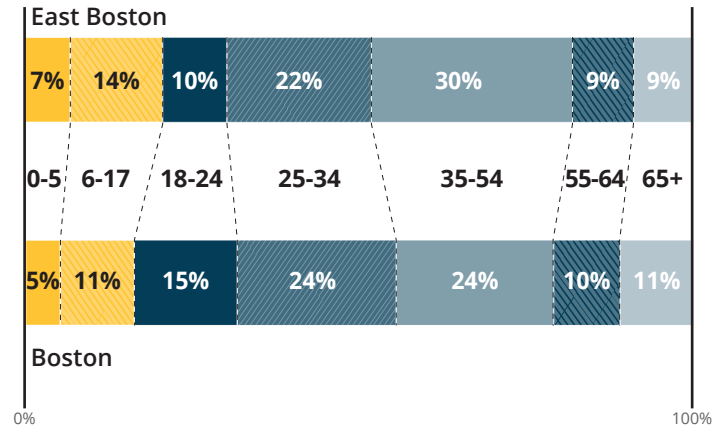
⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2013–2017 American Community Survey.

East Boston has a higher percentage of children than Boston overall, and more people aged 35-54.

Children make up 21 percent of East Boston's population, as compared to 16 percent of Boston's population overall. East Boston also has a higher percentage of adults aged 35-54, representing 30 percent of the neighborhood's population as compared to 24 percent of Boston overall. These numbers correlate with a higher percentage of family households (see page 42).

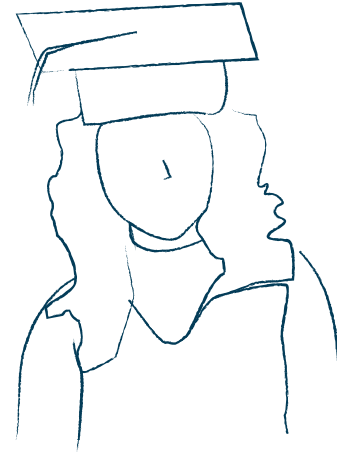
Age Distribution 2017

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis



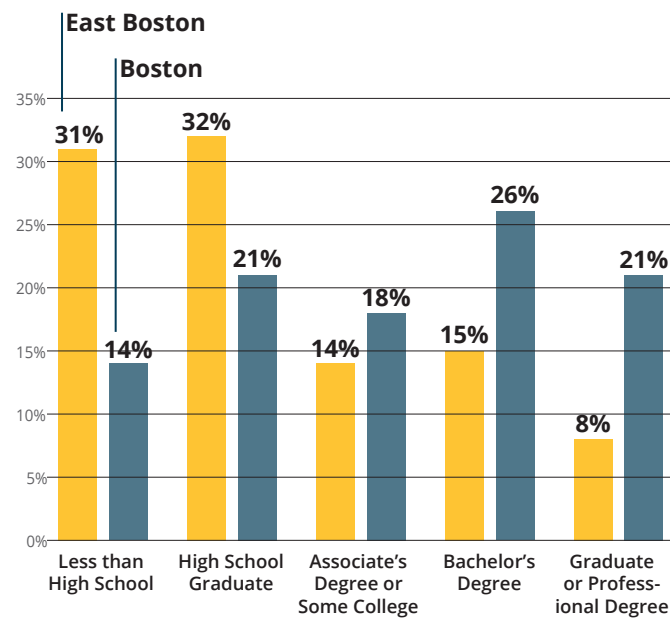
The share of East Boston residents with at least a Bachelor's degree has doubled since 2000.

The percentage of East Boston adult residents with at least a Bachelor's degree doubled from 2000 to 2017, to 23 percent. Overall, though, East Boston residents are half as likely to have obtained a Bachelor's degree or higher than residents citywide. In 2017, 5 percent of East Boston residents were enrolled in college or university, compared to 16 percent of Boston's residents.¹⁰ Comparing the different levels of educational attainment of different populations helps us understand how potential socioeconomic challenges of the neighborhood are related to educational attainment.¹¹ Higher levels of education often correspond with higher incomes and better economic opportunities.



Educational Attainment for Residents Age 25 and Older 2017

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013–2017 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis



The percentage of East Boston residents with at least a Bachelor's degree is half that of Boston overall.

¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, 2013–2017 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

¹¹ Educational attainment is measured for people ages 25 and older.

Shifting Household Composition

East Boston has larger households and a larger share of families with children than the city as a whole.

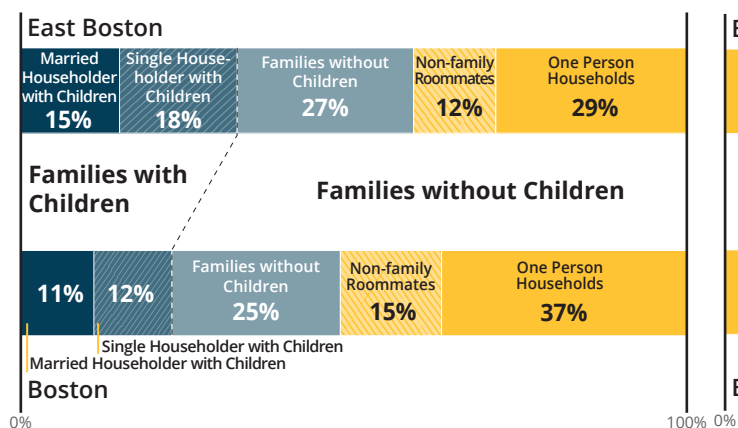
Households in East Boston are more likely to be families with children.

Households¹² in East Boston are more often families with children (33 percent) than in the city overall (23 percent). Households in East Boston are less likely to consist of non-family roommates or one person living alone.

More than half of the families with children in East Boston are headed by an unmarried householder.

Households by Type 2017

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013–2017 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

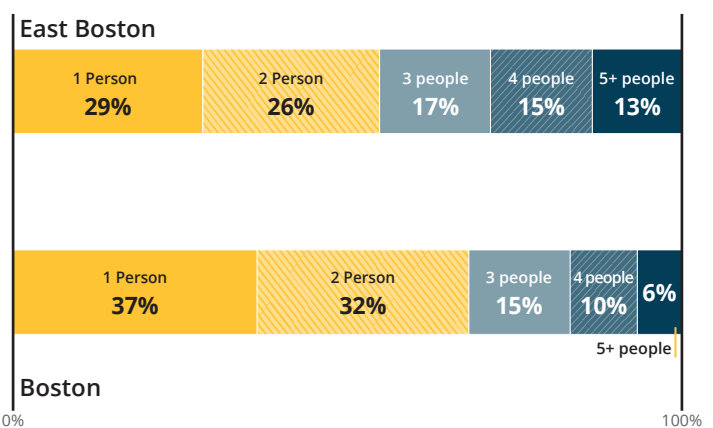


Households in East Boston are larger in East Boston than citywide.

The average household size in East Boston is 2.85 members, higher than the average household size for Boston, 2.36 members. East Boston households are less likely to have only one or two members—55 percent compared to 69 percent of Boston households. 28 percent of East Boston households have four or more members. Larger households are correlated with larger housing units: East Boston has more two- and three-bedroom units than the city overall (see page 53). Household sizes have increased slightly since 2000, although they are still significantly smaller than in 1950 when the average household size was 3.7.¹³

Households by Size 2017

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013–2017 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.



¹² A household includes all the people who occupy a housing unit as their usual place of residence, whether they are related or not. Family households include members related by birth, marriage or adoption.

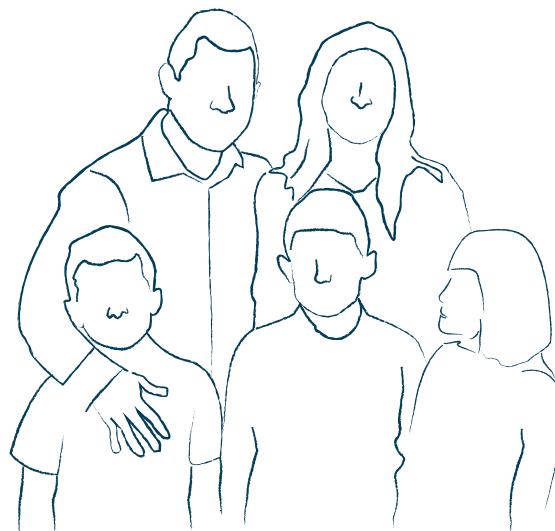
¹³ In 2000 the average household size for East Boston was 2.65, and for Boston it was 2.31. U.S. Census Bureau, 1950–2010 Decennial Census and 2013–2017 American Community Survey.



In July 2019 Mayor Walsh and City staff visited the East Boston Main Streets District and met local residents.

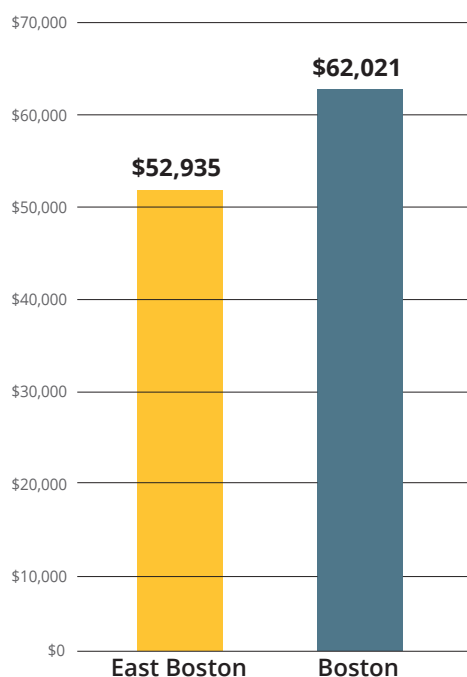
Household income in East Boston is lower than the citywide median.

Median household income¹⁴ provides a sense of the overall socioeconomic status of the neighborhood in comparison to the other neighborhoods and the overall city. East Boston has a lower median household income (\$52,935) than Boston (\$62,200). The Federal Poverty threshold is \$25,900 per year for a household of four persons. One in five households, or approximately 20 percent of households in East Boston, earn incomes below the poverty threshold; this is similar to the citywide average.¹⁵



Median Household Income 2017

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013–2017 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis



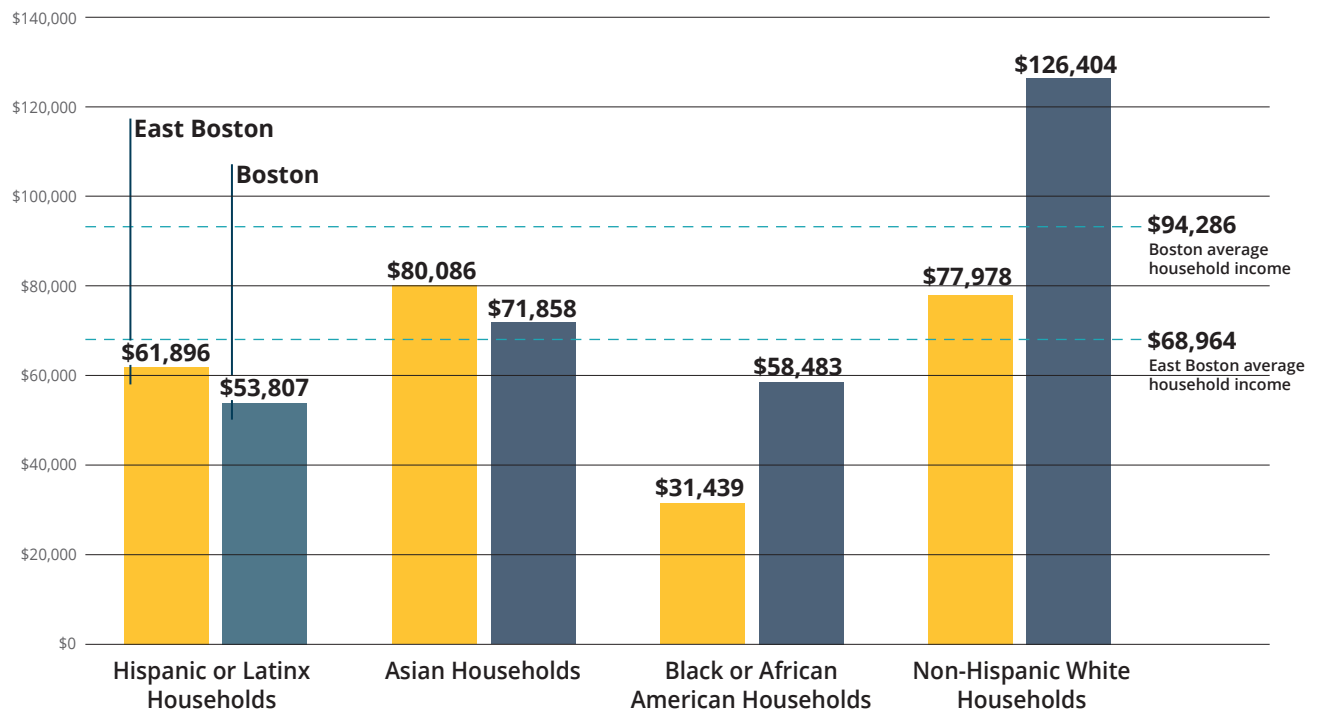
¹⁴ Median household income refers to the income whereby half of the households in the area earn more and half earn less. Households includes both family and non-family households. Family household income data is also provided by the U.S. Census Bureau, and the median family household income (\$51,470) in East Boston is slightly lower than the median household income (\$52,935). U.S. Census Bureau, 2013–2017 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

¹⁵ Citywide, 21 percent of households earn incomes below the Federal Poverty threshold. U.S. Census Bureau, 2013–2017 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

Average Household Income by Race / Ethnicity of Householder 2017

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013–2017 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis
Note: The householder is one of the adults in whose name a housing unit is owned or rented.

Hispanic or Latinx households in East Boston earn more than Hispanic or Latinx households overall in Boston.



Housing

Population growth continues to spur demand for housing across the Boston region, and East Boston has felt the pressure. Scarcity in housing supply perpetuates low vacancy rates, and puts pressure on rents and sales prices. Though hundreds of new housing units are approved annually—including new income-restricted units—housing prices continue to challenge both access and affordability. By protecting existing residential neighborhoods and strategically encouraging growth along the nodes and corridors, PLAN: East Boston can provide a balanced approach to meet future demands and stabilize existing housing.

In this section, learn more about:

- » Today's Housing Stock on page 48
- » Rising Housing Costs on page 56
- » Understanding Displacement on page 58
- » Producing Housing on page 60
- » Creating Affordable Housing on page 64
- » City Policies and Programs on page 66



View of East Boston, looking toward Downtown and Fort Point Channel

Today's Housing Stock

Much of the existing housing stock is comprised of row houses and triple deckers, typical of early twentieth-century workforce housing. The scale and built character of the neighborhood is relatively low density.

Housing supply across Boston is constrained.

The City of Boston closely tracks population growth, housing costs, and the creation of new housing to better understand housing demand. In 2014, the City launched *Housing A Changing City: Boston 2030*, the city's housing plan. Based on a projected growth in Boston's population to 709,000 people by 2030, the City set a goal of creating 53,000 new units by 2030. With more than 30,000 units permitted or completed, Boston has been outperforming Mayor Walsh's goal, set in 2014.¹ Despite these successes, Boston's population is growing faster than expected. Using the best demographic data now available, Boston's 2030 population is projected to be closer to 760,000 people. To house this increased population, the City increased the housing production goal from 53,000 units to 69,000 new units by 2030.

Citywide, the supply of housing units available for rent or sale remains tight. The citywide rental vacancy rate—the number of rental units available for rent as a share of housing units either available for rent or currently rented—was 2.8 percent in 2017. The rental vacancy rate for East Boston was lower, at 2.2 percent.² This low level of vacancy puts upward pressure on rents. Housing Boston 2030 sets a target vacancy rate of 7 percent by 2030, more than doubling the current vacancy rate to help stabilize rent levels.³

Housing growth in East Boston has not kept up with population growth.

East Boston's population grew by 22 percent from 2000 to 2017, and the number of occupied housing units⁴ grew by 11 percent during this same time.⁵ (See page 60 for more information about the production of new housing.) Currently, supply cannot match demand, resulting in high housing prices in East Boston and citywide.

1 City of Boston, Department of Neighborhood Development (DND), "Housing a Changing City: Boston 2030, 2018 Update," September 2018, p. 3.

2 BPDA Research Division, "Boston's Economy 2019," September 2019, pp. 34-36.

3 City of Boston, DND, "Housing a Changing City: Boston 2030, 2018 Update" September 2018, p. 129; and Lincoln Institute for Land Policy, "The Empty House Next Door: Understanding and Reducing Vacancy and Hypervacancy in the United States," 2018, p. 11.

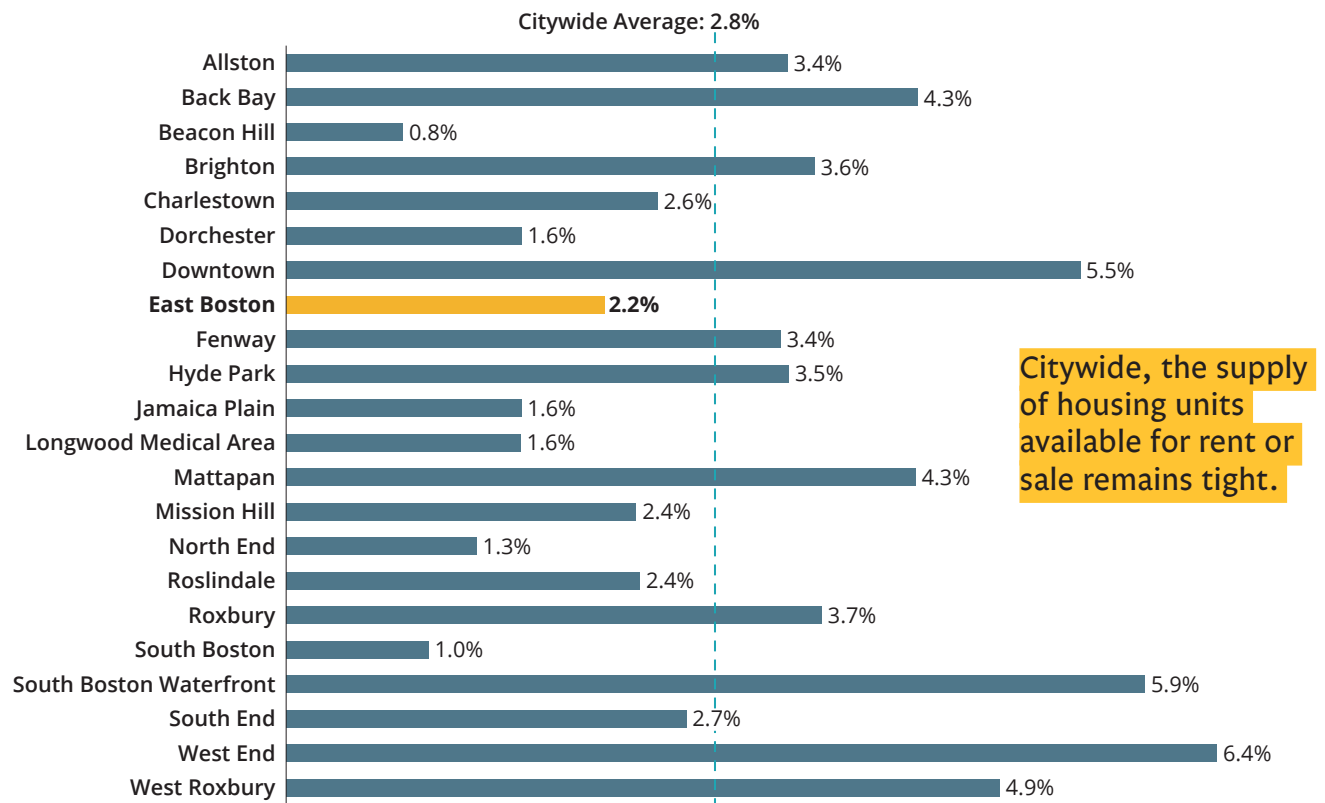
4 A housing unit is occupied if a person or group of persons is living in it at the time of the self-reported American Community Survey count. The persons living in the unit must consider it their usual place of residence or have no usual place of residence elsewhere. The count of occupied housing units is the same as the count of households.

5 U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Decennial Census, 2013–2017 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

Rental Vacancy Rate by Neighborhood

2017

Source U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2013–2017, BPDA Research Division Analysis.



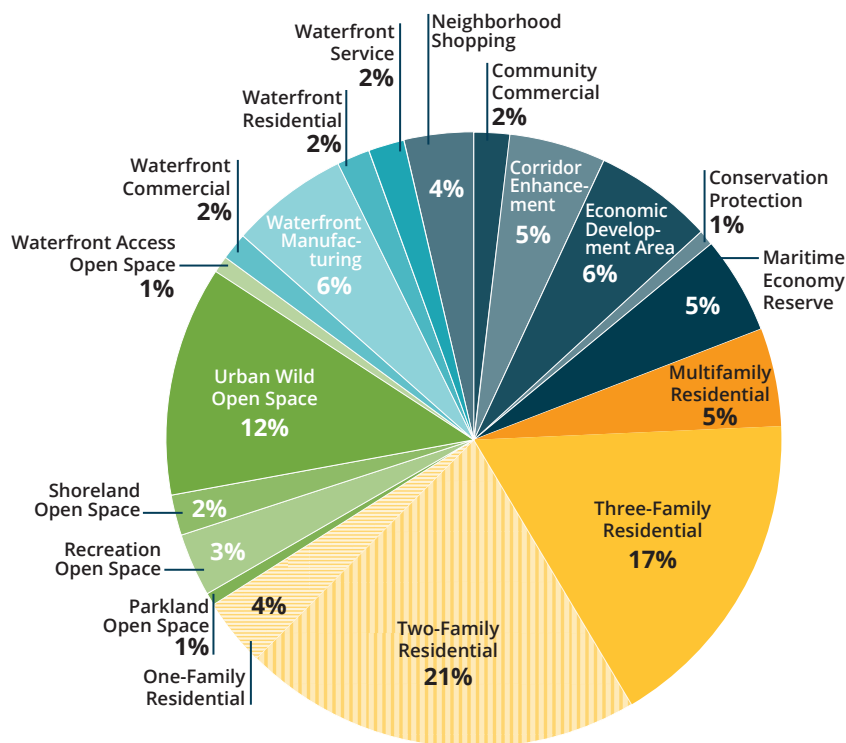
East Boston's housing stock and zoning is primarily smaller scale.

In East Boston, much of the existing housing and zoning are one-, two-, or three-family residences. Multifamily housing (4+ units) typically occurs at the edge of the neighborhood and along the waterfront. More than 40 percent of the total land area is zoned for one-, two-, or three-family houses, and only about 5 percent of the land is zoned for multifamily, or medium-or large-scaled, residential.⁶

Zoning Subdistrict by Percent Total Land Area, East Boston 2019

Source: BPDA GIS Analysis.

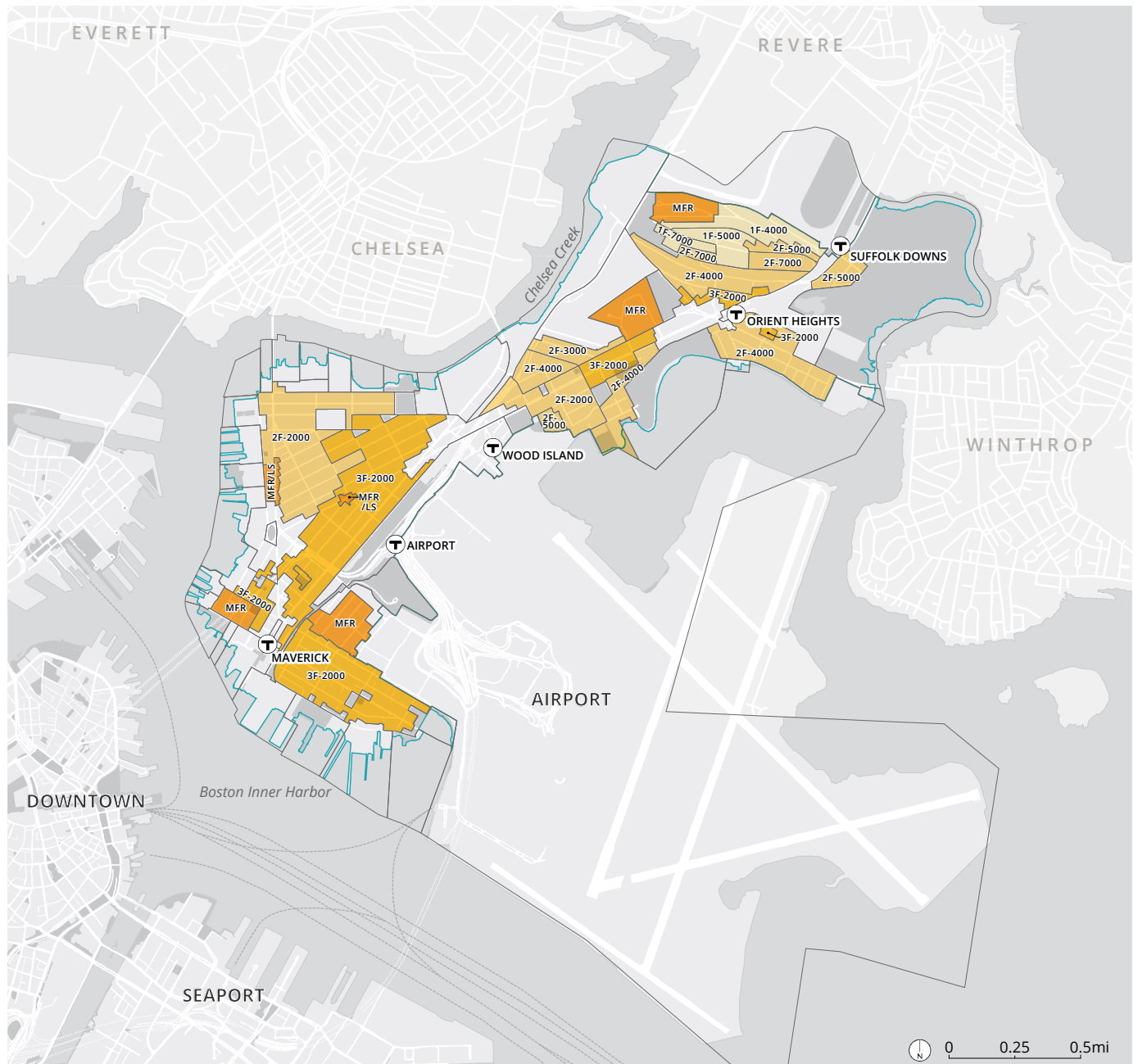
Note: This analysis looks at the PLAN: East Boston Study Area, which does not include Logan Airport or Suffolk Downs.



More than 40 percent of the land area is zoned for one-unit, two-unit, or three-unit houses.

⁶ BPDA GIS analysis.

East Boston Residential Zoning Districts



Residential Zoning and Property Use

2017

Source: Zoning, Assessing FY '18 (as of Jan 1, 2017), BPDA GIS Analysis.

	Number of properties and Property Use		
	One- unit house	Two-unit house	Three-unit house
1F Zone (One Family)	163	47	4
2F Zone (Two Family)	459	782	649
3F Zone (Three Family)	318	355	1377

Map of Residential Zoning Subdistricts in Article 53

Source: Article 53 of the Boston Zoning Code

- Single-family Residential
- Two-family Residential
- Three-family Residential
- Multi-family Residential

Zoning Subdistrict Boundary

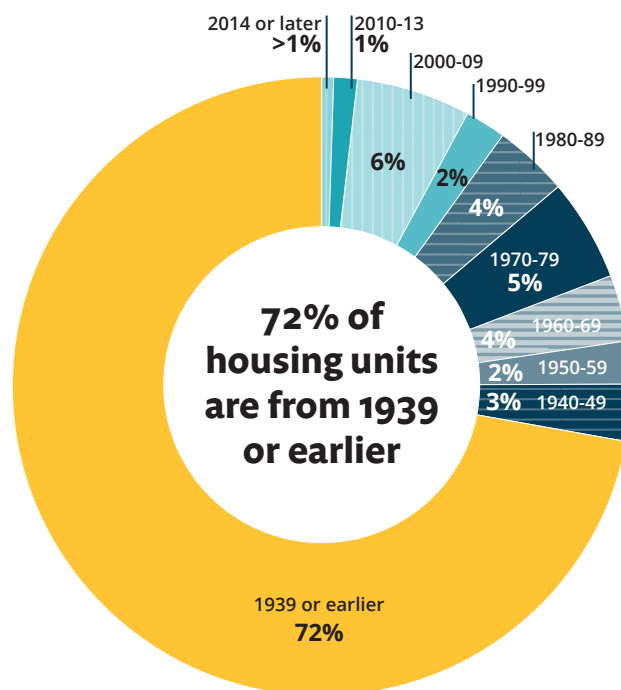
Much of East Boston's housing stock is aging.

Nearly three-quarters of East Boston's housing stock—72 percent—is from 1939 or earlier. Citywide, 51 percent of the housing is from 1939 or earlier. Only about 19 percent of East Boston's housing stock has been built since 1980.⁷ This is unusual for both the Boston region and comparable metro areas. For the Metro Boston area, a quarter of the housing stock was built after 1980, compared with a third for both Philadelphia and San Francisco, and more than half for Seattle and Washington, D.C.⁸ With an older housing stock comes attractive features such as dense, walkable neighborhoods, unique architecture, and history. However, given the population growth, a lack of new housing stock can also indicate a market that is not producing the housing needed. Aging housing stock built in areas of the neighborhood created by low-lying landfill are vulnerable to flooding and can be challenging to retrofit. In September 2019, the City adopted Coastal Flood Resilience Design Guidelines, which serve as a resource to translate flood resilient building design strategies into new projects and building retrofits (see "City Policies and Programs" on page 86 for more).



Year Structure was Built, Housing Units, East Boston 2017

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2013-2017 (Table S2504 Physical Characteristics for Occupied Housing Units), BPDA Research Division Analysis.



⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis. This data is through 2017 and thus does not include housing constructed since then.

⁸ The Boston Foundation, "Greater Boston Housing Report Card 2019: Supply, Demand and the Challenge of Local Control," June 2019, p. 26.

East Boston housing units are larger, on average, than the unit sizes citywide.

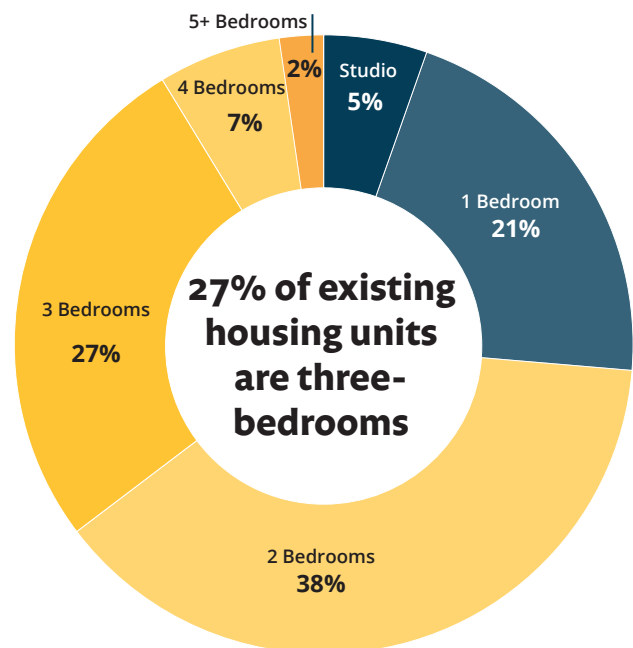
East Boston has more two- and three-bedroom units than the city overall. Of East Boston housing units, 38 percent are two bedrooms, and the citywide average is about 35 percent. Three-bedroom units comprise 27 percent of East Boston housing, and 23 percent of housing units citywide. New units being permitted often have more studios and one bedrooms and fewer three bedrooms than the existing housing stock.

A recent study from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), “Crowded In and Priced Out: Why It’s So Hard to Find a Family Sized-Unit in Greater Boston,” found that a majority of “family-sized” units (generally defined as two or more bedrooms) in Greater Boston are not occupied by families with children. Looking at Boston and 12 surrounding cities and towns, the study found that only 39 percent of homes with three or more bedrooms are occupied by a family with a child under the age of 18. 14 percent are occupied by a single person, 24 percent house two adults with no children, and 23 percent house three or more adults with no children. Many of the units without children are occupied by empty-nesters with extra bedrooms: 25 percent of all three-plus bedroom units—over 50,000 homes—are occupied by one or two people over 55. Rental units are more likely to be occupied by households with children (43 percent of total rentals) or three or more adults (34 percent).⁹ In Boston proper, 57 percent of households with children live in homes with 3 or more bedrooms.¹⁰

The study suggests that there is no one cause of the lack of family housing. The challenges facing families looking for housing reflect a broader lack of housing units of all types, across price points and communities.¹¹

Sizes of Existing Housing Units, East Boston 2017

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2013-2017, BPDA Research Division Analysis.



⁹ The Metropolitan Area Planning Council, “Crowded In and Priced Out: Why It’s so Hard to Find a Family-Sized Unit in Greater Boston,” January 2020.

¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, PUMS, and BPDA Research Division Analysis.

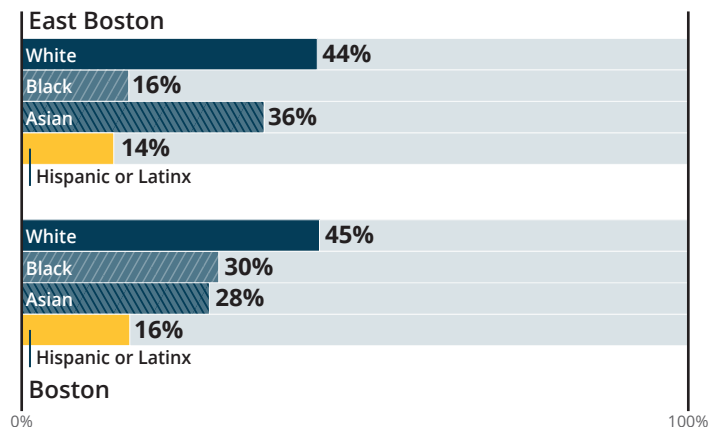
¹¹ The Metropolitan Area Planning Council, “Crowded In and Priced Out: Why It’s so Hard to Find a Family-Sized Unit in Greater Boston,” January 2020.

The owner occupancy rate is lower than the citywide average, and whites are more likely to be homeowners.

The owner occupancy rate in East Boston is lower than the city average, and has remained stable since 2000. The owner occupancy rate in East Boston was 29 percent in 2017 and was 35 percent across the city in the same year.¹² Understanding the rate of homeownership, and more specifically owner-occupancy, is important because household tenure¹³ is one potential indicator of the risk of housing displacement. The risk of displacement to homeowners is often considered lower than the risk of displacement to renters. (See page 58 for more on displacement risk.) In addition, homeownership has historically been a key source of wealth-building for Americans, and homeownership rates for people of color in East Boston are lower than for white households, as is the case citywide. Latinxs in East Boston, however, do have a slightly higher homeownership rate than Latinxs citywide.

Owner Occupancy Rate by Race 2017

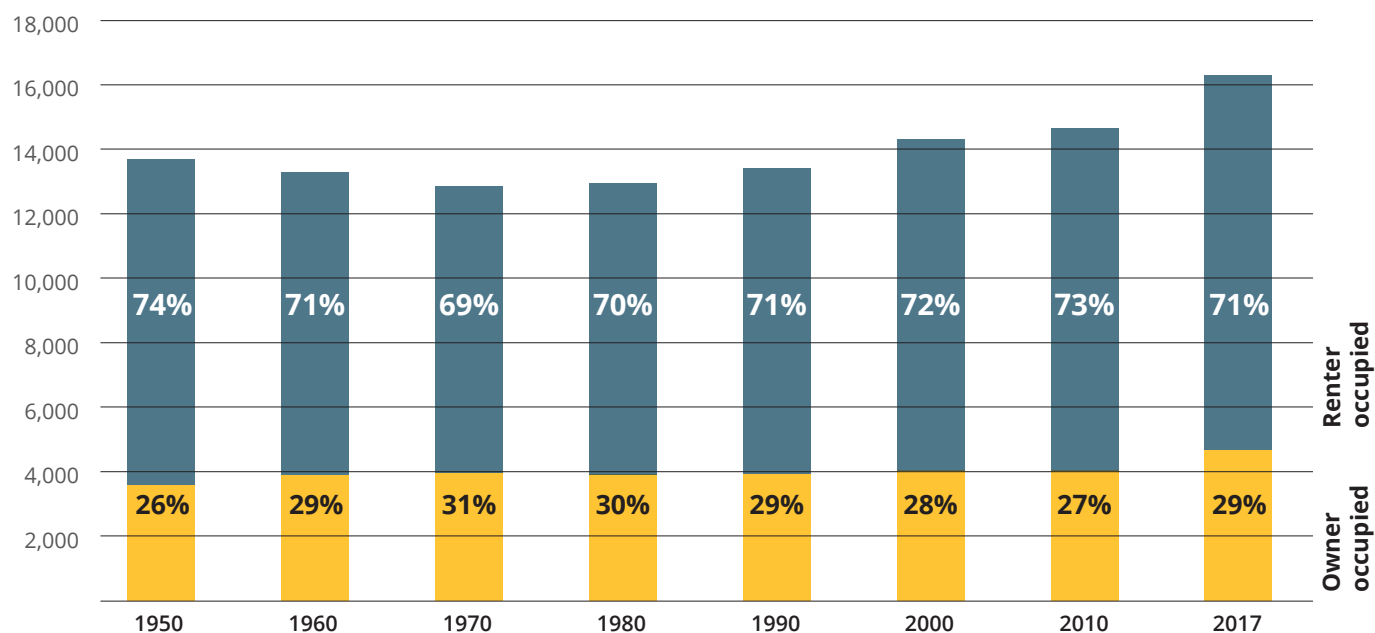
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.



Since 1950, 70-75 percent of East Boston households have been renter households, about the same as the city overall.

Renter-occupied Households and Owner-occupied Households, East Boston 1950-2017

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

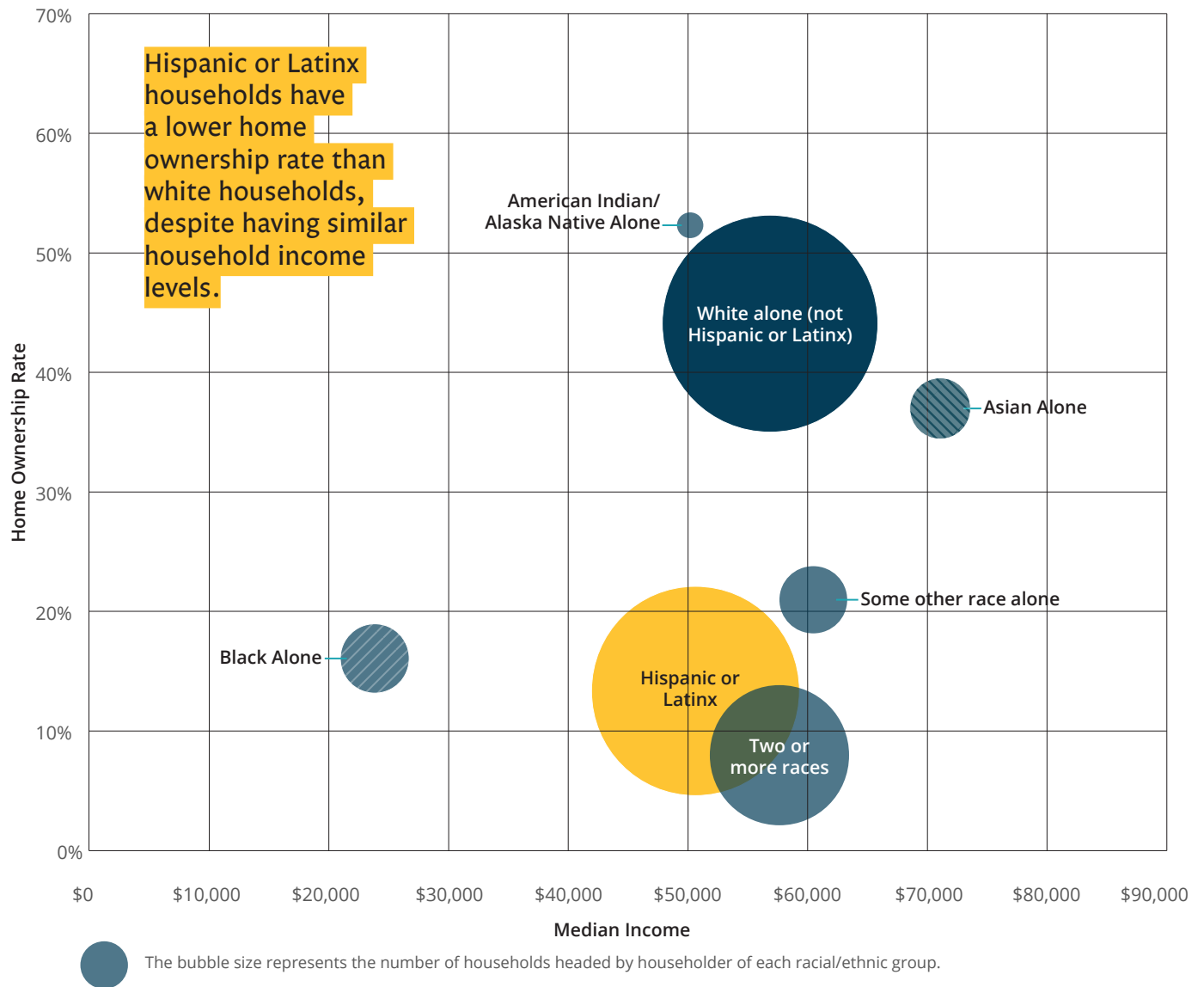


¹² U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

¹³ Tenure defines whether a household rents or owns where they live.

Share of Homeowners by Race/Ethnicity by Median Income and Percent of Total, East Boston 2017

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.



Rising Housing Costs

Because demand pressure on the existing housing supply has increased, prices and rents are high.

Housing prices in East Boston are high.

