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Map Projection: North American 1983
Massachusetts Mainland
Data Sources: Mass GIS; Green Restaurant
Association

Eating Green: A Demographic Analysis of Two Disparate Neighborhoods That Support Ecologically Sustainable Restaurants

Background

The Green Restaurant Association is an environmental consulting firm located in Boston, Massachusetts. The GRA performs comprehensive environmental assessments and offers certification to restaurants around the nation that perform certain ecologically sustainable actions, generally concerning: water efficiency, waste reduction and recycling, sustainable furnishings and building materials, sustainable food, efficiency in energy usage, and chemical and pollution reduction.
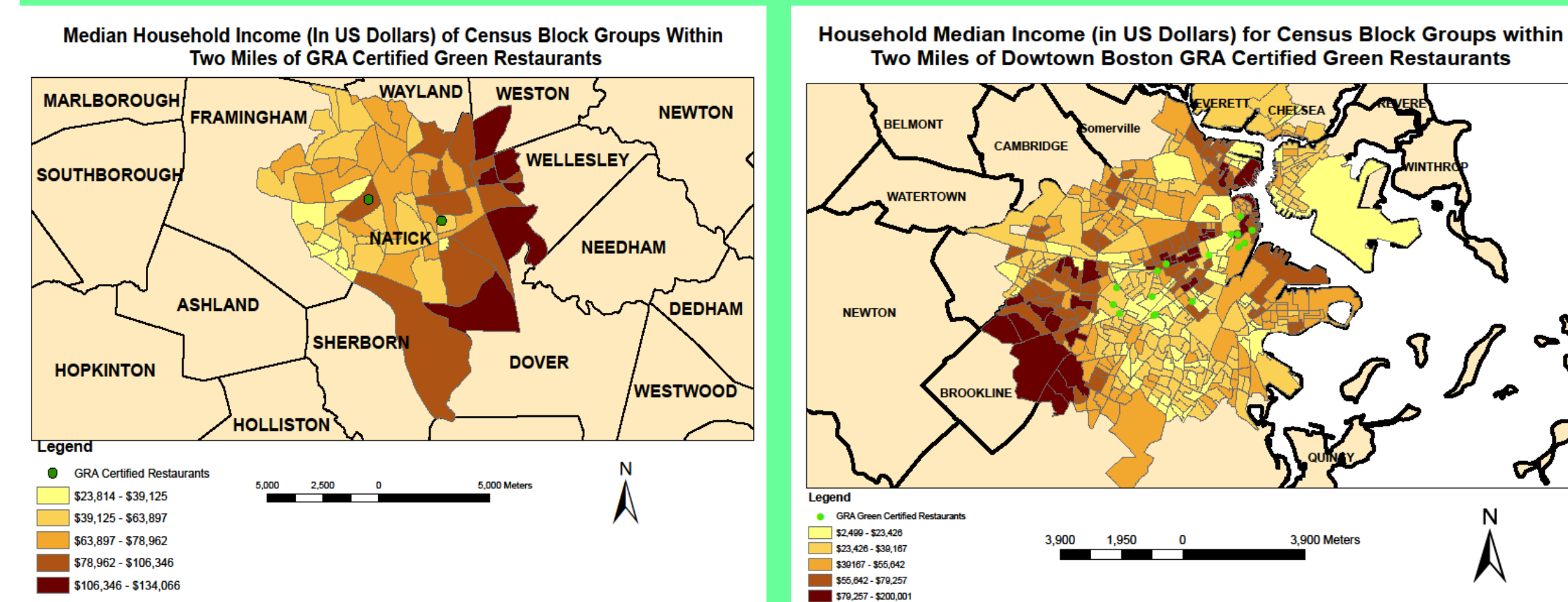
This project evaluates demographics of the areas where GRA-certified restaurants are located. This information is the first step in what could be a market analysis that investigates in which neighborhoods are certified restaurants viable. This could be used make recommendations to the Green Restaurant Association to target specific areas for future restaurant partnerships in demographically similar neighborhoods.

Methods

I plotted points on maps to demonstrate where each GRA certified restaurant is located in the downtown Boston area, as well as two certified restaurants that are located in Natick, MA. I have chosen to represent maps of two clusters of GRA-certified restaurants (sixteen restaurants in downtown Boston and two in Natick) separately in order to better make recommendations that are targeted at two different types of neighborhoods: the diverse downtown area of a major city, and a suburban town of roughly 32,000 residents.

