

SECTION ONE

Civic Health



Vision

A welcoming community with strong, supportive social networks, mutual respect across group boundaries and many opportunities for participation and engagement in civic affairs.

Indicators of Civic Health	Measures	How Is Boston Doing?
1.1 Civic Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Number of neighborhood associations and organizations by neighborhood ■ Volunteer activity in Boston ■ Percent of youth who feel connected to the community ■ Charitable donations by neighborhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Data not available at this time ■ In 2000, Read Boston volunteers tutored over 2000 children ■ In 1999, 60% of Boston youth surveyed reported volunteer activity. 6,000 youth had adult mentors ■ Giving was highest in ‘other charitable donations’ category. Central Boston led in political donations
1.2 High Voter Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Total voting population 18+ years vs .registered voters and voter participation rates in Boston ■ Voter participation rates in local and national elections by neighborhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In 1999, of the 464,829 voting age Boston residents 51% were registered to vote. The average voter participation rate is about 30% ■ Bostonians vote more in presidential elections, less in local elections. Neighborhood voting rates vary
1.3 Stability and Investment within Neighborhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Percent of people living at the same address by number of years, by neighborhood ■ Changes in property value by neighborhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1990 data showed many long-term renters and owners. Current housing costs may have shifted this balance ■ From 1998–1999 home values grew overall: 3-family: 22.5%; 2-family: 12.3%; 1-family: 15.6%; condos: 6%
1.4 Local Ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Number of owner-occupied structures (1–6 family) by neighborhood ■ Percent of local businesses owned by women and minorities by neighborhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1990 census data indicate 70% of Boston’s 1–6 family residential structures are owner-occupied ■ Minority and women enterprises do not reflect Boston’s demographics
1.5 Civic Confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Percent of residents who trust their neighbors, by neighborhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In 1999, 80% of Boston residents surveyed trusted their neighbors
1.6 Healthy Race Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Percent of minority professionals and managers in private industry by race ■ Citywide hate crimes ■ Degree of racial integration in Metro-Boston and by Boston neighborhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Minorities represent a total of 10.9% of all professionals and 6.2% of all managers/officials in private industry ■ See Public Safety section ■ While many Boston neighborhoods are racially segregated, Boston is among the most racially integrated communities in Metro-Boston
1.7 Welcoming, Inclusive Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Percent of accessible public buildings ■ Multi-lingual capacity in major public institutions and places 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Data not available at this time ■ Sample survey shows growing multi-lingual awareness.

Civic Health

Measured against most other American cities, Boston has an unusually high level of civic engagement.

Historical Context

Massachusetts' Puritan founders established the town meeting, an innovative form of democracy and decision making, in the 17th century. This was not unlike the tribal councils of the Massachusetts Indians whose land they had appropriated.

In the 18th century, Bostonians began to found organizations and associations that brought like-minded people together to further a range of interests and causes. In fact, the success of Paul Revere's mobilization of the Massachusetts Bay citizenry on the eve of the American Revolution is credited by Malcolm Gladwell, author of "The Tipping Point," to Revere's stature and connections as a respected member of numerous civic organizations.

Boston's early African-American residents founded the African Society, which was first organized to abolish slavery and later became a mutual aid and charitable organization. In the 19th century, Irish immigrants used electoral politics to advance their interests. With other newcomers, they developed strong networks of mutual support in church parishes as they moved into Dorchester, Roxbury, and South Boston. Later, Italians and Russian Jews in the North and West End — along with Chinese in Chinatown and Lebanese, West Indians and Puerto Ricans in the South End — contributed their traditions of civic activities to Boston's dense social fabric. As Boston annexed adjacent municipalities, these groups moved further into Boston's new neighborhoods, creating enclaves of mutual support and commerce.

However, following World War II, Boston began to lose population as young families, many headed by returning soldiers eligible for subsidized mortgages, moved to new suburbs on the outskirts of Boston. As the city's population and prospects shrank institutional disinvestment

strategies such as redlining (the refusal to make loans in a targeted area) and block busting (racial steering and the churning of residential housing) created a cycle of deterioration. The people leaving Boston were mostly white, and many of the city's newer residents were people of color from the rural American South and Puerto Rico seeking jobs in Boston's factories. Even as they began their new lives, the city's neighborhoods were deteriorating.

In 1954, Boston College initiated the Boston Citizens Seminar, designed to bring leaders of the city together to plan for the future. Out of these seminars grew a vision for Boston as a new center of financial services and commerce. The seminars were able to transcend a century-old division between Boston's old Yankee leadership and newer Irish leaders. The first major new building in 50 years, the Prudential Center, was constructed, and the City set up the Boston Redevelopment Authority to develop plans for urban renewal. But, with a continued population exodus to the suburbs and institutional disinvestment undermining Boston's neighborhoods, the city's civic health was in decline.

By the mid-1960s, Boston's tax base had dropped, its credit rating was at a record low and its social fabric had begun to tear visibly, undermining the dreams of old and new residents seeking stability for themselves and their families. Urban renewal plans and clearance, such as the demolition of the West End and parts of the South End, fueled tensions. Riots in other neighborhoods followed the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1968.

The late 1960s and 1970s were a difficult time for American cities. Many central cities were so neglected that residents and experts alike began to think that the death of an urban neighborhood was part of a natural cycle. The civic health of Boston worsened. School desegregation battles, forced into the open by a lawsuit by black parents seeking schools of equal quality to those of white children, reinforced distrust, racial and geographic boundaries, and political cynicism. More residents fled to the suburbs, including many participating in "white flight." With a weakened infrastructure, a number of neighbor-

hoods were blighted with daily arson fires, some set by desperate owners or by speculators to gain insurance money. As a result, tens of thousands of vacant house lots left blocks full of “missing teeth” that began to be used as dumping sites for debris and garbage. Commercial traffic and property values in many neighborhoods fell dramatically as crime rates rose.

Boston was pulled from the brink of disaster by civic action. People across the city, in every neighborhood and every sector, looked into the chasm of hate, violence and deterioration and committed themselves to creating a different future for Boston.

Civic associations fought for control of urban renewal plans. Coalitions formed to stop new highway construction through the city core. Housing activists sought to add affordable units to comprehensive neighborhood plans and to reclaim vacant land. Activist residents founded health care centers, revived old settlement houses and created new mutual aid societies; they organized youth programs, art centers, community gardens and sports leagues. Many of the civic associations and community-based organizations, health centers and development corporations organized in the mid to late 1970s are still at work in Boston today.

This kind of civic action, engagement and leadership had long characterized Boston's history. It has come to be called “social capital” through the work of Robert Putnam, a professor at Harvard University, who has studied this phenomenon and documented its importance to the economic success of cities, towns, and nations.

Regional context

Residents of Greater Boston have long been known for strong identification with their cities and towns, and a high degree of civic participation. Metro Boston is equally well known for the lack of coordination and collaboration among municipalities.

While Massachusetts retains its reputation as the state where the town meeting style of govern-

ment was born, attendance is down in many communities and voter participation rates throughout the state are down in both state and national elections.

In 1960, more than 63% of eligible voters in Massachusetts participated in the national election, and almost 76% participated in state elections. By 1996, participation had dropped to 49% in the national election and to 55% in state elections.

In fact, for both the presidential and gubernatorial elections between 1992 and 1996, all 101 cities and towns in Boston's Metropolitan area showed a decrease in voting rates — some by as much as 15%. Higher-income communities experienced the sharpest decreases overall.

In a countervailing trend, residents of the region seem more willing than ever to consider broad-based — even collaborative — solutions to shared local challenges. This is expressed in collaborative governmental initiatives and public-private partnerships such as the new Boston Harbor Islands National Park. Broad faith-based organizing efforts such as the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (GBIO) and Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries (CMM) are focusing on solutions to the regional housing crisis. The Metropolitan Affairs Coalition (MAC), the Boston Society of Architects, Northeastern University's Center for Urban and Regional Policy and the Massachusetts Institute for a New Commonwealth are all bringing people together from throughout Greater Boston to focus on regional issues such as workforce development, suburban sprawl and housing affordability. Regional coalitions are also tackling issues of child well being, access to health care, school reform, and other pressing issues.

Citywide context

A renaissance of community activism and citizen engagement has blossomed in Boston, along with the notion, spreading throughout the country, that urban neighborhoods can be excellent places in which to live.

Boston is well known for its effective public/private partnerships in a variety of areas. These include, among others: the Boston Private Industry Council, with its focus on school reform and school-to-work advancement through the Boston Compact; the Boston Higher Education Partnership, raising funds for scholarships; the Boston Coalition Against Drugs and Violence, helping to coordinate services and strategies; the Boston 2:00 to 6:00 Initiative, developing a strong network of opportunity for young people in after-school time; the Boston Home Certificate Initiative, a partnership of the city and 26 private lenders — and many more. The City of Boston seeks to stimulate and strengthen these efforts and others through its Office of Community Partnerships, the Safe Neighborhoods Initiative, Community Centers programs and a host of special events and initiatives.

Likewise, civic activity in Boston is supported by a strong and increasingly collaborative philanthropic sector. This sector provides more than \$100 million annually in private funds and donations to support nonprofit cultural and civic activities, social services, and community development at every level of community life.

Boston, long an exporter of political expertise and leadership, is in the forefront of the national community building movement. Visitors arrive from throughout the nation and the world to see what Bostonians have achieved in the fields of crime prevention, neighborhood business district revitalization, youth development, public health outcomes, and the use of shared data to measure change. These successes are all characterized by comprehensive, collaborative strategies that build on Boston's particular strengths and resources. Boston was rightly called “resource rich and collaboration poor” for many years, but this civic culture is changing.

Despite its dense civic infrastructure, however, Boston continues to struggle with issues of racial and class divisions and intolerance.

Another focus of concern is Boston's declining voter participation rate. In the 1997 City Council election, fewer than 30% of Boston's 235,940 registered voters cast ballots. In 1998, fewer than

50% voted in state and federal elections — a record low. According to the Boston Globe newspaper, voter participation in Boston is lowest among residents under 30 and highest among those over 55. To address this, many support a proposal to create a Boston Commission on Civic Involvement and Voter Participation. The commission would review voter and civic participation rates and develop strategies to increase them, especially among younger Bostonians. Suggestions include balloting by mail, ATM or the Internet and Saturday election days. In 2000, a number of groups have joined forces to register voters through the block-by-block Boston Vote initiative.