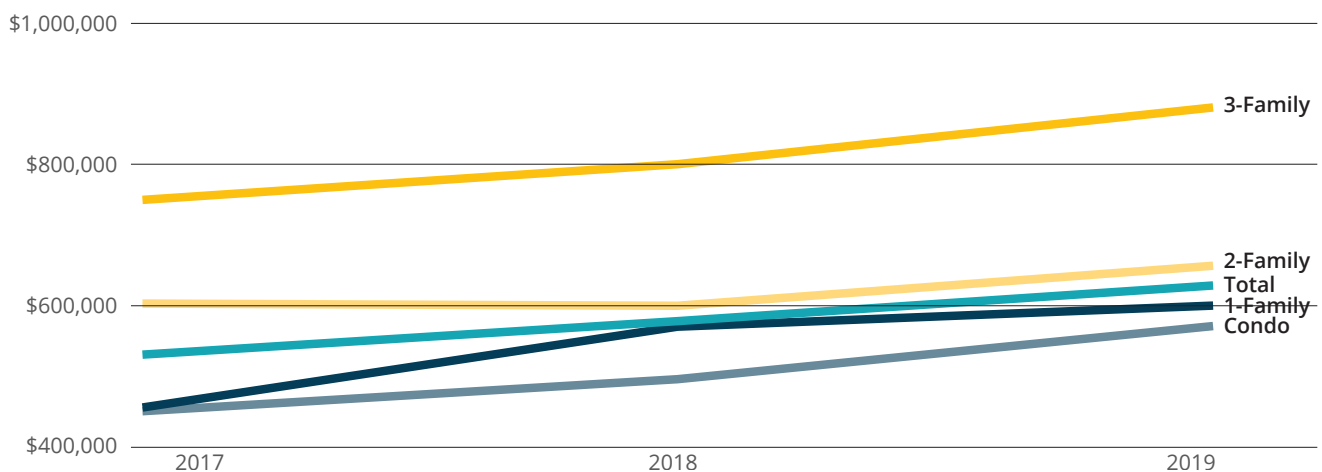
Home sales prices have risen in recent years: the median sales price for a unit in the neighborhood rose 9 percent from 2018 to 2019.¹⁴ Renting in East Boston has also become increasingly expensive. Average gross rent in the neighborhood increased 42 percent from 2000 to 2017,¹⁵ and median rents now span \$1,700 to \$2,500 per month for 1- to 3-bedroom apartments.¹⁶ Since mid-2018, though, rents have shown signs of stabilization. The median sales price and median rent are both lower in East Boston than the citywide average,¹⁷ suggesting that housing costs in East Boston could continue to rise as residents from elsewhere in the city search for more affordable options.

The median home sale price in East Boston in 2019 was \$625,000, which is a 9 percent increase from the previous year.

The median home sale price in East Boston in 2018 was \$575,000, which is a 9 percent increase from 2017.

East Boston Median Sales Price 2019

Source: The Warren Group and DND; BPDA Research Division Analysis.



¹⁴ Median sales price for a unit includes 1-FAM, 2-FAM, 3-FAM and Condos. The Warren Group and DND; BPDA Research Division Analysis.

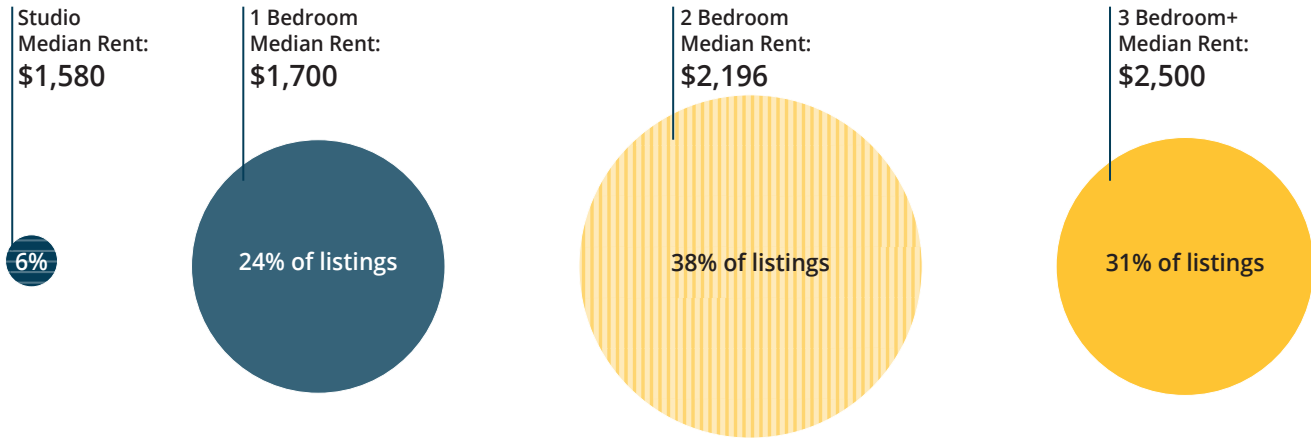
¹⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 census, 2006–2010 American Community Survey, 2013–2017 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division. During this same period, the population of East Boston increased by 22 percent. See “Growing Population” on page 36 for more information.

¹⁶ 2019 Median Rent Listings for All Stock. Rental Beast and MLS Listing compiled by DND; BPDA Research Division Analysis.

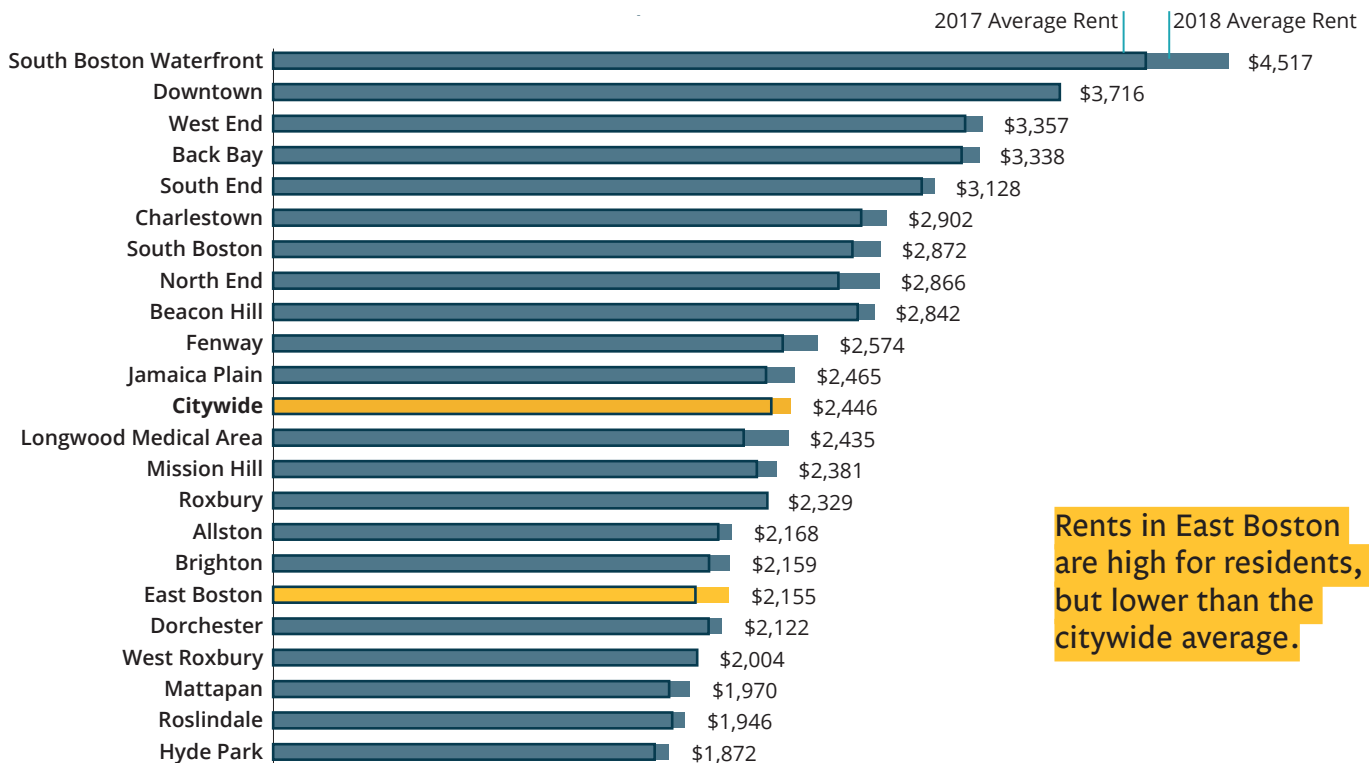
¹⁷ The median home value in Boston was \$455,130 in 2017, while in East Boston it was \$353,680. Per the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2013–2017 estimates, the average gross rent in 2017 was \$1,439 in Boston and \$1,227 in East Boston (this includes subsidized housing).

East Boston Median Rent Listings 2019

Source: Rental Beast and MLS Listing compiled by DND; BPDA Research Division Analysis.



Monthly Weighted Average Rental Listings by Neighborhood 2017, 2018



Rents in East Boston are high for residents, but lower than the citywide average.

Source: City of Boston, DND using Multiple Listing Service (MLS) and Rental Beast.

Because the sample of rental listings in a given month or year does not necessarily represent the composition of units in Boston as a whole, DND uses a weighted average methodology to compare rents across time periods. By holding the composition of units by bedroom and neighborhood constant between the comparison periods, this methodology isolates changes in rent levels from other changes in the sample. For instance, one year's data may contain a higher ratio of three bedroom to one bedroom units, or be more heavily weighted towards more expensive neighborhoods. Weighted averages adjust for any skewing in the sample by geography or bedroom type. To do the weighting, DND calculates a "total value" for each neighborhood and bedroom type by multiplying the average listing rent by the number of occupied rental housing units from the 2013-2017 5-year American Community Survey. The total value for 0 to 3 bedroom units is combined, then divided by the total number of occupied 0 to 3 bedroom units in that neighborhood in the American Community Survey to get the final weighted average.

For more information, see BPDA Research Division, "Boston's Economy 2019," September 2019. pp. 34-36.

Understanding Displacement

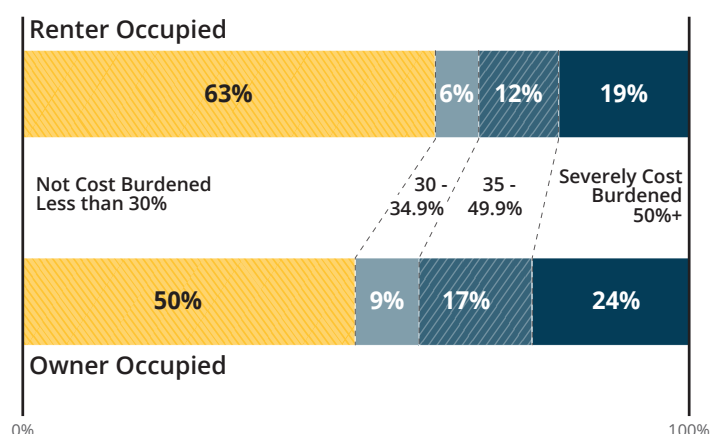
As housing costs increase, a growing share of the population is at risk for displacement.

Almost a quarter of East Boston households spend more than half their income on housing.

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), a household is considered housing cost burdened when it is paying more than 30 percent of its income to housing costs.¹⁸ It is considered severely burdened if it is paying more than 50 percent of its income to housing costs. In East Boston, 19 percent of renter-occupied households and 24 percent of owner-occupied households are severely burdened by housing costs.

Share of Income Going Toward Housing Cost, East Boston 2017

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.



¹⁸ Housing cost burden measures how much of a household's income is used to pay housing costs, such as rent or mortgage.

Risk of Displacement Index, East Boston 2018

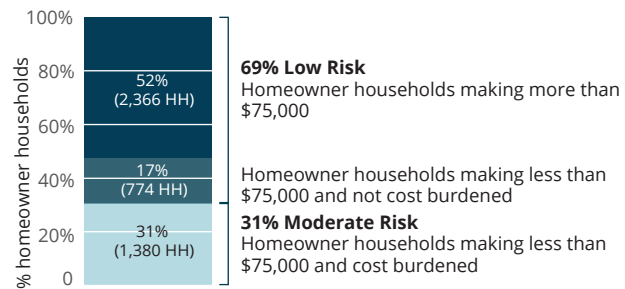
Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2014-2018 5-Year Estimates;
DND Income-Restricted Housing Inventory, DND Analysis.

HOMEOWNERS

Analyzing Displacement Risk for Homeowners

While owning a home provides more stability for households because they do not pay rent, low- and moderate-income homeowners can face some risk of displacement because they are more likely to have a risk for foreclosure or difficulty affording major home repairs or escalating insurance or utility costs.

4,520
Households (HH)



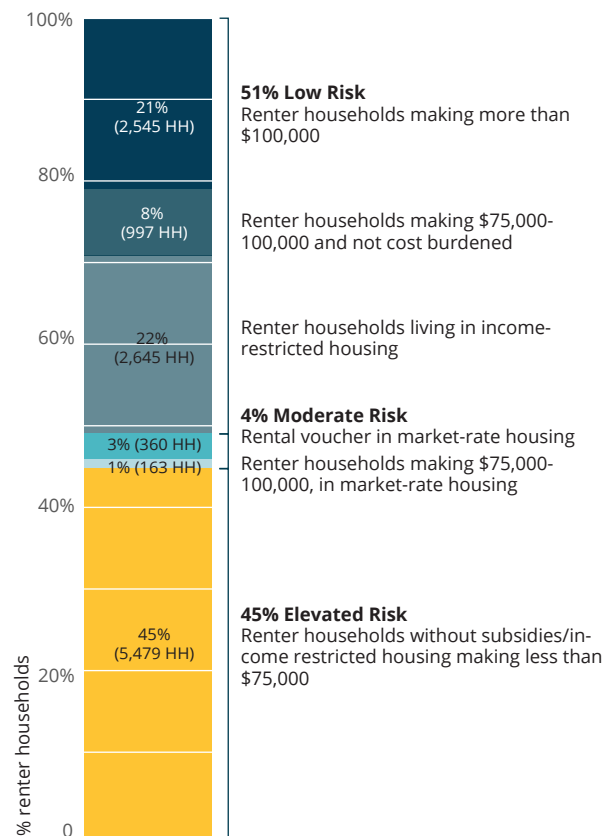
RENTERS

Analyzing Displacement Risk for Renters

Renters in market-rate housing: 49 percent of renters live in market-rate housing and are at moderate or elevated risk of displacement due to rising rents. Renters who make less than \$75,000 and live in a market-rate unit are at elevated risk for being displaced if rent increases too much. 45 percent of renters in East Boston are in this elevated risk category (33.4 percent of all households in East Boston).

Renters living in income-restricted housing and voucher holders: Voucher-holders are somewhat protected but because their rents can also rise, they are considered at moderate risk of displacement. Approximately 3 percent of renters have housing vouchers. Renters in income-restricted housing are least at risk of displacement due to rising housing costs because their rents are set either by a percentage of their income or a fixed amount. 22 percent of renters live in income-restricted housing.

12,189
Households (HH)



Producing Housing

A significant amount of new housing has been built in East Boston since 2010, but has not kept pace with population growth.

East Boston’s population has grown faster than the number of housing units.

Housing production in East Boston has increased since the economic downturn of 2008, but has been unable to keep pace with growing demand for housing in the neighborhood. Between 2000 and 2017, East Boston’s population grew by 21 percent, nearly twice the rate of the city overall, but the number of occupied housing units grew by only 14 percent.¹⁹

Much of the new and existing housing stock does not comply with current land use regulations.

Most new housing developments in East Boston are multifamily, but most of East Boston’s land area is zoned for single-family, two-family, or three-family residential uses. Much of the existing housing stock—including the one-, two-, and three-family housing—does not comply with existing zoning, whether in the number of units, the dimensional regulations, or other zoning requirements. (Read more in “Urban Form & Zoning” on page 130.) This contributes to less predictable outcomes for many developers, residents, and community groups.

¹⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-year estimates. The 2000-2017 Boston Proper Population Growth rate was 14 percent.



Coppersmith Village, developed by NOAH and located at 75 Border Street, is a mix of 56 market-rate and affordable apartments, 15 for-sale townhouses, and a ground-floor retail/restaurant. The project is replacing vacant industrial buildings and revitalizing an entire city block.

The cost of development keeps rising.

The cost of development in the Greater Boston area is high and has been rising. Nationally, the cost of construction increased by 57 percent from 2000 to 2016.²⁰ In East Boston, building along the waterfront often has an additional cost burden for necessary site work, resilience measures, and additional permitting.

Scale matters.

A major factor in the increase in total development costs for urban housing has been the increase in land acquisition costs. Across the Greater Boston area, land costs increased by 42 percent from 2004–2008 to 2011–2015.²¹ Larger scale housing developments, particularly those with greater height, may be able to reduce total costs per square foot by economizing on land acquisition costs or distributing costs over more units.

Parking adds to cost.

Several recent studies have tried to quantify the added costs of off-street parking to new development and how this affects housing affordability. Nonprofit affordable housing developers in San Francisco estimate that the City's parking requirements added 20 percent to the cost of each unit and reduced the number of buildable units on site by 20 percent.²² The City of Portland, Oregon, modeled several scenarios for what happens to housing unit prices when a developer decides to include parking, whether it is a surface lot, a podium, mechanical lifts (commonly called "stackers"), or underground parking. Overall, they found that residential parking spaces make individual units less affordable for rental tenants. In their analysis, rent in the building with no parking would be \$800, and then rise to \$1,200 if surface spots were included, and then \$1,300 if underground parking were built.²³

Another recent analysis from the City of Portland, Oregon, considered feasibility scenarios for a hypothetical 100-foot-by-100-foot parcel. They found that if off-street parking spaces are required in certain zoning subdistricts, then the most profitable thing for a landowner to build on one of these properties would be 10 townhomes, each valued at \$733,000, with an on-site garage. But if off-street parking is not a requirement, then a 32-unit mixed-income building, including 28 market-rate condos selling for an average of \$280,000 and four below-market condos, would be more profitable to the developer. If every unit has to come with on-site parking, then the result is usually a more expensive housing unit and fewer units overall.²⁴

The City of Boston is working to expand upon best practices already in place through BTDA's Transportation Access Plan Agreement to help meet Go Boston 2030's mode shift and other targets. This includes developing Transportation Demand Management strategies and programs that encourage people to travel without a private car and in turn reduce parking demand.

20 National Multifamily Housing Council, "The Housing Affordability Toolkit," April 2019, p.14.

21 The Boston Foundation, "The Greater Boston Housing Report Card 2015," November 2015, p. 8.

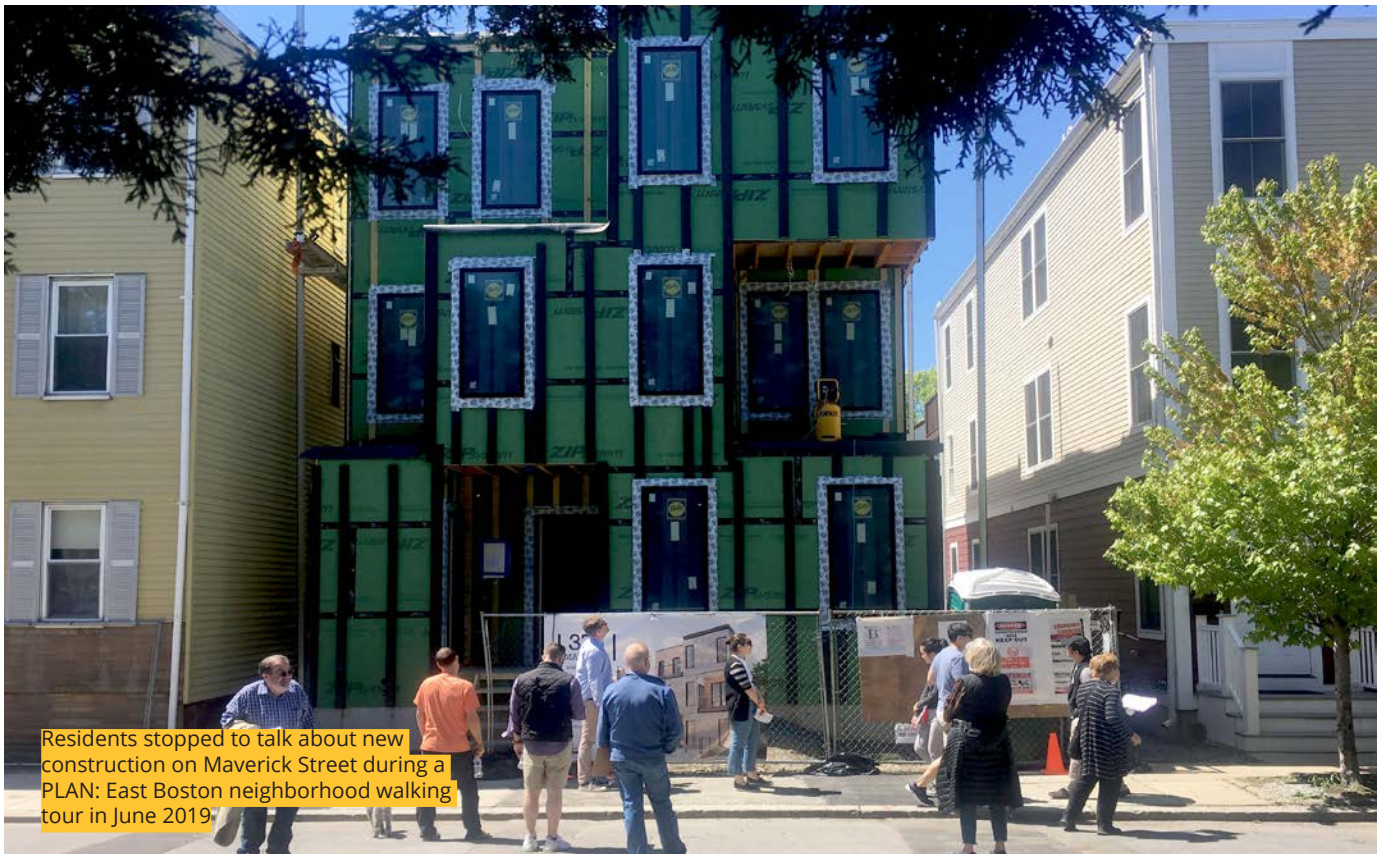
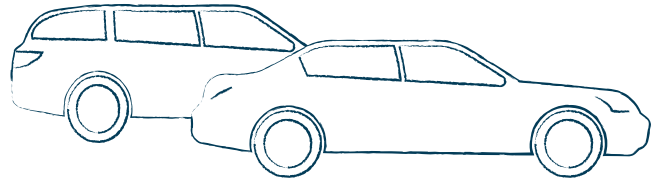
22 A. Millard-Ball, "Putting on Their Parking Caps," *Planning*, April 2002. See also A Better City, "Report: Future of Parking in Boston," November 2016.

23 Eric Jaffe, "How Parking Keeps Your Rent Too Damn High," Citylab, *The Atlantic*, May 11, 2015.

24 Dan Guimond and David Schwartz, "Better Housing by Design – Feasibility Analysis," Appendix C – Part 1, May 2018.

New construction may be overbuilding parking.

Recent analysis by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) found that many new developments in the Greater Boston area have overbuilt parking. The average 50-unit building with 50 parking spaces had 14 empty spaces. A recently constructed building in East Boston has 0.46 parking spaces per unit, but the parking demand is 0.34 parking spaces per unit.²⁵ As the MAPC writes, “Not only is the overbuilding of parking in residential developments wasting tremendous amounts of money and useful space; but the provision of abundant parking may also be counterproductive to local transportation goals for traffic and sustainability. Transit-proximate developments that provide easy parking are less transit-oriented than they might seem: they’re attracting car-owning households less inclined to use the available transit and more likely to use their cars, affecting local traffic with every trip.”²⁶



Residents stopped to talk about new construction on Maverick Street during a PLAN: East Boston neighborhood walking tour in June 2019.

²⁵ Metropolitan Area Planning Council, “Perfect Fit Parking Initiative: Phase II Report,” July 2019, p. 16. The MAPC surveyed The Eddy, which has a parking utilization rate of 74 percent. Parking is not included with rent at The Eddy; residents pay for each space requested. See <https://perfectfitparking.mapc.org/>

²⁶ Ibid., p. 2.

Creating Affordable Housing

In a growing city with high housing prices, maintaining a strong stock of income-restricted housing is integral for mitigating potential displacement and helping residents live affordably.

Boston has the highest percentage of income-restricted housing in the U.S.

Nearly 20 percent (54,247 units) of Boston’s housing stock is income-restricted. In a city with high housing prices, and increasing population and employment growth, maintaining a strong stock of income-restricted housing is integral for mitigating potential displacement and helping residents live affordably.

The majority (66 percent) of income-restricted units citywide are affordable to households making less than 50 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI). 24 percent (12,834 units) are set aside for senior households (age 64+), and 3 percent (1,400 units) are set aside for the homeless. 77 percent are privately owned, 22.5 percent are publicly owned, and 0.5 percent are owned by a public-private partnership.²⁷

Income-Restricted Housing by Neighborhood

Neighborhood	Income-Restricted Units	Total Housing Units	% Income Restricted
Allston/Brighton	4,310	33,007	13%
Back Bay/Beacon Hill	1,046	14,906	7%
Central	3,407	22,941	15%
Charlestown	2,280	8,953	25%
Dorchester	4,145	34,746	12%
East Boston	2,624	16,407	16%
Fenway/Kenmore	2,086	16,775	12%
Hyde Park	1,870	12,304	15%
Jamaica Plain	4,873	19,348	25%
Mattapan	3,021	13,428	22%
Roslindale	1,299	13,364	10%
Roxbury	11,519	25,856	45%
South Boston	3,605	21,238	17%
South End/Lower Roxbury	7,686	16,123	48%
West Roxbury	472	13,590	3%
CITYWIDE	54,247	282,986	19.2%

27 This includes Boston Housing Authority (BHA) housing units. City of Boston, DND, “Income Restricted Housing in Boston,” November 2018.

Income-restricted housing in East Boston is often created through mid- and large-scale development.

Increasing available housing supply is critical to improving housing access. Through the Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP), private development (of 10 units or more that seeks zoning relief) is asked to create or contribute to new income-restricted housing. From 2014 to the third quarter of 2019, 1,519 new units of housing in East Boston were completed, and 18 percent of these were income restricted. Of these income-restricted units, 83 were created directly through IDP, and 194 units were created with the help of \$17 million in City funds (\$13 million of which came through IDP).²⁸ In addition, 79 existing units have been converted from market rate to income restricted through programs such as the City’s Acquisition Opportunity Program (AOP).²⁹

28 BPDA Research Division Analysis and BPDA Compliance Department Analysis.
29 BPDA Compliance Department Analysis.

Housing Costs, Household Income, and Housing Programs

2019

Source: Rental Beast and MLS listings for rental listings; The Warren Group for sales prices.

Housing Costs and Household (HH) Income

Median Housing Costs, 2019
(Purchase price or
monthly costs)

**Annual House-
hold Income
Needed to
Affordably Rent
or Purchase***

3BR Condo \$592,500
(\$3,495/month estimated)

\$139,806

Single-family House \$600,000
(\$3,187/month estimated)

\$127,472

2BR Condo \$524,050
(\$3,115/month estimated)

\$124,610

1BR Condo \$475,150
(\$2,844/month estimated)

\$113,754

3BR Apartment \$2,500/month
(or \$833 per bedroom per month)

\$100,000

2BR Apartment \$2,196/month
(or \$1,098 per bedroom per month)

\$87,840

1BR Apartment \$1,700/month

\$68,000

Studio Apartment \$1,580/month

\$63,200

Household Income, Household Size, and Housing Program Eligibility

**Maximum
Allowable
Household
Income &
Household Size**

**Program
Eligibility**

\$140,000		
\$120,000		
\$100,000	\$113,300	IDP Homeowner Units [‡]
	100% AMI for 4-person HH	
	\$90,650	DND Neighborhood Housing Initiative Homeowner Units [†]
	80% AMI for 4-person HH	
	\$90,650	IDP Homeowner Units [‡]
	100% AMI for 2-person HH	
\$80,000		
	\$79,300	IDP Renter Units [‡]
	70% AMI for 4-person HH	
	\$72,550	IDP Homeowner Units [‡]
	80% AMI for 2-person HH	
	\$63,450	IDP Renter Units [‡]
	70% AMI for 2-person HH	
\$60,000	\$62,200 Boston median HH income	
	\$56,650	Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8)
	50% AMI for 4-person HH	
	\$52,935 East Boston median HH income	
\$40,000	\$45,350	Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8)
	50% AMI for 2-person HH	
	30-50% AMI	DND Renter Units [†]
\$20,000	\$25,750	Boston Housing Authority
	Federal Poverty Level, 4-person HH	
	\$16,910	Boston Housing Authority
	Federal Poverty Level, 2-person HH	
\$0		

* This analysis defines the amount of income needed to affordably rent or purchase a housing unit as not greater than 30 percent of the household income. Income required for purchase assumes a 30-year fixed-rate mortgage at 4.00 percent with a 10 percent downpayment, PMI of 0.5 percent, monthly homeowners' association (HOA) fee of \$350, and annual homeowners insurance of \$1,000. Tax rates are calculated at \$10.54 per \$1000 with the first \$2,719.09 of tax exempted by the residential exemption. This estimate does not include cost of utilities or any one-time costs with the purchase of a home. No homeowner fee is assumed for a single-family houses. Two-family, three-family, or other multifamily residential are not included because financing of these types of buildings has different requirements.

‡ For the Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP), rental units are typically made available to households earning up to 70 percent of Area Median Income (AMI). Homeownership units are made available to households earning 80 percent and 100 percent of AMI.

† Department of Neighborhood Development (DND) units largely serve populations between 30 percent and 60 percent of AMI, as well as some at 80 percent to 100 percent AMI (homeownership units through Neighborhood Housing Initiative). These units are available through a housing lottery.

Learn more about housing set aside for low-income residents making less than 50% AMI in "City Policies and Programs" on page 66.

City Policies and Programs

Boston's affordable housing needs are addressed through a number of City agencies and programs. Each program targets a range of Boston's household incomes with the goal of meeting the needs of a diverse workforce. The City of Boston is committing considerable resources to preserving existing and creating new affordable housing to support Boston residents.

The City of Boston has the highest percentage of income-restricted housing of any major city in the country, with nearly 20 percent of its total housing stock designated as income-restricted. Through Federal, State, and City funds, as well as leveraging private development, Boston has placed affordable housing creation at the forefront of its housing policy.

Citywide Public Funding Sources

For the creation of affordable housing, the Department of Neighborhood Development (DND) coordinates citywide funding rounds for Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME funds, as well as City-controlled Neighborhood Housing Trust (NHT), Community Preservation Act (CPA), IDP funds, and other City resources.

- » NHT funds are generated by "Linkage" funds from large commercial developments, as detailed below.
- » CPA funds are generated through a 1% surcharge on property taxes, and is controlled by the CPA Committee.
- » IDP funds are generated from private residential developments that are allowed to make a contribution to the IDP fund in lieu of providing all or some of their units on-site, or are making a partial unit payment.
- » DND can support income-restricted housing projects by funding the overall capital costs of the project and/or the cost of purchasing the property.

Inclusionary Development Policy

The Inclusionary Development Policy, enacted in 2000, requires that market-rate housing developments of ten or more units that require zoning relief contribute to the creation of income-restricted housing. Development can

- » create income-restricted units on-site,
- » create income-restricted units at a location near their building; and/or
- » contribute to the Inclusionary Development Policy Fund; these funds are used by DND to fund the creation of affordable/income-restricted housing across Boston.

Linkage

Linkage is a fee exacted from all new large-scale commercial real estate developments exceeding 100,000 square feet and requiring zoning relief, including expansion and rehabilitation projects. The linkage requirement can be fulfilled through either a cash payment or direct creation of housing or a job-training program. All cash payments are received by either the Neighborhood Housing Trust (NHT) or the Neighborhood Jobs Trust (NJT) for distribution. Linkage ensures that large-scale real estate development brings direct benefits to the City of Boston's residents through payments to the NHT and the NJT. Linkage was last increased in 2018 to the current rates of \$9.03 per square foot for housing and \$1.78 per square foot for jobs, for a total of \$10.81 per square foot. Linkage may be increased on three-year cycles to reflect the rise in inflation based on the Consumer Price Index and on economic, housing, and employment trends.

Since 2014, \$31.4 million in housing linkage has leveraged a total of \$562 million in public funds in 39 developments that cost \$837 million in total. Those projects have created 1,268 affordable units and preserved 548 existing affordable units.³⁰

Acquisition Opportunity Program

The City of Boston has created the Acquisition Opportunity Program (AOP) to facilitate the purchase of existing housing and income restrict the units. In doing so, these units are removed from the speculative market, rents are stabilized, and current tenants are protected. The City has established a citywide goal of acquiring and income-restricting 1,000 units from 2018 to 2030. These funds are meant to be flexible so that potential buyers (e.g., nonprofits or community development corporations) can move quickly and compete against market-rate buyers. The AOP is currently funded with IDP Funds and Community Preservation Act funds. DND is seeking additional funding sources from the Neighborhood Housing Trust and other sources. Ultimately, resources must be distributed across the city, and the program's scope is limited by funding, the ability to find opportunities, and the ability to find partners to acquire the units.

Citywide, 66 percent of income-restricted units are set aside for low-income residents making less than 50 percent of AMI.

14,913 units (28 percent) are restricted for households making less than 30 percent of AMI, and 20,746 units (38 percent) are restricted for households making between 31-50 percent of AMI, combined. This stock, which includes BHA housing, is integral in keeping households most in need of housing assistance safely and affordably housed. Another 21 percent of units are affordable to moderate-income households making between 51-60 percent of AMI, and 8 percent are restricted to households between 61-80 percent of AMI. A small percentage (~2 percent) are affordable to upper middle-income families (>80 percent of AMI). 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.

Source: City of Boston, DND, "Income Restricted Housing in Boston," November 2018, pp. 2-4.

Additional Dwelling Unit

In 2018, the City piloted the Additional Dwelling Unit (ADU) program in Mattapan, Jamaica Plain, and East Boston, and has since rolled out the program citywide. The program permits owner-occupier homeowners to alter their homes to meet changing household needs. Households will be able to modify their homes to create a new dwelling unit within the existing structure. These additional rental units increase housing unit count without modifying the existing neighborhood fabric. The Boston Home Center has no-interest loans for eligible homeowners to assist with the necessary renovations.

³⁰ See "Mayor Walsh to Pursue Increase in Linkage," June 12, 2018, <http://www.bostonplans.org/news-calendar/news-updates/2018/6/12/mayor-walsh-to-pursue-increase-in-linkage> for more information.

Compact Living Policy

The Compact Living Policy is a two-year pilot (October 2018–October 2020) that allows for a new kind of residential development. Compact Living projects of 10 or more units incorporate well-designed efficient units, shared common spaces and amenities, and transportation incentives. These kinds of projects offer a cost- and space-efficient way of building more units to accommodate growing demand for housing.

Office of Housing Stability

Residents facing immediate displacement need assistance from the City, and the City is responding to that need with the Office of Housing Stability (OHS). The OHS team provides critical case management services and advocates for policies that reduce evictions, prevent homelessness, and help Bostonians facing housing crises achieve housing stability. The following are specific efforts meant to reduce displacement for all Bostonians, but through outreach and educational efforts, can be targeted at the housing stability focus area:

- » **Dedicated Outreach on Tenant Rights:** A major goal of OHS is to ensure that tenants are informed about their existing rights and protections. Through targeted outreach campaigns, such as mailings to tenants in newly sold buildings or recently foreclosed properties, the office is intending to reach tenants well before any potential evictions occur. In addition, the OHS staffs a hotline and an evening clinic to assist tenants and landlords with maintaining tenancies.
- » **Eviction Assistance and Data Analysis:** The OHS assists tenants facing eviction through programs that provide rent payment assistance, mediate landlord-tenant disputes, and provide access to legal services at housing court. In addition, Mayor Walsh is sponsoring a “Right to Counsel” bill at the state legislature that would provide eligible households with legal assistance in housing court. Utilizing access to comprehensive data on evictions within the City of Boston, including both housing court records and early pre-court eviction documentation, the OHS is working on identifying trends and proactively intervening to preserve tenancies.

Boston Home Center

The Home Center sponsors education programs that help renters understand homebuying, owning a home, and credit repair, and provides financial assistance to income-qualified individuals looking to purchase homes. The Home Center also has a range of home repair and lead abatement loan and financial assistance programs, including one specifically geared towards seniors.

Taxpayer Referral and Assistance Center

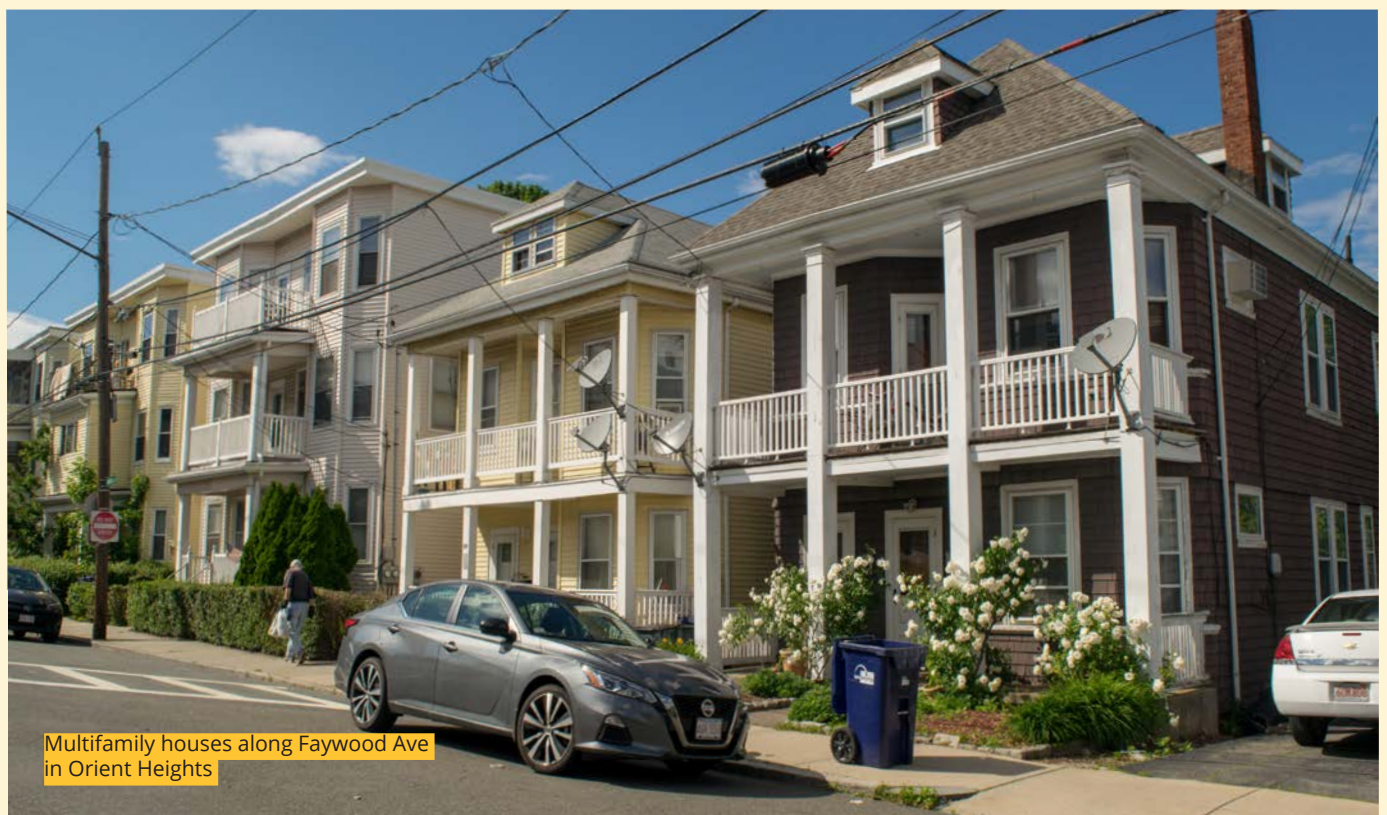
The City of Boston’s Taxpayer Referral and Assistance Center can help homeowners on a fixed income to manage the tax burden of their properties with the help of abatements, exemptions, and/or deferrals.

Fair Housing

The Office of Fair Housing and Equity’s mission is to ensure fair and equitable access to housing opportunities. They strive to increase equity and reduce barriers to opportunity for persons living and working in the City of Boston.

Area Median Income (AMI)

Created by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), affordable housing programs use AMI as a common measurement for determining affordable housing eligibility. Boston’s AMI is based on Greater Boston’s Median Family Income (Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH HUD Metro FMR Area), which for a family of four is \$119,000 for the 2020 Fiscal Year. In contrast, Boston’s Median Family Income is \$69,616.



Climate & Environment

Climate change and other environmental factors have a significant impact on the built environment, public health, and residents' well-being. The rapidly changing climate places an increasing area of East Boston at risk for flooding, endangering homes and communities. Other environmental factors, such as air quality, noise pollution, and tree cover, affect residents' health and quality of life. Requiring future development to address all of these environmental factors and climate risks is critical to ensuring East Boston's future.

In this section, learn more about:

- » Understanding Emissions on page 72
- » Increasing Precipitation on page 73
- » Rising Sea Levels on page 74
- » Preparing for Flooding on page 80
- » More Extreme Temperatures on page 82
- » The Neighborhood's Health on page 84
- » City Policies and Programs on page 86



Homes in Orient Heights
looking toward Winthrop
across the Belle Isle Inlet

Understanding Emissions

Earth's oceans are warming and sea levels are rising as a result of increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Reducing carbon emissions is as important as preparing the city to adapt to climate change.