The areas that I analyzed are US Census Block Groups within a two-mile area of GRA certified restaurants in the neighborhoods described above. The maps pictured here represent median household income, educational attainment by gender (high school vs. college as highest level of education), and renter vs. owner occupied housing units.
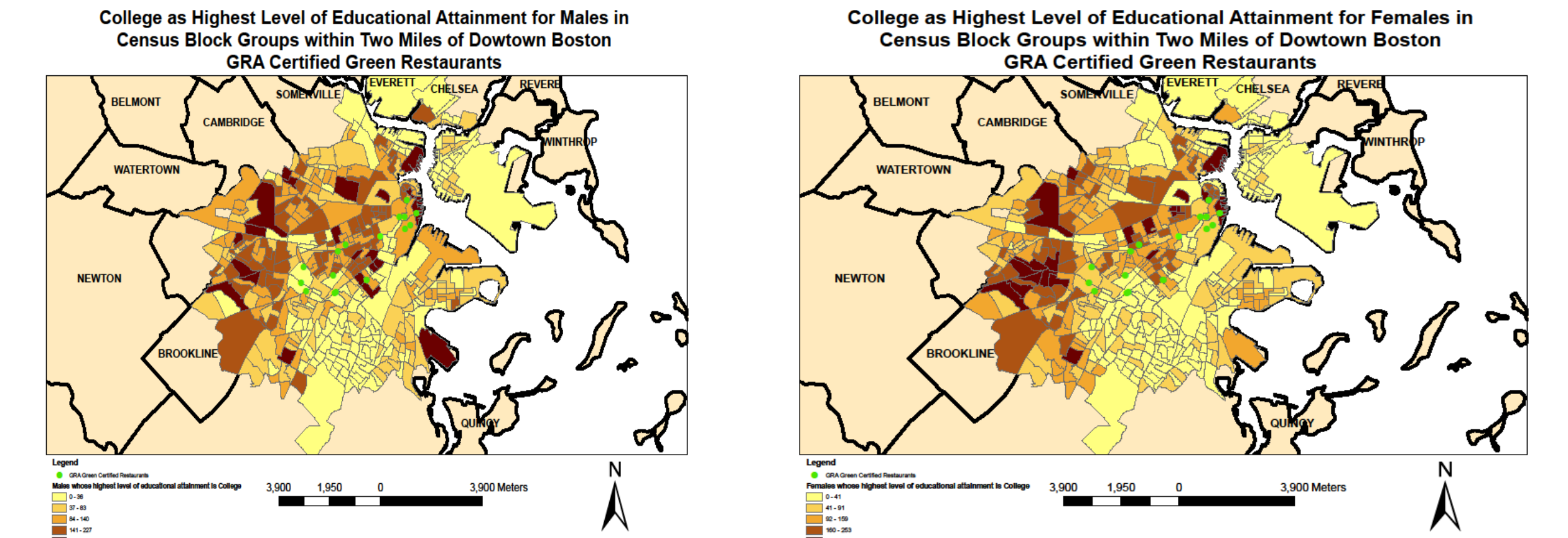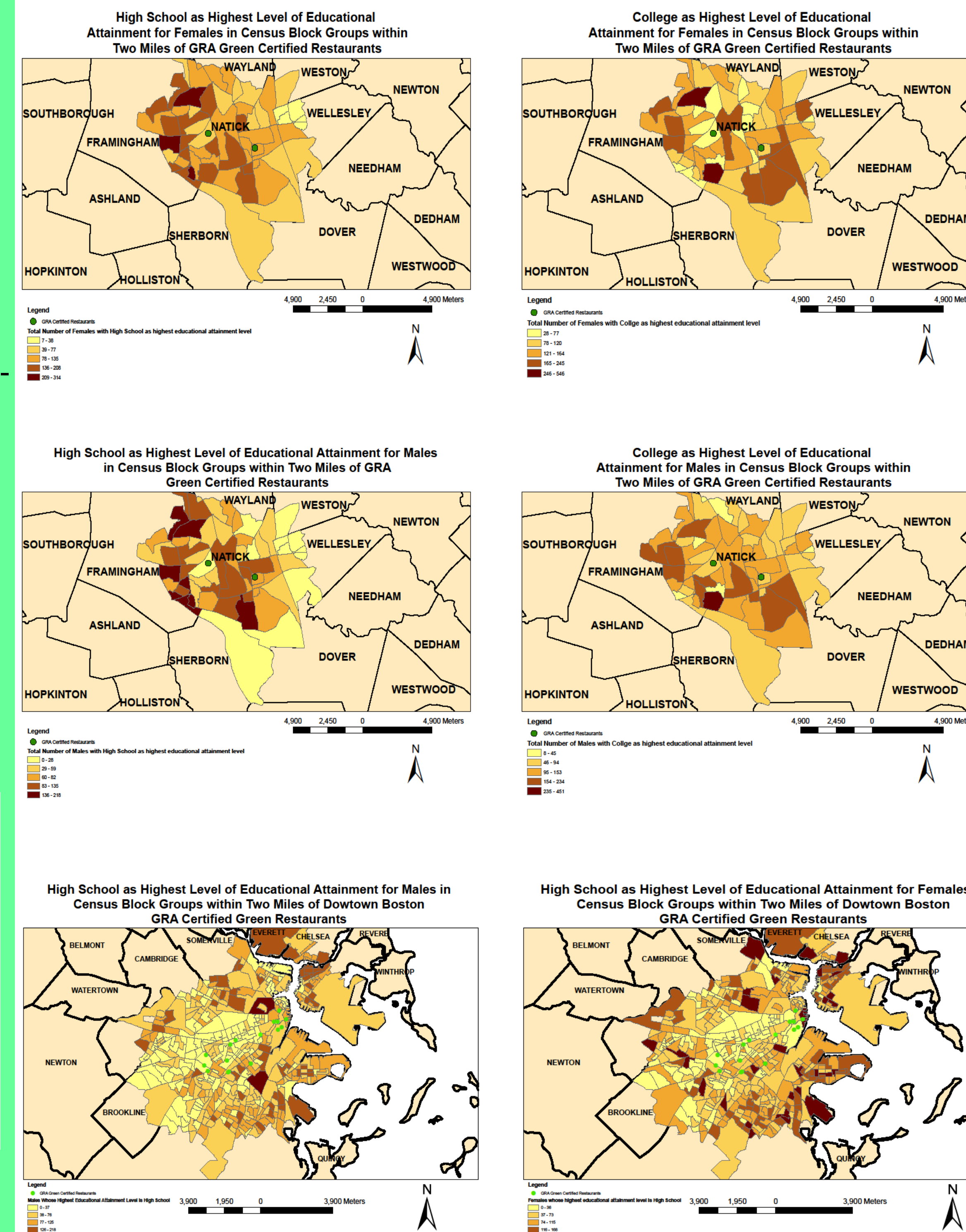
Household Income