Neighborhood context

More and more people in Boston are actively working on the health of their neighborhood. Health centers, youth agencies and community development corporations established to fight the crises of the 1970s have been joined by neighborhood and block associations, pilot and charter schools, faith-based coalitions, tenant associations, youth-led organizations, conflict resolution groups, leadership development initiatives, immigrant groups' mutual aid societies, parenting groups, crime watch groups, computer centers, networks of grandparents raising their children's children, micro-enterprise support groups and many others. These groups are evolving to be more inclusive and more comprehensive, linking together in multi-cultural, multi-issue, and multi-neighborhood coalitions and strategies.

Boston has more neighborhood associations and nonprofit organizations per capita than most cities, giving citizens a solid framework within which to get involved in the civic process and express commitment to their communities. In 1999, for example, the number of crime watch groups in Boston topped 1,000 — despite the lowest level of serious crime in 30 years. Neighborhood activity and debate are also nurtured by a strong network of community newspapers.

Every Boston neighborhood expresses its civic engagement somewhat differently. The fabric of Boston's civic health is a complex quilt of neigh-

neighborhood tradition, innovation, organizing and celebration: the Friends of the Boston Public Garden in Beacon Hill/Back Bay; the sports leagues and youth groups of Dorchester; the Wake Up the Earth Festival in Jamaica Plain; family promenades around Castle Island and the Saint Patrick's Day Parade in South Boston; voter registration drives, Sunday church services and golf on summer days in Roxbury; banquet season in Chinatown; saint-day festivals and corner side chats in the North End; the massive West Indian and Puerto Rican Festivals in Franklin Park; the Dorchester Day Parade. Health fairs, jobs fairs, and hard-working committees flow through libraries, schools, churches, synagogues, and mosques throughout the year.

Increasingly, residents of Boston's neighborhoods are organizing and celebrating together. Faith-based and other coalitions and initiatives are helping to break down stereotypes, historic animosities, discrimination and misunderstanding. And increasingly, these efforts are moving from dialogue to action.

Boston is both a small city and a city of neighborhoods. After five or twenty or forty years on a street — despite or perhaps even because of a neighborhood's battles and travails — residents develop bonds of familiarity and shared memories that become, over time, an invisible badge of belonging. It is these bonds that people refer to when they talk about the sense of community in so many of Boston's neighborhoods — a priceless treasure and resource that has seen the city through many hard times. It is ironic that in these good times, Boston's civic fabric may face its most daunting challenge. Many Boston residents who have contributed years of hard work and devotion to improving their neighborhoods are now struggling to keep pace with the city's prosperity and the rising cost of living.

Remaining Challenges

- **If social capital is defined as the relationships among people — the “glue” of a community — unmitigated economic success could lead to Boston's civic impoverishment.** Boston's hot real estate market threatens to

displace many longtime residents. Many of the gains in Boston over the past decades in revitalizing neighborhoods, building housing, improving the parks, saving historic buildings from destruction, enhancing neighborhood business districts, and holding Boston to a human scale — resulted from committed and persistent civic action on the part of neighborhood residents. We have a responsibility to ensure that residents who worked for their neighborhoods' improvement are not forced out by rising housing costs.

- **Boston's civic debates are shaped by differences in the perceptions of the city's various racial/ethnic and income groups.**

These differences in outlook reflect very real disparities in life opportunities and outcomes, as shown throughout this report. Unless these disparities are addressed in open and honest dialogue followed by action, deep consensus on Boston's most pressing challenges and opportunities will elude us.

- **Boston retains its national reputation as an unwelcoming city for people of color, impeding the recruitment and retention of professionals of color.**

The Partnership, Inc., a nonprofit organization that seeks to increase the diversity of staffs and boards of corporations, has established benchmarks to chronicle the successes and challenges of African American professionals in Boston. Its 2000 report, “State of African American Professionals in Boston,” finds that while diversity in the workplaces of Boston is increasing, the ratio of African American to white executives has declined. It also reports that “there are on average 8.5 corporate board seats per company on the BBJ (Boston Business Journal) top 100 companies. Of the roughly 850 board members, 91% are men and 9% are women. Some 95.3% are white, 2.2% African American, 0.7% Hispanic, and 2.1% Asian American.”

- **Attachment to place generates a high level of civic involvement but can also create turf problems.** Boston's sometimes extreme civic and neighborhood pride can be a double-edged sword. Bostonians now report feeling safer than most suburbanites, but many Boston residents do

not feel safe in all neighborhoods of the city, and many suburbanites do not feel safe coming to Boston. Greater Boston's neighborhood and municipal boundaries are becoming more permeable, but much work is needed to enhance our ability to work together across a narrow identification with place, race, class and sexual orientation.

- **Hate crimes are holding steady in Boston at a time when the crime rate overall is falling.**

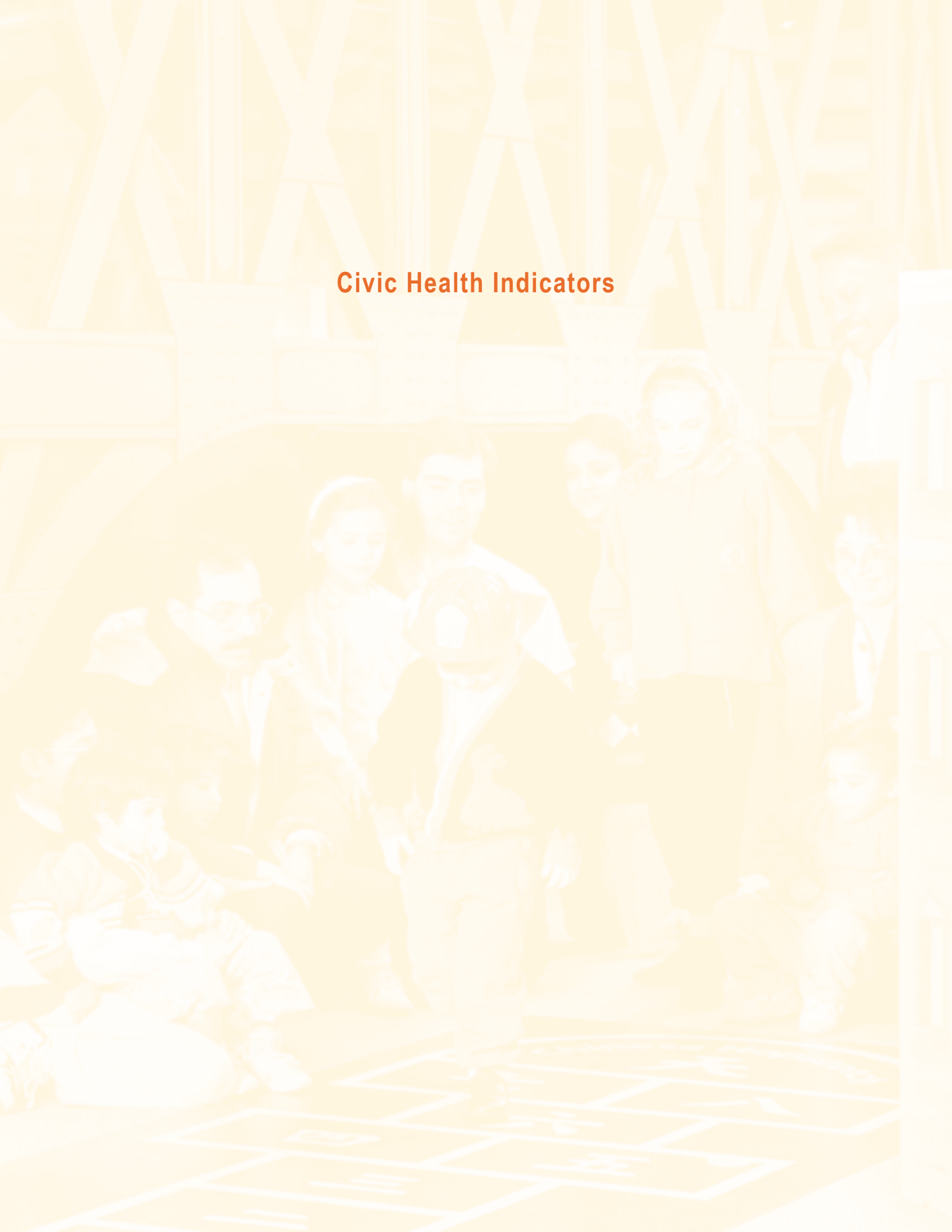
- **Full and effective civic participation in the Information Age requires access to the Internet and the ability to turn data into information and then shared knowledge.**

Bridging the digital divide may have as great a beneficial impact on Boston's civic engagement as on educational and economic advancement.

- **The sustained health of Boston and its neighborhoods depends not only on the number and variety of civic groups but on their efficacy.** Public policy often exerts a great impact on the civic health of a neighborhood, city or region, but there is often a disconnect between a community's ability to organize itself internally and its ability to affect external decisions. Capacity building and organizing on the part of residents, community-based groups and institutions will increase their effective inclusion in philanthropic, city, state, and federal policy formulation.

- **The civic community in Boston must strengthen efforts to involve and train young people and newcomers as leaders of the future.** The struggle to revitalize Boston and its neighborhoods has spanned much more than one generation. Gains made in Boston's civic health today must have the capacity to reach well beyond the current economic boom and well beyond the current generation and pool of leaders. This will happen only if all young people are well prepared to be active citizens.

Civic Health Indicators



1.1 Civic Involvement

A healthy community has an active citizenry. In neighborhoods, local communities and cities all across America, citizens are coming together to solve the problems of their communities. The interactions of individuals, families, local associations, organizations, and institutions are producing outcomes that develop trust, empower residents, increase neighborliness, generate hope and optimism, and strengthen the social fabric and effectiveness of communities.

The level of civic engagement in a community is a reflection of how involved people feel, and how they act toward each other. Lack of civic action conveys that either the community is completely satisfied with the state of affairs or that it lacks confidence in its effectiveness. The more we engage in civic affairs, the more likely we are to take responsibility and produce tangible improvements and even donate to charities and causes. Civic involvement can take several forms — volunteering for specific projects, local problem-solving through participation in committees and meetings to address concerns, charitable giving, membership support and, almost impossible to measure, informal neighborliness, which provides safety on the street, help to seniors and young people, and a sense of stability.