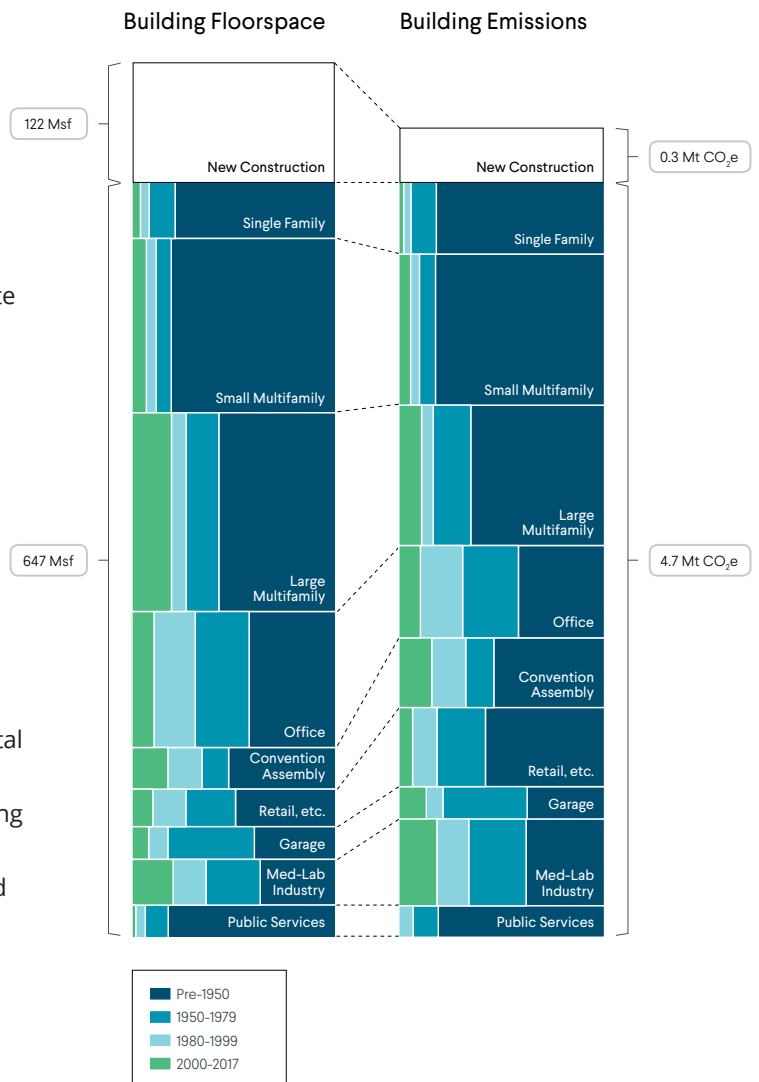
With the release of the 2019 Climate Action Plan update, the City of Boston has pledged to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. Carbon neutrality means releasing no net carbon emissions on an annual basis. For Boston, this means reducing carbon emissions from buildings, transportation, waste, and our energy supply as much as possible, and supporting activities that remove carbon from the atmosphere (carbon offsets) to compensate for any remaining emissions.¹ Carbon reduction goes hand in hand with climate adaptation measures outlined in Climate Ready Boston, addressing the cause of climate change by slowing further release of greenhouse gases and even drawing carbon out of the atmosphere.

Boston's buildings account for more than two-thirds of the city's total emissions.

The greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the use of electricity, heating oil, natural gas, and steam in Boston's buildings account for more than two-thirds of the city's total emissions. These emissions come mostly from the use of electricity (47 percent), natural gas (41 percent), and heating oil (10 percent). Oil and natural gas are used primarily to produce space heat and hot water, while electricity is used primarily for cooling, lighting, and plug loads. The GHG emissions from Boston's buildings are influenced by the age and floorspace in each type of building.²

Building GHG Emissions by Age and Type of Building

Originally produced for Boston Green Ribbon Commission and Institute for Sustainable Energy (ISE) at Boston University, "Carbon Free Boston Summary Report 2019," 2019, p. 35.



¹ City of Boston, "Climate Action Plan 2019 Update," October 2019, p. 7.

² Boston Green Ribbon Commission and Institute for Sustainable Energy (ISE) at Boston University, "Carbon Free Boston Summary Report 2019," 2019, p. 34.

Increasing Precipitation

As the climate warms, more ocean water evaporates into the air, and warmer air can hold more water, supporting heavier precipitation events.

Extreme precipitation has been increasing.

In the Northeast, there has already been a very large increase in the intensity of extreme rain and snow. From 1958 to 2010, there was a 70 percent increase in the amount of precipitation that fell on the days with the heaviest precipitation. This increase is greater in the Northeast than for any other region of the country.³

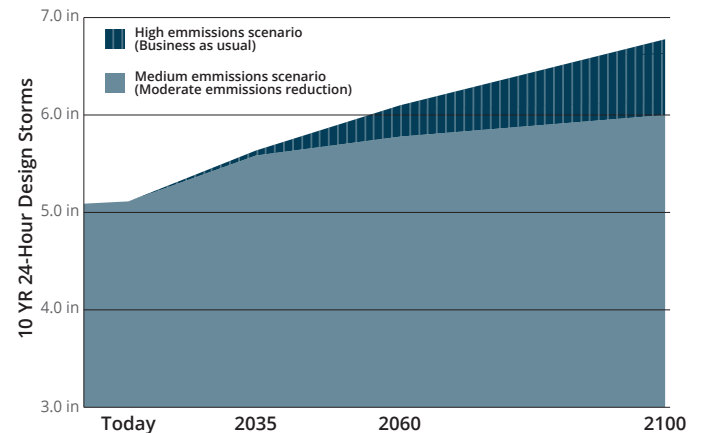
Stormwater flooding will worsen.

Stormwater flooding occurs throughout Boston today, as the city's drainage system struggles to manage intense rain events, rising sea levels, and less permeable ground surface that would slow and absorb stormwater. Common areas for stormwater flooding are along the coast, where outfalls may be unable to discharge; transportation corridors with impervious surfaces (where water cannot percolate); and designed drainage areas whose capacities are exceeded. The drainage system requires ongoing investments to catch up and keep up with climate conditions. In the near term (2030s–2050s), rising sea levels and increasing extreme precipitation will exacerbate stormwater flooding, unless the drainage system is upgraded.⁴ Development trends in East Boston and elsewhere have resulted in higher proportions of lot coverage on each parcel, which when combined with impervious surfaces like roads, sidewalks, and driveways, means less ground cover is available to absorb stormwater runoff.

Storm Rainfall Projections 2019–2100

Adapted from City of Boston, Environment Department, "Climate Ready Boston," 2016, using Boston Water and Sewer Commission data.

Note: "Today" baseline represents historical average, 1928–2012.



³ City of Boston, Environment Department, "Climate Ready Boston, Executive Summary," 2016, p. 13.

⁴ Ibid., p. 17.

Rising Sea Levels

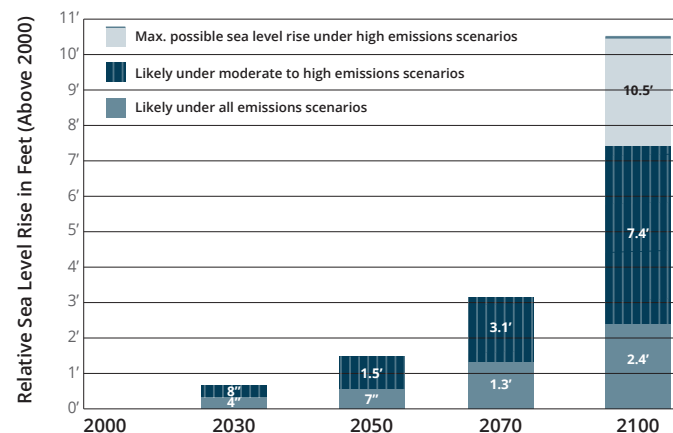
Although land expansion in previous centuries helped establish East Boston's maritime industrial economy, it has made the neighborhood more vulnerable to climate change.

East Boston has extensive areas at risk of coastal flooding.

As with several other neighborhoods in Boston, East Boston expanded by filling tidelands. These areas have developed and redeveloped and now house critical infrastructure and a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial land uses. East Boston has the highest percentage of land area of all Boston neighborhoods that will be exposed to coastal storms in the coming decades. Current flood exposure is concentrated near the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway, Maverick Square, Central Square, and the Sumner and Callahan tunnels.⁵ (See "Flood Risk in East Boston" on page 77.) Today, 23 percent of the land area of East Boston is in the current FEMA flood hazard zone. As soon as the 2070s approximately 58 percent of East Boston's land area will be exposed to coastal flooding at the 1-percent annual chance event.⁶ From 1921 to 2015, the overall trend in relative sea level rise was about 0.11 inches per year, but this pace has been accelerating.⁷

Sea Level Rise Projections 2019–2100

Adapted from City of Boston, Environment Department, "Climate Ready Boston, BRAG Report," 2016.



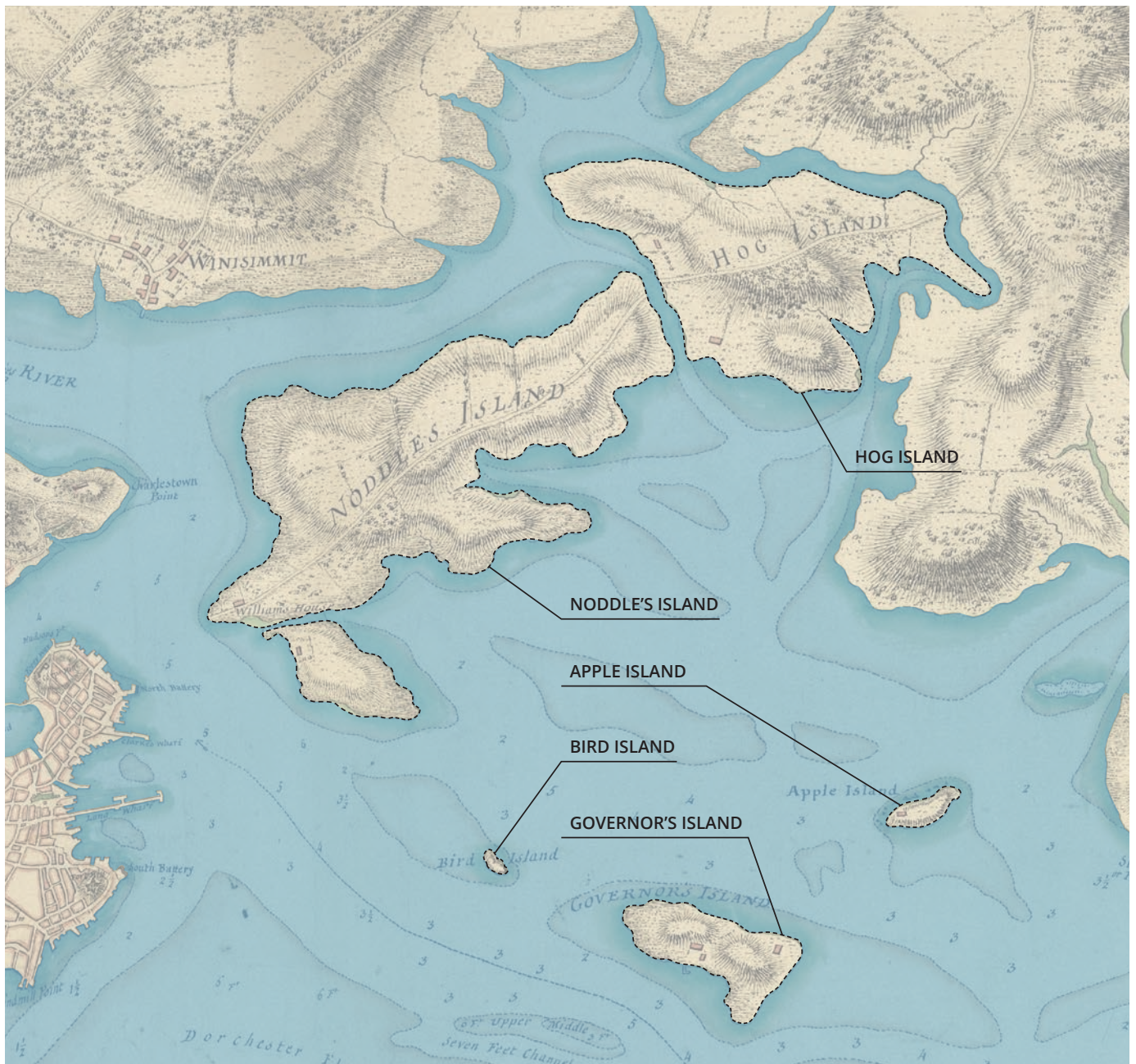
About 58 percent of East Boston's land area—more than half of East Boston's building stock—will be exposed to coastal flooding at the 1-percent annual chance event as soon as the 2070s.



⁵ The next phase of Climate Ready Boston will commence in late 2020 and study the northern portion of East Boston. PLAN: East Boston will be closely coordinating with this study. This may identify additional flood pathways and vulnerabilities, as well as district- and site-scale strategies.

⁶ BPDA GIS Division, Boston Zoning Code, Assessing FY2018 (as of Jan 1, 2017). This analysis includes the Suffolk Downs site and Logan airport. Neither the Suffolk Downs site nor Logan Airport are in the PLAN: East Boston Study Area. 2070 projections are based on the Boston Harbor Flood Risk Model.

⁷ City of Boston, Environment Department, "Climate Ready Boston, Boston Research Advisory Group (BRAG) Report," 2016, p. 6.



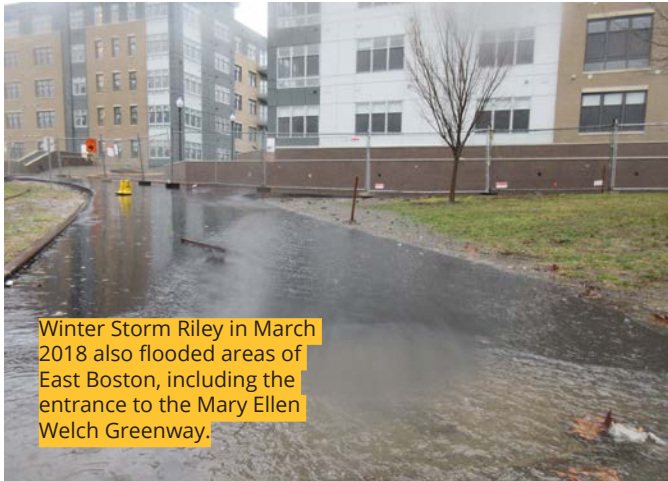
Map of East Boston, c. 1775

Source: Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division with color overlay.

East Boston was originally five islands, which were filled over decades.



Winter Storm Grayson in January 2018 flooded areas of East Boston, including Marginal Street and Bremen Street, shown here.



Winter Storm Riley in March 2018 also flooded areas of East Boston, including the entrance to the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway.

What is the 1-percent annual chance flood?

A “1-percent annual chance flood” has a 1 in 100 chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. Though the chance of occurrence each year may seem relatively low, a 1-percent annual chance flood elevation could be reached multiple times in a given year, decade, or century. These flood elevations have close to a one in three chance of being reached at least once during a 30-year mortgage, for example. The City of Boston uses a 1-percent annual chance water level / flood nomenclature rather than the “100-year” flood, in order to limit confusion related to the possible time horizon of an event occurring. The “100-year flood event” terminology is sometimes misinterpreted to imply that 100-year events will occur only once every 100 years, which is incorrect. Some areas within the 1-percent annual chance floodplain have a much higher probability of flooding.

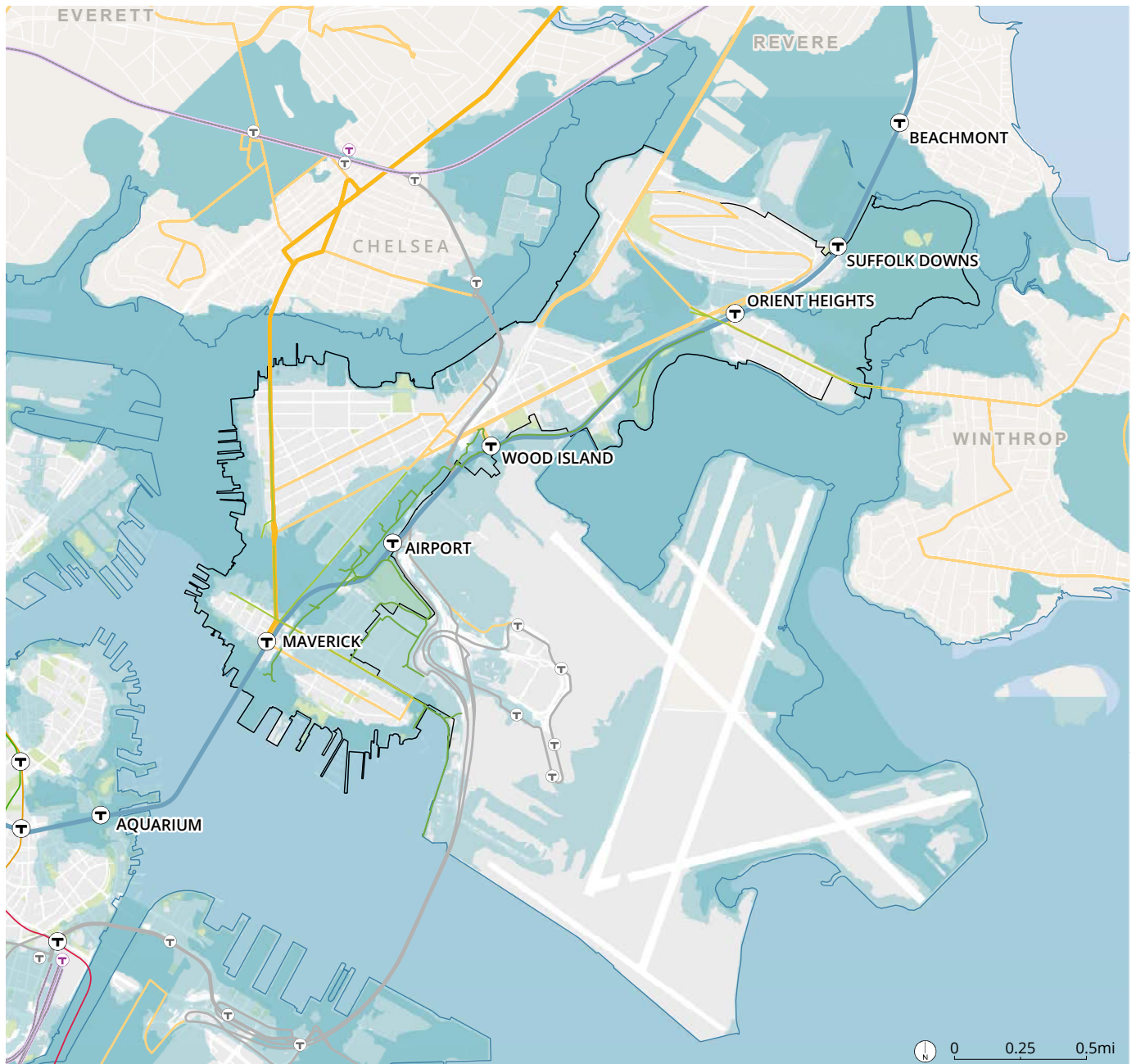
A 1-percent annual chance flood elevation is 10 times less likely than a 10-percent annual chance flood elevation. As sea levels rise, a 1-percent annual chance flood elevation today could be a 10- or even 99-percent annual chance flood elevation in the future. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood maps have historically been based on the 1-percent annual chance flood elevation, and the National Flood Insurance Program currently requires that all new development and redevelopment be protected to at least the 1-percent annual chance of flooding.

Sea Level Rise Scenarios

Climate Ready Boston used three sea level rise scenarios (9, 21, and 36 inches). The actual sea level rise Boston experiences will be driven by many factors, primarily global carbon emissions. Climate Ready Boston projections indicate that Boston’s sea levels will probably rise (from 2013 levels) by 9 inches as soon as 2030 if emissions continue at their current pace, 21 inches as soon as 2050, and 36 inches as soon as 2070.

The BPDA now requires developers to evaluate the vulnerability of new projects to 40 inches of sea level rise through its “Climate Change Resilience and Preparedness Checklist”. This level is equivalent to the Climate Ready Boston 36-inch level. The Climate Ready Boston (2016) report offers details on sea level rise probabilities and other climate projections citywide.

This report, as well as Coastal Resilience Solutions for East Boston and Charlestown (2017) and all Climate Ready Boston studies, refer to the long-term scenario as “40 inches” of sea level rise. Flooding that occurred in East Boston, South Boston, the North End, and other neighborhoods during extra-tropical storms Grayson (January 2018) and Riley (March 2018) were consistent with the Boston Harbor Flood Risk Model, which is used by the City and State for determining coastal flood vulnerabilities.



Land vulnerable to the flooding with a 1-percent annual chance storm event

Percent of land area vulnerable to flooding with a 1-percent annual chance event (today, FEMA standards)

East Boston neighborhood, including Suffolk Downs and Logan International Airport	23%
PLAN: East Boston Study Area, which excludes Suffolk Downs and Logan International Airport	38%

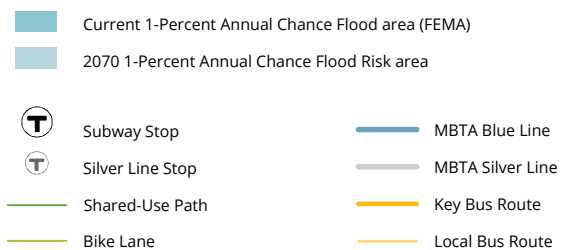
Percent of land area vulnerable to flooding with a 1-percent annual chance event and 40" SLR (as soon as the 2070s)

East Boston neighborhood, including Suffolk Downs and Logan International Airport	49%
PLAN: East Boston Study Area, which excludes Suffolk Downs and Logan International Airport	58%

Source: BPDA GIS Division analysis.

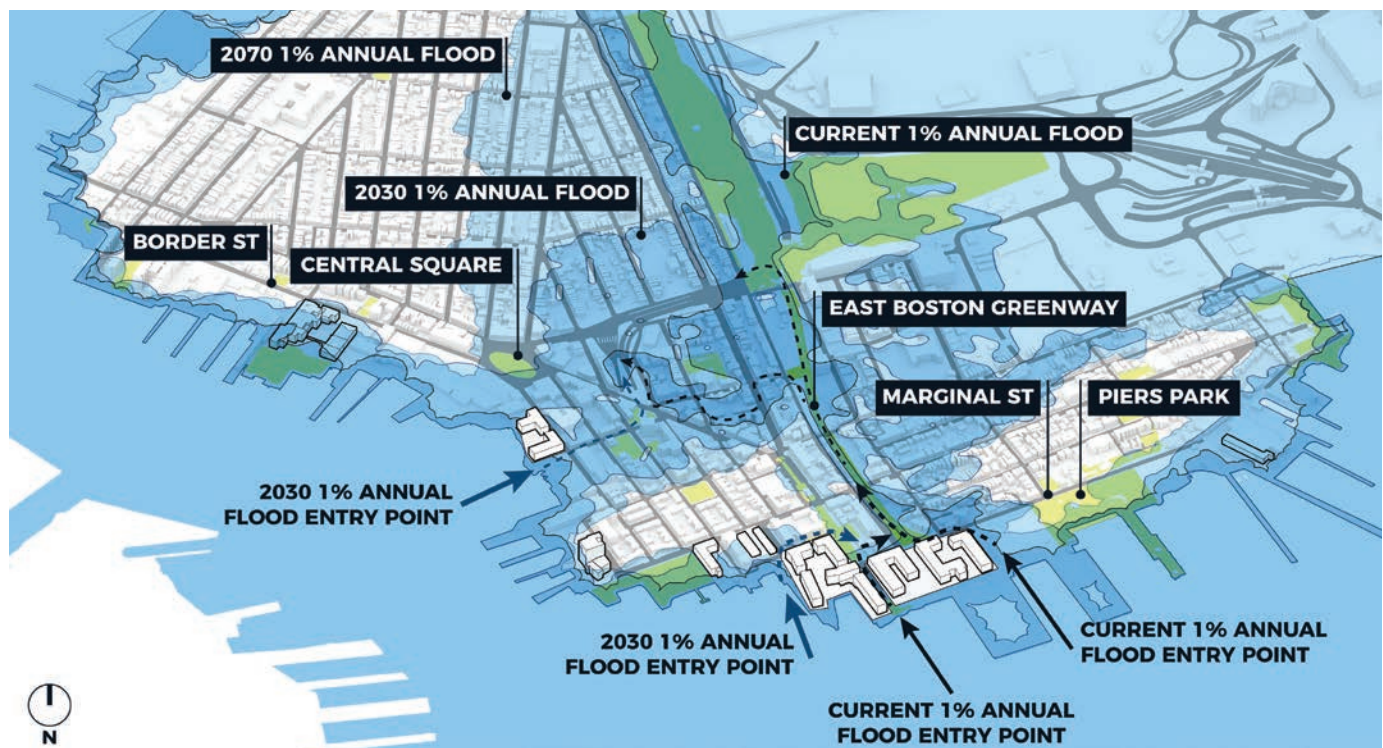
Flood Risk in East Boston

Source: BPDA, Boston Harbor Flood Risk Model, MassGIS



There are four primary flood pathways from the waterfront.

These flood pathways lead from the Marginal Street and Border Street waterfronts. Other flood entry points and pathways could develop in the 1-percent annual chance flood with 21 inches (2050) or 36 inches (2070) of sea level rise. The “Coastal Resilience Solutions for East Boston and Charlestown” report identified several points of potential inundation, with some locations projected to experience flooding as soon as 2030. Development occurring at the water’s edge presents a front line opportunity to incorporate resilient infrastructure to address this threat directly. Designated Port Areas (see page 150 for more) present a unique challenge to this approach as they do not currently allow for the use of open space, which has been the primary design approach in other neighborhood locations. The Marginal Street waterfront is undergoing significant redevelopment, and new projects are elevated as a result of climate resilience policies. (Read more about the Marginal Street and Border Street areas on page 80.)



Map of Flooding as related to Sea Level Rise

Map originally produced for City of Boston, Environment Department, “Coastal Resilience Solutions for East Boston and Charlestown,” October 2017, p. 25.

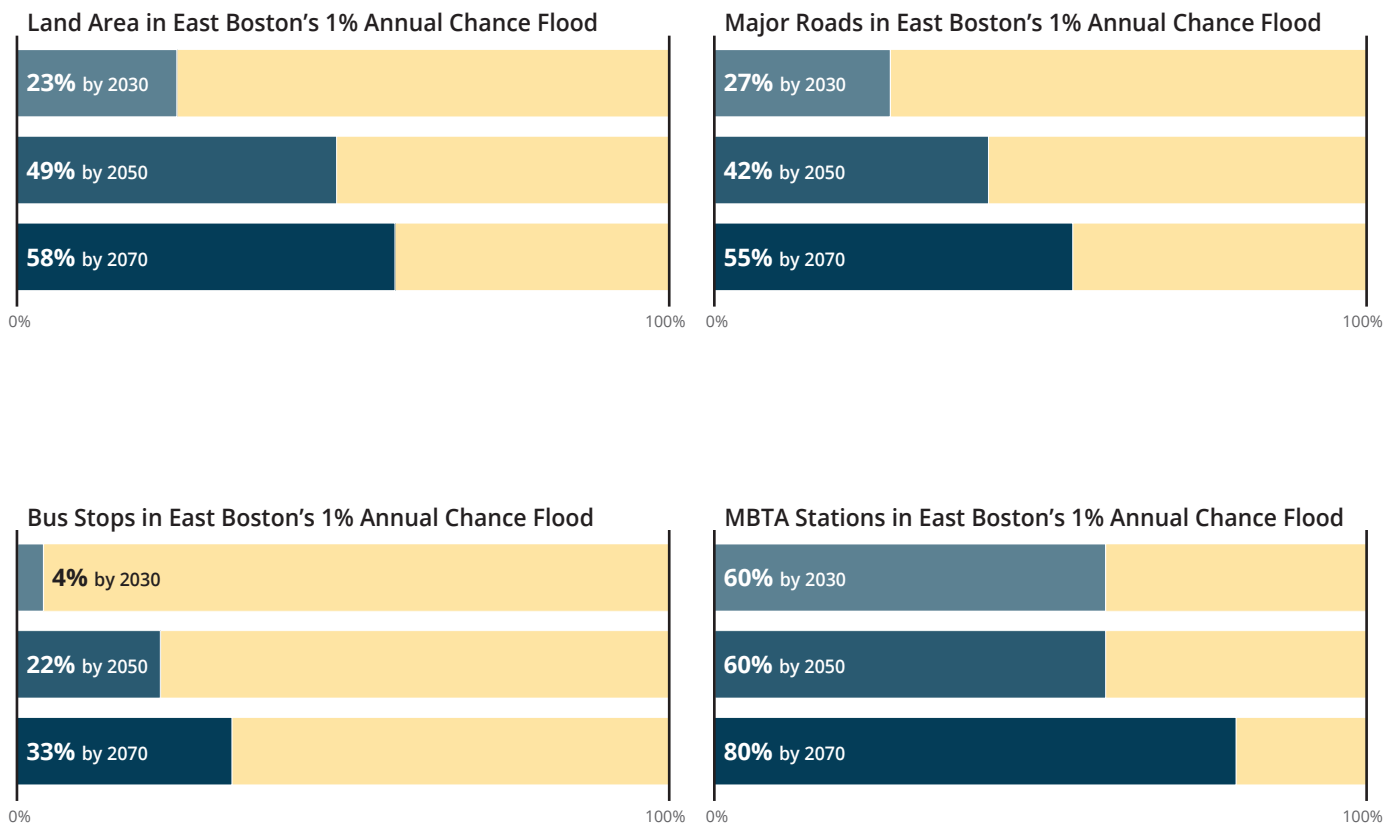
The gradations of blue in the map show how the 1-percent annual flood extent changes as sea levels rise. The colors do not indicate depth of flooding. The arrows show the flood entry points and pathways with current sea levels, 9 inches of sea level rise (2030s), and 36 inches of sea level rise (2070s).

Climate change threatens East Boston's transportation networks.

More than a third of East Boston's land area and three of its five Blue Line stations are within the current 1-percent annual chance of flood area. By 2070, 58 percent of East Boston is anticipated to be at risk of flooding, including more than 51 percent of its major streets.⁸ (See also "Extreme temperatures affect people using transit." on page 82.)

Flood Risk in East Boston

Source: Boston Harbor Flood Risk Model, BPDA, MassDOT, MassGIS, MBTA



⁸ PLAN: East Boston analysis, Toole Design.

Preparing for Flooding

The Coastal Resilience Solutions for East Boston and Charlestown report presents near- and long-term strategies to address sea level rise and coastal flooding impacts, expanding on Climate Ready Boston initiatives.

A deployable floodwall on the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway has been implemented.

The report calls for additional near-term flood protection solutions, including new elevated open spaces at the Greenway entrance and Piers Park Phase II, adaptations to ongoing development projects, and coastal flood protection measures across Lewis Street. Taken together, these approaches will protect more than 10,800 residents, at least 250 businesses, and critical infrastructure like MBTA Maverick Station from a 100-year flood event with sea-level rise at levels projected for 2030, preventing an estimated \$620 million in losses.⁹

To address the Border Street flood pathway, which is at risk of flooding with 9 inches of sea level rise (2030s), the report suggests planning and regulatory measures to ensure that public investment and future private redevelopment work together for unified resilience infrastructure.

Full implementation of near and long-term measures would protect over 13,200 residents and 310 businesses.

Elevated parks and pathways at Mario Umana School and Shore Plaza would protect critical facilities and vulnerable affordable housing residents. Porzio Park and Massport's waterfront parks could be elevated to address the flood pathway that could develop with 21 inches of sea level rise (2050s).¹⁰ As existing parks and buildings are renovated, they should incorporate waterfront flood protection measures that tie into the broader system.

Open space resilience solutions are effective, adaptable, and socially and environmentally beneficial.

Elevated waterfront open spaces and plazas can block critical flood entry points by raising the minimum elevation within the open space, therefore preventing flow of floodwater into the neighborhood. These public open spaces benefit the neighborhood with additional opportunities for recreation, education, and cultural programming. They also integrate natural stormwater infrastructure like gardens and fields that can capture extreme rainfall. Elevated waterfront pathways, called berms, would connect to these parks and the broader Harborwalk and transportation network. Docks and natural-based features like marshes or rocky shores could serve as recreational, educational, and aesthetic resources while adding buffer to the shoreline.

Infrastructure and development can protect and activate underutilized sites on the waterfront.

Through zoning and financing strategies, new development could help pay for the coastal flood protection system. With ground floors raised to the required minimum elevation, development can provide flood protection for inland properties when completed alongside raised roadways and waterfront open space. Local businesses are supported through the addition of new ground-floor uses in mixed-use development; open space, commercial, and cultural attractions create a draw for visitors that support local businesses; and maritime industries can upgrade infrastructure and equipment, so they can help Boston remain a competitive port city.

⁹ City of Boston, Environment Department, "Coastal Resilience Solutions for East Boston and Charlestown," October 2017, p. 56.

¹⁰ Ibid., This projection is based on 21 inches of sea level rise (2050s), plus one foot of freeboard.

Near and long-term coastal resilience solutions in the East Boston study area from the Coastal Resilience report

Originally produced for City of Boston, Environment Department, "Coastal Resilience Solutions for East Boston and Charlestown," October 2017, p. 43.



Preparing East Boston for climate change will require resiliency strategies at every scale.

In addition to neighborhood-scale infrastructure implementation, each building can contribute to neighborhood resiliency by implementing carbon neutral strategies and flood resilient design solutions. The public realm throughout the neighborhood can be adapt with added trees and reduced impervious surface. Public transportation must be protected from flooding. And increasing important neighborhood resources, like medical facilities and grocery stores, can reduce the daily stress of socially vulnerable residents and also make recovery and adaptation more effective.

The next phase of Climate Ready Boston will commence in late 2020 and study the northern portion of East Boston. PLAN: East Boston will be closely coordinating with this study. This may identify additional flood pathways and vulnerabilities for the parts of East Boston north of Day Square, as well as district- and site-scale strategies.

More Extreme Temperatures

Boston's average temperatures and the frequency, duration, and intensity of heat waves are projected to increase over the next century.

Extreme heat will become more common, last longer, and be hotter.

Historically, the heat index has topped 90 degrees in Massachusetts on average for 7 days per year.¹¹ But if there is no global action to reduce heat-trapping emissions, that number will increase to as many as 40 days per year by 2030 and 90 days by 2070. It is well-established that colder and hotter outdoor temperature (under both moderate and extreme conditions) is associated with higher daily mortality. Every year, a large number of hospitalizations are also associated with exposure to extreme outdoor temperatures, especially during heat waves and cold spells.¹² Heat waves—extended periods of extreme heat—are a leading cause of weather-related mortality in the United States.¹³

The annual average temperature in Boston increased about 2 degrees in the past hundred years, but the rate of increase in average temperatures is accelerating. Boston's average summer temperatures and number of days with extreme heat will increase. By 2100, the average annual temperature could increase to 56 degrees (compared to 46 degrees now).¹⁴ The average summer temperature in Boston from 1981 to 2010 was 69 degrees Fahrenheit, but it may be as high as 76 degrees Fahrenheit by 2050 and 84 degrees Fahrenheit by 2100. This suggests that, by 2050, Boston's summers may be as hot as Washington, DC's summers are today, and by the end of the century, they may be hotter than Birmingham, Alabama's summers are today.¹⁵

11 Union of Concerned Scientists, "Killer Heat in the United States: Climate Choices and the Future of Dangerously Hot Days," July 2019, p. 12.

12 City of Boston, Environment Department, "Climate Ready Boston, Executive Summary," 2016, p. 15.

13 Ibid., p. 10.

14 BPDA, "Climate Resiliency Guidance," December 2017, p. 2.

15 City of Boston, Environment Department, "Climate Ready Boston, Executive Summary," 2016, p. 10.

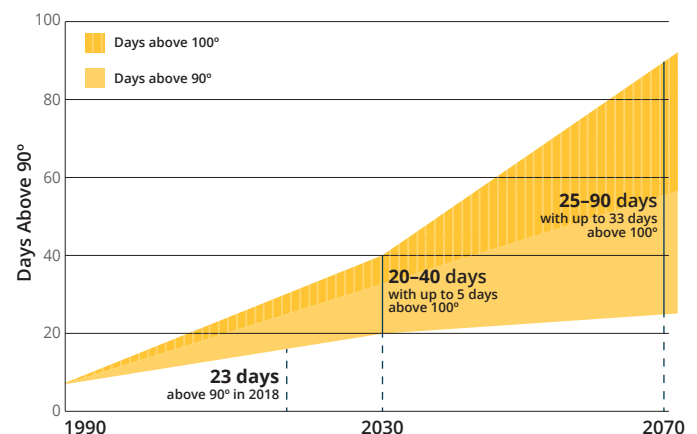
Extreme temperatures affect people using transit.

Urban temperatures are rising over time. 82 percent of East Boston bus stops are located in areas that experience high or very high elevated urban temperatures, while only 21 percent of bus stops, few of which have bus shelters, are located within 30 feet of a tree to shade waiting passengers. In East Boston and elsewhere, green space has shown to be an important factor for managing urban heat (compared to all land in East Boston, parks are 40 percent less likely to experience high heat).¹⁶ East Boston has the lowest percent tree cover of any Boston neighborhood in large part because of Logan Airport. (See page 155 for more.)

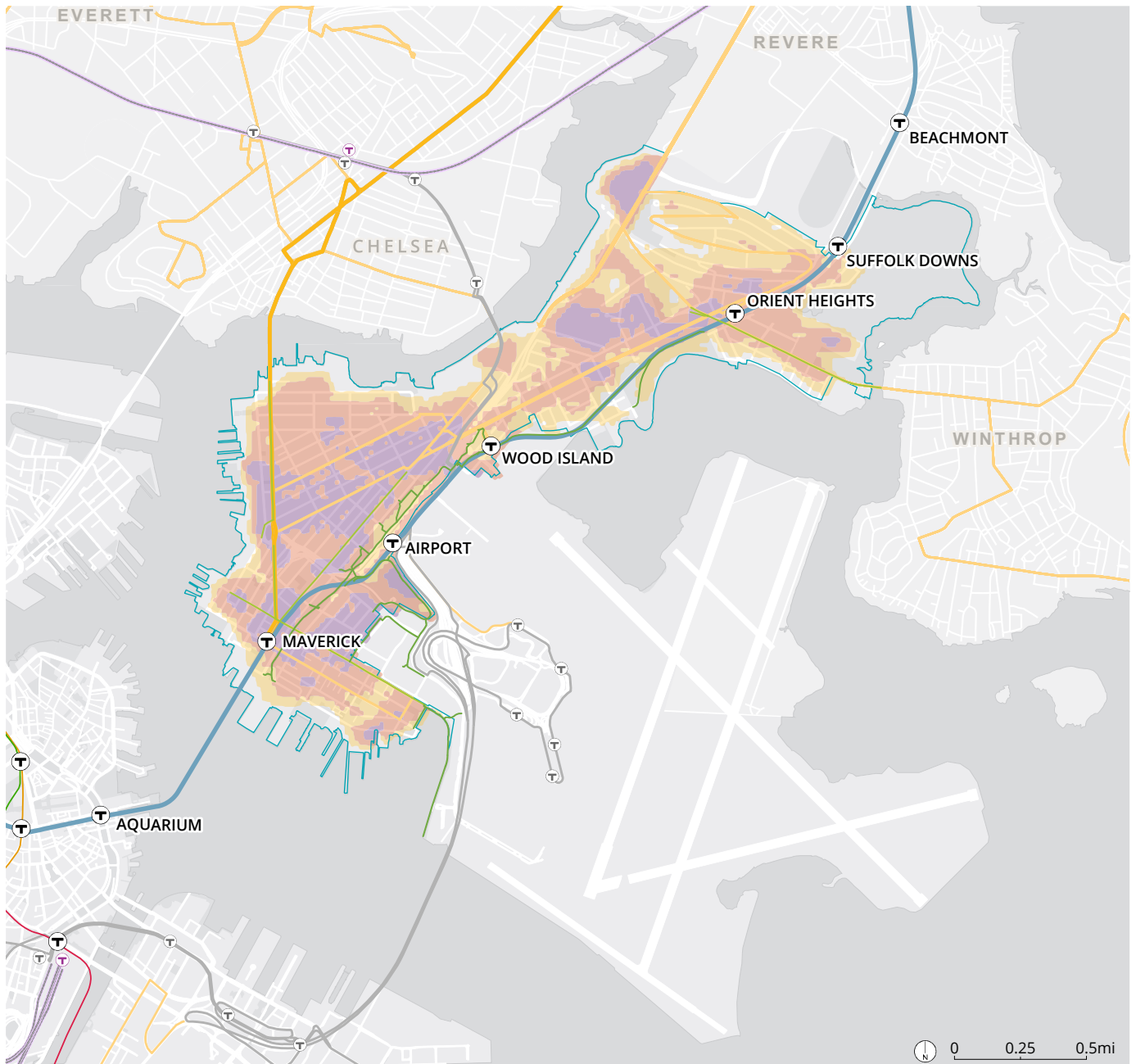
Projected Number of Very Hot Days 1990–2070

Adapted from City of Boston, Environment Department, "Climate Ready Boston," 2016, using Rossi et al. 2015

Upper values from high emissions scenario. Lower values from low emissions scenario.

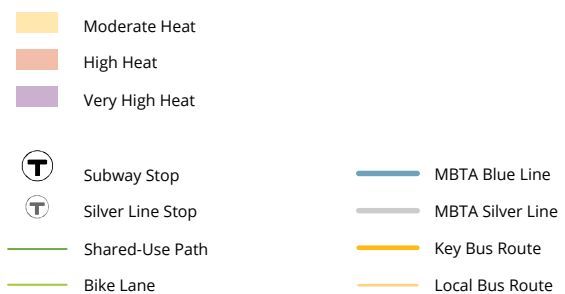


16 PLAN: East Boston analysis, Toole Design.



High Heat Zones in East Boston

Source: BPDA, MAPC, MassDOT, MassGIS, MBTA, Trust for Public Land



As an urban area, Boston tends to be hotter than surrounding suburban or rural communities because of the “urban heat island effect.” Concrete and building materials like steel retain more heat than vegetation, and the effect is compounded by climate change.

The Neighborhood's Health

Health outcomes vary significantly by neighborhood, and often correlate with environmental factors.

Environmental health is closely related to health equity.

The World Health Organization describes environmental health as addressing all the physical, chemical, and biological factors external to a person, and all the related factors impacting behaviors. Disadvantaged communities generally experience less access to resources like nutritious foods, educational opportunities, and quality medical care that might otherwise reduce negative effects of environmental hazards. East Boston is served by the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center, but the closest hospital is across the Boston Harbor. The northeast half of East Boston lacks adequate food access, with census tracts that indicate more than 100 households have no access to a vehicle and are more than 1/2 mile from the nearest supermarket.¹⁷ East Boston only has one grocery store, a supermarket in Central Square.

Climate change contributes directly and indirectly to community health outcomes. Though the experience of climate change is shared by an entire population, other factors contribute to the impact that climate change may have on individual health. As explained in the "Health of Boston 2016-2017" report, heat waves disproportionately affect individuals who are elderly, poorer, lesser educated, non-White, have pre-existing health conditions, and who live in neighborhoods with limited access to green space. East Boston is particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts as previously discussed; for this reason it will be important to invest in measures that prevent or mitigate climate impacts.

Beyond individual physiology and health-related behaviors, there are economic, environmental, and social factors that influence health.