The median household income for the Boston area analyzed is $42,722.28, while the median household income for the Natick area is $73,112.84.
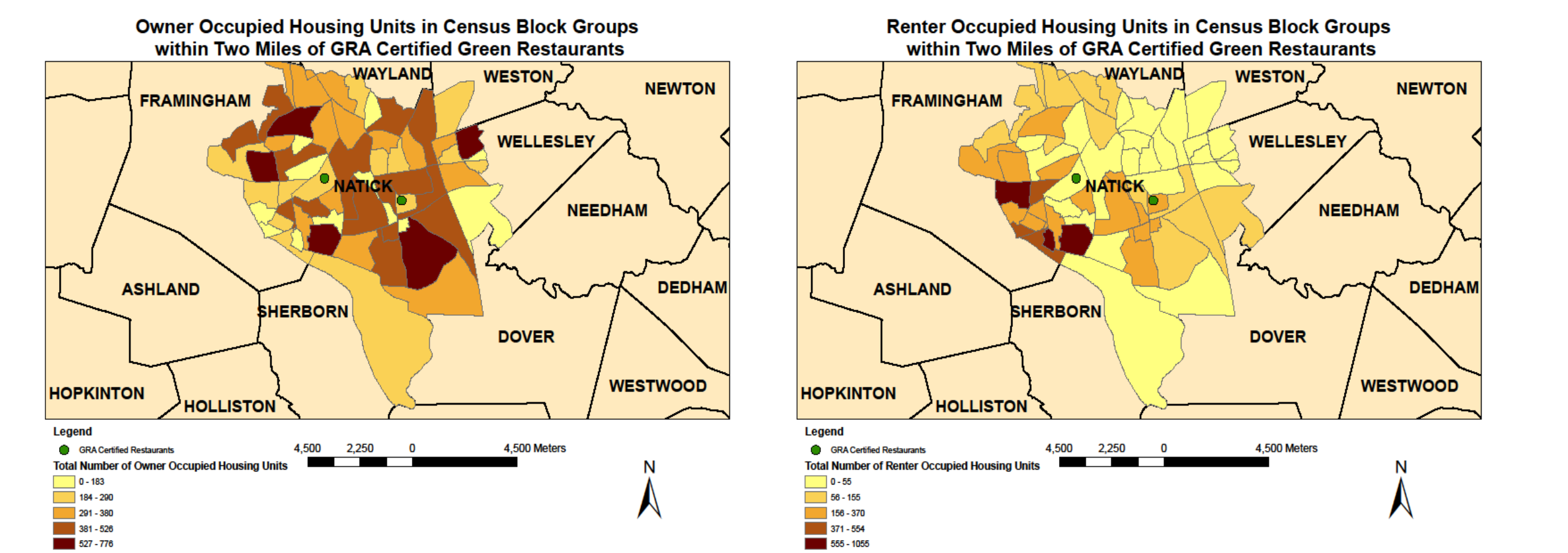
Educational Attainment