Number of neighborhood associations and neighborhood-based organizations, by neighborhood

PARTICIPATION IN CIVIC AND COMMUNITY EVENTS REFLECTS BOSTON’S WEALTH OF SOCIAL CAPITAL .

NO RELIABLE COMPREHENSIVE LISTING OF ORGANIZATIONS IS AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME.

What does this mean?

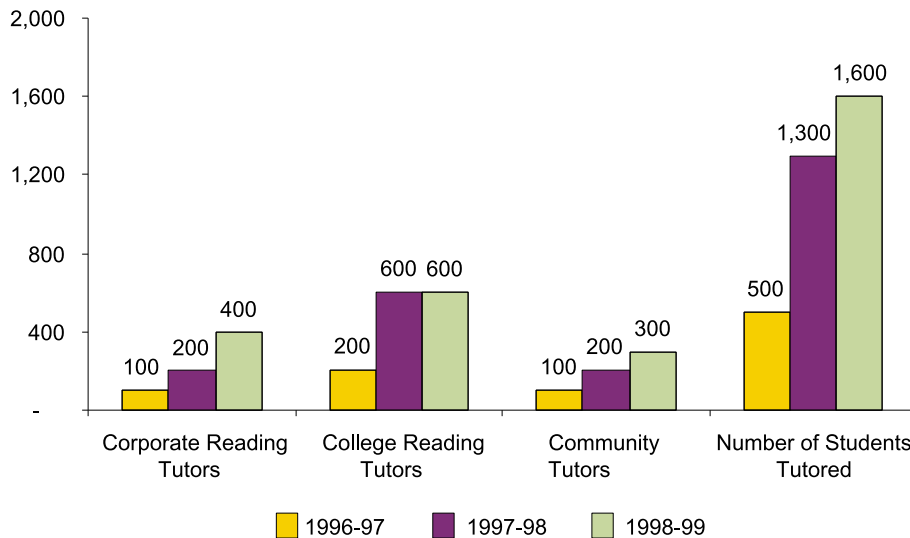
Boston has a wealth of “social capital,” from youth organizations, little leagues and block associations to religious institutions, community development corporations and advocacy groups. These associations and organizations have a long history of civic action in Boston. In more recent years, many individuals and community groups have been outspoken and successful in both creating needed resources and opposing unhealthy facilities in their neighborhoods. Bostonians have also become increasingly active in community organizations, creating a vision of what they want for their neighborhoods and taking appropriate action to steer results in that direction.

While there are many lists of organizations engaged in civic activity, no reliable, comprehensive listing of organizations is available at this time.

Volunteer activity in Boston at Read Boston

VOLUNTEERISM IN THE READ BOSTON PROGRAM GREW 350% FROM 1996 TO 2000. OVER 2,000 CHILDREN WERE TUTORED.

Read Boston Program volunteers and number of students tutored 1996–1999



Source: Read Boston Program, City of Boston

What does this mean?

A 1997 nationwide poll by the American Association of Retired Persons suggests that the average American belongs to 4.2 volunteer groups. In Boston, people of all ages, income groups, and races are actively engaged in volunteer efforts. Examples of these activities range from City Year's Serv-a-Thons, parent councils, tutoring in Boston's schools, neighborhood cleanups, crime watch groups, Parks Partner activities, arts festivals and celebrations, as well as membership on neighborhood boards and committees.

Read Boston, selected to illustrate the spirit of volunteer activity in Boston, aims to help all third graders in the Boston public schools read at grade level by the year 2003. Third graders' reading ability is a strong indicator of future academic success. The rapid increase in the number of Read Boston volunteers is indicative of the capacity of Bostonians to mobilize and have an impact on a particular issue of concern — in this case, public education and the success of Boston's children. In the 1998–1999 and 1999–2000 school years, 1,750 Read Boston volunteers, including corporate workers, community members and college students, helped more than 2,000 children improve their reading skills.

Percent of youth who feel connected to the community

60% OF YOUTH SURVEYED REPORTED VOLUNTEERING AND ENGAGING IN COMMUNITY SERVICE IN THE PRIOR SIX MONTHS. 6,000 YOUTH ARE CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN A FORMAL MENTORING PROGRAM.

Source: Office of Community Partnerships, Health & Human Services Cabinet, City of Boston

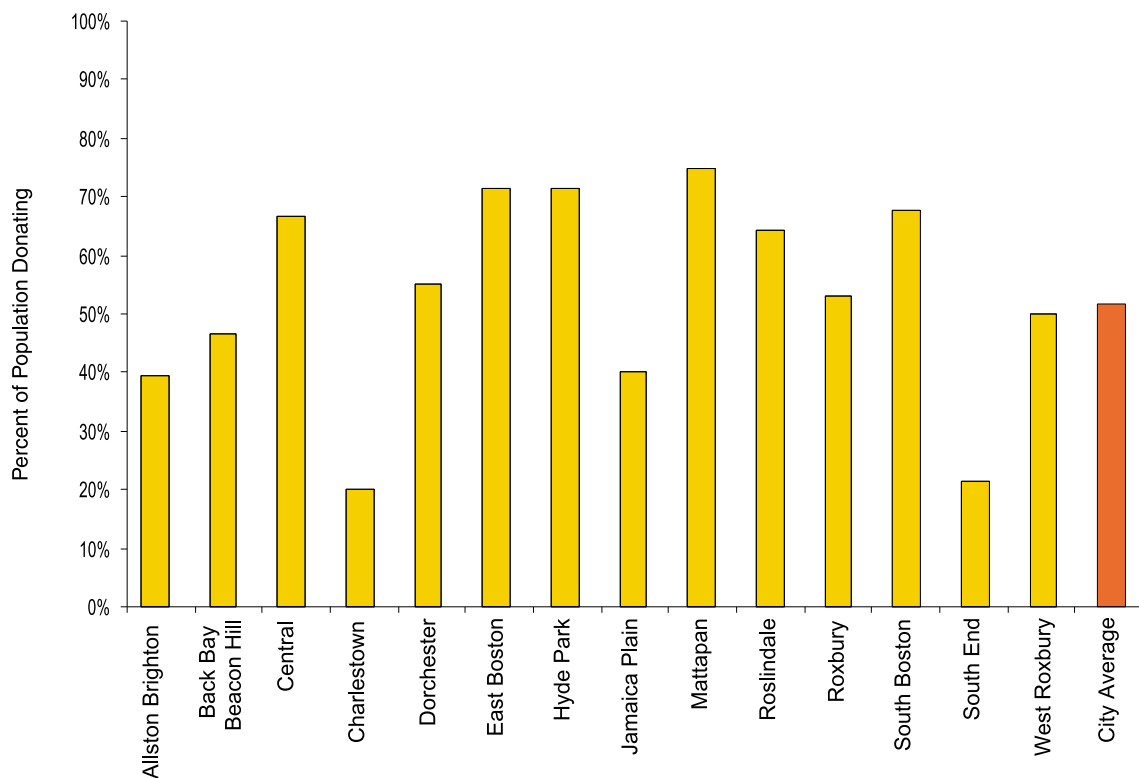
What does this mean?

Young people have an enormous amount of energy and passion which, if well directed, can translate into constructive civic engagement. If ignored, this same energy can lead to social problems caused by boredom and a lack of challenging activities (see Public Safety section). The 1999 Annual Youth Survey of 1,000 youth by the Boston's Office of Community Partnerships indicates that 47% of the youth surveyed identify making a contribution to society as a very important life goal and that 60% reported performing volunteer work or community service in the prior six months. In its April 2000 report titled *"Everybody's Out There for Youth"* Boston's Office of Community Partnerships talks about the importance of caring adults in the lives of young people as essential to any "asset building" approach. It reports that over 6,000 Boston youth are registered in formal mentoring programs. Additionally, the 1999 Annual Youth Survey also indicates that 96% of youth surveyed report having a caring adult in their lives who can inspire them to work hard and achieve their dreams, and 93% who have some adult they can confide in if they need help.

Charitable donations by neighborhood

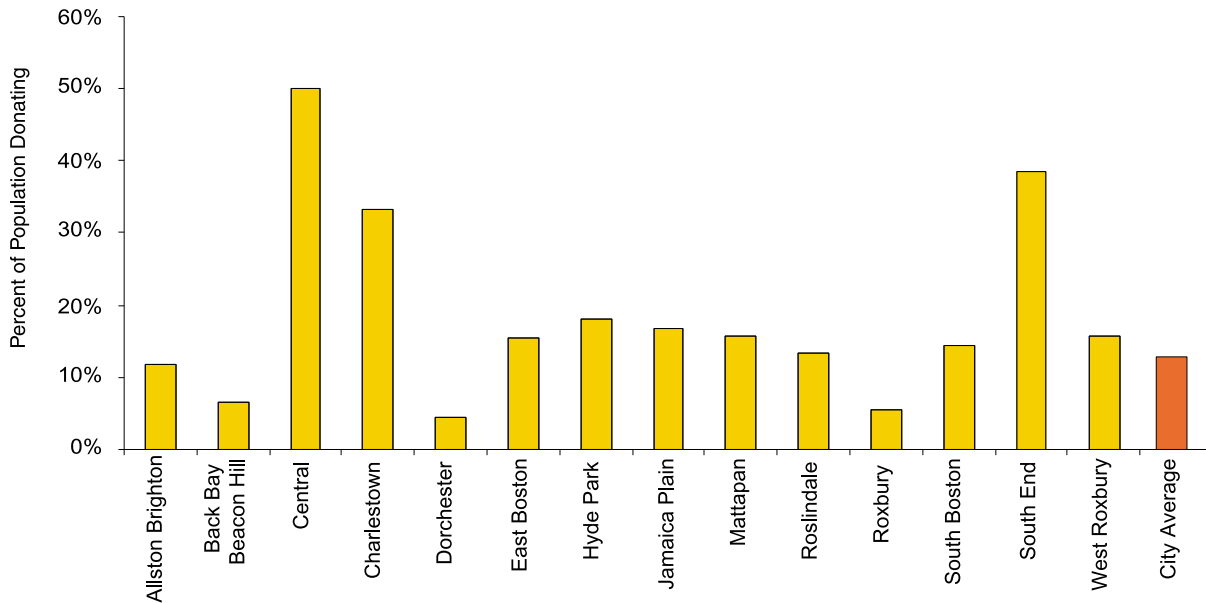
GIVING IN BOSTON WAS HIGHEST IN THE OTHER CHARITABLE DONATIONS CATEGORY. CENTRAL BOSTON RESIDENTS LED IN POLITICAL DONATIONS.