These factors are referred to as the social determinants of health and include an individual's physical environment, economic stability, community and social context, access to quality food, education, and healthcare. East Boston has a number of indicators from recent years that negatively impact the neighborhood's health. These include higher rates of housing overcrowding, a larger uninsured population, lower educational attainment, higher rates of heart disease, and lower rates of adults who met Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines for physical activity, compared to the city overall. East Boston has lower rates of injury emergency department discharges, mental health hospitalizations, and asthma-related emergency department visits when compared to the city as a whole.¹⁸

Access to open space and the walkability of a neighborhood often correlate to obesity rates.

Approximately 11 of Boston's 48 square miles is open space, and 80 percent (8.8 square miles) of Boston's open space is publicly accessible.¹⁹ According to Walk Score, Boston was the third most walkable large city in 2017, but Walk Scores varied across zip code. Despite a Walk Score in the high 60s and open space access, lower percentages of adults in East Boston reported meeting CDC guidelines for physical activity compared with the rest of Boston.²⁰

¹⁷ United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, Food Access Research Atlas, 2015.

¹⁸ City of Boston, Boston Public Health Commission, Research and Evaluation Office, "Health of Boston 2016-2017," 2017, pp. 51-52.

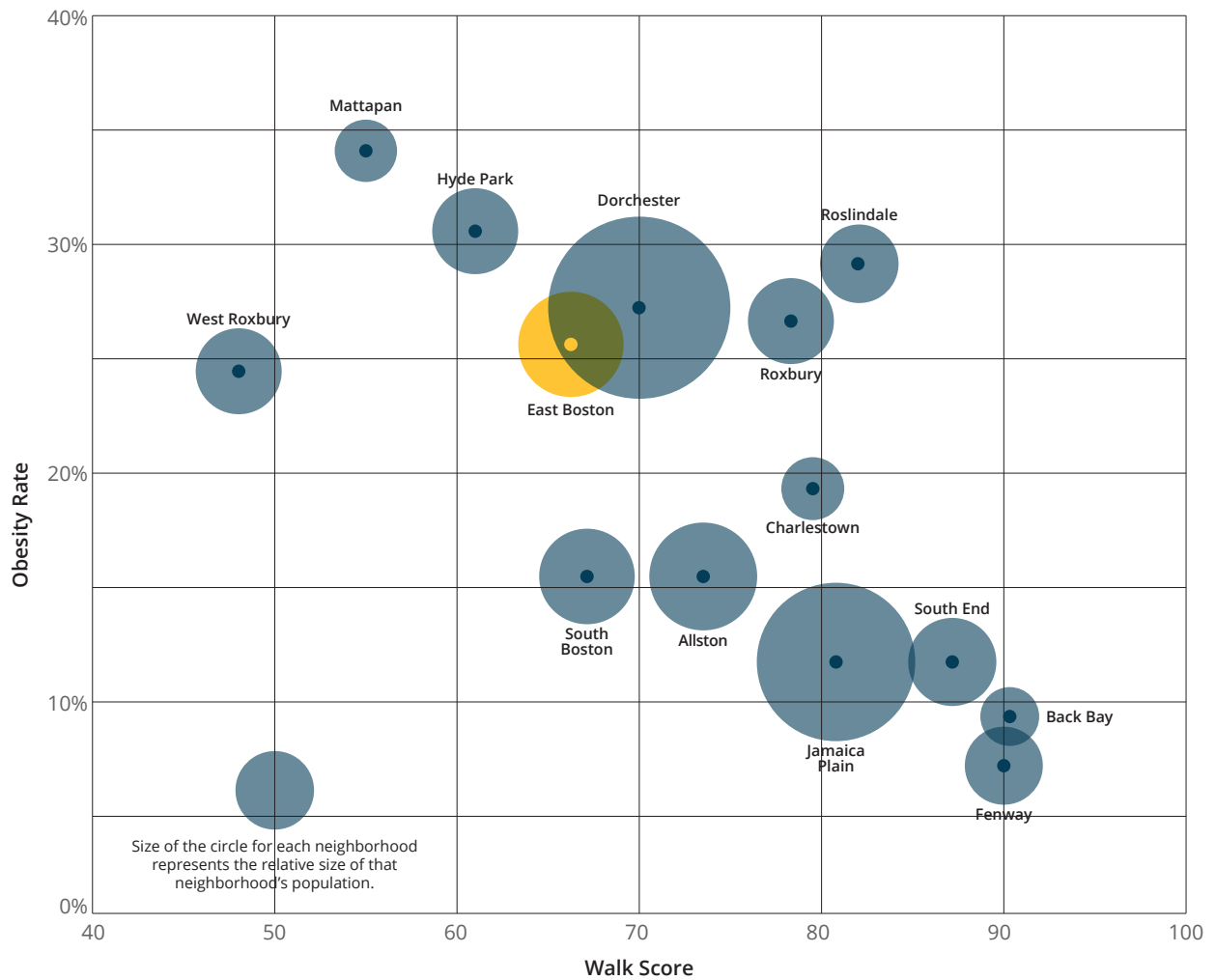
¹⁹ Boston's 48 square miles includes the Harbor Islands.

²⁰ City of Boston, Boston Public Health Commission, Research and Evaluation Office, "Health of Boston 2016-2017," 2017, pp. 51-52.

Relationship Between Neighborhood Walk Score and Obesity

2017

Adapted from City of Boston, Transportation Department, "Go Boston 2030: Vision and Action Plan," March 2017, p. 48. Using Walk Score data, 2016, and Boston Public Health Commission.



City Policies and Programs

Preparing for a changing climate has been a priority to ensure Boston continues to develop as a vibrant and sustainable city. Over the past decade there have been a number of efforts to address climate change through both the reduction of carbon pollution and the strengthening our resilience to its impacts. The policies and initiatives to manage the risks of climate change have been developed through the use of science, policy, and community engagement.

Boston Zoning Code Article 37, Green Buildings & Resiliency Policy

Adopted in 2007, Article 37 requires that all Article 80 projects achieve at a minimum the “certifiable” level utilizing the most appropriate U.S. Green Building Council Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design (LEED) Rating System. The Resiliency Policy requires that all projects consider present and future climate conditions in assessing project environmental impacts, including carbon emissions, extreme precipitation, extreme heat, and sea level rise. Projects must identify building strategies that eliminate, reduce, and mitigate adverse impacts including those due to changing climate conditions.

Coastal Flood Resilience Design Guidelines and Zoning Overlay District

One of the primary objectives of Climate Ready Boston is to promote building and zoning standards that will help protect homes and businesses from coastal storm surge and sea level rise. In September 2019, the City adopted Coastal Flood Resilience Design Guidelines, which serve as a resource to translate flood resilient building design strategies into new projects and building retrofits. The City is also developing a Coastal Flood Resilience Zoning Overlay District within which the Guidelines will be applied as part of the project review process. The extent of the Resilience Zoning Overlay will correspond to areas of Boston that could potentially be inundated during a major coastal storm event with 40-inches of sea level rise.

Climate Ready Boston

Much of the climate resilience and preparedness planning that is underway has been guided by Climate Ready Boston (2016), which provides an understanding of the city's vulnerabilities to increased temperatures, precipitation and sea level rise, as well as measures that can be taken to protect our neighborhoods. The City also continues to work on carbon reduction through its Climate Action Plan and advance solutions to ensure our buildings, infrastructure, and open space are prepared for a changing climate.

Climate Resilient Design Standards and Guidelines

The Climate Resilient Design Standards and Guidelines from the City's Public Works Department addresses both acute and chronic flooding due to sea level rise and storm surge to protect the public roads, sidewalks, and parks. The guidelines provide climate design adjustments for design of flood barriers and a process for evaluating engineering design, operations, maintenance, and cost considerations. Examples are provided of elevated vegetated berms, raised roads, Harborwalk barriers, and deployable measures to limit flood water intrusion. The Guidelines are currently being used by the City's Public Improvement Commission in the review of projects that may impact the public right-of-way.

Climate Action Plan

The City's first Climate Action Plan was issued in 2007 and had been regularly updated with new objectives and strategies to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and enhance our capacity to manage impacts from climate change. The 2019 update to the Climate Action Plan details the specific actions the City will take over the next five years to significantly cut emissions across all sectors of city life, in order to reach the ultimate goal of carbon neutrality by 2050. The plan identifies 18 strategies to increase carbon reductions from our buildings and the transportation sector. The plan's goals also include ongoing efforts to prepare for the impacts of climate change, becoming a zero-waste community, and protecting Boston's natural resources.

Resilient Boston Harbor & Coastal Resilience Solutions for East Boston

Resilient Boston Harbor is the City's vision plan to strengthen Boston's entire 47-mile coastline with a system of parks, beaches, and infrastructure that can block flood waters and improve quality of life year round. The Coastal Resilient Solutions for East Boston and Charlestown (2017) was an effort to better understand the specific coastal flood vulnerabilities of East Boston and where shoreline protective measures are needed to protect the community. The plan identifies short- and long-term solutions to protect the neighborhood, including strategies like elevated berms, flood walls, and elevated parks and pathways. The solutions are intended to not only protect the neighborhood, but also improve public access to and along the harbor, enhance coastal habitat, and revitalize underutilized waterfront properties.

The next phase of Climate Ready Boston and the Coastal Resilience Solutions studies will commence in late 2020 and study the northern portion of East Boston. PLAN: East Boston will be closely coordinating with this study. This upcoming study may identify additional flood pathways and vulnerabilities for the parts of East Boston north of Day Square, as well as district- and site-scale strategies.

Transportation

East Boston is generally well served by transportation options such as subway, bus, bikeshare, and carshare. While transit commuting has grown, East Boston streets have experienced growth in vehicle congestion in recent years. Congestion, alongside frequent bridge openings at the Chelsea Creek, create unreliable, unpredictable bus and vehicle travel. Crashes in East Boston increased between 2016 and 2018, and much of the neighborhood's transportation network is threatened by climate change. East Boston's unique topography, street grids, highway infrastructure, and location in relationship to regional transportation and economic corridors have created challenges for residents' access to job opportunities and day-to-day needs such as groceries.

In this section, learn about:

- » Traveling in East Boston Today on page 90
- » Safety and Comfort on page 98
- » Access to Options on page 104
- » City and State Policies and Programs on page 114



Key Bus Route 116/117 accounted for nearly all passenger growth for bus routes serving East Boston.

Traveling in East Boston Today

East Boston has become better connected, more reliant on transit, and more vulnerable to growing regional travel and climate change threats.

The East Boston street network is defined by major squares and the corridors that connect them.

Transportation has always played an important role in East Boston's development. East Boston was originally known as Noddle's Island (Jeffries Point, Gove Street, Eagle Hill, Maverick Central, and Harbor View) and Hog Island (Orient Heights), and major streets such as Meridian Street, Chelsea Street, Bremen Street, Bennington Street, and Saratoga Street were created in the nineteenth century to connect these islands and neighboring municipalities as well as move people and goods to and from the industrial waterfront. Maverick Square, Central Square, Day Square, and Orient Heights Square formed at the intersection of these corridors, serving as the economic, retail, and cultural hubs of the neighborhood. Over time, a web of narrower residential streets was laid out between major corridors in varying gridiron patterns or in response to changes in elevation. This results in today's inherently walkable block structure but also irregular intersections with numerous conflict points and excess pavement. (See also "From Landfill to Planned Development" on page 22.)

During the twentieth century, streets and squares were designed and regulated to maximize motor vehicle parking and throughput. Today, the City designs streets and squares using a Complete Streets approach that considers walking, biking, and transit as options equally as important as driving. Complete Streets provides a planning framework informed by the broader built environment and the needs of all transportation modes (see page 91).

East Boston is a critical gateway for regional motor vehicle travel.

East Boston is situated across Boston Harbor from Downtown Boston and is home to Logan International Airport. Much of the transportation investment during the twentieth century focused on connecting the metropolitan Boston region to these major destinations with highways. Highways built in East Boston—Sumner Tunnel (1934), McClellan Highway (Route 1A) (1938), East Boston Expressway (elevated Route 1A) (1951), Callahan Tunnel (1961), Ted Williams Tunnel (1995), and Sumner Tunnel Toll Plaza reconstruction (2019)—changed the neighborhood landscape. Major streets between squares now process regional vehicle travel bound for highways in addition to local traffic. A strong economy, growing airport, and the introduction of app-based ride-hailing have increased volumes on East Boston highways. Wayfinding technology on smartphones, which can direct drivers to local streets to avoid regional congestion, ensures that residential areas, too, feel the impacts of regional travel.

+47%

Growth in Sumner Tunnel daily traffic volumes since 2013.

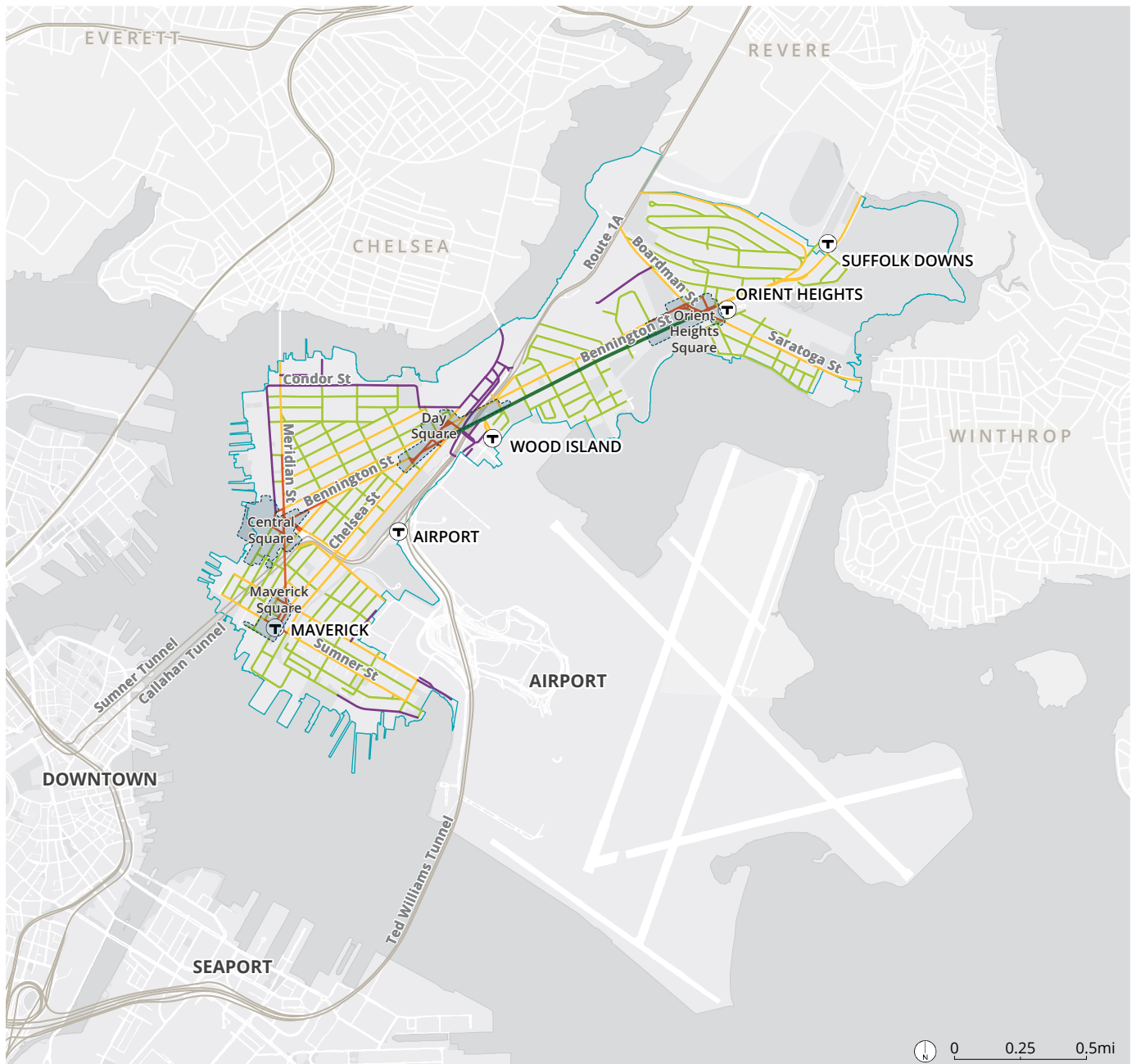
56%

of vehicles using East Boston streets to access the Sumner Tunnel between 7-8 AM are registered outside of East Boston.

71%

of vehicles using East Boston streets to access the Sumner Tunnel between 5-6 PM are registered outside of East Boston.

Source: MassDOT



Complete Streets Types in East Boston

Source: BPDA, MassGIS

- Boulevard
- Neighborhood Main
- Neighborhood Connector
- Neighborhood Residential
- Industrial
- Highway
- Neighborhood Squares

Streets can be categorized by types, which are based on context, adjacent land use, and the needs of all transportation modes. Street types can be fluid—a single corridor may change street types several times as surrounding land uses change.

People in East Boston have many travel options, including use of new, improved, or expanded infrastructure.

There are many ways to travel to, from, or within East Boston, including the MBTA Blue Line, Silver Line (SL3), Key Bus Routes (116/117), local bus routes (112, 114, 120, 121, 712, 713), bikeshare, carshare, water taxi, and a growing network of shared-use paths, most notably the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway. Limited ferry service is available from Logan Airport. At half a mile southeast of Jeffries Point, ferry service is essentially inaccessible for East Boston residents and visitors.

City and State projects have introduced or upgraded infrastructure and travel options since completion of the 2008 East Boston Transportation Action Plan. Notable examples include the Central Square redesign (2017), Mary Ellen Welch Greenway extension to Constitution Beach (2016), bikeshare expansion (2016), Sumner Tunnel Toll Plaza reconstruction (2019), SL3 service via Airport Station (2018), and reconstruction of Maverick (2009), Wood Island (2008), and Orient Heights stations (2013).

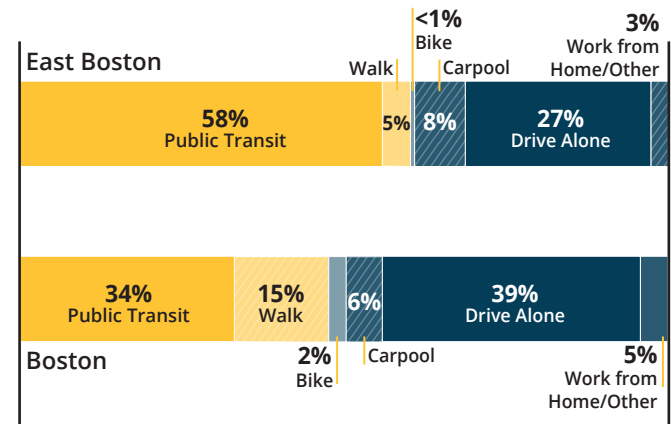
East Bostonians commute more by transit and spend more time traveling to work than the city average.

As of 2017, nearly 58 percent of East Boston commuters take transit, the highest rate of any Boston neighborhood. Since 2010, the East Boston's population has grown 14 percent (see "Growing Population" on page 36). During that time, the number of East Bostonians who commuted by transit increased 41 percent and the number who drove alone increased by 6 percent. The number of East Boston residents who walk and carpool decreased by 14 percent and 26 percent, respectively, since 2010. Without direct connections across Boston Harbor, bike rates have remained below one percent since 2010.¹

The average commute for East Boston residents is about 31 minutes, exceeding the citywide average by two minutes.² East Bostonians primarily commute to Downtown, Logan Airport, Cambridge, or Back Bay, while workers in East Boston primarily arrive from within East Boston or from Revere, Lynn, or Dorchester.³

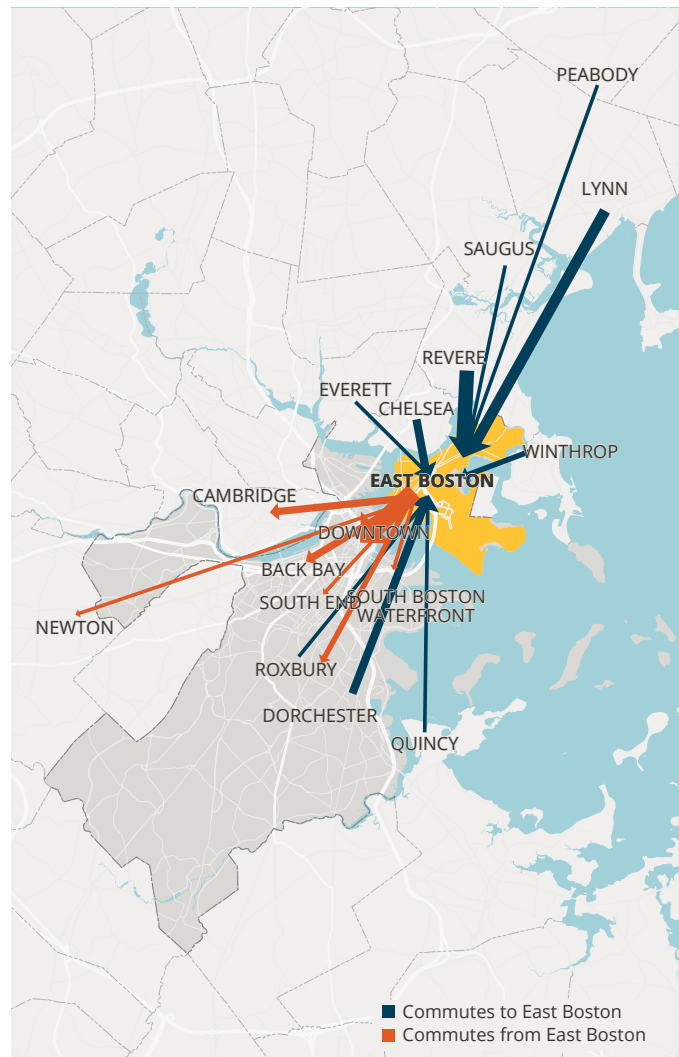
How Do East Bostonians Commute?

Source: BPDA, 2013–2017 American Community Survey



Top Commute Locations to and from East Boston

Source: BPDA, 2013–2017 American Community Survey



¹ 2013–2017 American Community Survey

² City of Boston, Transportation Department, "Go Boston 2030: Vision and Action Plan," March 2017, p. 39.

³ 2013–2017 American Community Survey



Existing Transportation Network in East Boston

Source: BPDA, MassGIS, Bluebikes, Zipcar

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Subway Stop | MBTA Blue Line |
| Silver Line Stop | MBTA Silver Line |
| Bluebikes Station | Key Bus Route |
| Zipcar | Local Bus Route |
| Ferry Terminal | Shared-Use Path |
| Water Taxi Stops | Bike Lane |

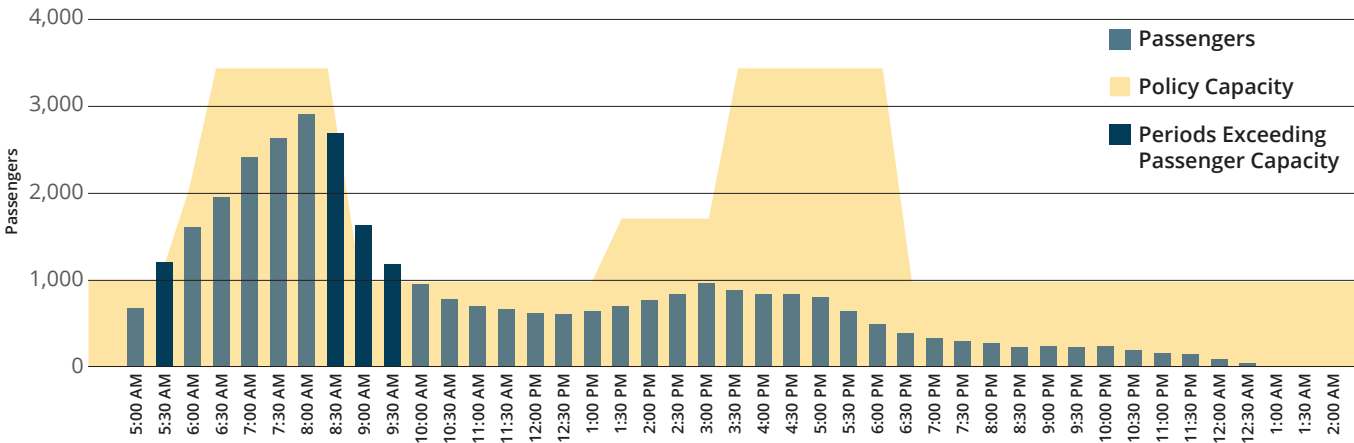
Subway ridership across the MBTA is down, except on the Blue Line.

More than 24,000 people boarded the Blue Line at an East Boston station on a typical weekday in 2018. 48 percent of all weekday Blue Line riders board within East Boston. Since 2014, weekday boardings at East Boston Blue Line stations have grown at an annual rate of 1.3 percent (1.1 percent for all Blue Line stations). During this same period, boardings at all other MBTA gated stations on the Red, Orange, Green, and Silver Lines have declined.⁴

In 2018, the Blue Line served the most passengers during traditional peak commuting periods, but felt more crowded outside of these periods because fewer trains were in operation. As a result, average trainloads exceeded the MBTA’s policy capacity of 516 passengers per train between 5:30–6:00 AM and 9:00–10:00 AM in the inbound direction, and between 6:30–7:30 PM in the inbound direction, and between 6:30–7:30 PM in the outbound direction. Passenger loading on late night trains (10:00 PM–12:00 AM) in the outbound direction exceeded or approached policy capacity as well.⁵

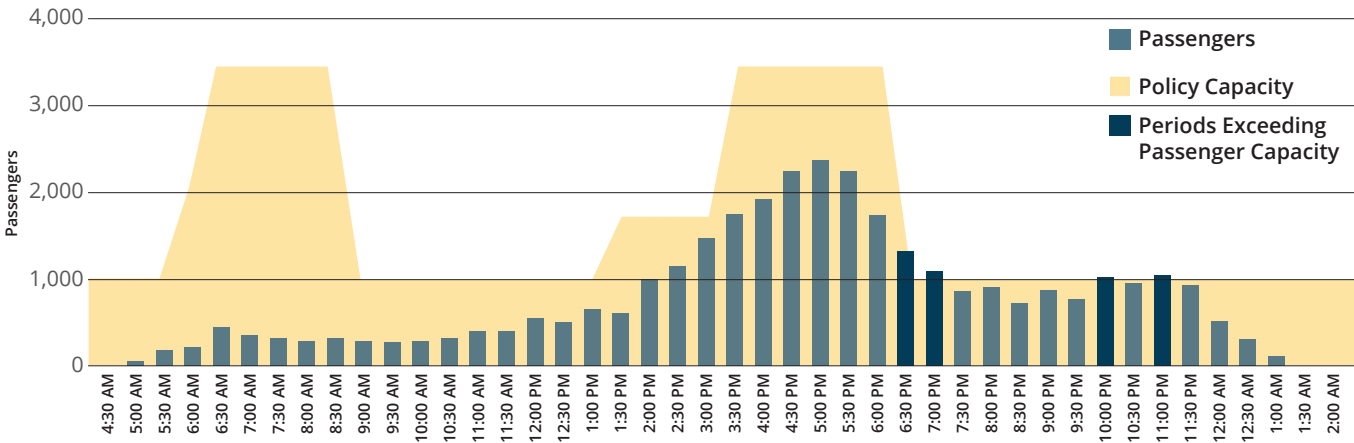
Blue Line Inbound (Toward Bowdoin Station) Passenger Volumes at Peak Load Point Versus Capacity

Source: MBTA, Blue Line Ridership Data, Spring 2018 as cited in The HYM Investment Group, “Suffolk Downs Redevelopment: Final Environmental Impact Report,” December 2019.



Blue Line Outbound (toward Wonderland Station) Passenger Volumes at Peak Load Point versus Capacity

Source: MBTA, Blue Line Ridership Data, Spring 2018 as cited in The HYM Investment Group, “Suffolk Downs Redevelopment: Final Environmental Impact Report,” December 2019.



4 MBTA

5 MBTA, Blue Line Ridership Data, Spring 2018 as cited in The HYM Investment Group, “Suffolk Downs Redevelopment: Final Environmental Impact Report,” December 2019.

Bus ridership is down in East Boston, but Key Bus Route 116/117 is becoming more crowded.

In 2018, more than 9,400 people boarded route 112, 114, 116/117, 120, 121, 712, or 713 within East Boston on a typical weekday. While 49 percent of passengers on these routes boarded within East Boston, total bus boardings within East Boston are down. Between 2017 and 2018, weekday bus boardings within East Boston declined 3.3 percent, while the number of passengers on routes serving East Boston that occurred outside of East Boston increased 4.1 percent. (Routes 712 and 713 are not included in these growth figures, as only 2017 ridership data are available).⁶

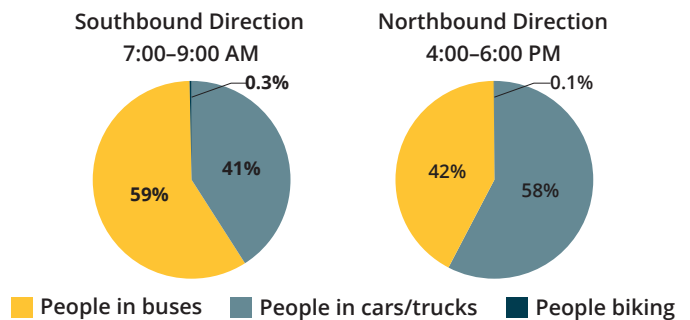
Key Bus Route 116/117 accounted for nearly all passenger growth for bus routes serving East Boston. The MBTA considers about 10 percent of weekday 116/117 trips uncomfortable due to high passenger loads, which typically occurred on Meridian Street as trips headed toward Maverick Square during the morning peak period.

Maverick Square is the busiest transit hub in East Boston.

More than 14,000 bus and subway trips originate in Maverick Square each weekday, representing 42 percent of all bus and subway boardings within East Boston.⁷ Two-thirds of all bikeshare trips within East Boston start or end at Maverick Square. About 96 percent of all people accessing Maverick Station do so by bus (44 percent) and walking or biking (52 percent), an increase from 87 percent a decade ago.⁸

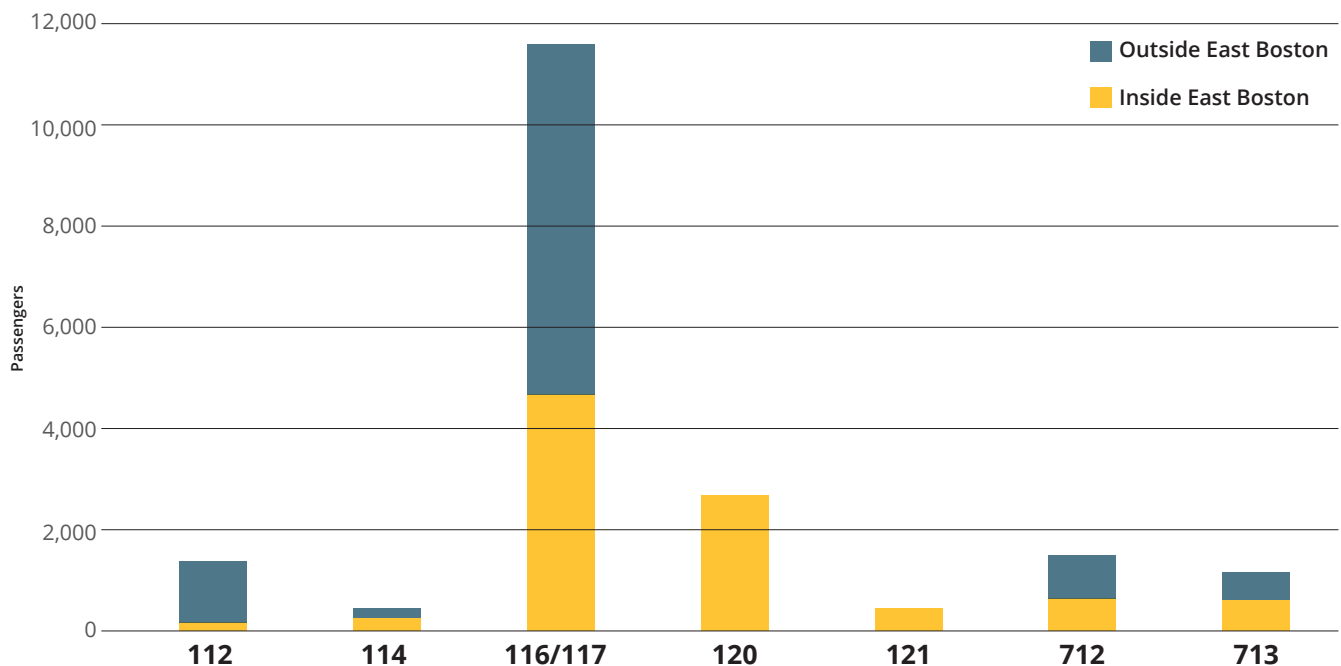
At Central Square, How are People Traveling on Meridian?

Source: BPDA, BTD (2017), MBTA (2017)



Average Weekday Bus Ridership

Source: MBTA (2018)



⁶ SL3 boardings, ferry boardings, and pre-2017 bus boardings at the stop level were unavailable or unreliable for this analysis. Source: MBTA

⁷ SL3 and ferry boardings at the stop level are unavailable for this analysis. Source: MBTA

⁸ Central Transportation Planning Staff, "MBTA 2015–17 Systemwide Passenger Survey," May 2018.

East Boston population is growing more quickly than passenger vehicle registrations.

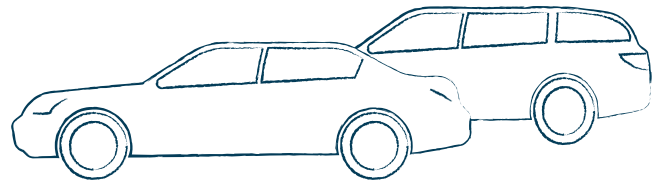
Between 2010 and 2018, East Boston population grew faster (+15 percent) than growth in passenger vehicles registered to an East Boston address (+10 percent).⁹ As a result, the average passenger vehicle registrations per resident declined 4 percent in East Boston (compared to a steeper decline of 8 percent for the rest of Boston during the same period).

Between 2010 and 2018, the number of no-car households grew faster in East Boston (+8 percent) compared to the rest of Boston (+3 percent).¹⁰

Ratio of registered passenger vehicles to residents, as of 2018:

1 vehicle for every 3.0 residents (East Boston)

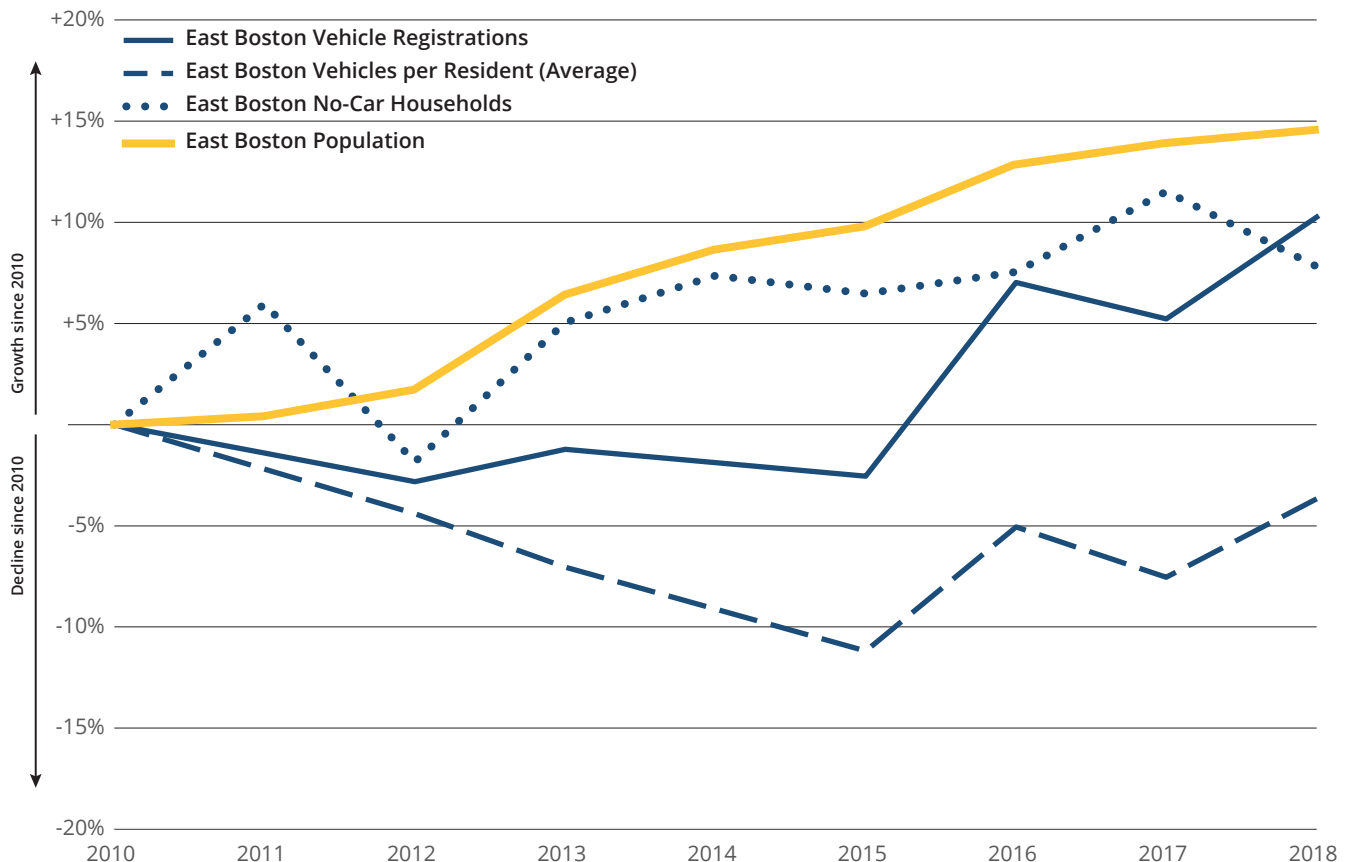
1 vehicle for every 2.7 residents (rest of Boston)



Source: BPDA, CTPS, RMV, 2014–2018 American Community Survey

Change in Population, Registered Passenger Vehicles, Average Vehicles per Resident, and No-car Households in East Boston

Source: BPDA, CTPS, RMV, 2014–2018 American Community Survey



⁹ CTPS, RMV, 2014–2018 American Community Survey

¹⁰ 2014–2018 American Community Survey



Since 2010, population growth in East Boston has outpaced growth in passenger vehicle registrations.

Safety and Comfort

Boston Emergency Medical Services (EMS) responded to 471 East Boston crashes between 2016 and 2018. Four crashes were fatal. In May 2019, another fatal crash occurred on Bennington Street.

Crashes in East Boston are clustered along major streets and around complex intersections.

When crashes are weighted for severity, several of East Boston's major squares and key gateways stand out as the neighborhood's top crash hot spots. These locations shown on the following page share common features: arterial streets, irregular intersections, and high activity areas. Arterial streets make up 34 percent of East Boston's street network, but 72 percent of East Boston crashes occur on an arterial street. Three of the four fatal traffic crashes in East Boston from 2016 to 2018 occurred at intersections with multiple crashes.

The Central Square area was the primary East Boston crash hot spot from 2016 to 2018. However, the area was under construction during this period, and today's Central Square includes safer intersections to address prior safety challenges. When considering travel modes, primary crash hot spot locations varied: Central Square (walking), Bennington Street from Brooks Street to Putnam Street (biking), and Route 1A at Curtis Street (driving).

Top Five Most Severe Crash Hot Spot Locations by Mode (2016–2018)

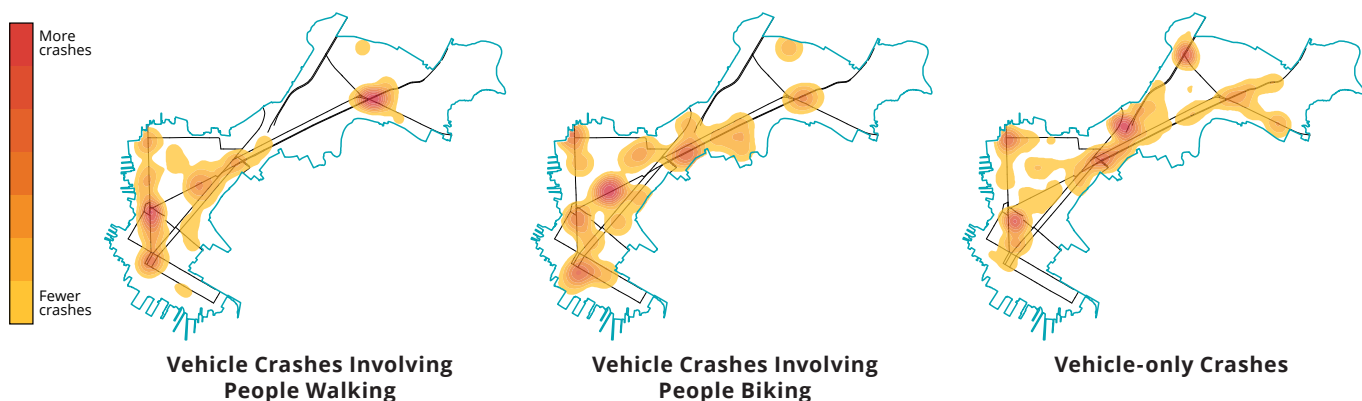
Source: BPDA, Boston EMS

Note: Data includes years in which Central Square was under construction.

Crash Hot Spot	Crash Hot Spot Ranked by Severity (1 = most severe)			
	All Vehicle Crashes	Vehicle Crashes with People Walking	Vehicle Crashes with People Biking	Vehicle-only Crashes
Central Square	1	1	5	2
East Boston Expressway (Route 1A) at Curtis Street	2	-	-	1
Orient Heights Square	3	2	-	-
Meridian Street at Condor Street	4	5	2	5
Day Square	5	-	-	4
Bennington Street (Brooks to Putnam Streets)	-	4	1	-
Bennington Street at Mendoza Square	-	-	4	-
Maverick Square	-	3	3	-
McClellan Highway (Route 1A) at Boardman Street	-	-	-	3

Crash Density in East Boston (2016–2018)

Source: BPDA, Boston EMS, MassGIS

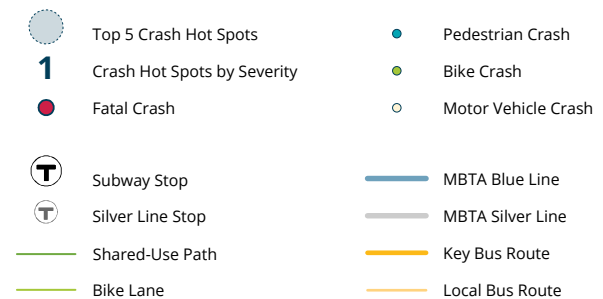




Crashes and Crash Hot Spots in East Boston, 2016–2018

Source: BPDA, Boston EMS, MassGIS.