In my analysis of the area around GRA-certified restaurants in downtown Boston, I've found that 23.6% of residents over the age of twenty-five have a bachelors degree as their highest level of educational attainment (71,524 twenty-five years and up degree-holders out of 302,289 total population over twenty-five years of age). The total percentage of people over the age of twenty-five in this collection of block groups whose highest level of educational attainment is high school is 19.1%. Finally, 13.6% of people age twenty-five and older have master's degree as their highest level of educational attainment.
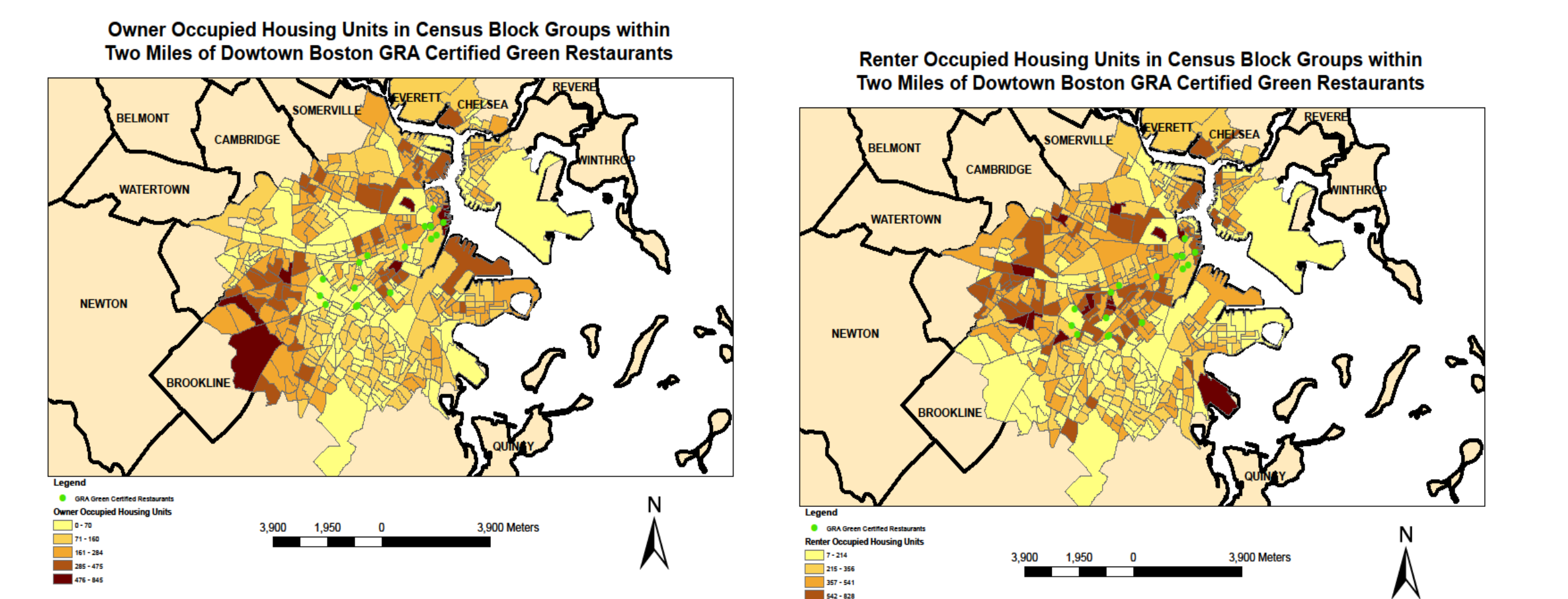
In the Natick area, 27.2% of adults over twenty-five have obtained a Bachelor's degree as their highest level of education, and 20.3% of adults over the age of twenty-five have high school as their highest level of educational attainment.

Owner and Renter Occupied Households

There are 55,557 owner occupied units in the downtown Boston, and 145,903 renter occupied units. In Natick, there are 19,621 owner occupied units and 10,544 renter occupied units.

Conclusions

Using this data, we can predict that the GRA may have marketing success if they were to focus on advertising to a city where about 28% of households are owner occupied, and 72% are renter occupied; and focusing on towns where 65% are owner occupied and 35% are renter occupied. For future city-based advertising, they should focus on areas where approximately one-fourth of the population has at most a college education, and approximately one-fifth of the population has, at most, completed high school or high school equivalency. For smaller, suburban towns, the GRA should focus on areas where about one-fourth of residents have, at most, obtained a college education and one-fifth have obtained at most a high school education.