Religious donations by neighborhood, Boston Pilot Survey, 1998



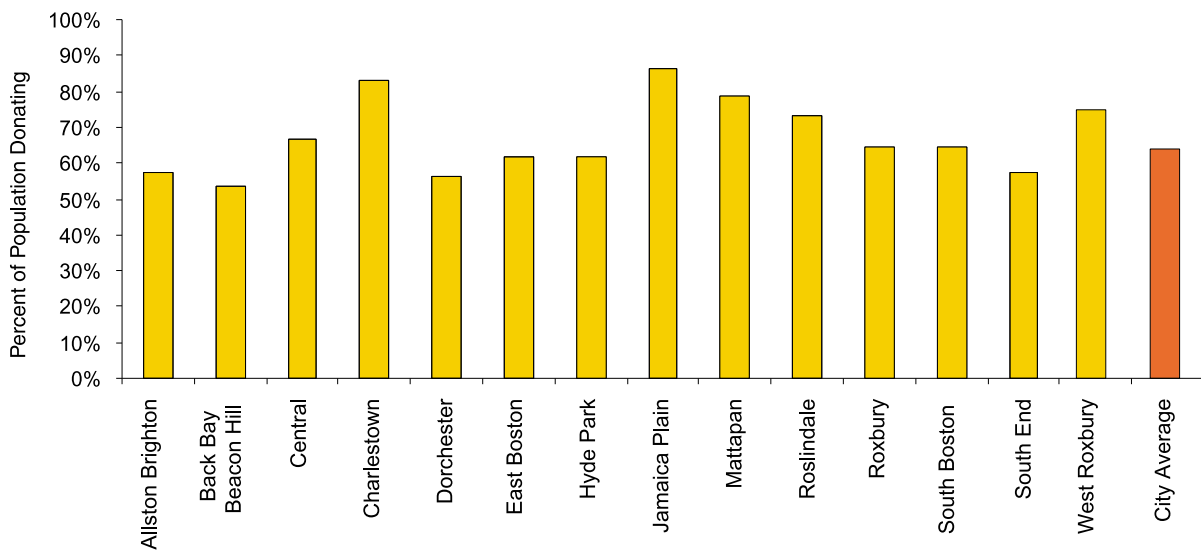
Source: UMass Boston, Center for Survey Research

Political donations by neighborhood Boston Pilot Survey, 1998



Source: UMass Boston, Center for Survey Research

Other charitable donations by neighborhood Boston Pilot Survey, 1998



Source: UMass Boston, Center for Survey Research

What does this mean?

A 1998 indicators study released by the President's Council on Sustainable Development suggests that the percentage of households contributing time and money to religious charities exceeded contributions to charities in other sectors by almost 100%. Charitable giving across the nation was led by religious charities, followed by health, human services, youth development, and education. A 1998

University of Massachusetts/Boston survey of 300 residents across Boston neighborhoods explored charitable donations in three major categories: religious donations; other charitable causes; and political donations. Donations also varied by income group. Responses indicate that people earning less than \$30,000 gave to religious and other charitable causes almost equally, while people earning over \$30,000 gave more heavily in the other charitable causes category. Boston residents preferring most to donate in the other charitable contributions category were most likely to be found in the neighborhoods of Jamaica Plain, Mattapan, Charlestown and West Roxbury. Second preference for donations was to religious institutions, highest in the neighborhoods of East Boston, Central Boston, Mattapan and South Boston. The third category, political donations, was preferred most by residents of Central Boston, Charlestown and the South End.

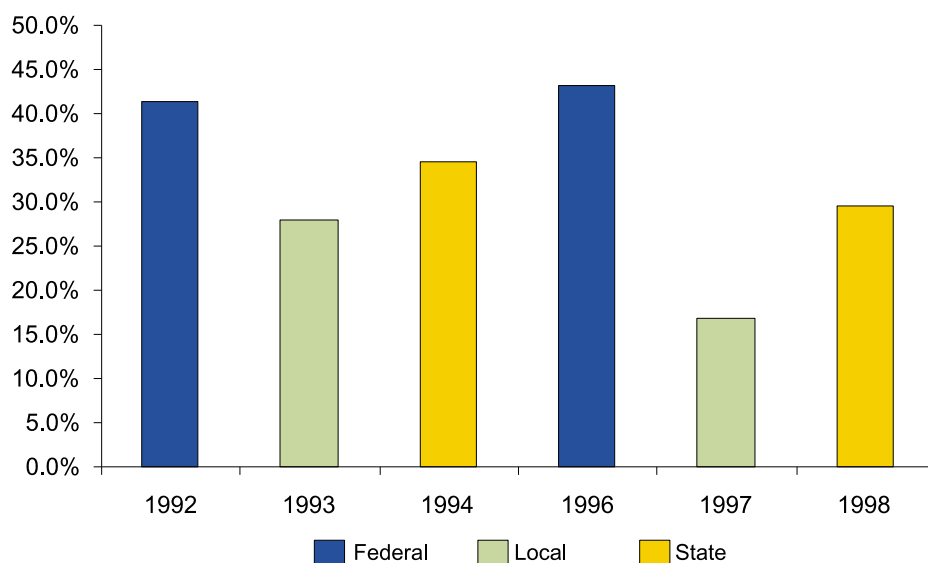
1.2 High Voter Participation

Voters are the driving force of democracy. As an indicator of civic health, voter participation rates tell us about democracy in action, about the degree to which people exercise individual choice to produce community leaders and to collectively influence policies, laws, and programs. Given the influx of newcomer immigrant populations in Boston, it is also important to consider additional indicators to account for civic action taken by people not yet eligible to vote, who find other ways to express their concern, interest, and personal investment in improving community life. As shown in the indicator on Civic Involvement, many of these community members are joining neighborhood or citywide organizations, committees, task forces, and other forums.

Total voting population 18+ years old versus number of registered voters and actual voter participation rates

OF THE ELIGIBLE VOTER POPULATION OF 464,829 (18+ YEARS), BOSTON HAS 237,870 REGISTERED VOTERS AND A VOTER PARTICIPATION RATE THAT VARIES BETWEEN 30% AND 50%.

Boston's voter participation rates for federal, state and local elections, 1992–1999



Source: Boston Election Department

What does this mean?

Boston has 237,870 registered voters out of a voting age population of 464,829. Its voter turnout rate for voting ranges between 30% and 50%, depending upon the type of elections and the fierceness of the race. There are many reasons besides why people do not vote: they may not like any of the candidates; may feel that the outcome will not produce desired changes; or believe that their vote will not really count. They may also be recent immigrants who, though of voting age, are not eligible to cast a vote.

Number of people who voted in the most recent mayoral and presidential elections, by neighborhood

BOSTONIANS VOTE MORE IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS (40%–50%), AND LESS IN LOCAL ELECTIONS (LESS THAN 30%). PARTICIPATION RATES VARY GREATLY ACROSS AND EVEN WITHIN NEIGHBORHOODS.

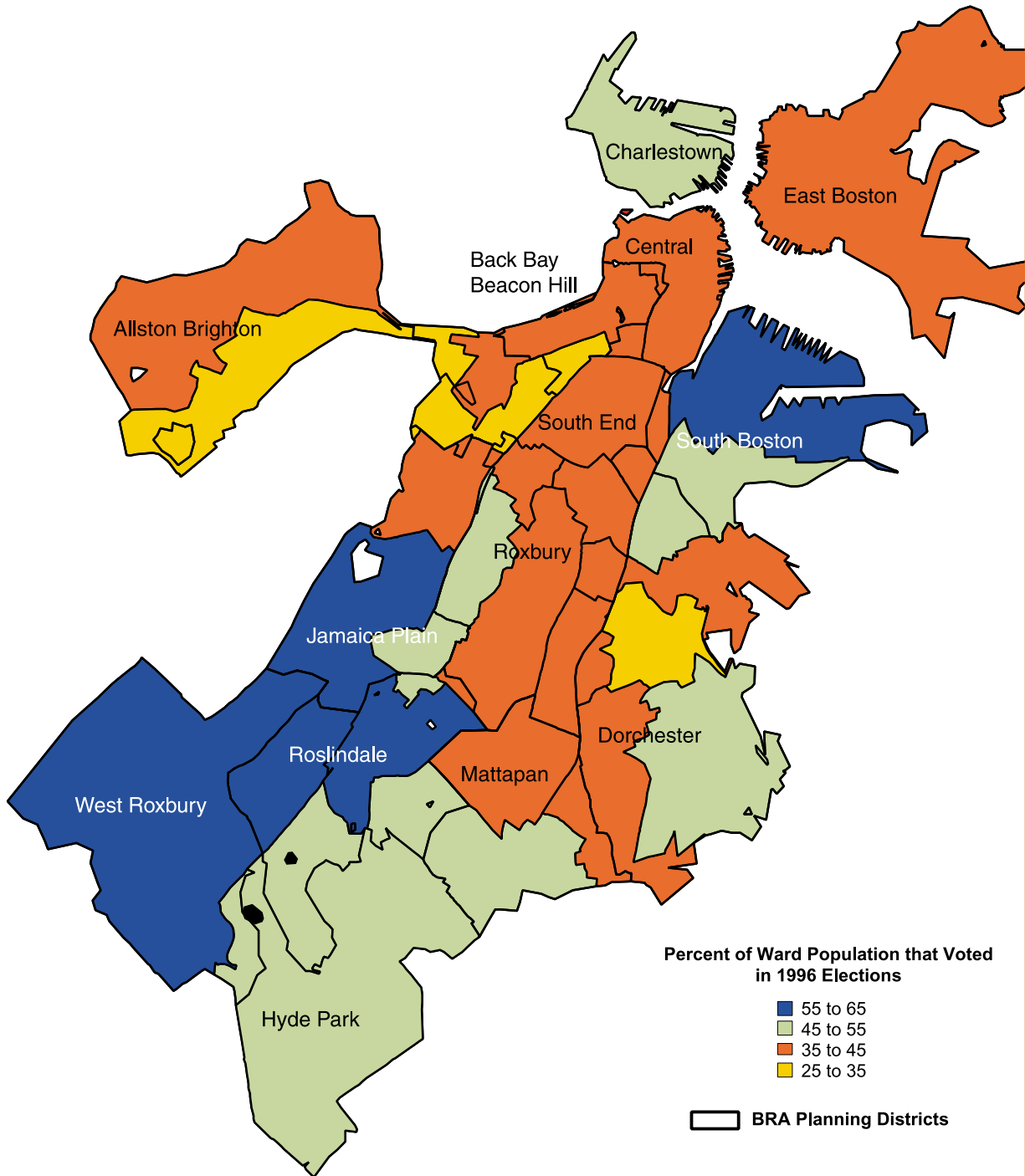
See voter participation rate maps that follow

What does this mean?