Note: Data includes years in which Central Square was under construction.



People walking and biking are disproportionately affected by crashes.

From 2016 to 2018, 22 percent of crashes requiring EMS response involved people walking and 6 percent involved people biking. Together, these travel modes account for 5 percent of all commute trips from East Boston, though a portion of transit trips also include walking or biking (data on non-work trips are unavailable). Overall, approximately 20 percent of pedestrian crashes occurred within about one block of a Blue Line station, whereas only 10 percent of all crashes are near a Blue Line station.

Two of the four fatal crash victims during this period were people walking. When comparing fatal to non-fatal crashes, one in 50 crashes with people walking were fatal, while one in 170 motor vehicle-only crashes.¹¹

Speeding is the top safety concern among travelers in East Boston, particularly by people walking.

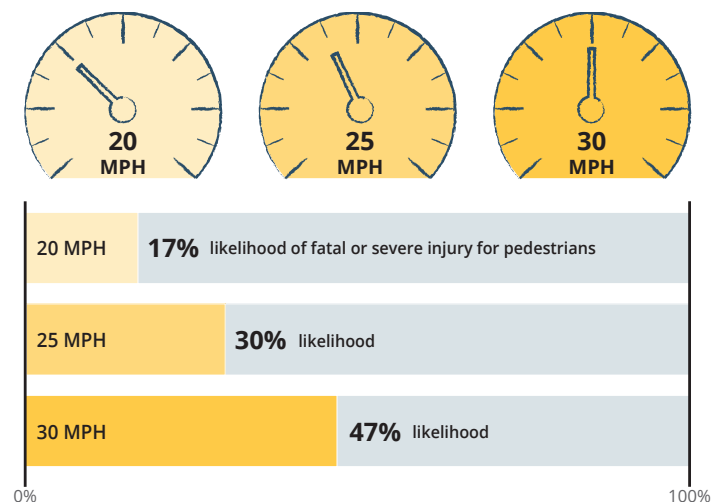
Speeding represents the largest share of reported safety concerns in East Boston, according to data collected by the City's Vision Zero program. Of these speeding concerns reported, nearly two-thirds were from people walking. Motor vehicle speed is a central determinant of crash severity. With lower speeds, people walking are less likely to be killed or severely injured if struck by a motor vehicle. In 2017, the City of Boston reduced its default speed limit to 25 mph, and research confirmed that, as a result, drivers in Boston are less likely to travel in excess of 25 mph.¹² Only Bennington Street north of Day Square retains a 30 mph speed limit in East Boston.

Other commonly reported safety concerns include double parking and the conditions of streets. 63 percent of comments from people biking were related to the condition of the roads. 18 percent of driver comments were related to people double parking their vehicles, which was noted to be especially prevalent around convenience stores, day care centers, schools, and take-out restaurants.



Likelihood of Fatal or Severe Injury for Pedestrians Struck by Drivers Traveling at These Speeds

Source: BPDA; Brian C. Tefft, "Impact Speed and a Pedestrian's Risk of Severe Injury or Death," AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, September 2011



¹¹ Source: Boston EMS

¹² Wen Hu and Jessica B. Cicchino, "Lowering the Speed Limit from 30 mph to 25 mph in Boston: Effects on Vehicle Speeds." (Injury Prevention, 2019.)



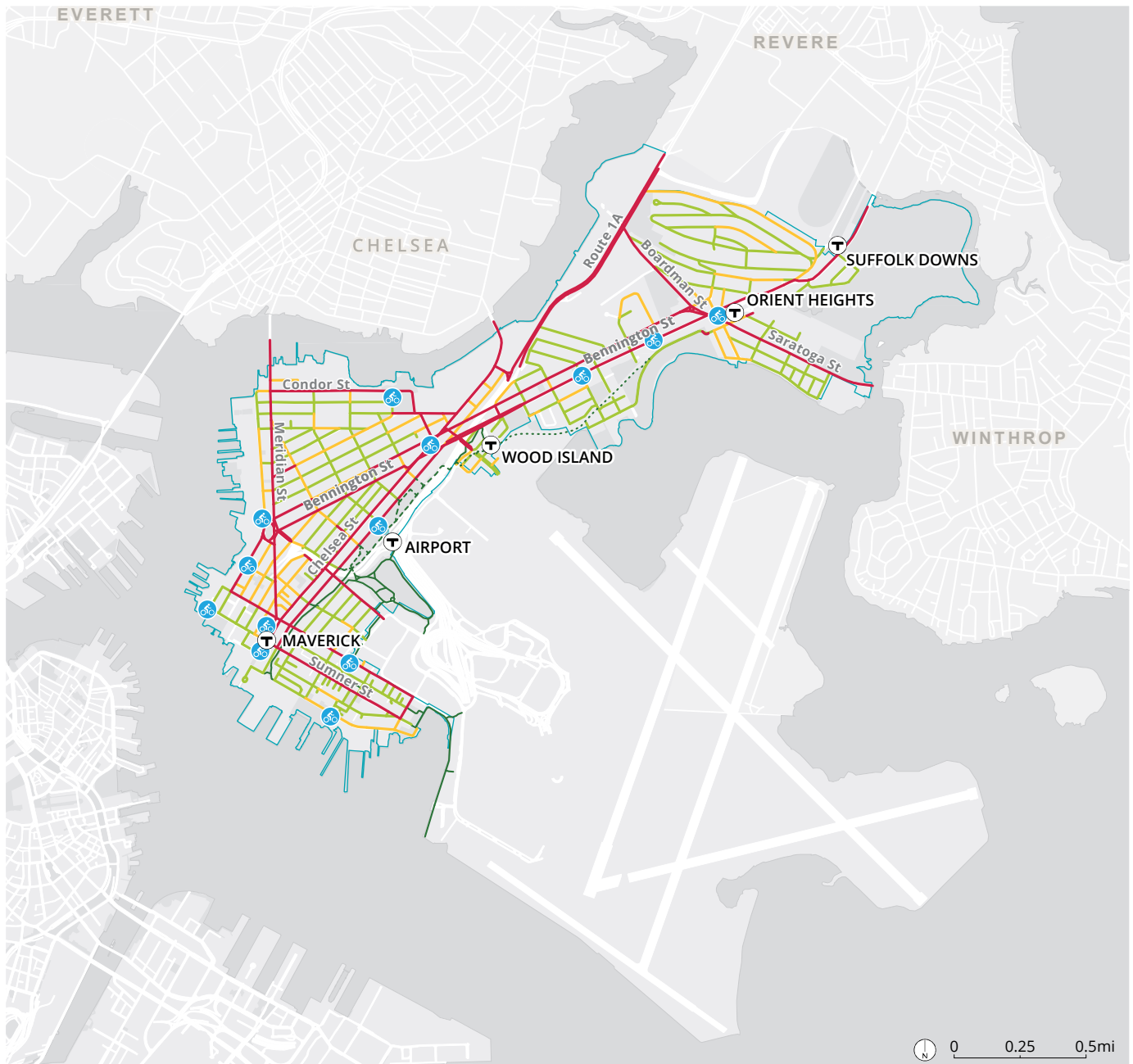
Most of East Boston's streets lack dedicated and comfortable bicycle infrastructure. Pictured here is Neptune Road at Saratoga Street.

Major streets in East Boston have stressful bicycling conditions.

Bike lanes are available on portions of Chelsea Street, Meridian Street, Maverick Street, and Saratoga Street. However, when accounting for motor vehicle volumes, speeds, and curbside conflicts, no major street in East Boston can be considered comfortable for bicycling by people of all ages and abilities (see “Bicycling Level of Traffic Stress” on page 103). National research shows that most people will only ride when they feel comfortable, typically where interactions with motor vehicles are infrequent (e.g., paths, protected bike lanes, and traffic-calmed residential streets).

Low-stress streets in East Boston are limited to residential areas, many of which have difficult terrain and do not form a connected network to facilitate everyday travel to destinations. While the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway provides low-stress bicycling along much of East Boston, its limited hours of operation require people to use alternative, higher-stress streets when it is closed. (See “Bicycling Level of Traffic Stress” on page 103 for hours of operation.)





Bicycling Level of Traffic Stress

Source: BPDA, Bluebikes

- Lowest Stress
- Lower Stress
- Higher Stress
- Highest Stress

- Paths that Close at 11pm in the Summer and 8pm in the Winter
- Paths that Close at Dusk
- Paths Open During MBTA Hours
- Bluebikes Station

Interactions with motor vehicles are stressful for people who bike. Streets with higher vehicle volumes, speeds, and curbside conflicts have higher level of traffic stress ratings. “Lowest stress” streets comfortably accommodate people of all ages and abilities. Protected bike lanes, off-street paths, and low-volume shared streets are considered “lowest stress”.

Access to Options

Access to transportation options is expanding, but natural barriers, limited transit connectivity, and few supermarkets restrict everyday travel for people walking, biking, and taking transit.

Nearly 74 percent of East Boston residents live within a 10-minute walk of a subway station or Key Bus Route stop, bikeshare station, and carshare.

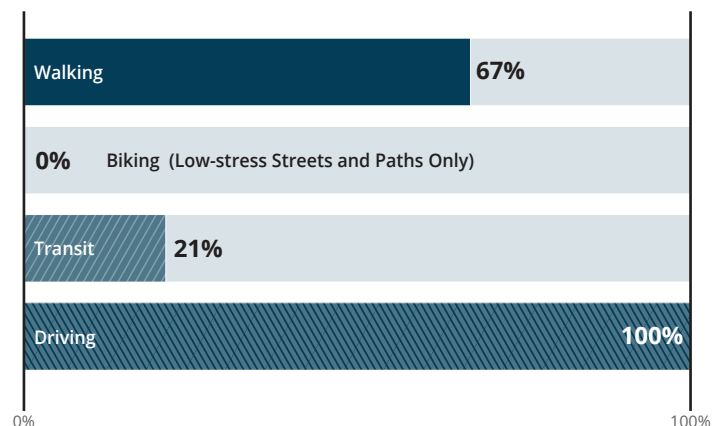
Only 60 percent of residents citywide have this same level of access to transportation options. Access to options is highest in Jeffries Point, Eagle Hill, and Orient Heights Square, whereas travel options are more limited along Condor Street and within McCormick Square, Harbor View, and Orient Heights. Households in areas with a wider range of transportation choices tend to have lower than average access to a motor vehicle (i.e., car ownership). Conversely, access to a motor vehicle is higher where transportation options are limited. Portions of Eagle Hill along Condor Street, uniquely, have lower median household incomes, lower motor vehicle access, and limited transportation options.¹³

Residents have limited travel choices for accessing supermarkets.

Not all East Boston residents can walk or take transit to a supermarket within 15 minutes, though all could by motor vehicle, if one is available. No resident can bike to a supermarket entirely on low-stress streets¹⁴ or paths. Shaw's in Central Square is the only supermarket within East Boston, and the closest nearby alternatives include Market Basket (Chelsea), Stop & Shop (Revere), and Star Market (West End). While small corner stores are found throughout East Boston, community members have noted that accessing supermarkets can be challenging. Analysis conducted by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) confirmed that East Boston residents travel the longest (0.8 miles on average) to a grocery store compared to all Boston neighborhoods.¹⁵

East Boston Residents within 15 Minutes of a Supermarket

Source: BPDA

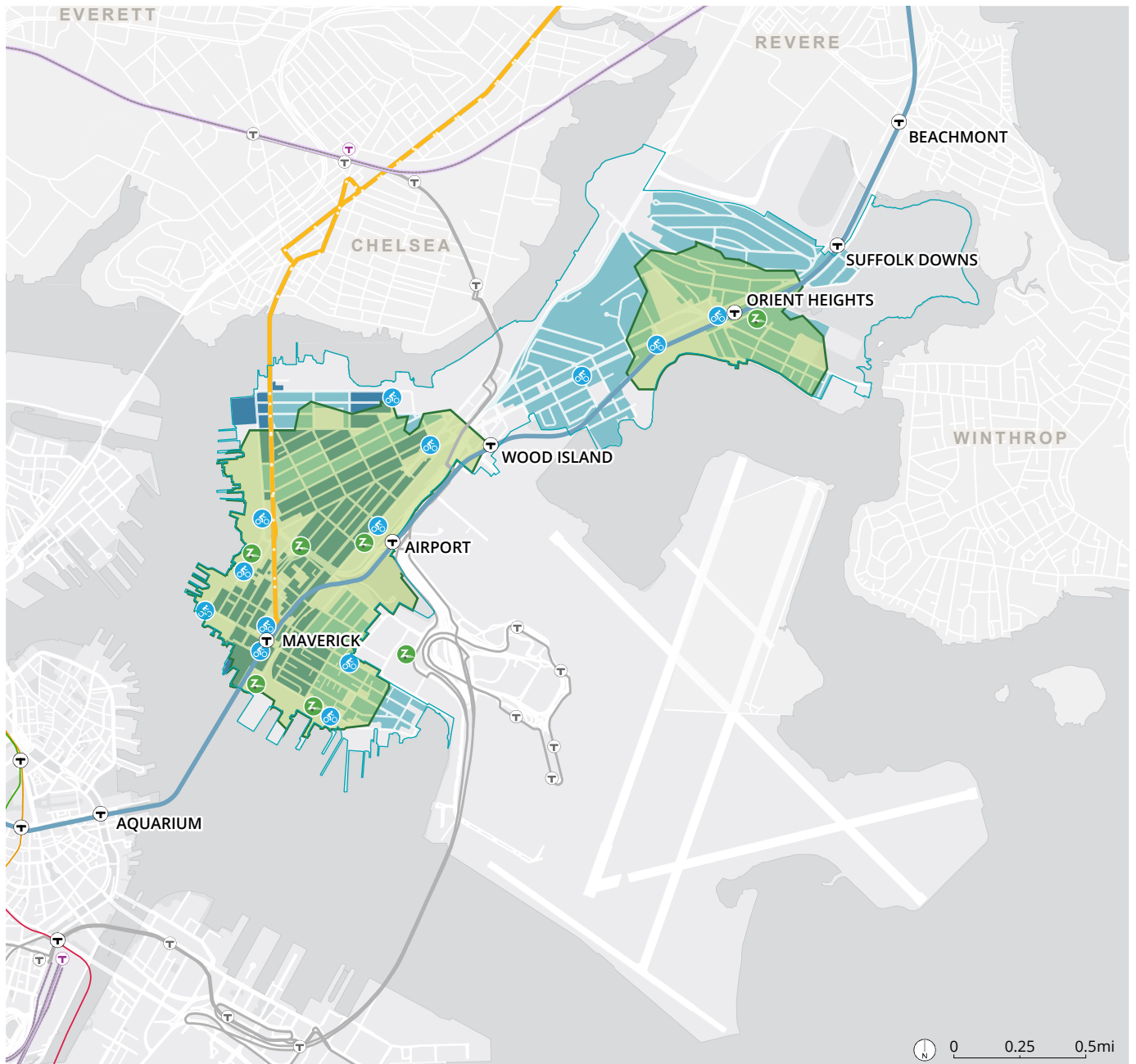


Notes: Includes supermarkets within East Boston and neighboring municipalities.

¹³ 2013–2017 American Community Survey

¹⁴ Level of traffic stress 1 or 2

¹⁵ City of Boston, Mayor's Office of Food Access, State of Food Security in the City of Boston data. 2019



Residential Areas Accessible to Transportation Options

Source: BPDA, 2013–2017 American Community Survey

Areas of East Boston within a 10-minute walk of a rail station or key bus route, a Bluebikes station, and carshare

Below Average Car Ownership per Household

Above Average Car Ownership per Household

The average rate of car ownership in East Boston is 62%



Subway Stop



Silver Line Stop



Bluebikes Station



Zipcar

— MBTA Blue Line

— MBTA Silver Line

— Key Bus Route

● Key Bus Stop

Access to major employment centers differs greatly by travel mode.

Boston Harbor greatly limits walking and biking access to jobs; Logan Airport is the only major employment center accessible by these modes using the neighborhood's average commute time of 31 minutes. Major employment centers of Logan Airport, Downtown, Back Bay, and some of the South Boston Waterfront are accessible by transit in 31 minutes. The remainder of the South Boston Waterfront cannot be accessed within 31 minutes because the SL3 operates in congested traffic. The lack of accessible and frequent ferry service and a direct Blue Line connection to the Red Line and commuter rail network limits access to other large employment centers within this commute time. East Boston residents accessing the Longwood Medical Area, Cambridge Red Line corridor (Kendall, Central, and Harvard squares), and Allston-Brighton must make more than one transfer, reducing reliability, increasing wait time, and increasing overall travel time.

37 percent of East Boston's working population commute during non-traditional hours (i.e., departing between 4 PM and 7 AM) when transit can be infrequent or unavailable.¹⁶ In 2019, the MBTA implemented early morning and late night service changes to increase frequency and add trips on bus routes 116, 117, 120, and SL3, among others in the region.

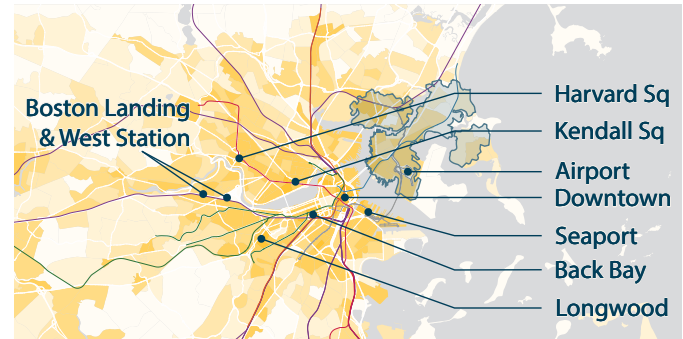


The SL3 travels between South Station and Chelsea via Airport Station.

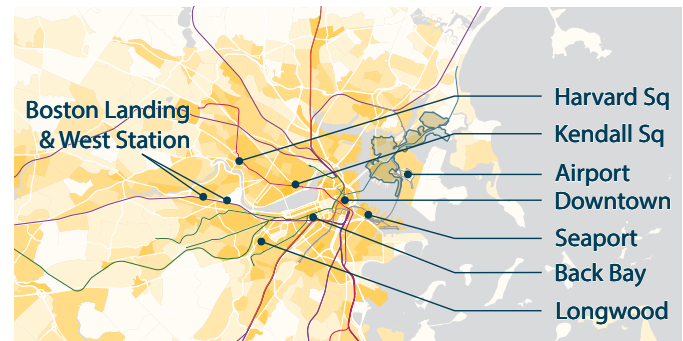
Within the Average East Boston Commute of 31 minutes, How Far Can a Resident Travel During a Weekday Morning?

Source: BPDA, 2013–2017 American Community Survey, MassGIS, MassDOT

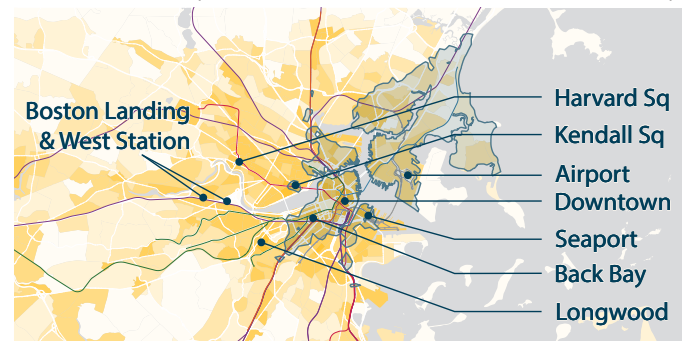
WALKING



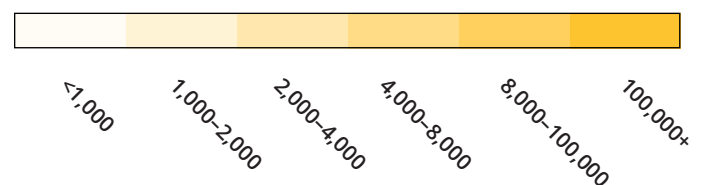
BIKING (LOW-STRESS STREETS AND PATHS ONLY)

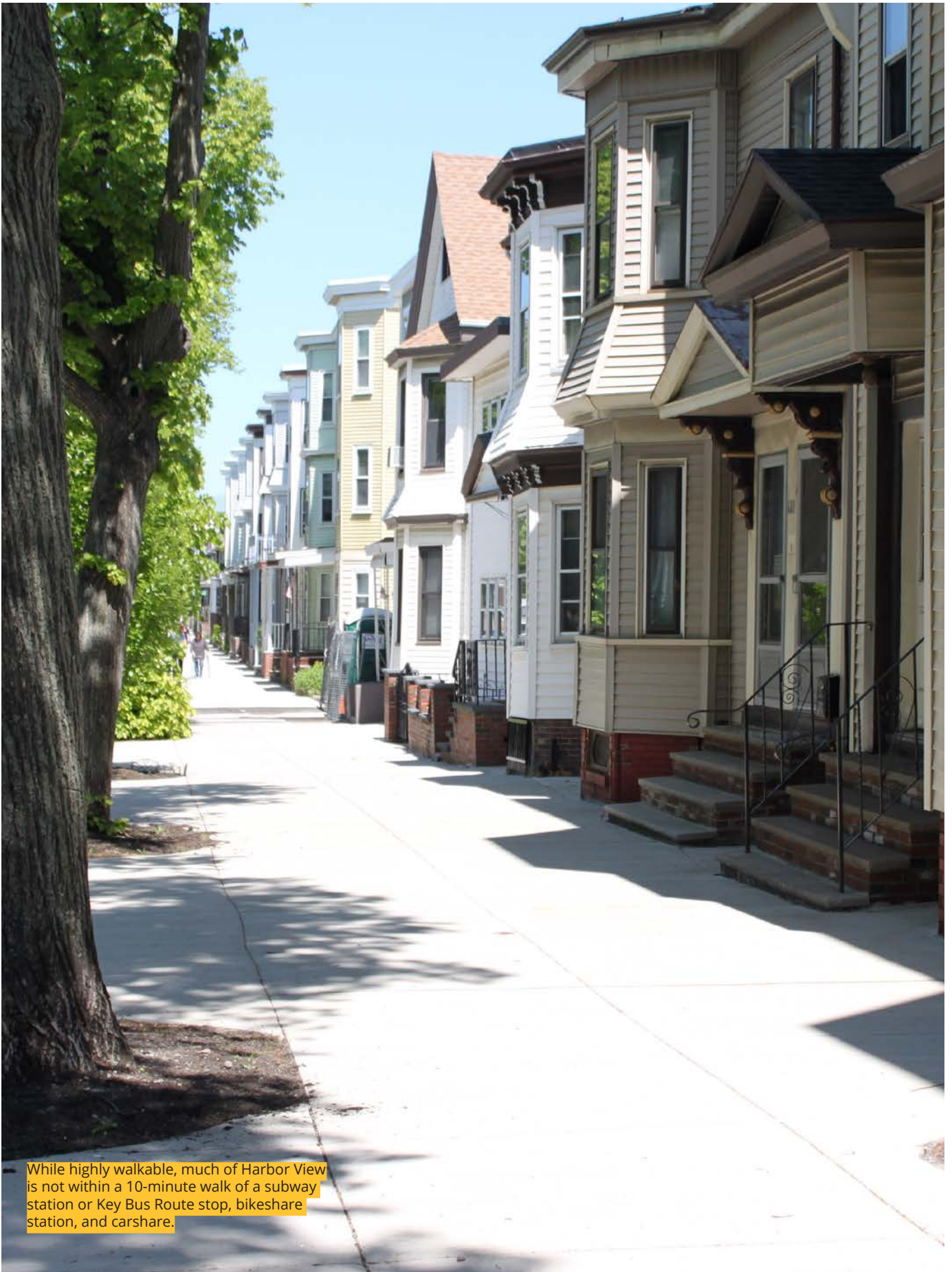


RIDING TRANSIT (BUS, RAPID TRANSIT, AND COMMUTER RAIL)



Employees per Square Mile





While highly walkable, much of Harbor View is not within a 10-minute walk of a subway station or Key Bus Route stop, bikeshare station, and carshare.

Bluebikes helps with first- and last-mile connections to Blue Line stations, especially at Maverick Square.

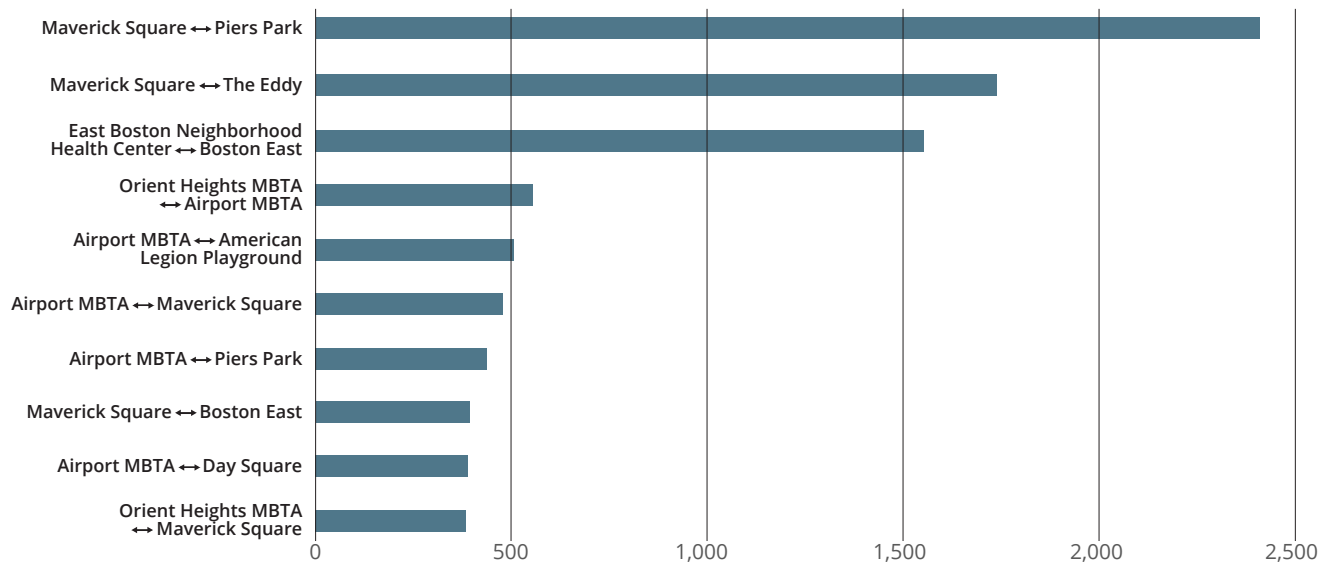
Boston is part of Bluebikes, the region’s public bikeshare program. East Boston hosts 13 bikeshare stations, 11 of which are open year-round. Between 2016 and 2018, 55 percent of all East Boston bikeshare trips started or ended at a Blue Line station. The 10 most common bikeshare trips during this period all began or ended at a Blue Line station—more than 80 percent of these most frequently made trips involved one of two Maverick Square bikeshare stations. While 86 percent of East Boston residents can reach the Blue Line by bike using a low-stress route (Level of Traffic Stress 1 or 2), a majority of bikeshare stations in East Boston are located along high-stress streets (Level of Traffic Stress 3 or 4).

With limited connections to the rest of Boston, few bikeshare users traveled beyond East Boston. For those who did, trips between Charlestown and Somerville, via streets within Chelsea and Everett, were the most popular. These destinations are difficult to reach by transit from East Boston. In 2019, Everett joined Bluebikes with 11 stations, which will likely encourage bikeshare activity in East Boston.

About 10 percent of bikeshare rides in East Boston started and ended at the same station, suggesting recreational trips or trips to nearby destinations where bikeshare stations were full or unavailable.

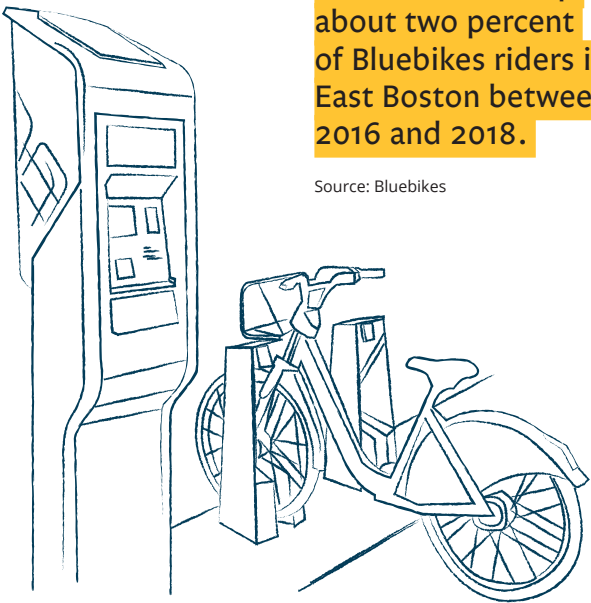
Most Common Bikeshare Trips Starting and Ending Within East Boston (All Trips)

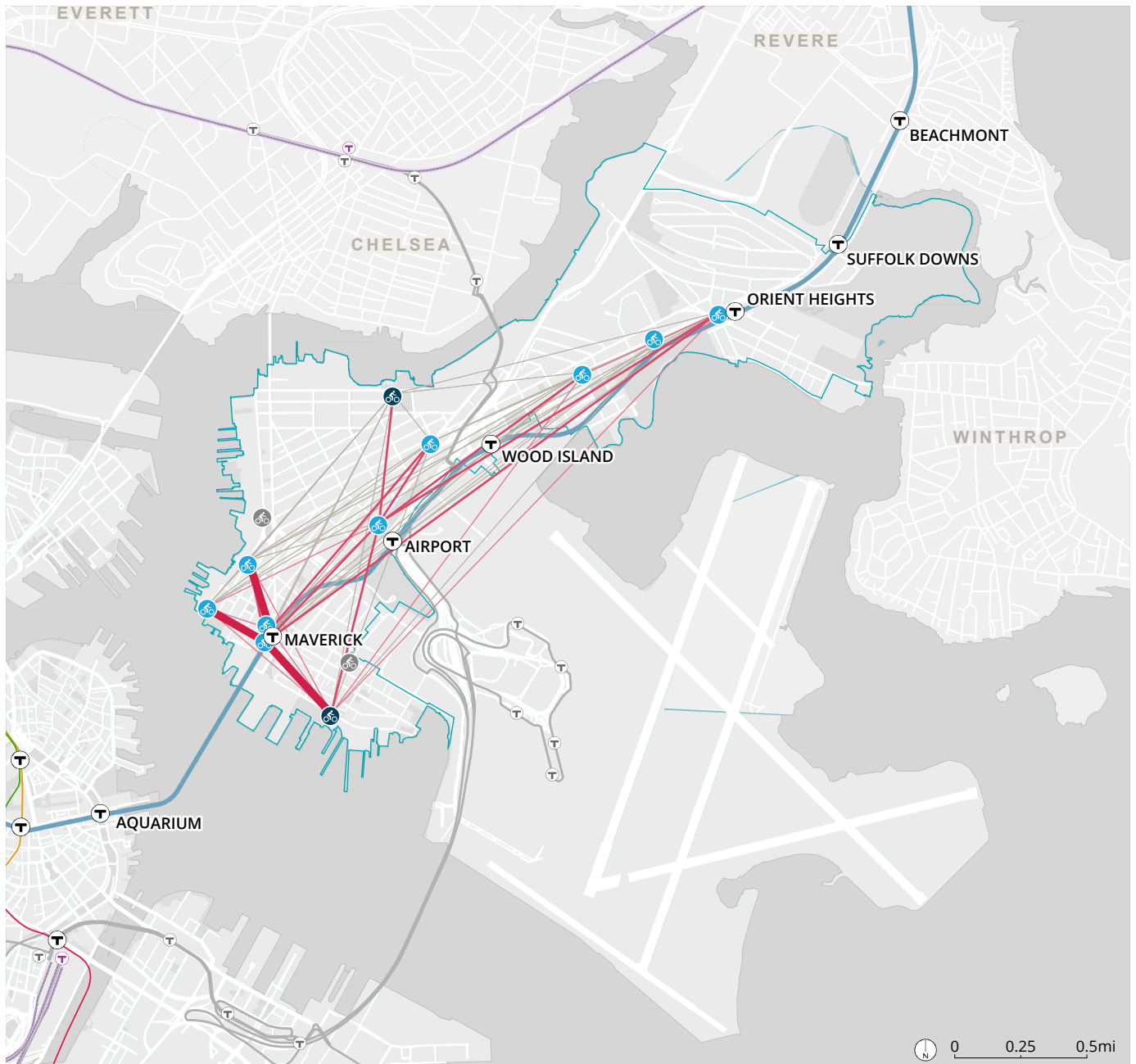
Source: Bluebikes



Income-eligible members made up about two percent of Bluebikes riders in East Boston between 2016 and 2018.

Source: Bluebikes



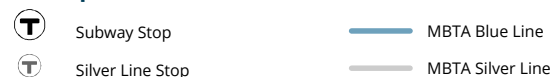


All Bluebikes Trips Starting and Ending within East Boston (2016–2018)

Source: BPDA, Bluebikes



Transportation Network



Transit Reliability

The Blue Line is the most reliable and consistent transit service in East Boston. Congestion and bridge openings can make bus service and the SL3 unreliable and unpredictable.

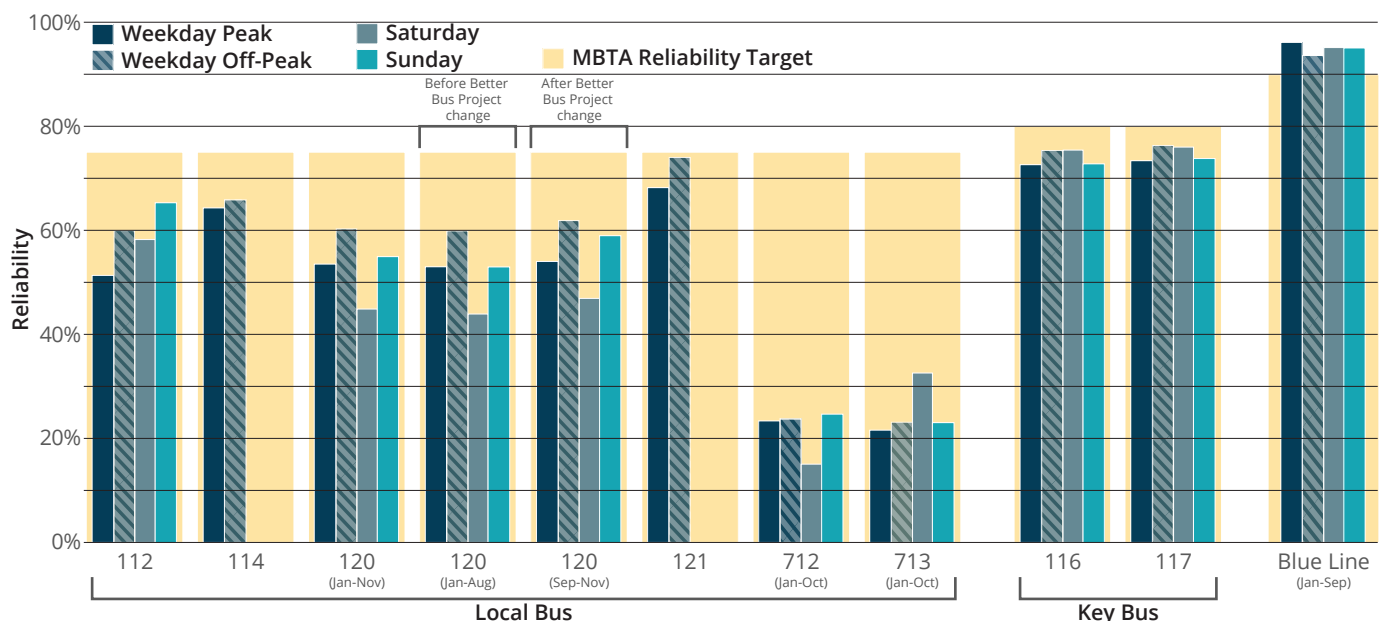
The Blue Line meets MBTA reliability targets but East Boston buses do not, with congestion at major intersections increasing bus travel times.

East Boston Key Bus Routes (116, 117) perform more reliably than local bus routes (112, 114, 120, 121, 712, 713). Weekend service is generally more reliable than weekday service but still below MBTA targets. The MBTA measures reliability by how closely travel times adhere to schedules. This comparison can occur at specific mid-route time points (local bus route) or at the final destination (Key Bus Route). For 2019, Blue Line reliability—the percent of passengers waiting no more than the scheduled headway—exceeded MBTA targets.

Bus travel times in East Boston are impacted by congestion, as buses operate alongside motor vehicles in general travel lanes. As congestion increases, actual travel time between bus stops can greatly exceed scheduled travel time, resulting in poor reliability. Bus travel times are most impacted between Maverick Square and Central Square, near the Meridian Street/Condor Street intersection, near Day Square, and near Orient Heights Square. The most congested period—and the longest bus travel times—occur during the weekday PM peak period (4:30 PM to 6:00 PM). During this period, the streets with the longest travel times relative to scheduled travel times include Meridian Street between Havre Street and Saratoga Street, and Bennington Street between Neptune Road and Wood Island Station. Both of these congested locations are associated with Route 1A access points.¹⁷

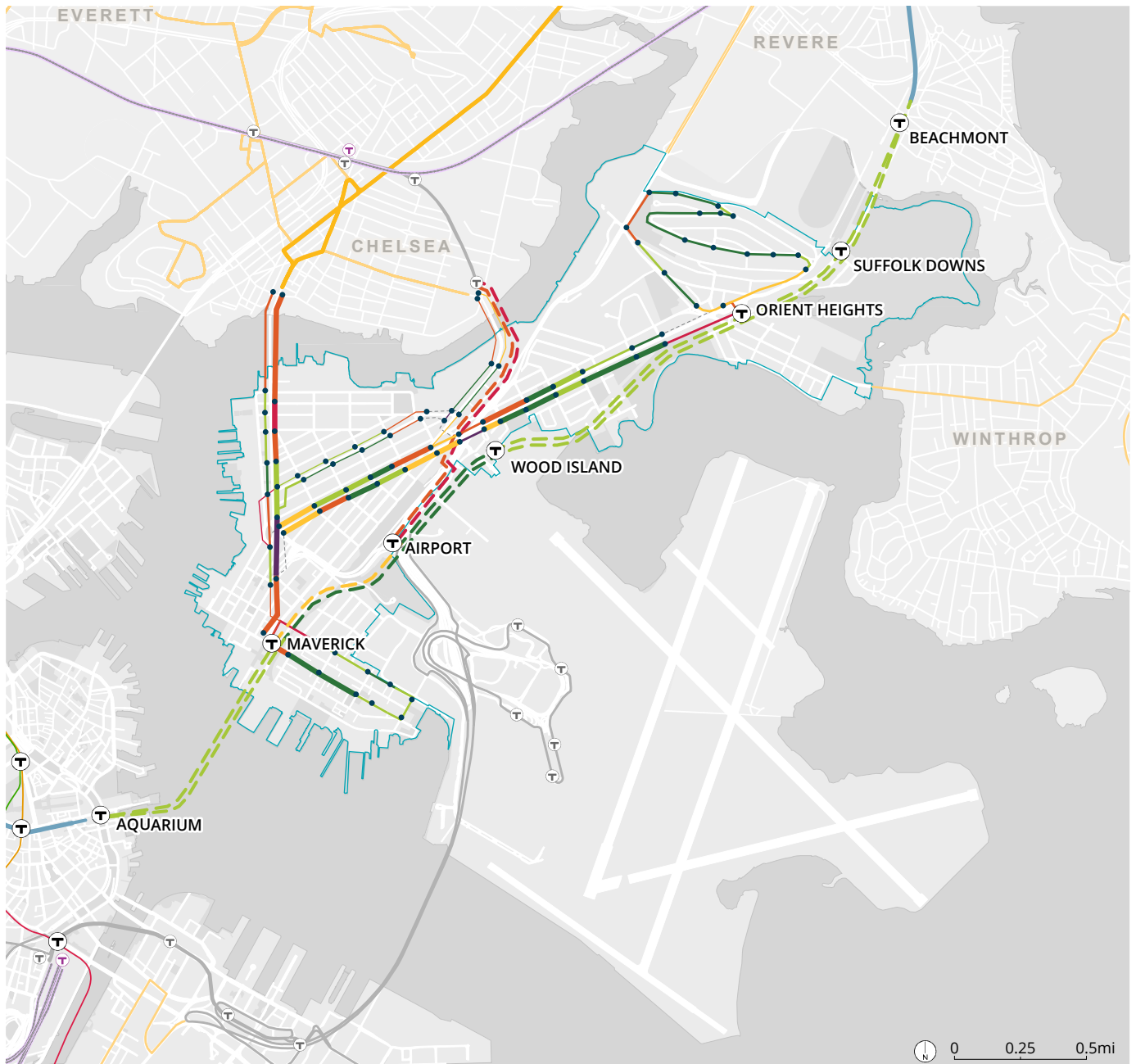
Bus and Blue Line Reliability, 2019

Source: BPDA, MBTA (January–November 2019 data, unless otherwise noted)



Note: On September 1, 2019, MBTA removed the Route 120 loop around Central Square to provide faster and more reliable service. Reliability data for SL3 are currently unavailable.

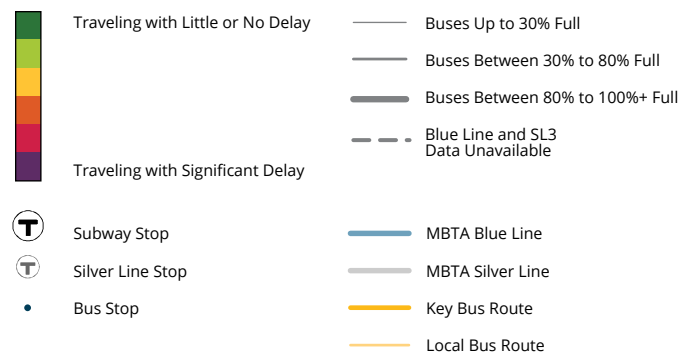
17 MBTA (fall 2018)



Note: On September 1, 2019, MBTA removed the Route 120 loop around Central Square to provide faster and more reliable service. Route 712 and Route 713 are privately operated and travel time data are unavailable.