Boston has not seen a significant change in overall voter turnout over the last five election cycles. Bostonians, on average, are far more likely to vote in a presidential election than in a local or state election. Years with a presidential election have the highest voter turnout, and mayoral elections, held one year after presidential elections, tend to have the lowest turnout. Gubernatorial elections fall on even years between presidential elections and tend to have voter turnouts that are lower than presidential elections but higher than mayoral elections.

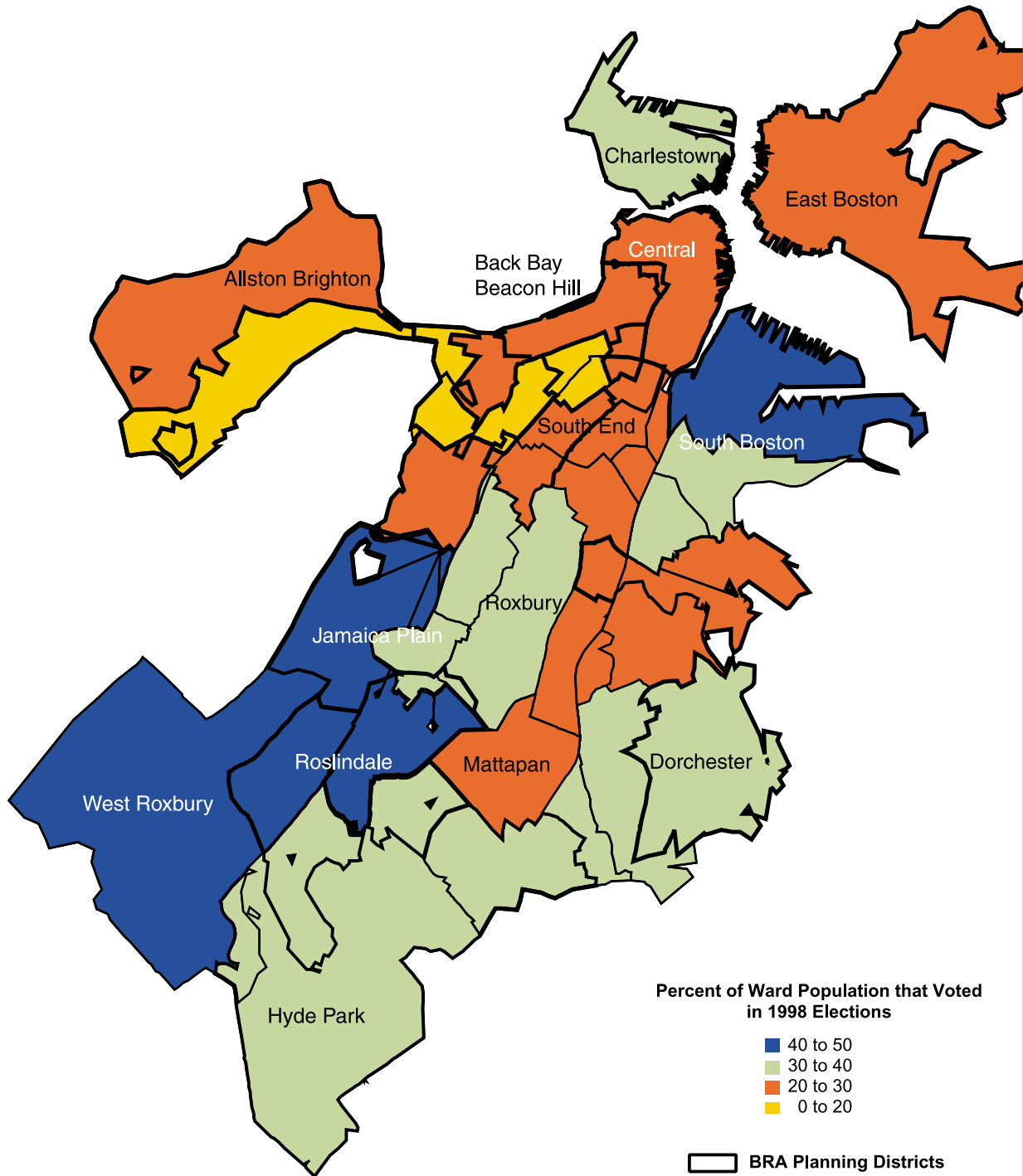
The maps on the following pages show the variation in voter turnout by ward for the 1996 presidential elections and 1998 state elections, indicating that even within one neighborhood, some wards are politically more active than others.

Percent of registered voters who voted in 1996 presidential election



Prepared by:
 Alan Saiz, Dept. of Information Services
 Northeastern University

Percent of registered voters who voted in 1998 state elections



Prepared by:
Alan Saiz, Dept. of Information Services
Northeastern University

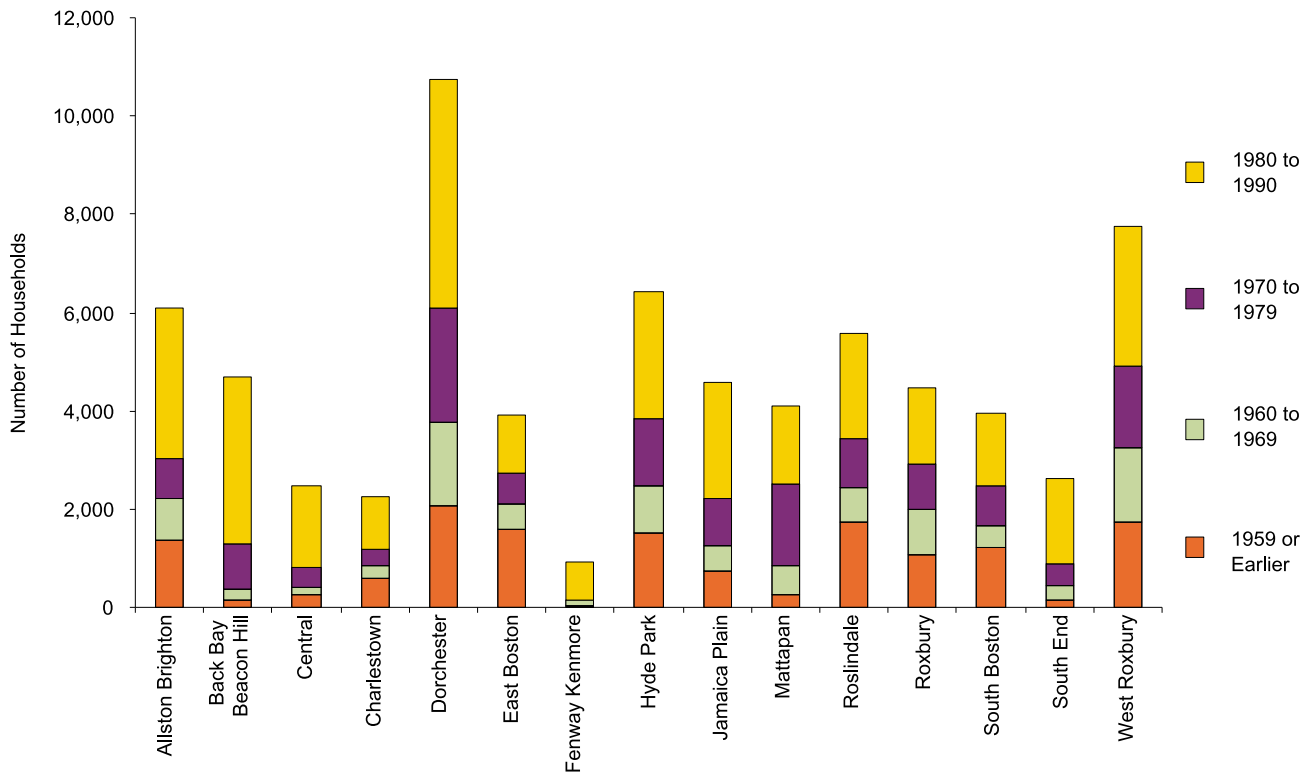
1.3 Stability and Investment Within Neighborhoods

Stable neighborhoods that are safe, well cared for, and have amenities that contribute to a high quality of life are likely to increase in both civic engagement and economic value over time. Rapid movement in and out of a neighborhood, on the other hand, affects the ability of people to get to know and trust their neighbors, and to build a sense of community. Also, rapid change is often an indicator of local economic conditions and the level of satisfaction with local services such as education and safety. Tracking stability in the context of demographic and income shifts in a neighborhood can tell us if that neighborhood is facing the threat of gentrification (with poorer people being displaced from their neighborhoods because of rising rents and home values as wealthier people move in) or about the threat of disinvestment.

Percent of people living at the same address by number of years, by neighborhood

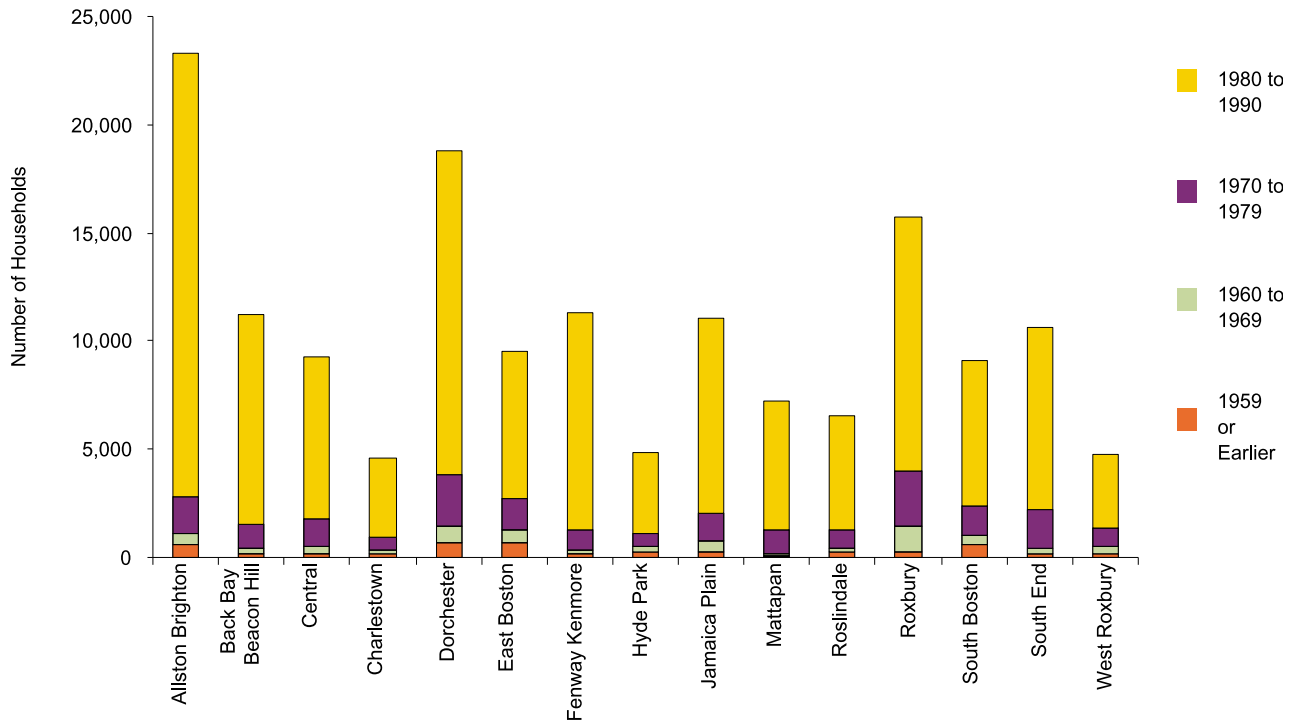
1990 CENSUS DATA INDICATE THAT MOST BOSTON NEIGHBORHOODS HAD MANY LONG-TERM RENTERS AND OWNERS. HOWEVER, CURRENT RISING HOME VALUES AND RENTS MAY BE CHANGING THIS.

Length of occupancy of homeowners by neighborhood, 1959 and earlier to 1990



Source: U.S. Census, 1990

Length of occupancy of renters by neighborhood, 1959 and earlier to 1990



Source: U.S. Census, 1990

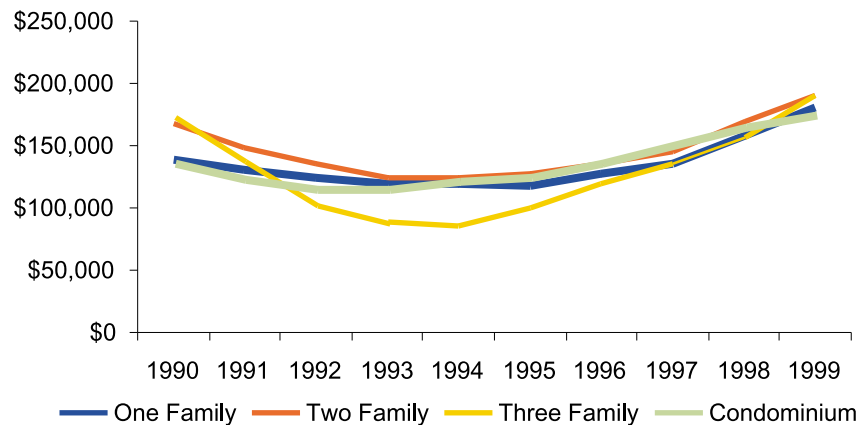
What does this mean?

People who live at the same address for more than five years are more likely than those in transition to invest in relationships, as well as in their homes and yards, the quality of which contributes to a neighborhood's stability. Census data from 1990 suggest that many Boston neighborhoods had a strong vested population of both renters and homeowners to provide stability to their neighborhoods. In 1990, neighborhoods with the largest number of long-term residents were Dorchester, Roslindale, Brighton, Hyde Park and Roxbury. Recent pressures in the housing market may be shifting this balance as increasing housing costs have the potential to drive out elderly residents and low-income families who can no longer afford to live there. As indicated by an increase in the volume of sales between 1998 and 1999 in neighborhoods such as Back Bay/Beacon Hill (66%), East Boston (43%), the South End (37.5%) and Roxbury (28%), there could be a dramatic change in long-term residential patterns. These changes need to be examined in view of income and demographic shifts in the community as they can affect the long-term stability and civic health of Boston's neighborhoods.

Changes in property values

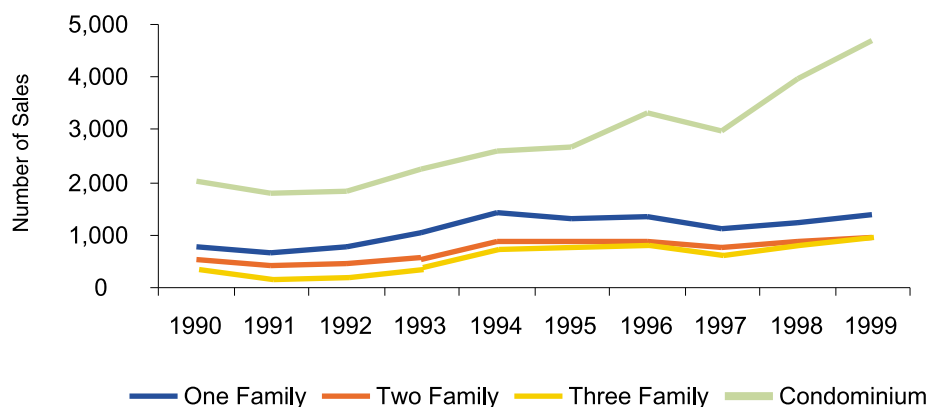
FROM 1998 TO 1999, HOME VALUES ROSE IN ALMOST ALL NEIGHBORHOODS IN BOSTON. CITYWIDE, VALUES ROSE 22.5% FOR THREE-FAMILY HOUSES, 15.6% FOR SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES, 12.3% FOR TWO-FAMILY HOMES, AND 6% FOR CONDOMINIUMS.

Change in home values, 1990-1999



Source: Department of Neighborhood Development, Research and Development Unit

Change in home sales volume, 1990-1999



Source: Department of Neighborhood Development, Research and Development Unit

What does this mean?

Between 1998 and 1999, property values rose in almost all neighborhoods in Boston, but saw a decrease in the Back Bay/Beacon Hill, Central Boston, and the Fenway/Kenmore neighborhoods. Property values for single-family units rose most in the South End, by 55%, followed by South Boston by 33.7%, and Charlestown by 25%. Some part of the increase in property values, however, is also attributable to the level of investment that government, local organizations, and local residents have made in their communities. Their engagement and advocacy has resulted in better amenities, cleaner parks and safer streets, making these communities more attractive places in which to live. Boston's robust economy and a tight housing market have also contributed to a dramatic increase in property values across every neighborhood. The rate of increase is causing grave concerns about gentrification as property owners sell in the hot housing market. Strategies aimed at stabilizing rents and providing incentives for homeowners to stay invested in their communities could go a long way towards ensuring neighborhood stability.

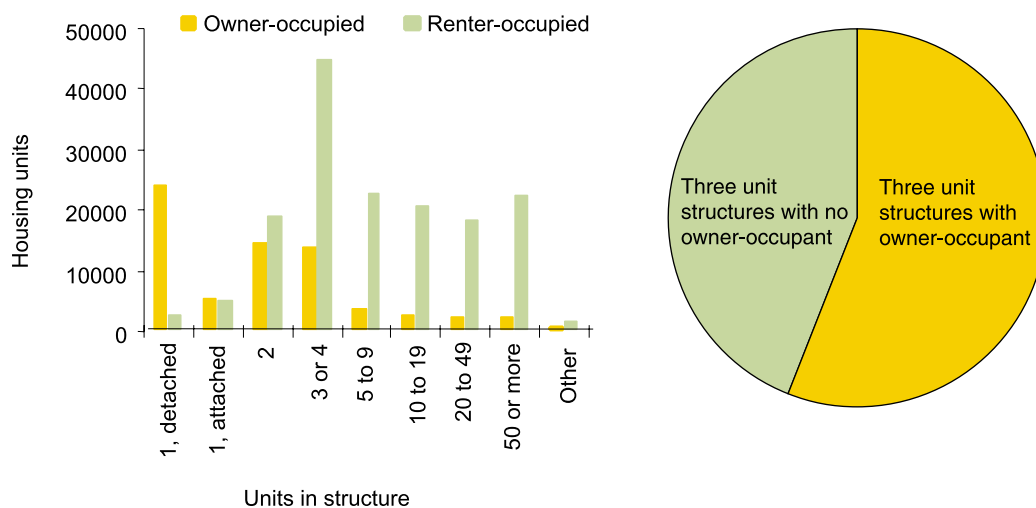
1.4 Local Ownership

Like longevity in a neighborhood, local ownership ensures that people are invested in their communities. Resident ownership often ensures accountability for the condition of one's property and for what goes on there. It acts as a self-policing mechanism for neighborhoods, as property owners watch out for issues ranging from crime to the maintenance and upkeep of the public realm in order to protect their investment. It can also lead to people being more engaged in local and community affairs, and to greater interaction among community members. Neglect, sometimes associated with absentee ownership, can affect a neighborhood's stability by creating conditions for increased crime, the perception of crime or both. Investment in upkeep on the other hand, strengthens social capital, builds community pride, and enhances our sense of well-being. However, homeowners occasionally are seen by renters as protecting their own interest at the expense of those who do not own property. A healthy community balances these interests.

Number of owner-occupied residential structures (1–6 family) by neighborhood

CENSUS DATA SHOWS THAT OVER 70% OF BOSTON'S 1–6 FAMILY STRUCTURES WERE OWNER OCCUPIED IN 1990. NEIGHBORHOOD DATA NOT AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME.

Owner occupied residential structures by building type, 1990



Source: U.S. Census, 1990

What does this mean?

Besides being the quintessential American Dream, home ownership is a strong indicator of the social and economic health of a community. In fact, neighborhood destabilization has often been attributed to poorly managed investor-owned properties or absentee-owned properties that are in disrepair. According to the “Broken-Window Syndrome,” neglect and disrepair can have a negative domino effect on property values and on a neighborhoods overall stability and economic value.