Travel Times with Bus Average Passenger Load During Weekday PM Peak Period (4:30 PM to 6:00 PM)

Source: BPDA, MBTA (fall 2018)



Blue Line travel times are consistent but congestion and bridge operations result in variable bus travel times.

Blue Line travel times are relatively consistent throughout the week despite travel times between Wonderland and Bowdoin stations (18 to 23 minutes) exceeding scheduled travel times (18 minutes). Weekday peak travel periods have the longest travel times. Travel times during off-peak and weekend periods are shorter because there are fewer passengers boarding and alighting at each station.

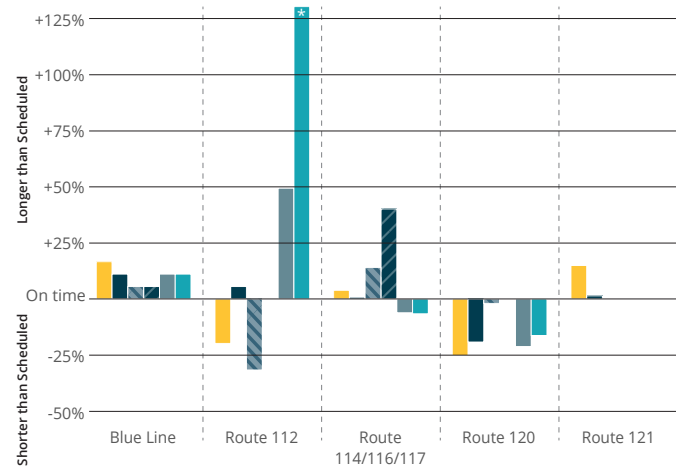
Bus and SL3 travel times, however, can vary significantly, making it difficult for passengers to plan for and rely on these services. Travel times are especially inconsistent during the weekday peak travel periods, especially for routes operating near Route 1A access points (Central Square, Day Square, and Boardman Street) and relying on the Chelsea Street Bridge or McArdle Bridge (Meridian Street). Both bridges are legally required to prioritize marine traffic and open for vessels on demand. The Chelsea Street Bridge (lift bridge), which carries Route 112 and SL3, opens on average five times per day for 16 to 21 minutes per opening, depending on the vessel size. The McArdle Bridge (basculer bridge), which carries Route 114 and 116/117, opens more frequently but the duration of each opening is approximately 40 percent shorter than the Chelsea Street Bridge.¹⁸

How Much Longer or Shorter is Actual Travel Time Compared to Scheduled Travel Time?

- Weekday AM Peak Period
- Weekday PM Peak Period
- Weekday Evening
- Weekday Late Evening
- Saturday MIDDAY
- Sunday MIDDAY

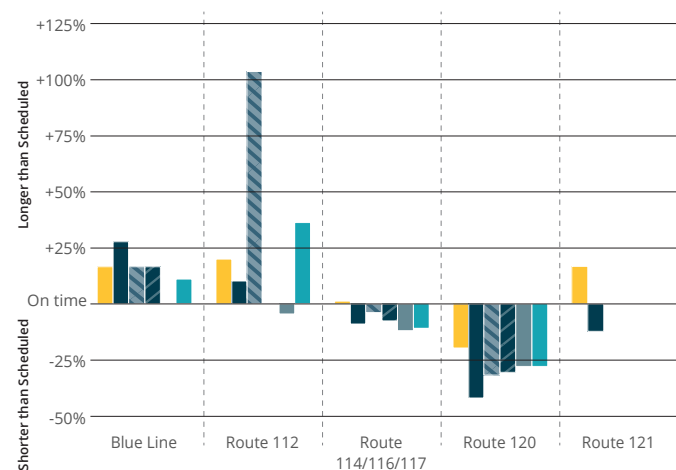
Actual vs. Scheduled Travel Time (Inbound)

Source: BPDA, MBTA (2018)



Actual vs. Scheduled Travel Time (Outbound)

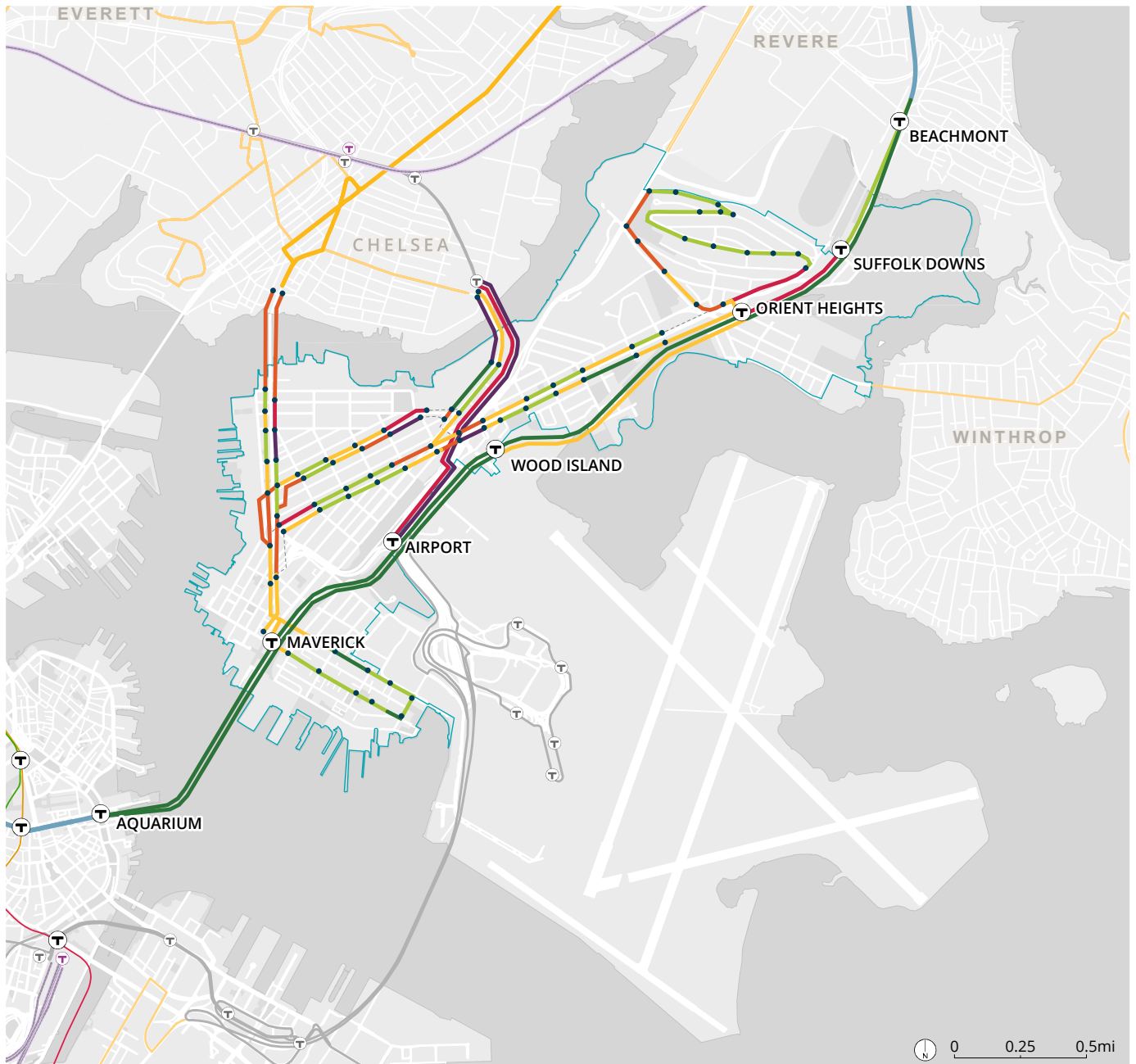
Source: BPDA, MBTA (2018)



*Inbound Sunday midday travel time on Route 112 exceeds +300%

Note: On September 1, 2019, MBTA removed the Route 120 loop around Central Square to provide faster and more reliable service. Route 712, 713, and SL3 travel time data are currently unavailable.

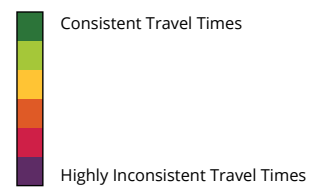
¹⁸ MassDOT, Chelsea Street Bridge Project, data collected through May 2019.



Note: On September 1, 2019, MBTA removed the Route 120 loop around Central Square to provide faster and more reliable service. Route 712 and Route 713 are privately operated and travel time data is unavailable.

Variability of Travel Times During the Weekday PM Peak Period (4:30 PM to 6:00 PM)

Source: BPDA, MBTA (fall 2018)



- Subway Stop
- Silver Line Stop
- Bus Stop

- MBTA Blue Line
- MBTA Silver Line
- Key Bus Route
- Local Bus Route

City and State Policies and Programs

In 2017, the Go Boston 2030 Action Plan, Boston's citywide transportation plan, established goals, targets, and guiding principles to inform how the City plans, designs, and maintains streets and services. By 2030, Boston aspires to eliminate fatal and serious injury crashes, decrease average commute times by 10 percent, and ensure all residents are within a 10-minute walk of frequent transit, bikeshare, and carshare. By 2030, more people will commute by foot, bike, or transit, while drive-alone rates will be halved.

Vision Zero Boston

Vision Zero is a people-first approach that prioritizes human life and safety when planning, designing, and maintaining streets. One fatality is too many. Vision Zero Boston, launched in 2015 and led by the Boston Transportation Department, focuses resources on proven strategies to eliminate fatal and serious traffic crashes in the City by 2030. The program inventories and analyzes community-provided safety concerns data and crash and fatality data recorded by the Boston Emergency Medical Service (EMS) and Boston Police Department (BPD). These data are used to identify high-crash intersections and street segments (i.e. Boston's High Crash Network), which informs the project development and design process. Vision Zero Boston includes the Neighborhood Slow Streets program (which aims to reduce the number and severity of crashes on residential streets), the Better Bike Lanes program (which is advancing a safe and comfortable bike lane network citywide), and Boston's Safest Driver (a smartphone app that encourages safe driving). In 2017, the City lowered the default speed limit to 25 miles per hour.

Boston Complete Streets Design Guidelines

Complete Streets is a design approach that places people walking, biking, and taking transit on equal footing with motor vehicle users. Complete Streets improve the quality of life in Boston by creating streets that are both great places to live and sustainable transportation networks. The Boston Complete Streets Design Guidelines, published in 2013, provide policy and design guidance on the planning, design, and operation of streets and sidewalks in Boston, and are intended to ensure that Boston's streets are safe for all users. These guidelines inform planning at all levels, the development of new transportation policies and programs, the look and function of all City-led transportation projects, and the Article 80 development review process.

Boston Green Links

Boston Green Links is a citywide plan to seamlessly connect people of all ages and abilities in every neighborhood to Boston's greenway network. Green links include off-road paths, protected bike lanes, safer road crossings, and low-traffic streets also known as "neighborways." The plan includes projects in progress by the City, Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), community groups and others, as well as new projects developed with local input. The plan will be implemented over time, through grants, partnerships, and City-funded projects.

Curbside Management

Through a partnership between the Boston Transportation Department, Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics (MONUM), and Boston Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT), the City is testing curbside management policies to increase community access and opportunity for shared services. Initial pilots include ride-hailing pick-up and drop-off zones in Fenway and the South Boston Waterfront and performance-based meter parking in the Back Bay and South Boston Waterfront. Policy pilots are based on national best practice and receive thorough evaluation to identify evidence-based results. Initial results showed that pick-up and drop-off zones resulted in more productive use of the curb, increase in safe behaviors, and reduction in travel delays and parking tickets. The performance parking pilot increased available metered spaces and decreased double parking and illegal parking.

Bus Transit Priority

The MBTA is partnering with Boston and other communities to invest in bus priority along City-owned streets. Investments can include dedicated or peak-period bus/bike lanes, priority for buses at traffic signals, and queue jumps (short stretches of priority lanes that let buses bypass waiting traffic with early green signals). Such investments benefit passengers by reducing delay, speeding up bus trips, and resulting in more reliable and frequent service.

Public Realm Guidelines

56 percent of City-owned land is streets and sidewalks. While getting around is the primary use for this space, the City is also leveraging its infrastructure in order to create a sense of place and bring communities together with placemaking, public art, green infrastructure, and wayfinding. Activating the public realm is being accomplished through traditional reconstruction projects as well as "tactical" experiments with low-cost materials and rapid implementation timelines. In 2018, the City published its Tactical Public Realm Guidelines, which outline how to create and maintain public spaces with tactical plazas, parklets, outdoor cafes, and street murals. Often new public space can be created by closing redundant streets, squaring irregular intersections, or filling in redundant travel lanes.

Article 80 Transportation Review Process

Article 80 of the Boston Zoning Code provides clear guidelines for the development review process relating to projects larger than 20,000 square feet, Institutional Master Plans, and Planned Development Areas. As part of this process, the BPDA's Transportation & Infrastructure Planning Department uses urban planning and design best practices to plan for a system that advances safety, comfort, and mobility for everyone and connects people to opportunity and one another. The transportation review process focuses on walking, biking, transit, and automobiles to ensure that Boston's future is equitable and environmentally sustainable, and that developments support neighborhood needs and goals. More than \$450,000 has been committed by developers through the Article 80 Development Review process since 2015 to study or implement transportation projects in East Boston.

Focus40

Completed in 2019, Focus40 is the comprehensive playbook for all MBTA capital investments for the next two decades. It connects current and future modal, project-specific, and systemwide plans to feed the rolling five-year financially constrained Capital Investment Plan. Focus40 also identifies potentially transformative investment options to be analyzed, including the Red-Blue Connector, Blue Line to Longwood, Blue Line extension to Lynn, and an expanded water transportation network.

MBTA Service Delivery Policy

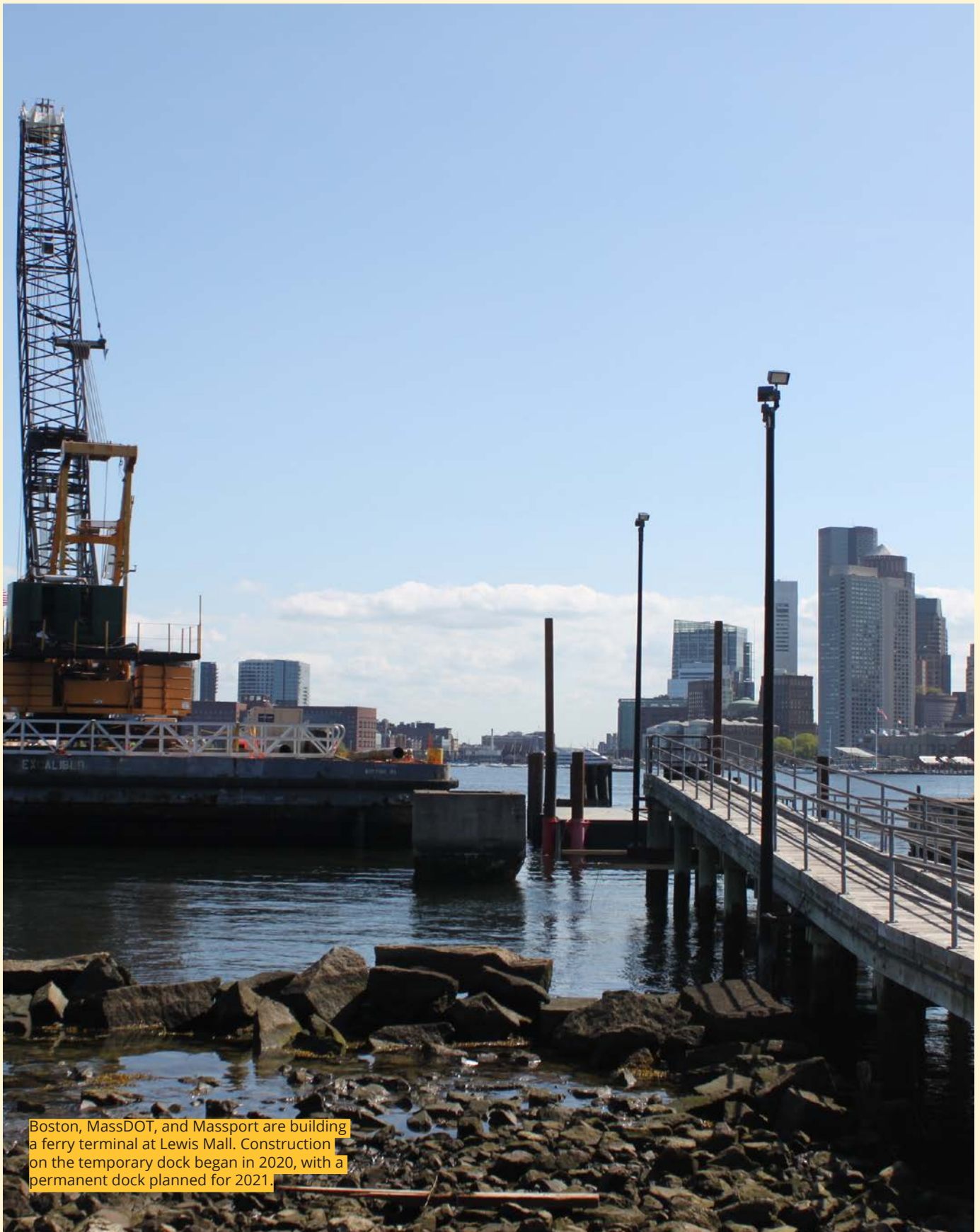
The Service Delivery Policy sets how the MBTA evaluates service quality and allocates transit service to meet the needs of the Massachusetts Bay region. Published in 2017, the Service Delivery Policy takes the first steps towards creating standards from a passenger perspective, including service availability, reliability, comfort, and accessibility. The Service Delivery Policy addresses all of the MBTA's fixed-route services, including bus, light rail, heavy rail, commuter rail, and ferry.

Better Bus Project

The Better Bus Project is the first step in the MBTA's efforts to improve bus service and the bus system as a whole, as many bus routes fail to live up to the Service Delivery Policy. The Better Bus Project has several components, including research and analysis, near-term route changes, a multi-year investment strategy, and a bus network redesign. While near-term route changes went into effect September 2019, the MBTA began implementing some of its investment strategy in fall 2019. The bus network redesign is under development and is intended to recommend a new network that better serves the needs of the region.

Fare Transformation

The MBTA's Fare Transformation is intended to make paying for transit easier and more convenient. Passengers will be able to tap and board at any door with a fare card, smartphone, or contactless credit card; reload using cash or credit card at vending machines at all stations and some bus stops; or go online to manage their account. As of December 2019, the MBTA has reset its project plan based on community feedback, and is working to address problems with the existing fare system before implementation of new technology.



Boston, MassDOT, and Massport are building a ferry terminal at Lewis Mall. Construction on the temporary dock began in 2020, with a permanent dock planned for 2021.

Jobs & the Economy

Once driven by shipping and the maritime industry, East Boston's economy is now centered on the airport, transportation-related services, and the small businesses that support the neighborhood. East Boston's strong economy, bolstered by the airport and its proximity to downtown, is helping to draw new people to the area, and increased demand is driving up prices for housing, services, and more. Many residents, especially immigrant, youth, and lower income populations, lack financial security or the educational opportunities that enable them to participate in this economy growth. As East Boston continues to shift from a maritime economy, the challenge lies in increasing economic mobility and expanding opportunity for all members of the East Boston community.

In this section, learn more about:

- » Where Residents Work on page 120
- » Working in East Boston on page 124
- » Growing Small Businesses on page 126
- » City Policies and Programs on page 128



Each year, the Mayor and the Mayor's Office of Economic Development visits Main Street Districts throughout the city to highlight the importance of small businesses for our neighborhoods. Mayor Walsh visited Sammy Carlo's in July 2019.

Where Residents Work

East Boston residents earn less than Boston residents overall and a higher percentage work in service-related jobs.

Nearly half of East Boston residents work in service-related jobs.

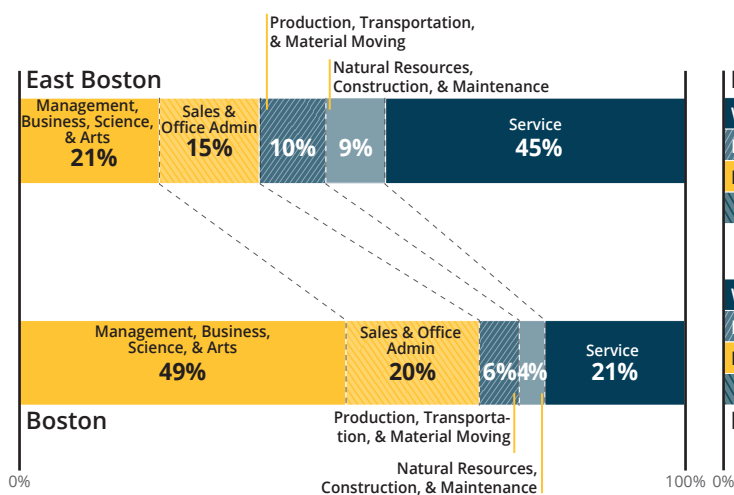
Understanding the diverse labor force that lives in East Boston informs us about the major economic opportunities in the neighborhood, or within commuting distance from the neighborhood. 45 percent of East Boston's residents work in service-related occupations, compared to 21 percent of Boston's residents.¹ Service-related jobs often pay less and have greater instability than other types of employment, such as office administration or business.

Employment by race varies.

A similar percentage of East Boston residents participate in the labor force, as in the city overall. The labor force participation rate in East Boston is 71 percent, compared to 69 percent in Boston. Hispanic residents in East Boston have a high labor force participation rate: 83 percent of residents are in the labor force.²

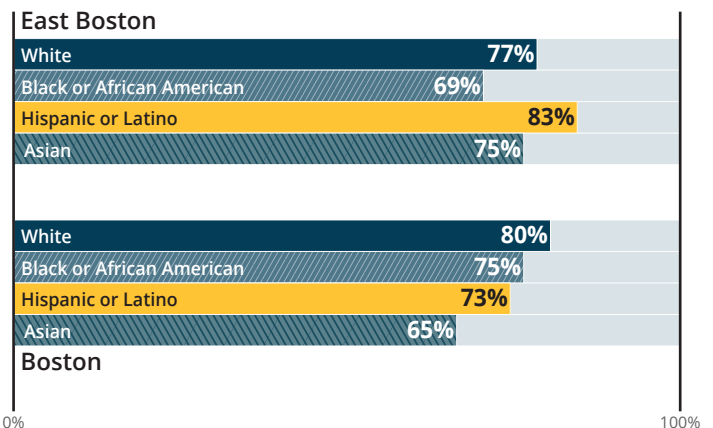
Resident Worker Occupations 2017

Source: US Census Bureau, 2013–2017 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.



Labor Force Participation by Race 2017

Source: US Census Bureau, 2013–2017 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.



¹ US Census Bureau, 2013–2017 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

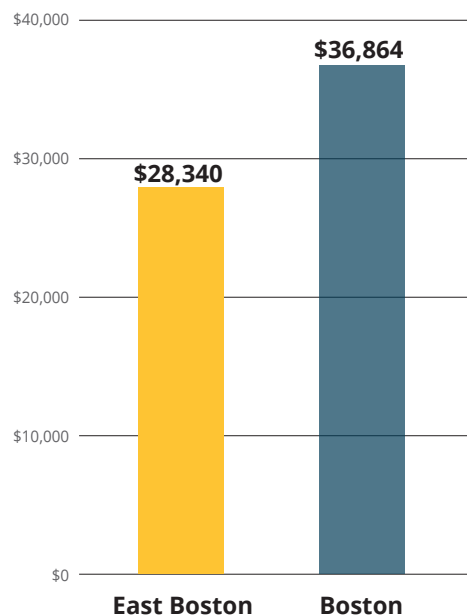
² Labor force participation by race looks at the racial makeup of the workers who live in East Boston. The race data are based on self-identification. Hispanics can be of any race and are reported separately. These data present the share of residents ages 16 and older who are working or looking for work. US Census Bureau, 2013–2017 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

The median income of East Boston residents who work is lower than citywide.

East Boston resident workers have median earnings of about \$28,000 per year. Citywide resident workers have a median income of almost \$9,000 more per year. Workers' earnings tell us approximately how much income residents earn from wages or self-employment.³ (See "Household income in East Boston is lower than the citywide median." on page 44 for more information.)

Resident Workers by Median Income 2017

Source: US Census Bureau, 2013–2017 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.



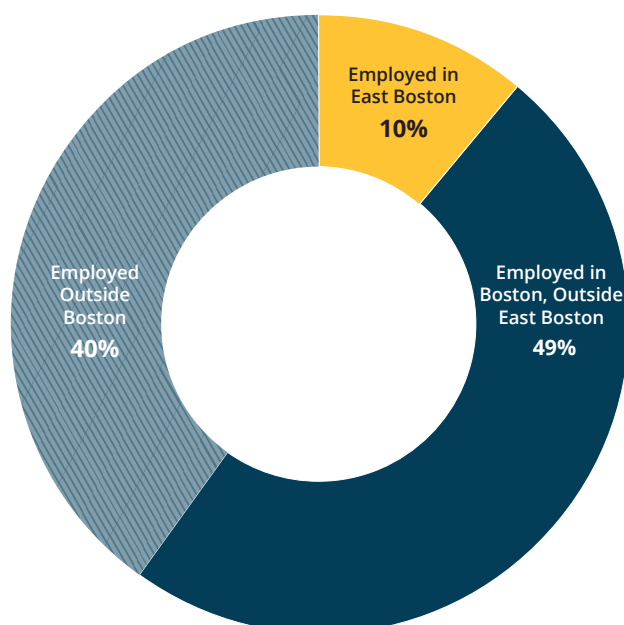
³ Worker earnings are different from household income; households can include multiple workers. US Census Bureau, 2013–2017 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

Only 10% of East Boston resident workers work in East Boston.

10 percent of employed residents live and work in East Boston, and 40 percent work outside Boston. The remaining half of East Boston residents are employed in Boston. Throughout Boston, 49 percent of employed residents live and work in Boston, and 51 percent work in cities and neighborhoods outside Boston.⁴

Location of Work for Residents with Payroll Jobs 2015

Sources: US Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, BPDA Research Division Analysis (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2015); US Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, Primary Jobs, 2015.



⁴ US Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, BPDA Research Division Analysis (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2015); US Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, Primary Jobs, 2015.



Residents of East Boston commute mostly towards Downtown, Back Bay, Cambridge, and Roxbury. These data show the commuting patterns of East Boston residents to understand where they find employment opportunities.



City or Town of Work for East Boston Resident Workers

CITY OUTSIDE BOSTON	RESIDENT WORKERS	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Cambridge	896	5%
Newton	447	3%
Chelsea	425	2%
Somerville	393	2%
Waltham	347	2%
<i>All Cities outside Boston</i>	<i>7,970</i>	<i>46%</i>

Neighborhood of Work for East Boston Resident Workers

NEIGHBORHOOD	RESIDENT WORKERS	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Downtown	2,154	13%
East Boston	1,786	10%
Back Bay	852	5%
Roxbury	712	4%
South Boston Waterfront	512	3%
<i>Boston (overall)</i>	<i>9,233</i>	<i>54%</i>

Sources: US Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, BPDA Research Division Analysis (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2015); US Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, Primary Jobs, 2015.

Working in East Boston

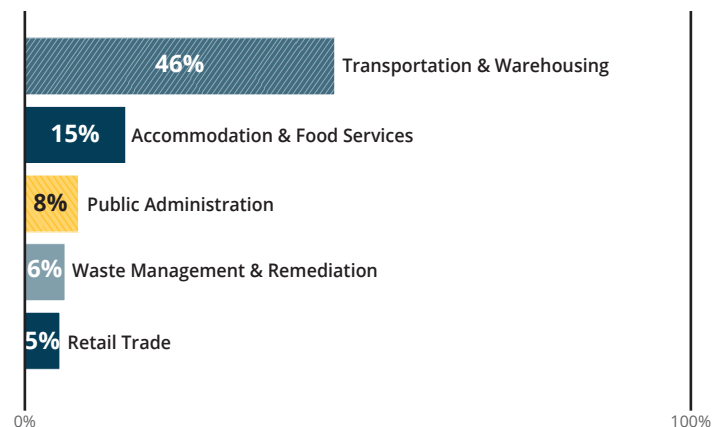
A century ago the maritime industry dominated East Boston. Today airport-related industries, such as transportation and warehousing, comprise the majority of the jobs in East Boston.

Airport-related jobs make up more than half the jobs in East Boston.

In 2015, the total number of payroll jobs in East Boston was 22,506.⁵ Transportation and Warehousing (46 percent) and Accommodation and Food Services (15 percent) make up more than half of the payroll jobs in East Boston.⁶ Understanding what job industries are in East Boston helps us to better understand the existing strengths of the local economy.

Top Five Industries 2015

Source: US Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, BPDA Research Division Analysis (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2015).

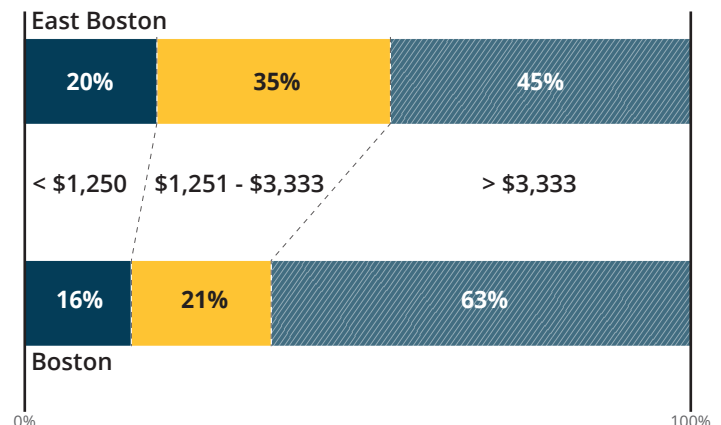


Jobs in East Boston pay less on average than jobs in the city overall.

About 45 percent of payroll jobs in East Boston pay more than \$3,333 per month and 20 percent pay less than \$1,250 per month. Jobs by earnings tells us how much jobs in East Boston pay their workers. These data include both full-time and part-time jobs.⁷

Jobs by Monthly Earnings 2015

Source: US Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, BPDA Research Division Analysis (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2015).



⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, On the Map Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2015, and BPDA Research Division.

⁶ US Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, BPDA Research Division Analysis (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2015).

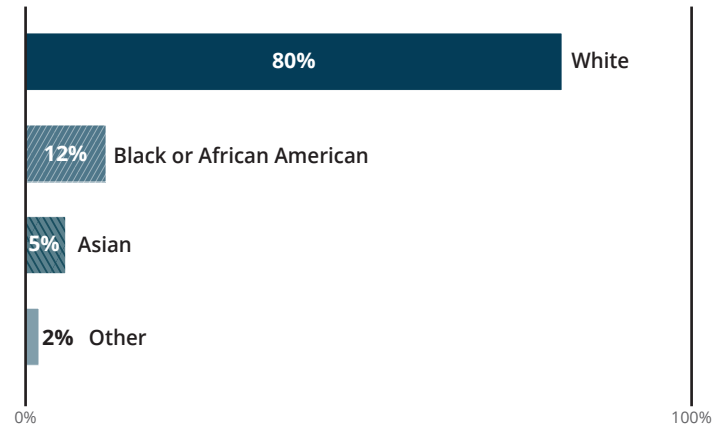
⁷ US Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, BPDA Research Division Analysis (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2015).

More than three-quarters of payroll workers in East Boston are White.

12 percent are Black and 80 percent are White.⁸ Nearly 20 percent of payroll workers in East Boston are Hispanics, who are included in the various racial categories in Census data.⁹

Payroll Workers by Race 2015

These data include those who identify as Hispanic within all categories.
Source: US Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, BPDA Research Division Analysis (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2015).

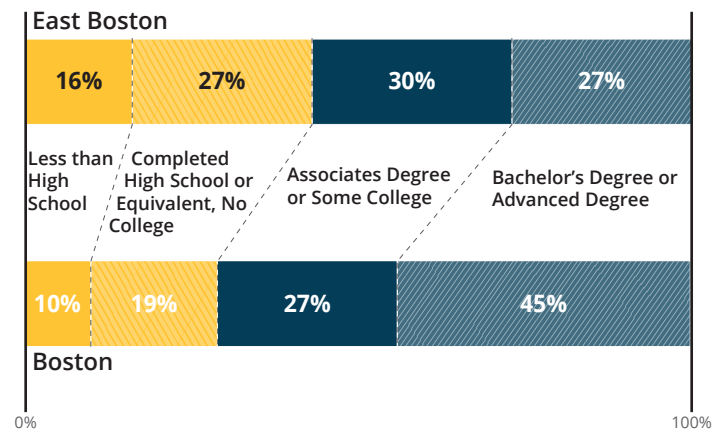


The majority of the jobs in East Boston employ workers with less than a Bachelor's degree.

73 percent of jobs in East Boston employ workers with less than a Bachelor's degree. Only 27 percent of jobs employ workers with a Bachelor's degree or higher. This is significantly lower than the citywide average: 45 percent of jobs citywide employ people with a Bachelor's degree or higher.¹⁰

Educational Attainment of East Boston Workers 2015

Source: US Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, BPDA Research Division Analysis (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2015).



⁸ These data include those who identify as Hispanic within all categories. US Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, BPDA Research Division Analysis (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2015).

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, On the Map Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, (2015), BPDA Research Division

¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2015), BPDA Research Division Analysis. This category tells us about the level of education that workers employed in East Boston have attained. Note that these data only include workers ages 30 or older.

Growing Small Businesses

Small businesses—establishments with less than 50 employees—are a key element of the Boston economy and contribute to the character of vitality of all of Boston’s neighborhoods.

Small businesses in Boston provide more than 200,000 jobs and create social capital in communities.

In Boston, there are more than 17,000 small businesses making up 91 percent of all private establishments. Small businesses account for 35 percent of Boston’s private employment representing 204,795 direct jobs and more than \$14.2 billion in personal income. Their annual contribution to the gross regional product is over \$29.5 billion.¹¹ They provide entry-level jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities to immigrant, minority, and low income populations. They supply needed goods and services to all neighborhoods of Boston. They are crucial for the maintenance of existing physical infrastructure. Small businesses contribute to social equity and inclusion by serving as an entry point for workers with diverse education and experience levels and by supporting wealth creation in all of Boston’s communities.¹²

Microbusinesses make up almost half of all businesses in East Boston.

Micro-businesses are businesses with 4 or fewer employees, and comprise 49 percent of all businesses in East Boston. Another 42 percent of businesses in East Boston have 5-49 employees, and only 9 percent of businesses in East Boston have 50 or more employees.¹³



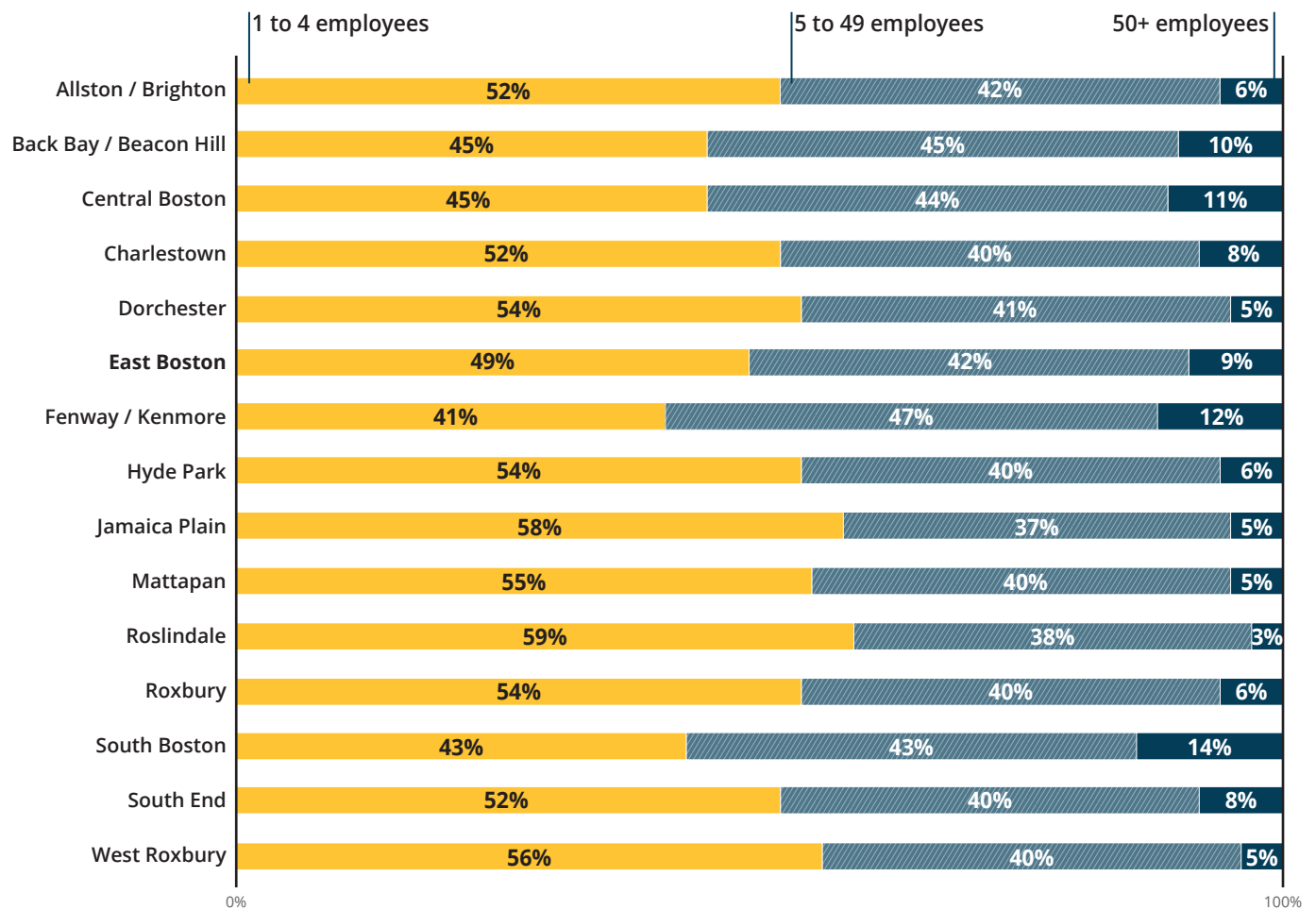
¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau, Zip Code Business Patterns, 2016, REMi Model, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

¹² City of Boston, “Small Business Plan,” March 2016, p. 3.

¹³ U.S. Census Bureau, Zip Code Business Patterns, 2016, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

Business Establishments by Size and Neighborhood 2015

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Zip Code Business Patterns 2016, BPDA Research Division Analysis



City Policies and Programs

The Office of Economic Development promotes policies that help businesses grow while fostering economic inclusion and equity.

Business Strategy Team

The Business Strategy Team assists companies seeking to relocate to, expand, or stay in Boston. They have industry managers with specialized expertise across a range of sectors including startups, light industrial/manufacturing, life sciences, high tech, and the creative economy. Boston is a global city, and the Business Strategy Team engages with partners to promote the city as open for business within the international market.

Small Business Unit

The Small Business Unit (SBU) is Boston's front door for small businesses. The SBU has technical assistance resources for small businesses needing support in marketing, legal, accounting, and more. The SBU also provides grants and support for storefront beautification, including business signage and facade improvements. The SBU can help businesses with their permitting and licensing requirements, as well as other types of business help, like coordinating certification for local, women-, minority-, and veteran-owned businesses through the Equity and Inclusion Unit.

Equity and Inclusion Unit

The Equity and Inclusion Unit is committed to the full and equal participation of minority-owned businesses (MBEs) and woman-owned businesses (WBEs) in City contracting.

In 2016, Mayor Martin J. Walsh issued an executive order promoting equity in public procurement. It sets the following goals:

- » 15-20 percent MBE and 15-20 percent WBE utilization in architectural and engineering subcontracts;
- » 10-15 percent MBE utilization in construction prime contracts under \$500,000;
- » 20-25 percent MBE utilization in architectural and engineering prime contracts under \$500,000;
- » 15-20 percent WBE utilization in architectural and engineering prime contracts under \$10,000;
- » 25-30 percent WBE utilization in professional services prime contracts under \$500,000;
- » 10-15 percent MBE utilization in professional services prime contracts under \$25,000.

To help achieve these goals, the City has launched a Disparity Study to review City contracting that seeks to find out whether or not these businesses face any barriers. This study will inform improvements to City policies related to M/WBEs.

In October 2019, the Mayor announced an Executive Order that builds on the 2016 Executive Order to expand opportunities for woman- and minority-owned businesses. The measures addressed by the Executive Order include modernizing a public-facing directory of MBEs, WBEs, and veteran-owned enterprises, creating a training program for City employees and departments who manage procurement, and requiring each City department to create a procurement plan that prioritizes equitable business practices.

Boston Residents Jobs Policy

The Boston Residents Jobs Policy (BRJP) office monitors the compliance of developers and contractors on private and public development projects in the City of Boston.

In 1983, the Mayor approved an Ordinance, which set employment standards for Boston residents, people of color, and women construction workers. The original ordinance stated that private development projects over 100,000 square feet and any public projects had to meet the following employment standards:

- » at least 50 percent of the total work hours in each trade must go to Boston residents;
- » at least 25 percent of the total employee work hours in each trade must go to people of color; and
- » at least 10 percent of the total employee work hours in each trade must go to women.

In 1985, the Ordinance was extended by the Mayor's Executive Order and on January 25, 2017 the Ordinance was amended and employment standards are effective as of that date. Private development projects over 50,000 square feet and any public development project must meet the following employment standards:

- » at least 51 percent of the total work hours of journey people and fifty-one percent of the total work hours of apprentices in each trade must go to Boston residents;
- » at least 40 percent of the total work hours of journey people and forty percent of the total work hours of apprentices in each trade must go to people of color; and
- » at least 12 percent of the total work hours of journey people and twelve percent of the total work hours of apprentices in each trade must go to women.

The BRJP office and the BPDA will both monitor projects in the City of Boston under the new Ordinance. All projects being monitored by BRJP or BPDA are subject to review by the Boston Employment Commission (BEC).



Mayor Walsh and elected officials visited the East Boston Shipyard and Marina Park for Manufacturing Month in October 2019



Mayor Walsh visited East Boston in July 2019 during the Mayor on Main trolley tour

Urban Form & Zoning

East Boston has continuously evolved since its founding in the 1830s. Industry, infrastructure, and private development drove the physical form of the neighborhood in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1964, the City of Boston enacted the Boston Zoning Code to guide growth and protect the distinct neighborhoods from development or uses that do not harmonize with their surrounding context. East Boston's zoning was last updated in 1993, and will be revisited with PLAN: East Boston to better align it with the character and needs of East Boston's built environment.