Boston has a high degree of local ownership. A large percentage of Boston's housing stock is two- and three-family owner-occupied homes. As a result, though Boston's home ownership rate is at about

35%, over 70% of all structures are owner-occupied. Two- and three-family owner-occupied homes provide homeowners with supplemental income in the form of rents, ensure neighborhood stability and investment through local ownership, and provide a local presence. It is therefore a more appropriate measure of local ownership.

Percent of local businesses owned by minorities and women by neighborhood

MINORITY AND WOMEN BUSINESS OWNERSHIP IS LOW IN COMPARISON TO NEIGHBORHOOD DEMOGRAPHICS. IT IS HIGHEST(15–30%) IN NEIGHBORHOODS WITH OVER 90% MINORITY POPULATIONS AND LESS THAN 5% IN NEIGHBORHOODS THAT ARE OVER 70%WHITE.

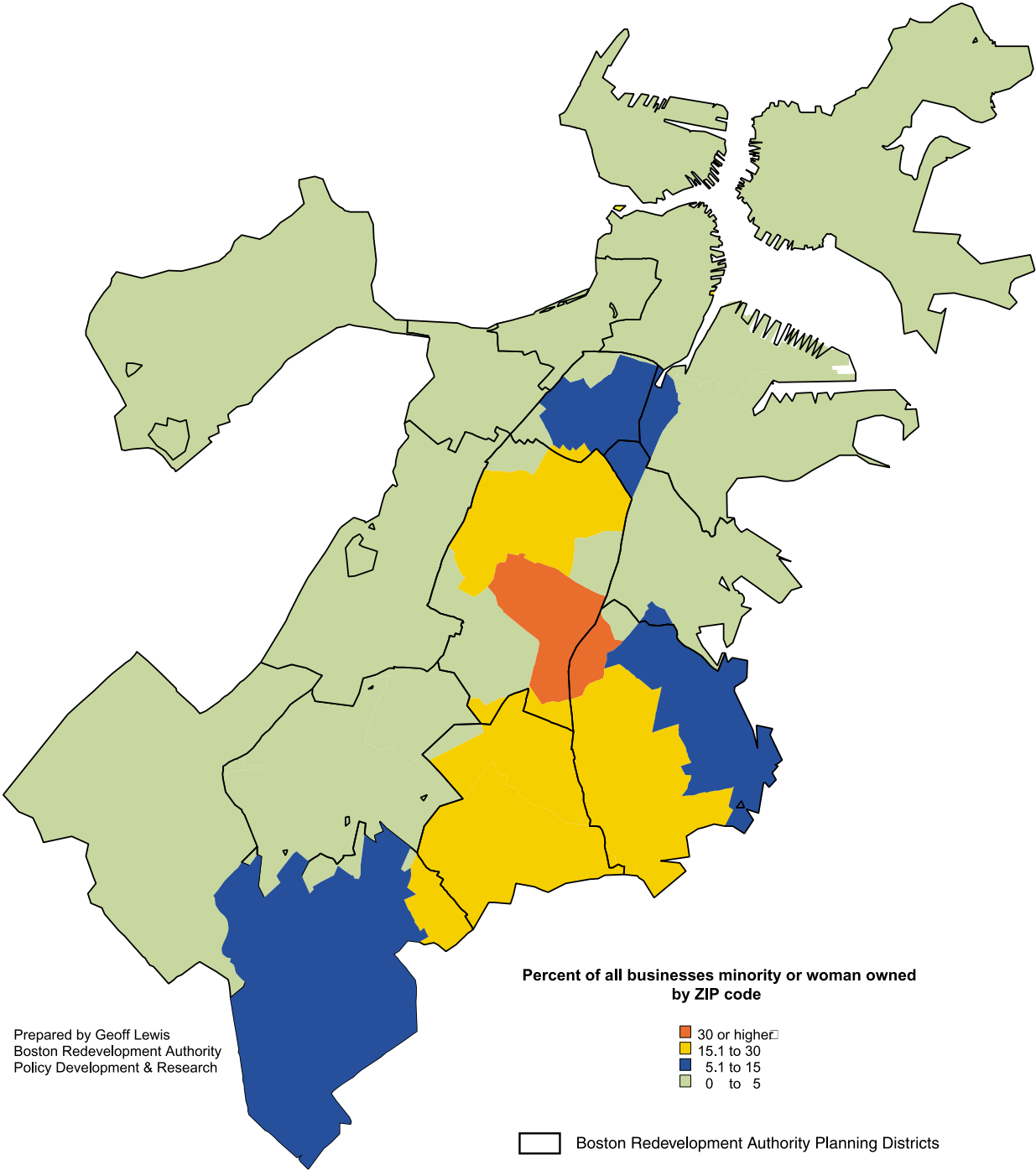
See map on following page

What does this mean?

Boston residents often refer to their neighborhood’s commercial districts as the “living room” of their community. Locally-owned businesses are often viewed as community assets that contribute to the stability and quality of life of the neighborhood. They also indicate local investment — the recycling of economic assets throughout the community — and local ownership by racial minorities and women also indicates the ease with which historically disadvantaged groups can advance in a community.

However, an examination of minority- and women-owned businesses in Boston shows that while minority and women owned businesses somewhat reflect a neighborhood’s racial/ethnic structure, the actual percentage of ownership generally falls far short of actual demographics. For instance, the predominantly minority neighborhoods of Roxbury and Mattapan, with about 90% residents of color, have the highest percentage of minority- and women-owned businesses at an average 15–30% with some pockets in Roxbury at 30–60%. The South End and Dorchester, which are racially more mixed, are at 5–15%. Boston neighborhoods that are over 70% white have less than 5% minority- and women-owned business enterprises.

Percent of businesses that are minority or woman owned



Prepared by Geoff Lewis
Boston Redevelopment Authority
Policy Development & Research

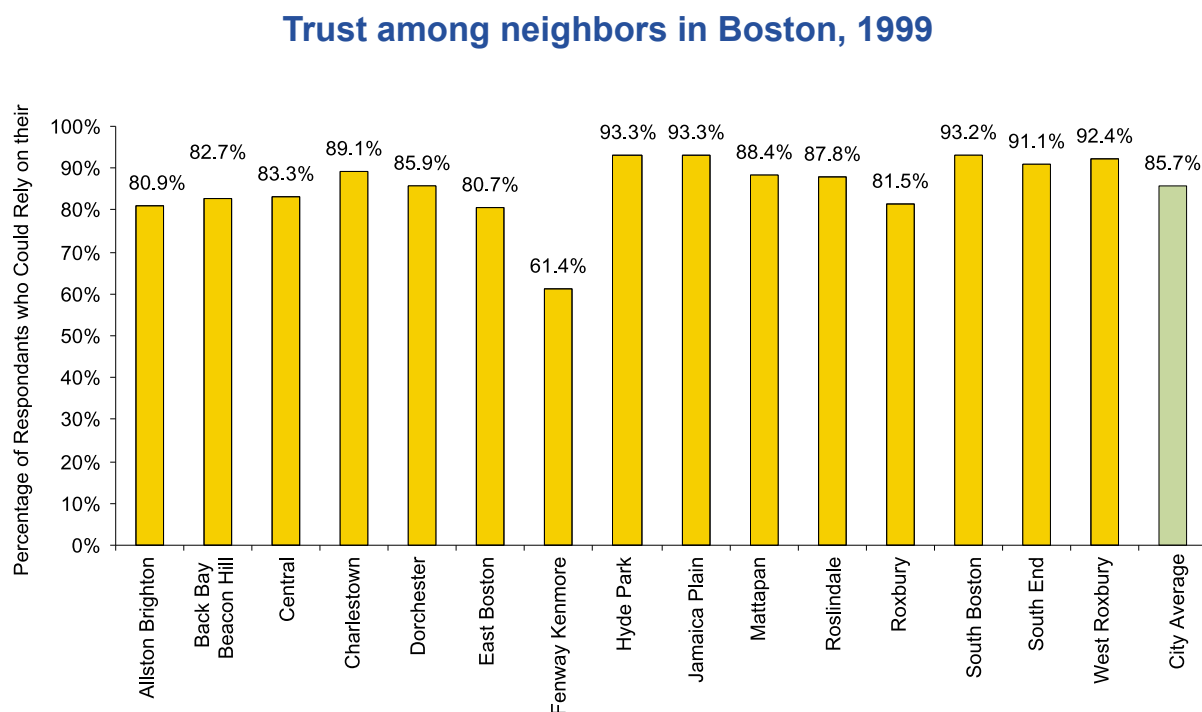
Source: City of Boston, Minority & Women Business Enterprise Office
U.S. Census Bureau, Compiled by Boston Redevelopment Authority

1.5 Civic Confidence

Social trust and confidence emanate from civic and social interactions and networks among community members, and affect civic health and the well-being of residents. They also affect empowerment and civic engagement. They strengthen the local institutions that create the ability for communities to solve problems and resolve conflicts amicably. Civic confidence usually reflects civic engagement. A high level of civic confidence indicates that people feel that they have a say in issues and are being effective.

Percent of Boston residents who trust their neighbors

IN 1999 OVER 85% OF BOSTON RESIDENTS SURVEYED SAID THEY TRUSTED THEIR NEIGHBORS.



Source: Boston Police Department, Citizen Survey, 1999

What does this mean?

A 1999 survey of 3,046 Boston residents, conducted by the Boston Police Department, indicates that over 85% of the respondents citywide felt they could rely on their neighbors for help, which indicates a high level of trust among people. Levels of trust were high across all Boston neighborhoods. This can be compared to a 1998 study, “Trust and Citizen Engagement in Metropolitan Philadelphia: A Case Study,” conducted by the Pew Research Center for People and the Press, that compared a national survey with that of Philadelphia and found that 42% of Philadelphia residents felt they could trust their neighbors. The national average was 45%.