In this section, learn about:

- » East Boston's Buildings and Zoning on page 132
- » Neighborhood Residential Areas on page 136
- » Mixed-Use Nodes and Corridors on page 140
- » Waterfront Industrial and Economic Development Areas on page 146
- » Creating and Accessing Open Space on page 152
- » BPDA and City Policies and Programs on page 160



Triple-deckers along Maverick Street in Jeffries Point

East Boston's Buildings and Zoning

East Boston has diverse residential neighborhoods, vibrant commercial squares, and important regional industrial businesses.



East Boston is dominated by two land uses: residential and airport-related.

These two land uses co-exist in a sometimes uneasy tension, but over the last several decades several parks and open spaces have been developed in East Boston, buffering the residential fabric from the airport uses.

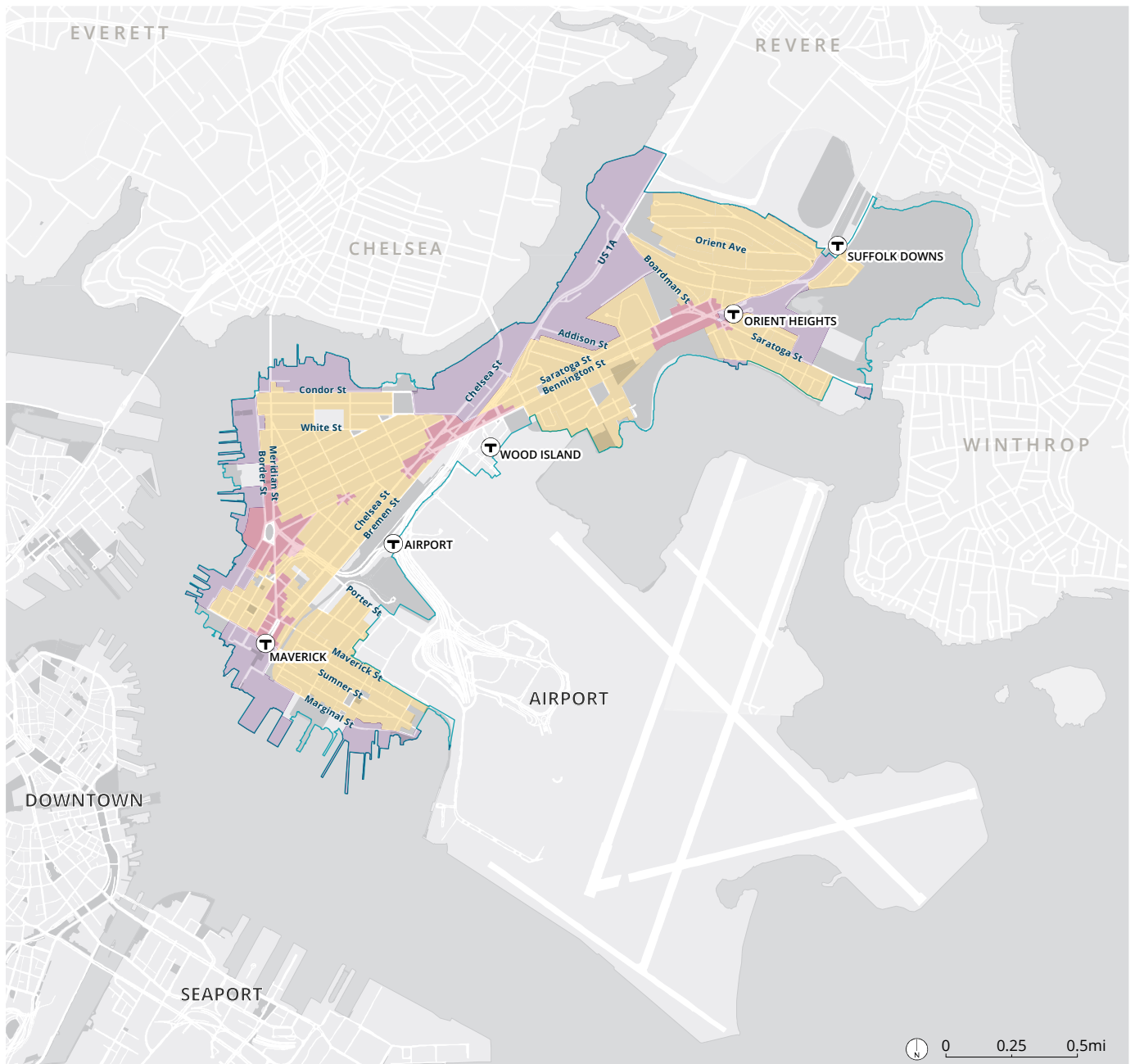
Corridors link commercial squares between the neighborhood's residential fabric.

East Boston has four neighborhood squares. Orient Heights, Day, and Central Squares are all connected by Bennington Street, the major transit corridor and linear spine of the neighborhood. Meridian Street links Central and Maverick Squares, forming the neighborhood's Main Streets business and shopping district. (See also East Boston's Past & Present on page 20 and Traveling in East Boston Today on page 90).

Article 53 of the Boston Zoning Code regulates land use for East Boston.

Zoning is a legal mechanism that regulates what property owners can and cannot do with their property. Zoning keeps compatible things together, like types of function or sizes and shapes of buildings. Under current zoning, regulations are divided into three categories: geography, use (identifying what kinds of activities or services are allowed), and dimensional standards (guiding how big buildings can be, how far apart they can be, and so on).

Article 53 was adopted in 1993. PLAN: East Boston will propose updates to Article 53, which will be informed by the existing conditions of the neighborhood and community visions for their neighborhood. The current zoning accounts for 9 distinct subdistricts—residential, neighborhood business, industrial, economic development areas, conservation protection, community facilities, open space, corridor enhancement, and Logan Airport—and provides additional regulation for Tideland and Waterfront areas, Planned Development Areas, and Design Overlay Districts.

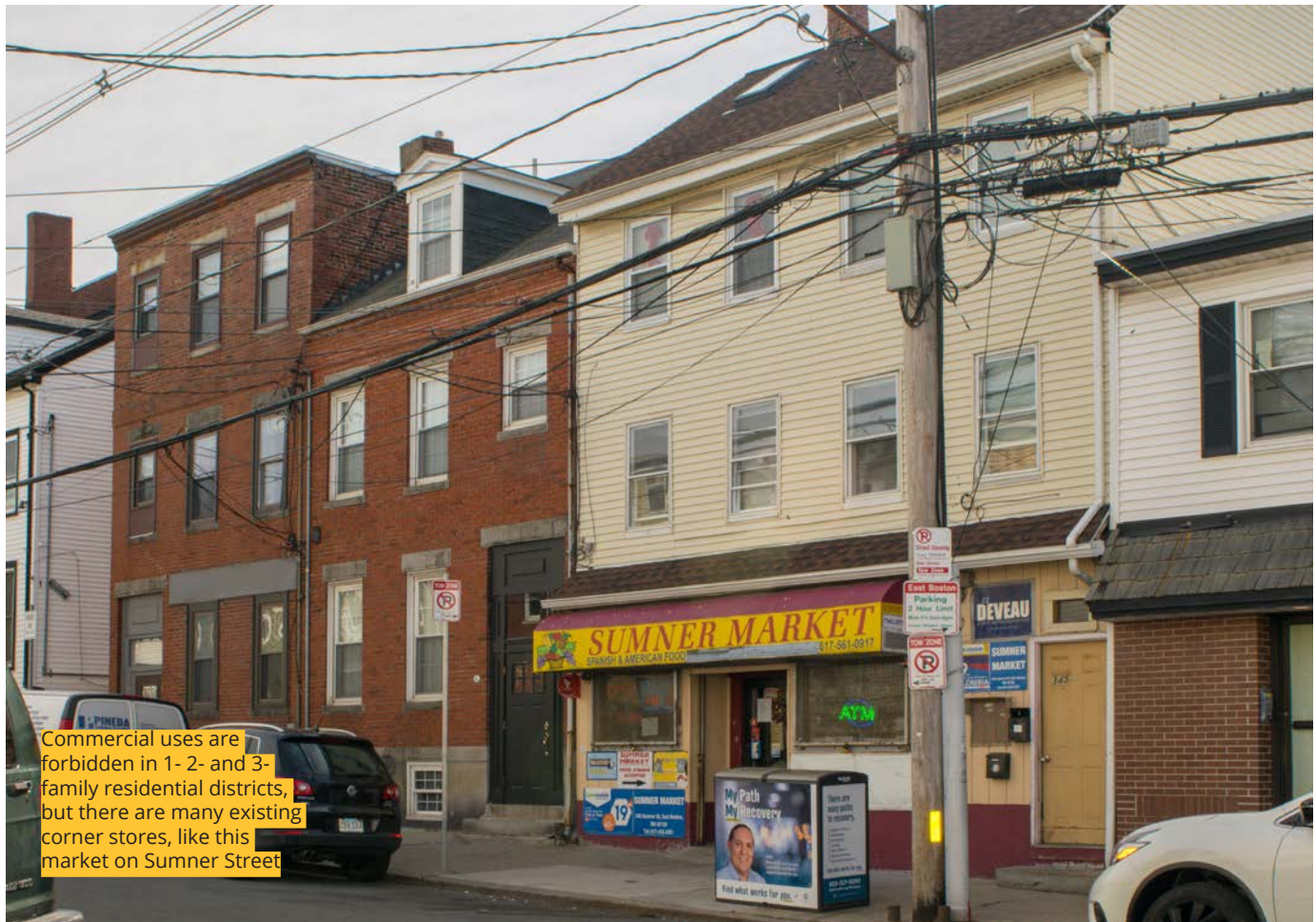


Today, East Boston predominantly consists of three area types with geographic and functional similarities: neighborhood residential areas, mixed-use nodes and corridors, and waterfront industrial and economic development areas.

East Boston Character Areas

Source: BPDA





Commercial uses are forbidden in 1- 2- and 3-family residential districts, but there are many existing corner stores, like this market on Sumner Street

Many existing buildings do not comply with zoning and are considered “non-conforming.”

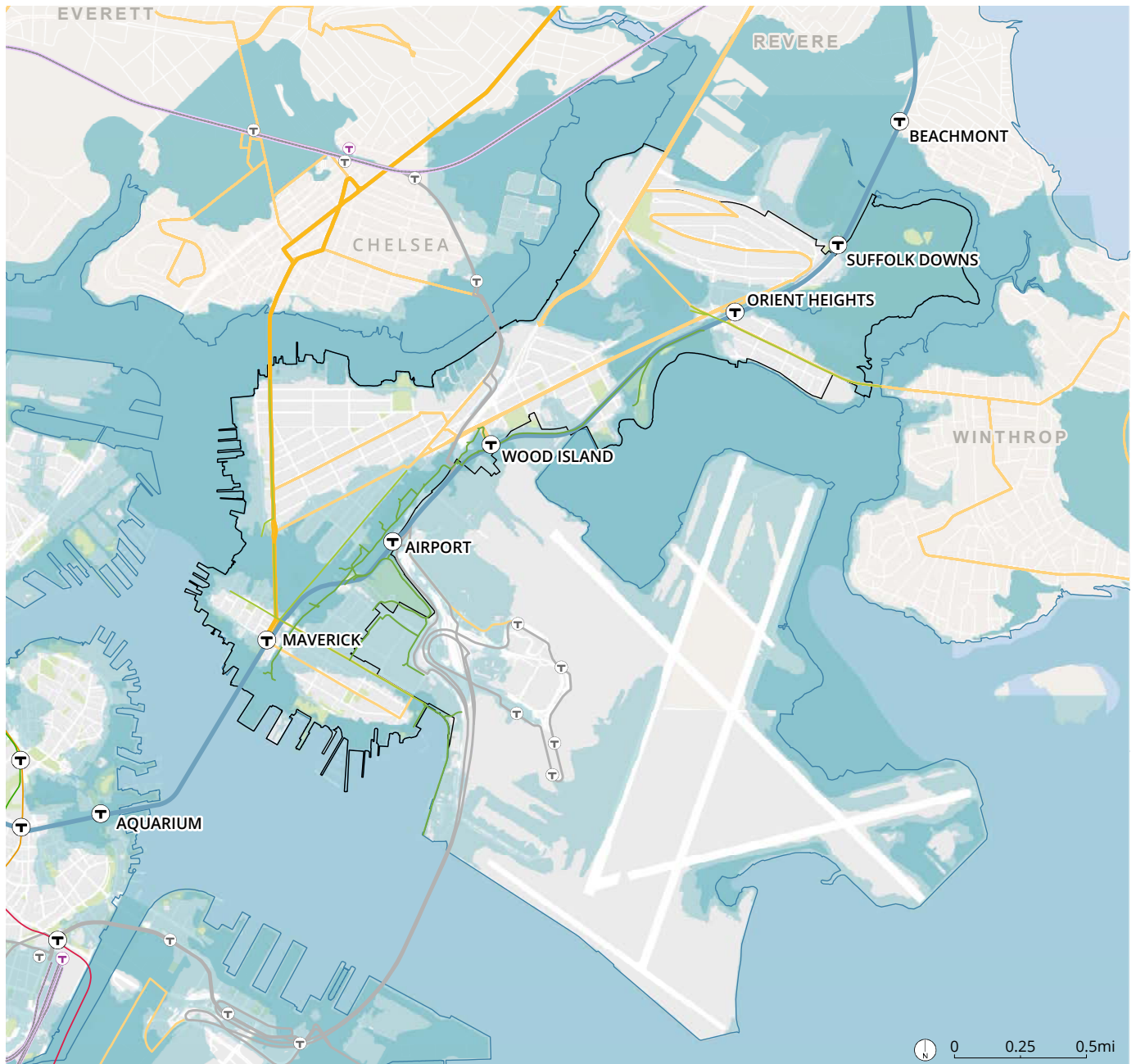
This means that if those buildings were proposed today, they would require variances, and would not be “as-of-right.” There are many examples of existing height, density, and uses that are forbidden by zoning but are desirable to the neighborhoods they are located in. 20 percent of existing buildings in East Boston are taller than the height allowed by zoning and 60 percent are out of compliance with the maximum floor-area-ratio.¹ In both cases, many non-conforming buildings predate the current zoning code.

Nearly half of East Boston’s land area will be vulnerable to flooding by the 2070s.

Out of all Boston neighborhoods, East Boston has the most population, buildings, and land area at risk from coastal flooding. Much of the exposed area has residential uses and is concentrated near the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway, Maverick Square, Central Square, and the Sumner and Callahan Tunnels.² (See Rising Sea Levels on page 74 for more information.) Retrofitting existing building stock, especially housing, to prepare for that risk presents unique design challenges.

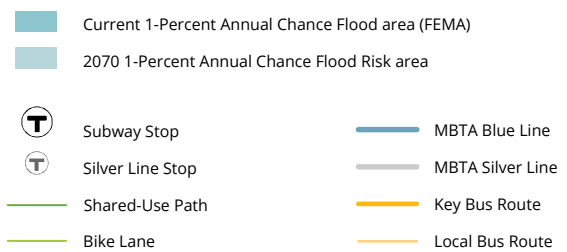
¹ Assessing FY’19, BPDA GIS Analysis.

² City of Boston, Environment Department, “Coastal Resilience Solutions for East Boston and Charlestown,” October 2017, p. 25.



Flood Risk in East Boston

Source: BPDA, Boston Harbor Flood Risk Model, MassGIS



Neighborhood Residential Areas

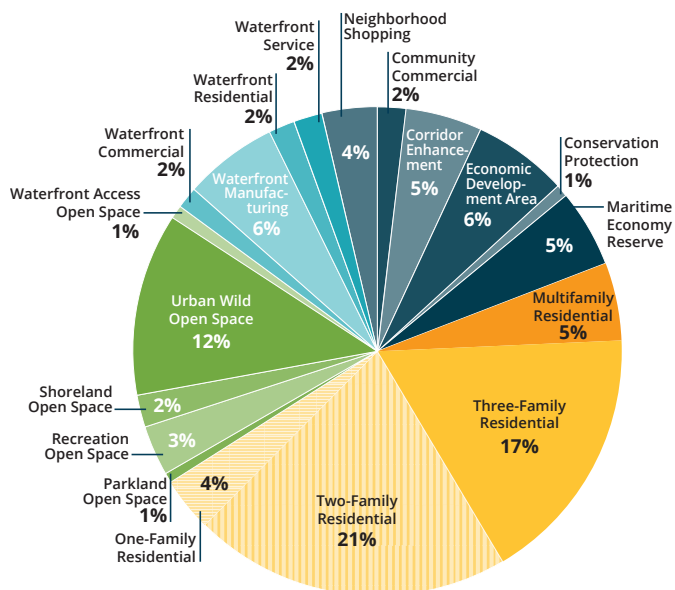
Neighborhood residential areas refer to areas that are primarily, though not exclusively, housing.

More than 40 percent of East Boston's land is zoned in one-, two-, or three-family zoning subdistricts.

These residential subdistricts accordingly permit one-, two-, and three-family residences. Under the existing neighborhood zoning code, Article 53, one-family (1F), two-family (2F), and three-family (3F) zoning subdistricts forbid uses like corner stores, coffee shops, dry cleaners, and other small businesses as well as multifamily residences. However, there are many existing examples of non-conforming use in these districts; for example, more than 30 percent of parcels in two-family (2F) areas of East Boston contain three-family houses.³ (See Today's Housing Stock on page 48 for more information about residential zoning subdistricts and land area.)

Zoning Subdistrict by Percent Total Land Area 2019

Source: BPDA GIS Analysis.

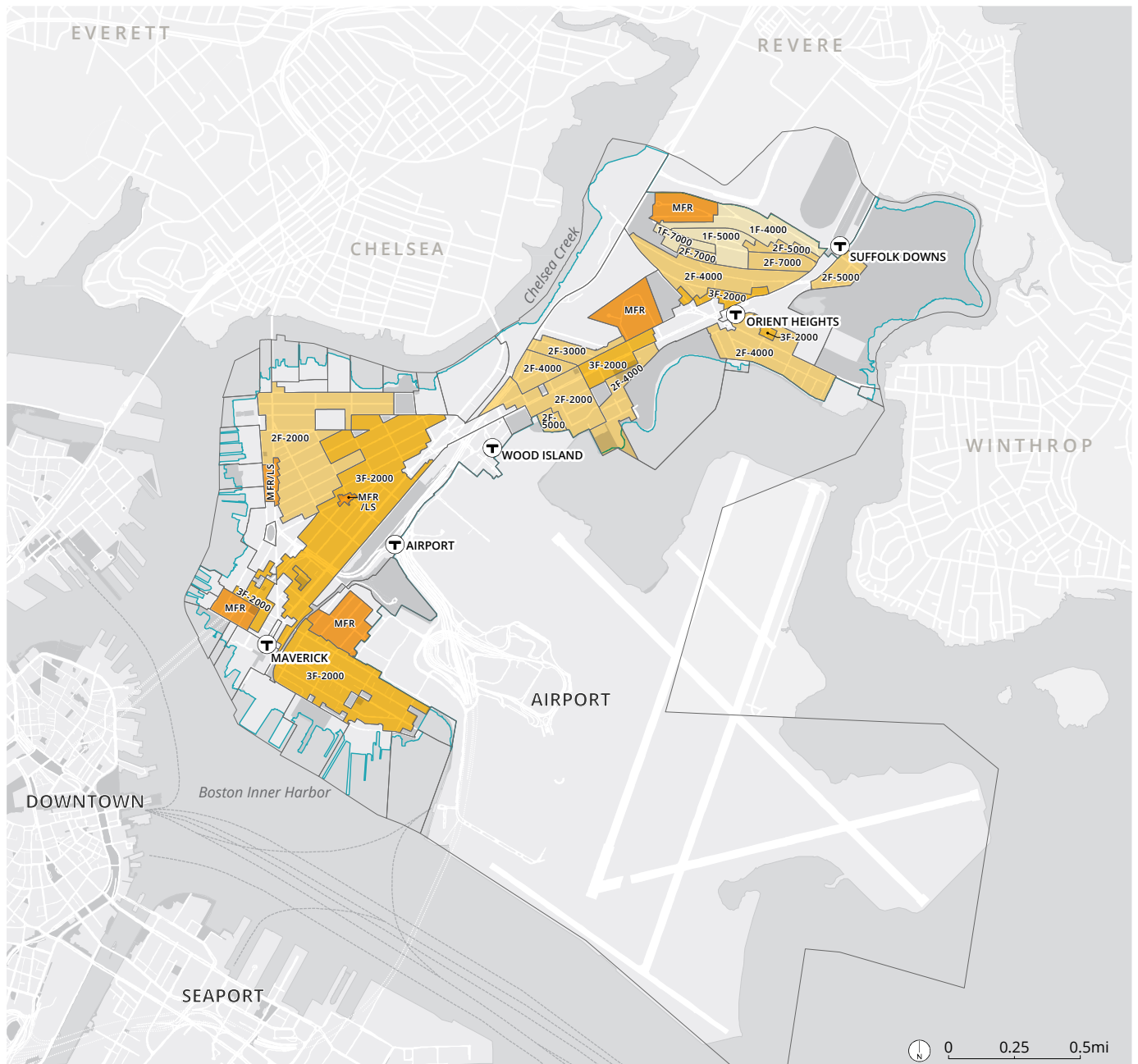


3 BPDA GIS analysis

Multifamily residential zoning subdistricts are dispersed at edges of lower density neighborhoods.




Multifamily Residential (MFR) subdistricts allow higher-density multifamily dwellings in addition to one-, two-, and three-family dwellings. Multifamily residential buildings can take the form of row houses, town houses, and larger-scale residential buildings. Like 1F, 2F, and 3F districts, most commercial uses are forbidden. One Multifamily Residential/Local Services Subdistrict exists at the intersection of Bennington and Brooks Streets that allows for ground-floor commercial uses. Under the current zoning, less than 6 percent of East Boston's total land area allows multifamily residential units.⁴ The current zoning code also makes no distinction between the number of units in multifamily residences, which means a building in an MFR district can contain as few as 4 or as many as 400 units.

4 Article 53 of the Boston Zoning Code, BPDA GIS analysis of land use by square foot.



Map of Residential Zoning Subdistricts in Article 53

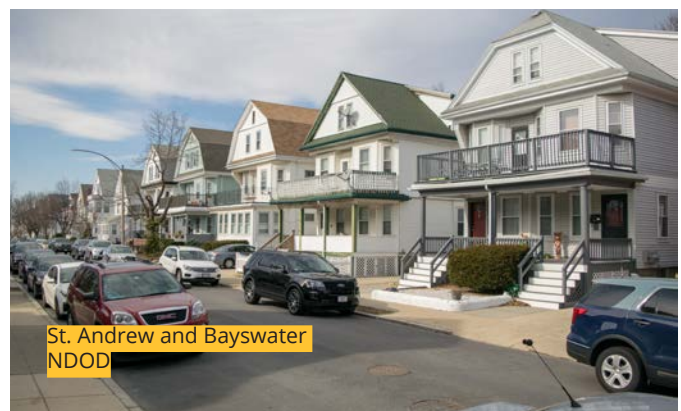
Sources: Article 53 Zoning

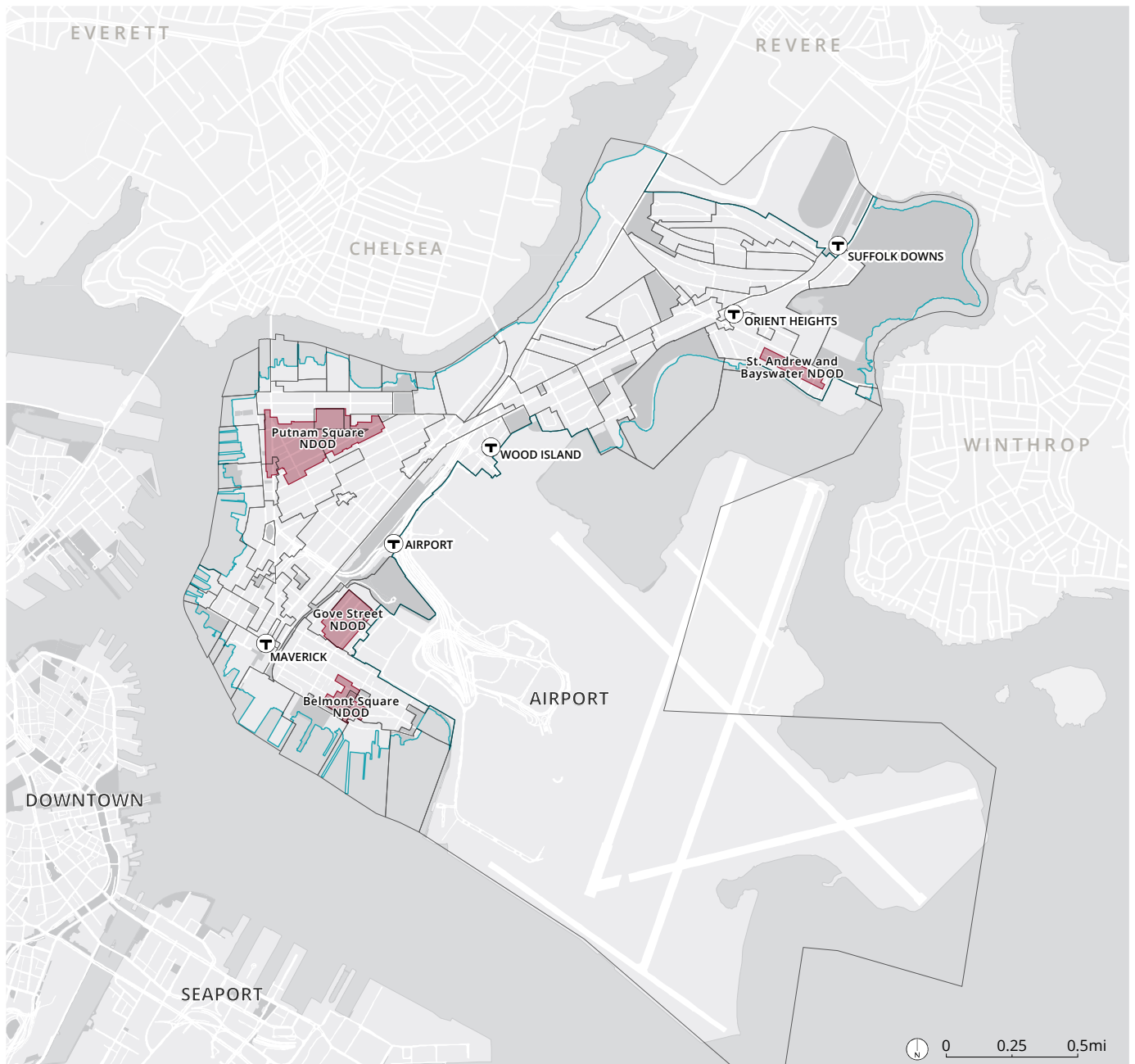
-  Single-family Residential
 Two-family Residential
 Three-family Residential
 Multi-family Residential
-  Zoning Subdistrict Boundary

East Boston has 4 Neighborhood Design Overlay Districts.

The Neighborhood Design Overlay Districts (NDOD) are established to protect the historic character, existing scale, quality of the pedestrian environment, character of the residential neighborhoods, and concentrations of historic buildings within the districts. These areas are not subject to review by Boston Landmarks Commission, but new proposed projects or projects that entail exterior alterations to existing buildings are subject to design review by BPDA staff and notice to the community in which the project is located.

The four NDODs in East Boston include: Belmont Square, known for its large concentration of intact historic buildings, predominantly in the Greek Revival style, constructed on some of the first lots sold by the East Boston Company; the six-block Gove Street area with its large concentration of brick residential buildings in East Boston; Putnam Square in Eagle Hill, known for its significant concentration of architectural styles ranging from Greek Revival to Colonial Revival; and the three-block St. Andrew and Bayswater area of one- and two-family houses in the Colonial Revival style.





Map of Neighborhood Design Overlay Districts in Article 53

Sources: Article 53 Zoning

Neighborhood Design Overlay District (NDOD)

Zoning Subdistrict Boundary

Mixed-Use Nodes and Corridors

Mixed-use nodes and corridors refer to areas in East Boston suited for active ground-floor uses. Nodes are collection points or places of gathering and corridors can be thought of as the connections between them.

Neighborhood Business zoning subdistricts in East Boston prioritize active ground-floor uses.

Ground-floor commercial uses are regulated by zoning, which limits the type and location of use. Ground-floor retail is allowed as-of-right only in commercial and business zoning districts. East Boston's commercial zoning includes Neighborhood Shopping and Community Commercial Subdistricts. Both types of Neighborhood Business Subdistricts encourage the development of businesses that provide essential goods and services as well as jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities for the community. These areas, generally concentrated around the four neighborhood squares, are important points of collection throughout the neighborhood that could accommodate a greater intensity of uses.

Zoning for commercial use is concentrated in East Boston's Main Street district and in limited areas around squares.

Commercial zoning districts are concentrated in the four squares of the neighborhood: Central Square, Maverick Square, Day Square, and Orient Heights Square. Over time, ground-floor retail has extended along corridors connecting those areas.

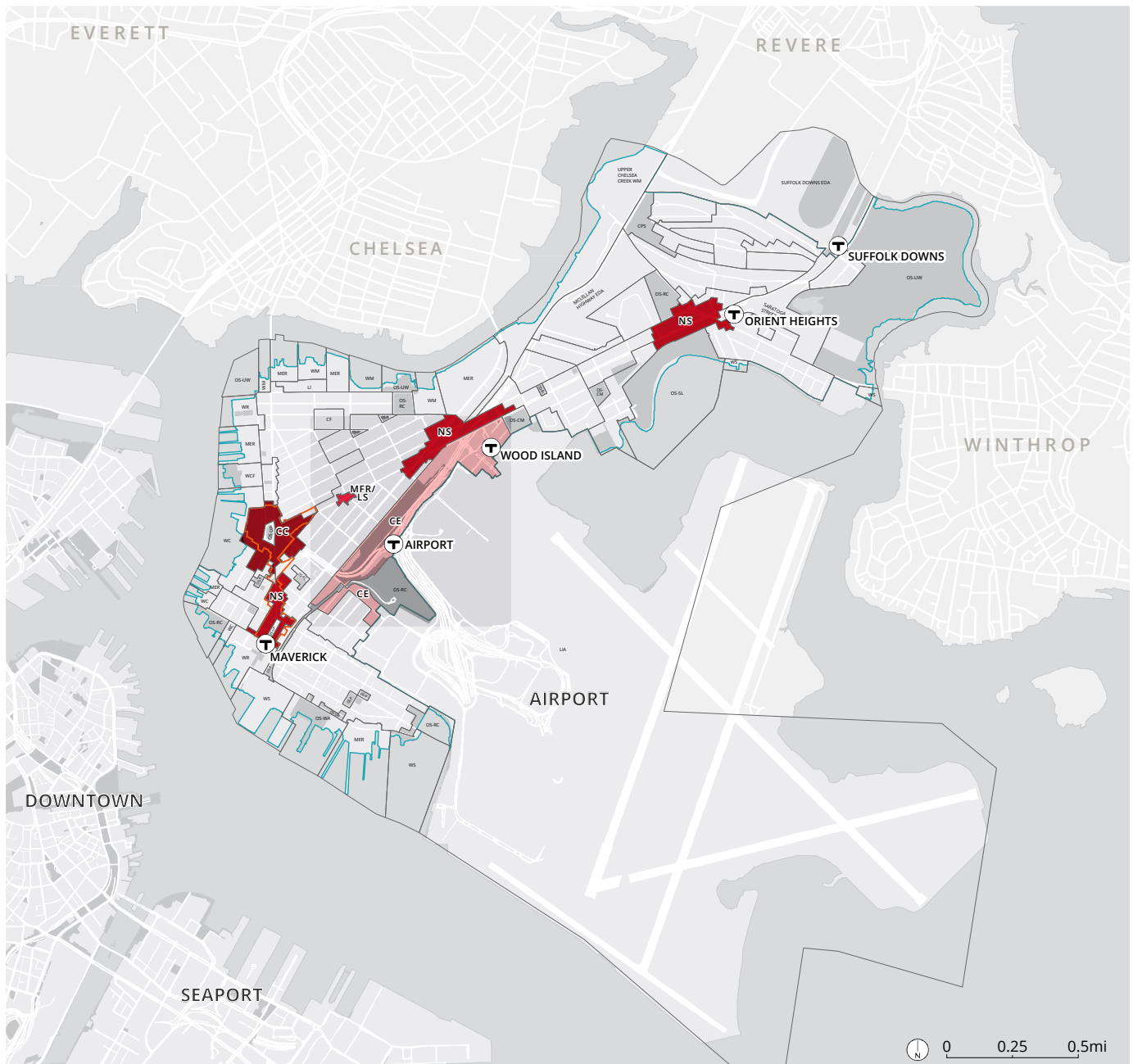
Meridian Street connects Maverick Square to Central Square and serves East Boston as the primary neighborhood main street. In 1995, the City's Boston Main Streets Program designated this area as the East Boston Main Street for the program. Meridian Street is characterized by single-floor commercial and retail use, providing residents with daily essentials, locally-owned businesses, restaurants, and services ranging from banking to dry cleaning.

Commercial uses contribute to walkable enjoyable urban environments.

Well-designed commercial uses on the ground floor, such as active storefronts and community uses, can provide neighborhood-supporting services and amenities to local residents. East Boston has areas with active storefronts and a density of commercial and community uses, such as the East Boston Main Street district, Day Square, and Orient Heights Square. These areas contribute significantly to the quality of a neighborhood's streetscape, its built character, its economic vitality, and the quality of life of its residents. These areas are most successful when connected to a larger open space network, like Central Square at the end of the Main Street District, and Noyes Park and Constitution Beach as connections from Orient Heights Square.

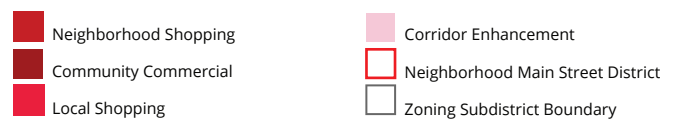
The Corridor Enhancement subdistrict runs along the north-south spine of East Boston.

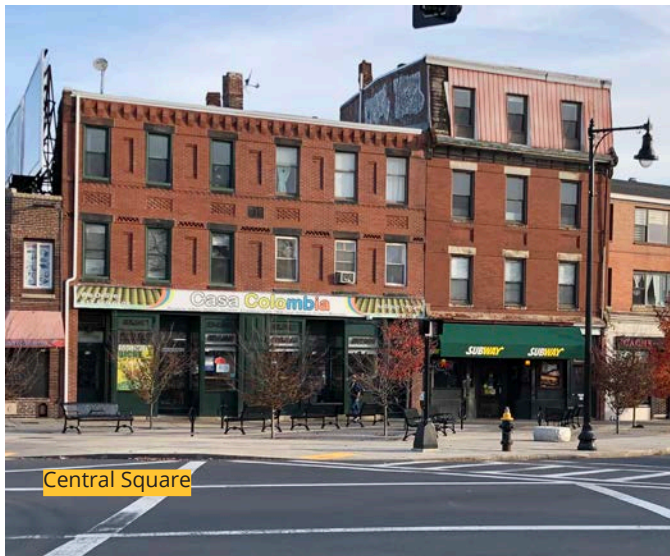
This land corridor serves as a buffer between residential areas from industrial and commercial areas and also as a connection between residential neighborhoods to open space areas and East Boston's waterfront. Article 53 of the Boston Zoning Code states that the purpose of the Corridor Enhancement Subdistrict is to "promote the siting and design of any new development in a manner that is sensitive to the adjacent residential and open space areas." Today, the majority of this subdistrict contains Bremen Street Park.



Map of Commercial Zoning Subdistricts in Article 53

Sources: Article 53 Zoning





Maverick Square is an entry point to East Boston for many.

Maverick Station first opened in 1904 as streetcar portal to the East Boston Tunnel. Today it is an MBTA Blue Line station; in addition, the station is a terminal for five MBTA Bus local routes. Renovations to the station were completed in 2009. Maverick Square is part of the East Boston Main Street district and is adjacent to the terminus of the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway. The East Boston Harborwalk, including LoPresti and Piers Parks, are easily accessible from Maverick Square by foot or bicycle.

Central Square is the heart of East Boston's commercial district.

Central Square is part of the East Boston Main Streets district and begins at the intersection of Bennington Street and Meridian Street. The commercial area is within close proximity of the entrance to the Sumner Tunnel. Central Square was identified as a priority project in the 2008 East Boston Transportation Action Plan. As a result, in 2018, Central Square Park was reconstructed to reclaim public space and is now a valuable asset in the square.



Day Square



Orient Heights Square

Day Square is an active business district surrounding the intersection of Bennington and Chelsea Streets.

Day Square supports many legacy businesses, including a variety of restaurants with international cuisines and neighborhood services like dry cleaners, salons, and the chamber of commerce. Because the square is bisected by two major streets, Day Square's pedestrian conditions can be challenging. The area is close to neighborhood assets including the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway, the East Boston Public Library, and the Wood Island MBTA Station, served by the MBTA Blue Line and the 112, 120, and 121 bus lines.

Orient Heights Square is the primary commercial area serving the northeast portion of East Boston.

Orient Heights Square is an active business district at the intersection of Saratoga Street and Bennington Street. Active businesses today include many restaurants, auto services, a day care center and a memorial home. A large commercial plaza just east of the Square is connected by Saratoga Street. The area is proximate to several community assets including the recently renovated Noyes Playground, Constitution Beach, and Orient Heights Station and is served by the MBTA Blue Line and the 120, 712, and 713 bus lines along Bennington Street.



Maverick Street transitions from waterfront industrial to residential and on to commercial use.

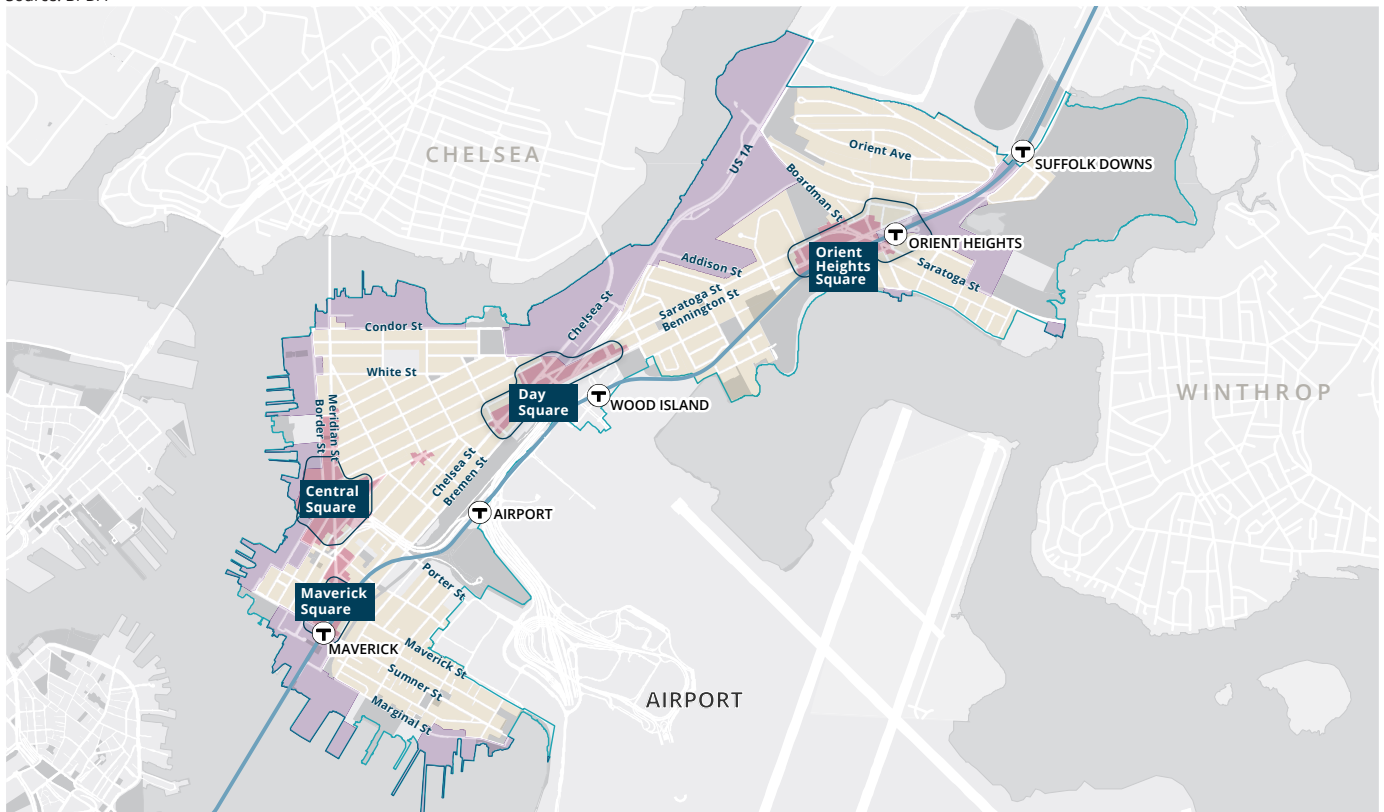
Maverick Street intersects with Meridian Street and Chelsea Street at the center of Maverick Square and terminates at the waterfront at both its ends. It is characterized by ground floor commercial uses around Maverick Square and transitions to medium-density residential areas on both sides. Its edges along the water connect to industrial uses. Maverick Street and Sumner Street operate as a one-way pair, connecting Porzio Park and the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway. Maverick Street runs parallel to Logan Airport and both Jeffries Point and Gove Street neighborhoods.

Meridian Street serves as the neighborhood's Main Street.

Meridian Street connects East Boston to Chelsea via the Andrew McArdle Bridge and hosts several important local and regional bus routes including the 114, 116, 117, 120, and 121. Meridian Street is the spine of the East Boston Main Street district, connecting Maverick Square and Central Square, with many neighborhood businesses. North of Central Square, Meridian Street continues to have some commercial uses but becomes increasingly residential towards McArdle Bridge.

Commercial Squares

Source: BPDA



Bennington Street is a primary neighborhood connector, stretching from Central Square to Orient Heights.

Bennington Street runs the entire length of East Boston from Central Square through Day Square and Orient Heights Square. It runs parallel to the MBTA Blue Line from Wood Island Station to Wonderland Station, passing inland along Constitution Beach, Belle Isle Marsh Reservation, and Revere Beach. Saratoga Street runs parallel to Bennington and is characterized by a residential scale with a more narrow street width. Bennington Street changes dramatically as it passes through neighborhood residential areas and active retail districts.



Bremen Street runs parallel to the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway.

Bremen Street connects Maverick Square to Day Square. Uses along Bremen Street vary greatly; there are stretches of residential areas with light industrial uses mixed in including several auto-body shops, a reminder of the Greenway's former life as an elevated highway. Because the Greenway park is adjacent to Bremen Street, the street is characterized by vehicle traffic as pedestrians and bicyclists favor the Greenway path.

Waterfront Industrial and Economic Development Areas

Waterfront industrial and Economic Development Areas (EDA) primarily support large-scale commercial and industrial uses. These areas are important to local and regional economies.

East Boston's extensive shoreline enabled it to become a center for shipbuilding from early in its development.

As discussed in the context of historic development (see Industry and Infrastructure Shape the Neighborhood on page 26), marine industrial use has been embedded in the neighborhood's history through shipbuilding and related industries. These industrial sites are concentrated along Condor, Border, and Marginal Streets. Waterfront industrial zoning subdistricts currently include Maritime Economy Reserve (MER), Waterfront Manufacturing (WM), and Waterfront Service (WS). Each is intended to preserve and protect East Boston's working waterfront. These areas are further protected by State-level regulations (learn more on page 150).

Protecting East Boston from flooding will require a redesigned shoreline.

A quarter of East Boston's major streets and three of the five Blue Line stops in East Boston are already experiencing flooding today. By 2070, more than 80 percent of East Boston's major streets and four of the five Blue Line stops in East Boston will be threatened by flooding. (See "Rising Sea Levels" on page 74 for more information.)

Pockets of land in the neighborhood's lowlands have been developed with local industrial or EDA land uses.

Because of their location at the edges and infilled portions of the neighborhood, these areas are often at the front lines of East Boston's coastal resilience challenges.

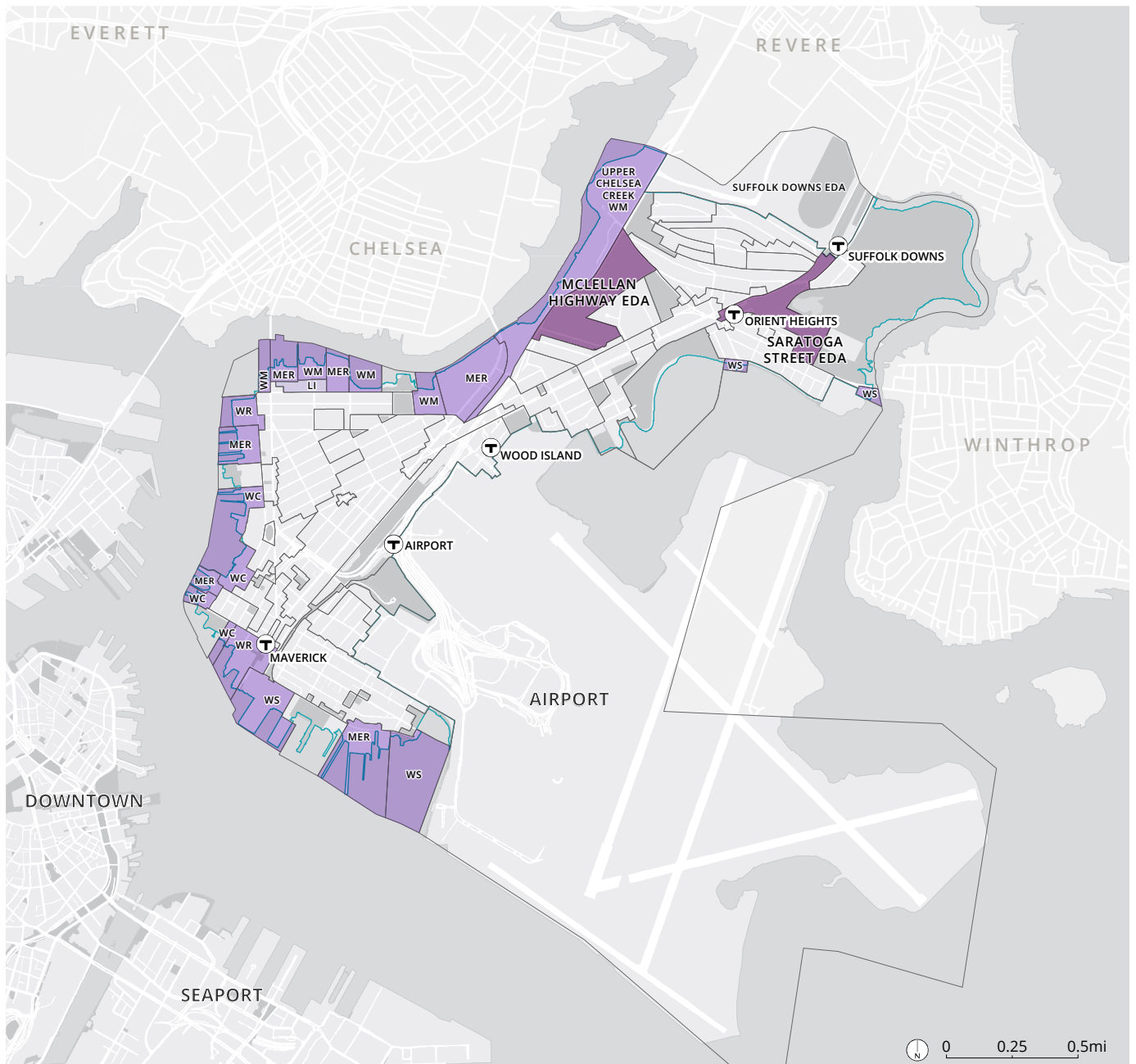
EDAs were established to encourage economic growth in a manner that is sensitive to the needs and interests of the community.

Article 53 requires EDAs to provide for economic development that is of a quality and scale appropriate to the surrounding neighborhoods. Additionally, EDAs intend to encourage the diversification and expansion of Boston's economy as a whole.

Where adjacent to neighborhood residential areas, waterfront industrial and economic development areas create potentially challenging transitions in building use and scale.

Intense demand for housing has put pressure on the waterfront and EDAs, while lack of demand from commercial uses and industrial uses have meant many of these areas are dormant or underused.

It should be noted that Logan International Airport has its own zoning subdistrict. State and Federal agencies have jurisdiction about future development in these areas.



Map of Industrial Zoning Subdistricts in Article 53

Sources: Article 53 Zoning



The East Boston Inner Harbor provides a broad mix of waterfront uses.

The waterfront is home to the dynamic Boston Harbor Shipyard and Marina, new residential mixed-use developments along Sumner and Marginal streets, active open space resources at Piers and LoPresti parks, as well as areas of the working waterfront with marine contractors and boatyards.

In its current form, the McClellan Highway EDA is inaccessible to much of the neighborhood.

This EDA is situated between low-density residential areas and McClellan Highway (Route 1A). It currently houses low-density light industrial uses and hotels. The area lacks a street network or infrastructure, though it is adjacent to the recently renovated Noyes Park and connected to Bennington Street.



The waterfront along Chelsea Creek has long served as an important corridor of water-dependent industrial uses.

From East Boston's early history, the area along Chelsea Creek was developed for industrial use. In recent history, boat repair, bulk fuel, and shipping have populated the waterfront and the area is located in a Designated Port Area (DPA). Some of the parcels today are in transition or remain vacant. Additionally, Chelsea Creek supports a unique environmental ecosystem like the Condor Street Urban Wild, broad tidal flats, and areas of salt marsh. (See page 150 for more information about DPAs.)

The Saratoga EDA connects Bennington Street to Winthrop.

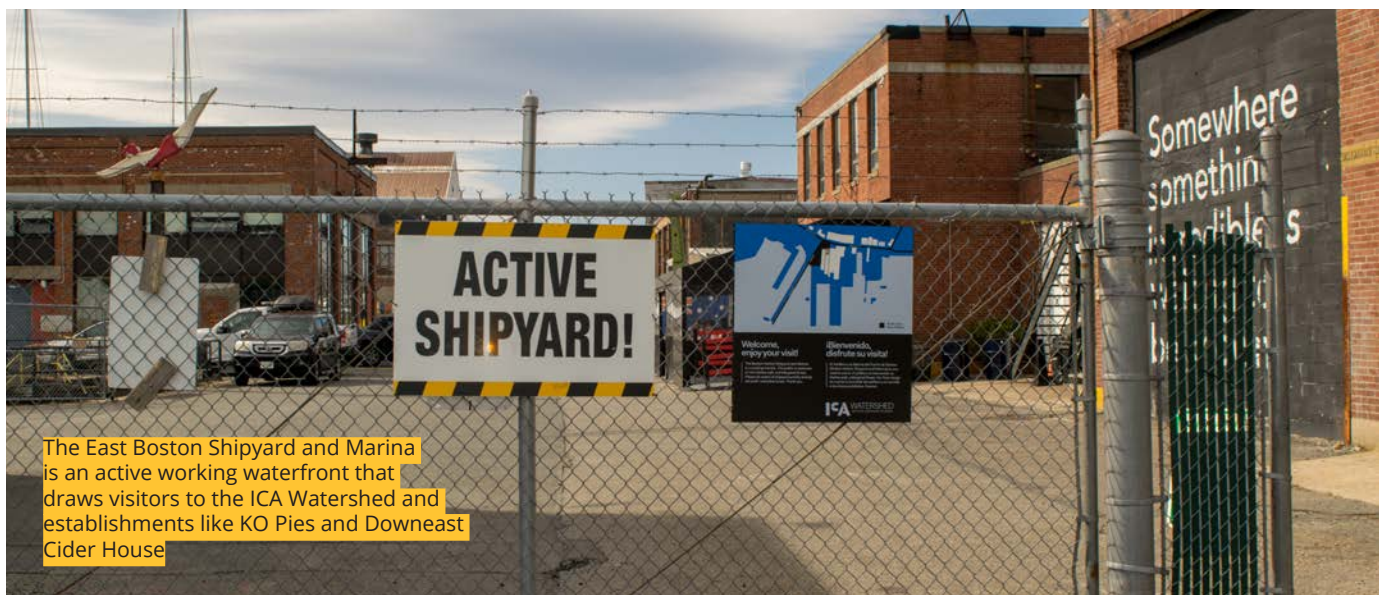
This EDA stretches from Saratoga Street near the Winthrop town line to Bennington Street, encompassing the Orient Heights MBTA Station. It includes MBTA-owned land, light industrial buildings, and low-density commercial buildings which directly abut the Belle Isle Marsh.



The East Boston waterfront is governed by State regulations, including the Public Tidelands Act (MGL Chapter 91) and Designated Port Area (DPA) regulations.

These State-level regulations take precedence over local zoning. Chapter 91 guides waterfront development to promote public access to the harbor, prioritize water-dependent uses, and ensure public use of the waterfront. Chapter 91 accomplishes these objectives through dimensional and use restrictions for private waterfront development by requiring half of project sites to be open space, by placing limits on building height and setback from the water to allow for Harborwalk, and by requiring ground-floor uses that are available to the public. The regulations also support an activated waterfront through requirements for water transportation and public programming.

DPA regulations preserve water-dependent industrial uses in Massachusetts. The State has established certain areas of the East Boston waterfront as locations for marine industrial uses due to access to deep water berthing, existing industrial site characteristics, and access to transportation networks and roads. These areas include the Boston Harbor Shipyard, much of the Chelsea Creek waterfront, and other locations where marine contractors and marine service uses are currently or were formerly located. DPAs impede the creation of publicly accessible open space because they require direct industrial access to the shoreline.



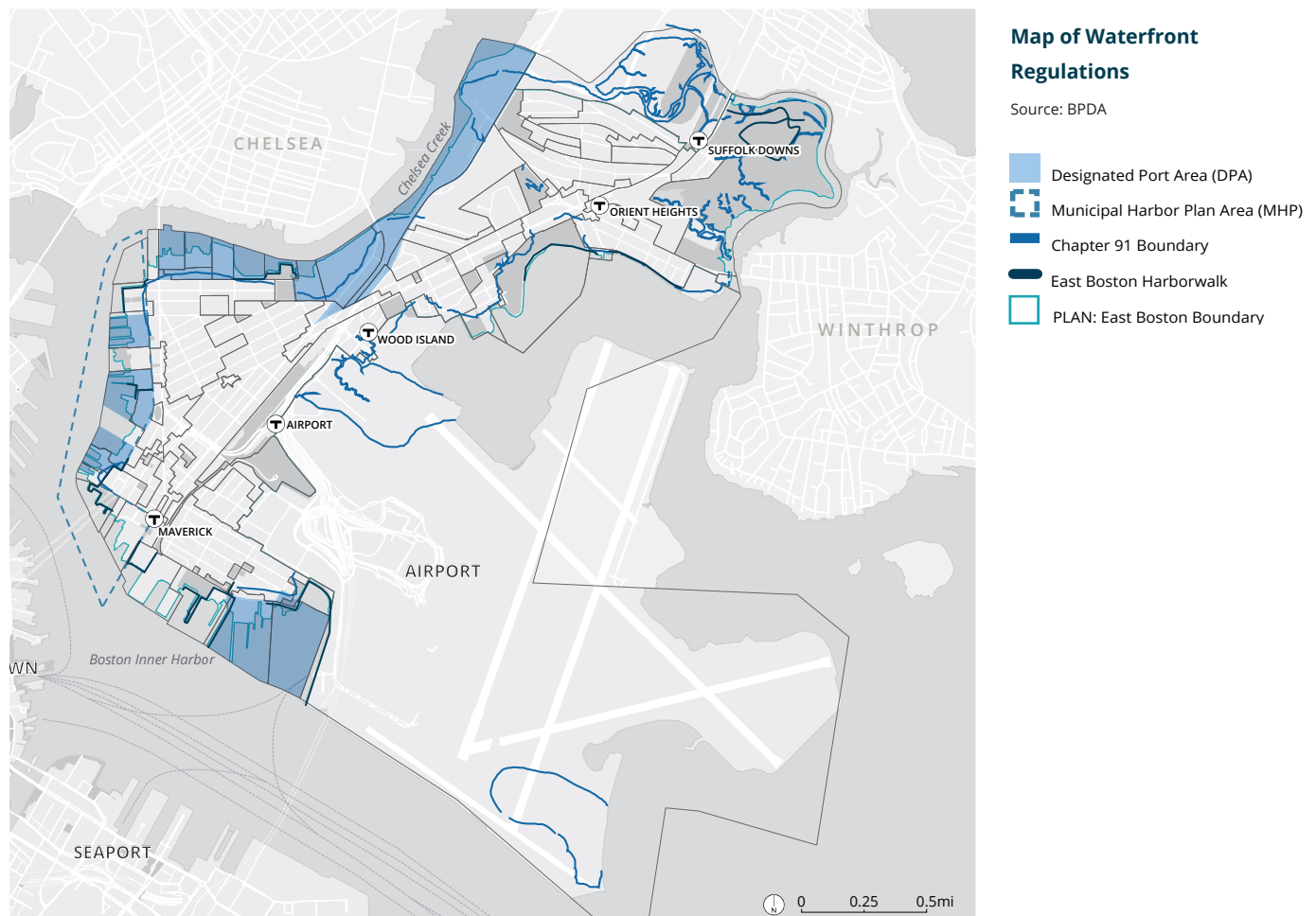
The East Boston Shipyard and Marina is an active working waterfront that draws visitors to the ICA Watershed and establishments like KO Pies and Downeast Cider House

Municipal Harbor Plans (MHPs) involve a public planning process to allow for changes to the uniform Chapter 91 use and dimensional requirements.

Through an MHP, the height, mass, and setback of new buildings, and location of open space can be altered to address community objectives and neighborhood character. An MHP can also specify the types of waterfront amenities, programming, and ground-floor uses residents would like to see with new development.

The East Boston Municipal Harbor Plan (EBMHP) was adopted in 2002 and amended in 2008. The document provided guidance to the community, developers and to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Chapter 91 licensing process, and was built on findings published in the East Boston Master Plan in April 2000.

Climate Ready East Boston contemplated several zoning recommendations that would support climate resilience for parcels associated with the EBMHP. These recommendations changing allowable uses from Maritime Economy Reserve to Commercial, and increasing open space requirements. Future amendments to the EBMHP will build on the efforts of PLAN: East Boston and Climate Ready East Boston.



Creating and Accessing Open Space

The public realm consists of publicly accessible space around, between, and within buildings. This typically includes parks, open spaces, squares, and streets.

East Boston has 378 acres of open space.⁵

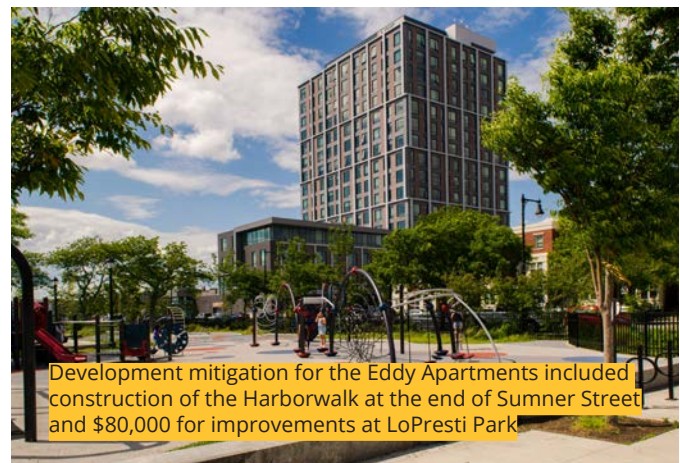
East Boston is a dense neighborhood with limited private residential outdoor space, which means that public space and parks are particularly important for community health. East Boston has a rich mix of open space types, including active and passive areas, linear parks, natural areas, and waterfront access. Open space is produced by public agencies and, increasingly, in association with new private development.

The term “protection” generally refers to the ease with which an open space property can be converted from an open space use to a non-open space use. Some properties have permanent (“in perpetuity”) restrictions on development. Others have lesser degrees of protection, while many have only the restriction imposed by the owner’s own intentions.⁶

Of East Boston’s 378 acres of open space, 61 percent is protected and 39 percent is unprotected.⁷ This distinction is important because ownership and access affect the ways open space is designed, inhabited, and integrated into a neighborhood. Unprotected land generally includes academic and religious campuses and athletic fields, Harborwalk segments, cemeteries, and vacant lands. While all protected land is publicly accessible, only 18 percent of unprotected land is publicly accessible. The Don Orione hillside of Orient Heights is an example of privately-owned, inaccessible open space that adds value to the visual landscape of the neighborhood.

Both private and public entities contribute to the creation and maintenance of public open spaces in the neighborhood.

Public ownership of open space properties includes the City of Boston Parks and Recreation Department, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), the Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport), the MBTA, and the State Department of Transportation (MassDOT). Some privately owned open spaces, like the dog park associated with The Eddy, are publicly accessible with some restrictions on use and hours of operation. Few areas for public park development remain, which means that future public open spaces will be created and maintained in large part by private owners.



⁵ City of Boston, Boston Parks and Recreation Department. This number includes existing open space associated with Suffolk Downs racetrack.

⁶ City of Boston, Boston Parks and Recreation Department, “Open Space & Recreation Plan 2015–2021,” January 2015, p. 65.

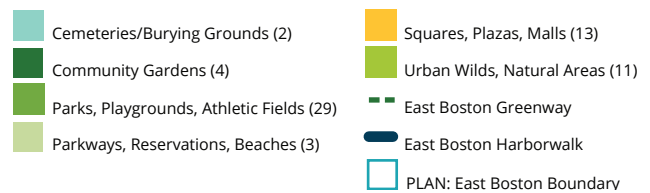
⁷ City of Boston, Boston Parks and Recreation Department data.

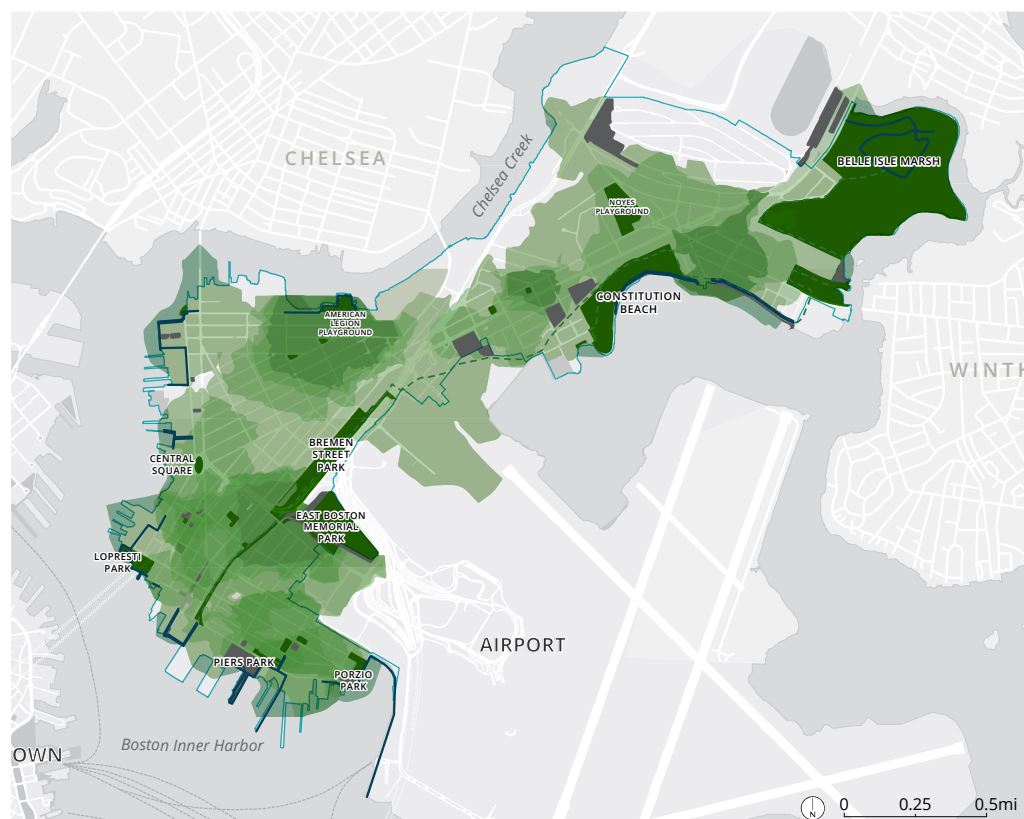
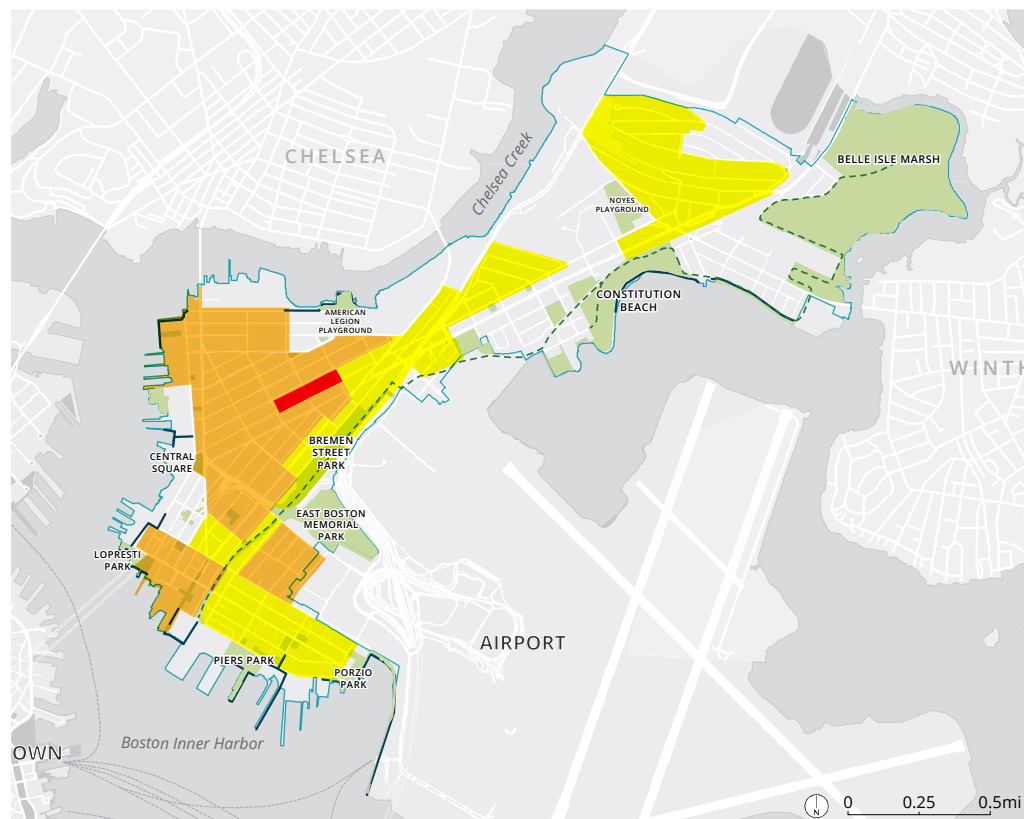


Central Square, Piers Park, Noyes Park, American Legion Playground, and LoPresti Park have opened or been renovated since the East Boston Master Plan in 2000, which made recommendations for improvements and connections between parks and open spaces.

Map of Open Space by Type

Source: BPDA GIS





The neighborhood's higher density contributes to higher park needs.⁸

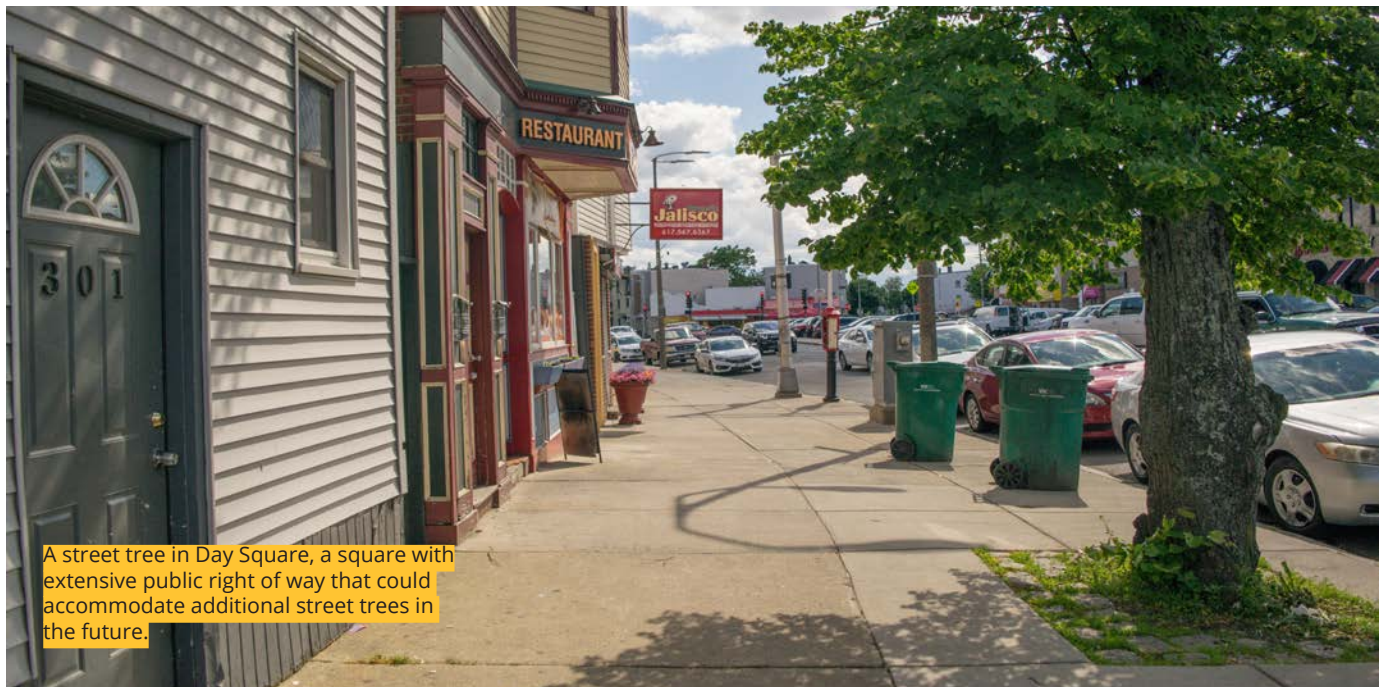
The Boston Parks and Recreation Department published the Open Space and Recreation Plan in 2015. East Boston compares favorably with other densely populated neighborhoods, with 5.33 acres of open space for every 1,000 residents, though this number is still below the city average of 7.59 acres.⁹ There is a high parks need score across East Boston, and highest-need areas include Orient Heights and Eagle Hill, particularly along Meridian and Bennington Streets. Almost all of East Boston meets at least one of the State's Environmental Justice criteria.¹⁰

The neighborhood's high density contributes to higher park needs and environmental justice scores, as does its higher proportion of family households, youth, and foreign born population compared to Boston overall (see more in the "People" chapter on page 32). The continued pressure for housing contributes to the lack of open land for future parks distributed throughout the neighborhood.

Increasing the number of street trees and urban tree canopy is a priority.

East Boston has a 7 percent tree cover, the lowest of any Boston neighborhood, with a relatively high amount of capacity for added vegetation due to Logan Airport and its predominance of tree-less grassy areas near the runways.¹¹ Street trees can be accommodated in the public right of way, which includes most streets and sidewalks; East Boston has a relatively high capacity to support street trees in the public right of way with 28 percent classified to accommodate possible tree canopy.¹²

Trees are effective at reducing the urban heat island effect (see "More Extreme Temperatures" on page 82) by offering shade. They also clean the air, capture carbon dioxide, reduce noise pollution, and help prevent flooding by absorbing stormwater. The City of Boston is developing a master plan for Boston's urban tree cover to address planting and preserving street trees in the future.



⁸ A park need score is a subjective analysis that considers a neighborhood's population density, percent of population under the age of 18, block groups designated as Low Income using the MA State Environmental Justice criteria, block groups designated as Minority using the MA State Environmental Justice criteria, block groups designated English Language Isolated using the MA State Environmental Justice criteria, and percent of the population over the age of 69.

⁹ City of Boston, Boston Parks and Recreation Department, "Open Space & Recreation Plan 2015–2021," January 2015, p. 223.

¹⁰ Massachusetts identifies Environmental Justice communities with one or more of the following characteristics: a block group whose annual median household income is equal to or less than 65 percent of the statewide median; or 25 percent or more of the residents identify as a race other than white; or 25 percent or more of households have no one over the age of 14 who speaks English only or very well.

¹¹ Spatial Analysis Laboratory at the University of Vermont's Rubenstein School of the Environment and Natural Resources, City of Boston, and Trust for Public Land, "An Assessment of Boston's Tree Canopy," December 2017, p. 6.

¹² Ibid., p. 8.

Many of East Boston's parks are located on the edges of the neighborhood—bordering the water or the airport.

Parks and open spaces ease the transition between contrasting residential and industrial areas. Their location at neighborhood edges enables open space to serve as walking and bike paths and in some cases as ecological protection areas. East Boston hosts several urban wilds and the Belle Isle Marsh along the waterfront, which help restore and conserve some of the neighborhood's wetlands (see more on Natural open spaces offer environmental, ecological, and educational value to East Boston. on page 159). Massport operates Piers Park, Bremen Street Park, the Airport Edge Buffer Parks, and parts of the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway, totaling more than 33 acres of green space in East Boston that have been created through mitigation of airport development.¹³

Residents of East Boston have fairly good walking access to parks. Eagle Hill could use more access to open space either through establishment of new park or sidewalk improvements that make it easier to reach Bremen Street Park. Linking existing open spaces will improve access and usability from limited open space resources, many of which are high quality and water-oriented.

Neighborhood squares and plazas host vibrant urban life as commercial and recreational destinations.

The neighborhood's squares and corridors host a variety of uses, including areas for passive recreation and rest. The streets, sidewalks, and open space between buildings all contribute to the social life and add to the economic vitality of East Boston's commercial areas. Outdoor seating and plantings bring life to open spaces associated with commercial areas. Residents gather in smaller neighborhood parks, like Putnam and Prescott Squares, Veterans Park, Joe Ciampa Garden, and Brophy Park, which offer places to rest and engage with nature in residential areas.

Central Square's renovation was completed in 2017, which included narrowed streets, expanded park space, and widened sidewalks to create spaces for outdoor seating, cafes, and greenscape elements. Many commercial areas of East Boston have benches but lack programmed space for pedestrians.

Parks and playgrounds provide active open space to the neighborhood.

Active open space consists of courts and fields. East Boston has 9 basketball courts, 11 tennis courts, and 1 street hockey court. These are all located on permanently protected public land, as are 9 playgrounds—like Cueno Park, McLean Playground, and Paris Street Playground—and the 5 splash pads at Bremen Street park, East Boston Memorial Park, LoPresti Park, Piers Park, and Sumner and Lamsom Street Playground. Public athletic fields include Al Festa Field (baseball diamond), American Legion Playground (baseball diamond), Constitution Beach (baseball diamonds), East Boston Memorial Park (baseball diamonds and soccer/football stadium), Lo Presti Park (soccer field), and Noyes Playground (baseball diamonds and soccer field).¹⁴

¹³ Massport

¹⁴ Boston Parks and Recreation Department

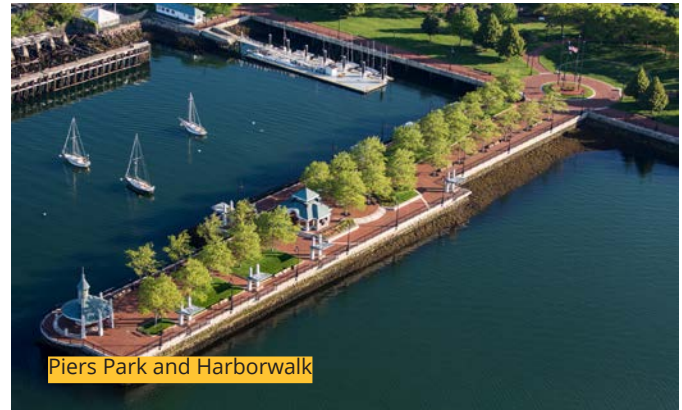


The Greenway and Harborwalk serve as connective open space for both passive recreation and pedestrian and bike transit.

The Harborwalk system, supported by Chapter 91, links existing waterfront parks owned by public agencies to open spaces within proposed developments. Some waterfront locations remain inaccessible because of active industrial uses that are protected by DPA legislation.

The Mary Ellen Welch Greenway is a path and linear park that, when fully constructed, will link open spaces between Boston Harbor and Belle Isle Marsh Reservation. The park links several significant neighborhood open spaces, including Piers Park, Memorial Stadium, Bremen Street Park, Wood Island Bay Marsh, and Belle Isle Marsh. The completed Greenway will consist of over 12 acres of park land and provide a 3.3 mile pathway system through the heart of East Boston. As the neighborhood along the Greenway grows, it will be important to prioritize maintaining strong, visible connections to the park.

East Boston has among the largest portion of protected bicycle trails in the city with about 6 miles of recreational bike network today. (See page 88 for more about transportation options in East Boston.)



Piers Park and Harborwalk



Mary Ellen Welch Greenway



Aerial photo of East Boston from 2012

Natural open spaces offer environmental, ecological, and educational value to East Boston.

Vast salt marshes once covered most of East Boston's shoreline; remnants of these habitats remain in more than 206 acres of open space in East Boston's three urban wilds and in Belle Isle Marsh, which support native plant and animal species and also perform important ecological functions like housing and filtering stormwater. Condor Street Overlook, Condor Street Urban Wild, and Rockies Urban Wild in Jeffries Point are all protected by Boston's Urban Wild initiative. The Condor Street Urban Wild was a major remediation and salt marsh restoration project completed in 2003. It resulted in the removal of hazardous materials, the creation of a healthy salt marsh, upland meadow, pier, sculpture, pathways, benches and scenic overlooks for habitat and passive recreation uses.

Belle Isle Marsh is protected and managed by DCR. Its restoration was completed in 2005. The marsh is wholly included in the Rumney Marsh Area of Critical Environmental Concern, one of the most biologically significant estuaries in the state.¹⁵



¹⁵ As declared by the Department of Conservation and Recreation Office of Natural Resources and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

East Boston has approximately 12.9 miles of waterfront; 2.9 miles is accessible to pedestrians via parks and harborwalk.¹⁶

The neighborhood benefits from its extensive shoreline, which features diverse open spaces like the East Boston Harborwalk, Constitution Beach, and Belle Isle Marsh. Constitution Beach is one of a few beaches in the City of Boston and is a treasured local destination (that has seen recent improvements by the DCR). While Chelsea Creek is largely inaccessible from the shoreline, there are several docks and piers that provide public access to the Inner Boston Harbor. Legislation like Chapter 91 (see page 151) ensures that East Boston's waterfront will remain accessible to the public.

Open space along the waterfront will be important for mitigating climate change impacts.

East Boston is already experiencing coastal flood events, which will increase in severity and frequency with future sea level rise. Protecting East Boston from flooding will require a redesigned shoreline, as envisioned through the Coastal Resilient Solutions report (2017) and the Mayor's Resilient Boston Harbor Vision (2018) (see page 80 for more information). These initiatives look to promote new elevated berms, Harborwalk, plazas, and living shorelines along the East Boston waterfront that will provide protection from coastal storms, improve public access to the harbor, and revitalize coastal habitats and underutilized areas of waterfront.

¹⁶ Excluding the airport

BPDA and City Policies and Programs

Zoning is a legal mechanism that regulates what property owners can and cannot do with their property. Zoning keeps compatible things together—like types of uses or sizes and forms of buildings. Several City agencies, departments, and boards and commissions play important, but separate, roles in zoning.

The Boston Zoning Code

The BPDA writes zoning. The Boston Zoning Commission (BZC) adopts zoning. The Inspectional Services Department (ISD) interprets and applies zoning. The Zoning Board of Appeal (ZBA) determines eligibility for exceptions from zoning.

The most recent edition of the Boston Zoning Code was enacted in 1964. In the 1980s and 1990s, there was a comprehensive rezoning process that led to the rewriting of the zoning for many neighborhoods. Some zoning articles apply to the entire city, while others apply to specific neighborhoods. Article 53 regulates East Boston's built environment and was last updated in 1993.

Zoning articles that apply to all neighborhoods in Boston

Article 37 - Green Buildings and the Climate Resiliency Policy

Green Buildings, inserted into the Zoning Code in 2007, and the Climate Resiliency Policy, updated in 2017, together ensure that major building projects are planned, designed, constructed, and managed to minimize adverse environmental impacts and are resilient to climate change. All proposed projects subject to or electing to comply with Zoning Article 80B, Large Project Review, are subject to the requirements of Zoning Article 37 and the Resiliency Policy. For more information about Article 37 and the Climate Resiliency Policy, see "City Policies and Programs" on page 86.

Article 80 - Development Review and Approval

Adopted in 1996 by the BPDA to provide clear guidelines for the development review process relating to Large Projects (more than 50,000 square feet), Small Projects (more than 20,000 square feet and/or 15+ net new residential units), Planned Development Areas, and Institutional Master Plans.

Zoning articles that are specific to East Boston

Article 53 - East Boston Neighborhood District

East Boston's zoning article was inserted into the Zoning Code in 1993, and established the zoning regulations for the comprehensive plan for the East Boston Neighborhood District, published in 2000. Article 53 defines use and dimensional regulations for all zoning subdistricts in the neighborhood. There are six types of Residential subdistricts, four Neighborhood Design Overlay Districts, four types of Neighborhood Business subdistricts, six types of Waterfront subdistricts, one type of Local Industrial subdistrict, three types of Economic Development Area subdistricts, one type of Conservation Protection subdistricts, one type of Community Facilities subdistrict, eight types of Open Space subdistricts, and one type of Corridor Enhancement subdistrict. Article 53 also establishes the location of PDA-eligible areas.

Article 27T - Interim Planning Overlay District

An Interim Planning Overlay District (IPOD) is a temporary zoning code adopted by the City for a geographic area which is undergoing a long term planning or zoning process. East Boston was subject to a previous IPOD designation (Article 27G) which required the production of comprehensive planning policies, development controls, and design guidelines for the East Boston Neighborhood District, and established the East Boston Neighborhood Plan, adopted by the Boston Redevelopment Authority in 2000, as the general plan for the East Boston Neighborhood District. The article expired when Article 53 was formally adopted. The current East Boston IPOD (Article 27T), established in October 2018 in association with PLAN: East Boston, covers the extents of the East Boston Neighborhood District excluding Logan Airport and Suffolk Downs, and will be effective for the duration of PLAN: East Boston. The IPOD will send all projects above a defined threshold to the Zoning Board of Appeals, but it does not replace or change underlying zoning. The IPOD will be lifted at the conclusion of the planning process.

BPDA Development Review Processes

The BPDA's Development Review Department facilitates the review of small and large development projects, Planned Development Areas (>1 acre), and Institutional Master Plans (projects relating to academic and medical campuses) pursuant to Article 80 of the Boston Zoning Code.

Projects that do not require zoning relief are often referred to "as-of-right." If a project requires zoning relief, the project proponent may pursue relief, including variances or conditional uses, through the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). The process engages several agencies and boards, including Inspectional Services Department (ISD), ZBA, BPDA, and the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services (ONS).

Next Steps

The planning process follows a timeline designed to move from neighborhood-wide discussions about high-level priorities across several planning topics to scenario-based discussions in increasingly specific geographies. Discussions in the next phase of the process will focus on gathering feedback related to specific planning recommendations.



Residents talked about their priorities for their neighborhoods during walking tours in 2019. For the Maverick Central walking tour in June 2019, residents highlighted streets and projects that were of particular concern.

From Goals to Actions

The next phase of the process will focus on identifying the specific actions that will contribute to planning goals.

PLAN: East Boston asked members of the East Boston community to identify challenges and opportunities across several planning topics.

Members of the planning team will synthesize that feedback and combine it with analysis presented here to produce specific recommendations to address those challenges and opportunities. Recommendations will focus on actions that can be implemented through zoning and design guidelines and projects for the neighborhood's multimodal transportation network, and will be presented to the community for feedback.

The impact of each recommendation will be explored through the use of design scenarios.

Design scenarios help demonstrate how priorities shape the built environment. Public engagement will be structured around neighborhood character areas including neighborhood residential, squares and mixed use corridors, and waterfront and industrial areas. Community members will be able to engage with design scenarios for each of these areas and give feedback to further refine recommendations. Recommendations will be encoded as a series of specific actions that can be taken to accomplish shared planning goals.

We want to hear from you!

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