1.6 Healthy Race Relations

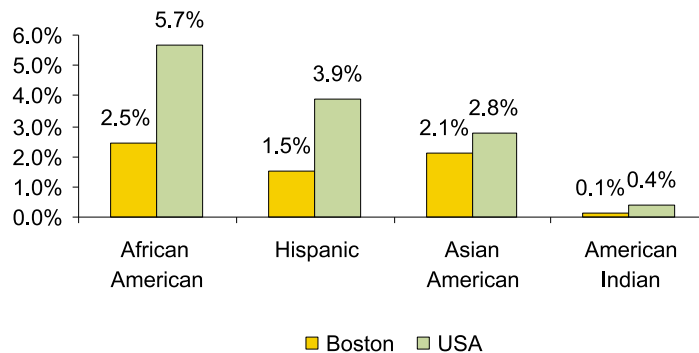
Healthy race relations are the foundation of a community's civic health. Boston's growing racial and ethnic diversity requires a strong base of knowledge about different cultures, inclusion and representation of the city's ethnic and racial diversity, and an understanding of the value of cultural diversity. The reflection of cultural and ethnic diversity in leadership and decision-making positions in Boston's major public and private institutions is a key measure of the acceptance and integration of different groups in mainstream civic life, the depth and breadth of corporate decision-making capacity, and the ease with which racial/ethnic groups can organize and express themselves and to influence the civic landscape of the city.

Boston has seen severe racial tensions in the past. Healthy race relations will require awareness of the changing demographic landscape, equitable representation of all races in leadership positions, vigilance on incidents of reported hate crimes, and a sharp reduction of disparities in economic, health, and educational outcomes across racial lines.

Percent officials and managers of color in private sector

IN 1998, AMONG HIGH-LEVEL MANAGERS AND EXECUTIVES IN METRO-BOSTON'S PRIVATE SECTOR, 94% WERE WHITE AND ONLY 6% PEOPLE OF COLOR. BOSTON LAGS BEHIND NATIONAL TRENDS.

Percent of high-level executives and managers of color, 1998



Source: Equal Employment Opportunity Commission private industry figures, 1998. As reported in *State of African American Professionals in Boston*, The Partnership, Inc., 2000.

What does this mean?

Professional networks are often the cause of career advancement or delay. Likewise, word about the professional climate of a place travels quickly, affecting firms' ability to attract and retain professionals of color. The year 2000 report "*State of African American Professionals in Boston*," by the Partnership, Inc., an organization working with firms and organizations in Greater Boston to more effectively attract, retain, and develop leadership among professionals of color, examines the workforce diversity of private industry at the professional and officials/management levels. It reports that, while Boston's workforce is less diverse than the national average, it is increasing. While African Americans and Latinos are under-represented, Asian Americans in Boston are ahead of the nation in terms of the percentage of professionals and managers holding these higher paying positions.

Among all 1,164,771 people employed in private industry in Metro-Boston: 83% were white; 6.5% were African American; 6.3% were Hispanic; 3.9% were Asian American; and, 0.3% were American Indian. Of people employed as professionals in Metro-Boston, however, 89.1% were white; 3.4% were African American; 1.7% were Hispanic; 5.6% were Asian American; and, less than 0.2% were American Indians. Of officials and managers with responsibility for setting policy directions, the percentages are still lower, African Americans at 2.5%; Hispanics at 1.5%; Asian Americans at 2.1%; and, American Indians at 0.1%.

Number of reported hate crimes by neighborhood

See *Public Safety* section.

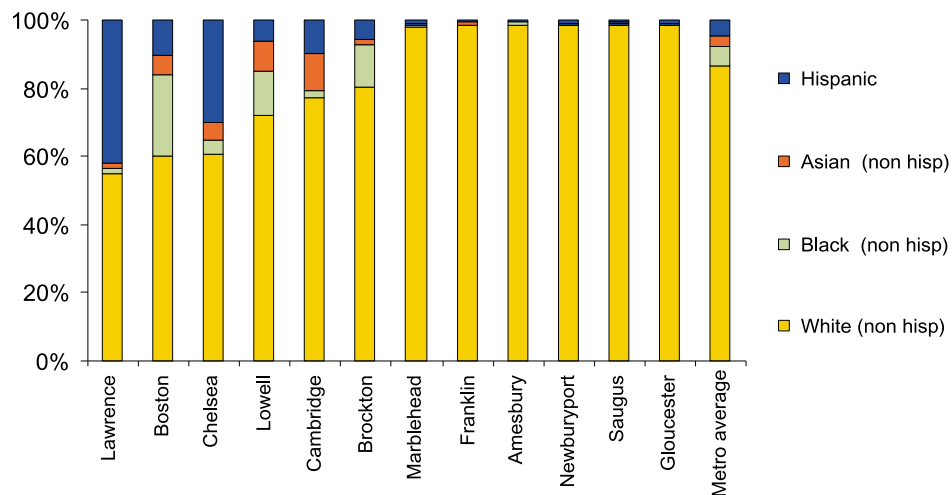
What does this mean?

Reported hate crimes citywide have remained constant despite the fact that Boston has seen an increase in its overall population, as well as in its immigrant population. Though the overall decrease in hate crimes is encouraging, hate crimes continue to be of concern to the Boston Police Department as they indicate racial intolerance, which can have serious implications in Boston's growing multi-cultural community.

Degree of racial integration in Metro-Boston and by Boston neighborhood

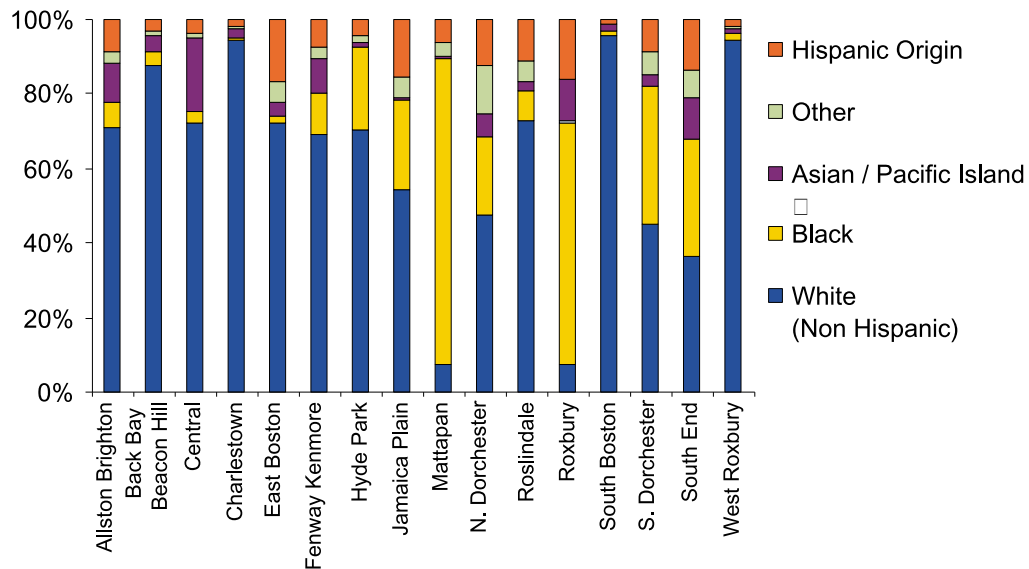
IN METRO-BOSTON RACIAL MINORITIES ARE CONCENTRATED IN A DOZEN COMMUNITIES. WHILE BOSTON OVERALL HAS A BALANCED MIX OF RACIAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS, WITH SOME EXCEPTIONS, BOSTON NEIGHBORHOODS HAVE A HIGH DEGREE OF RACIAL SEGREGATION.

Racial mix of selected communities in Metro-Boston, 1990



Source: Metropolitan Area Planning Council

Racial mix in Boston neighborhoods, 1990



Source: Boston Redevelopment Authority

What does this mean?

Due to historic inequities, racial and ethnic minority groups are often concentrated in low - and moderate-income areas. The issue of economic class therefore often merges with issues of race. However, it is also important to understand racial segregation in terms of the cultural needs of communities who may choose to congregate in close geographic proximity in order to access cultural and social institutions that are shared by people of a particular ethnic community. The key variable is choice.

Boston's neighborhoods range from being very racially integrated like the South End and Jamaica Plain, that reflect the ethnic mix of Boston, to highly segregated neighborhoods like Charlestown and West Roxbury which are primarily white or Mattapan which is primarily black.

1.7 A Welcoming, Inclusive Environment

A sustainable community provides an inclusive environment for people of all races, languages, ages, and abilities. A 1999 survey of community leaders representing twelve major cultural and linguistic communities conducted by the Mayor's Office of New Bostonians was aimed at assessing qualities that make Boston a welcoming city. Survey results underscored Boston's diversity, its existing community networks and organizations, the availability of higher education and schools, the availability of quality health care, and political freedom as the most important attributes that attract newcomer groups. The group of about 150 survey participants also identified and prioritized the most pressing challenges to their communities: discrimination and cultural insensitivity; lack of affordable housing; lack of English as a Second Language (ESL) classes; and legal issues regarding immigrant status.

Percent of public buildings that are accessible to people with disabilities

DATA NOT AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME

What does this mean?

For people to participate actively in the civic and cultural life of a city, it is essential to have access to public and cultural institutions. The federal Americans with Disabilities Act is aimed at ensuring the elderly, parents with baby carriages, and persons with disabilities physical access to public institutions and venues. Great progress has been made in making cultural venues, streetscapes and sidewalks, housing, and commercial areas more welcoming and accessible. However, in Boston, where a large percentage of building stock is older, multiple strategies for ensuring accessibility are important, and much more remains to be done.

Multi-lingual capacity in major public institutions and places in Boston

SAMPLE SURVEY INDICATES GROWING MULTI-LINGUAL AWARENESS.

COMPREHENSIVE DATA NOT AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME.

What does this mean?

The Mayor's Office of New Bostonians' notes that more than 140 languages (including many dialects) are spoken in Boston. The cultural diversity this represents, adds tremendous richness to the civic landscape of Boston while also presenting challenges in terms of integrating newcomers into its civic life. Opportunities to publicly express and celebrate cultural traditions and values and to fully engage in civic life will reshape the city. Likewise, Boston is a tourist destination for increasing numbers of people from around the globe. They, too benefit from Boston's increased multi-lingual capacity.

The impact of Boston's changing demographic landscape can be seen in signage, literature, forms, and notices used at different institutions that are used to carry out everyday business. The major public institutions and places across the city continue to exhibit most signs only in English. However, a range of institutions surveyed exhibited an awareness of the need to reach out to a diverse population. Medical institutions, Logan Airport, and local banks are beginning to offer interpreter services in a wide array of languages that reflect the broadening diversity of Boston's population. A sample survey of interpreter services at select institutions shows a growing awareness of language issues in meeting customer/client needs. The following institutions provide interpreter services: Children's Hospital(35 languages); Logan International Airport (26 languages); Boston Medical Center (17 languages); and, Citizen's Bank (39 languages spoken by staff).