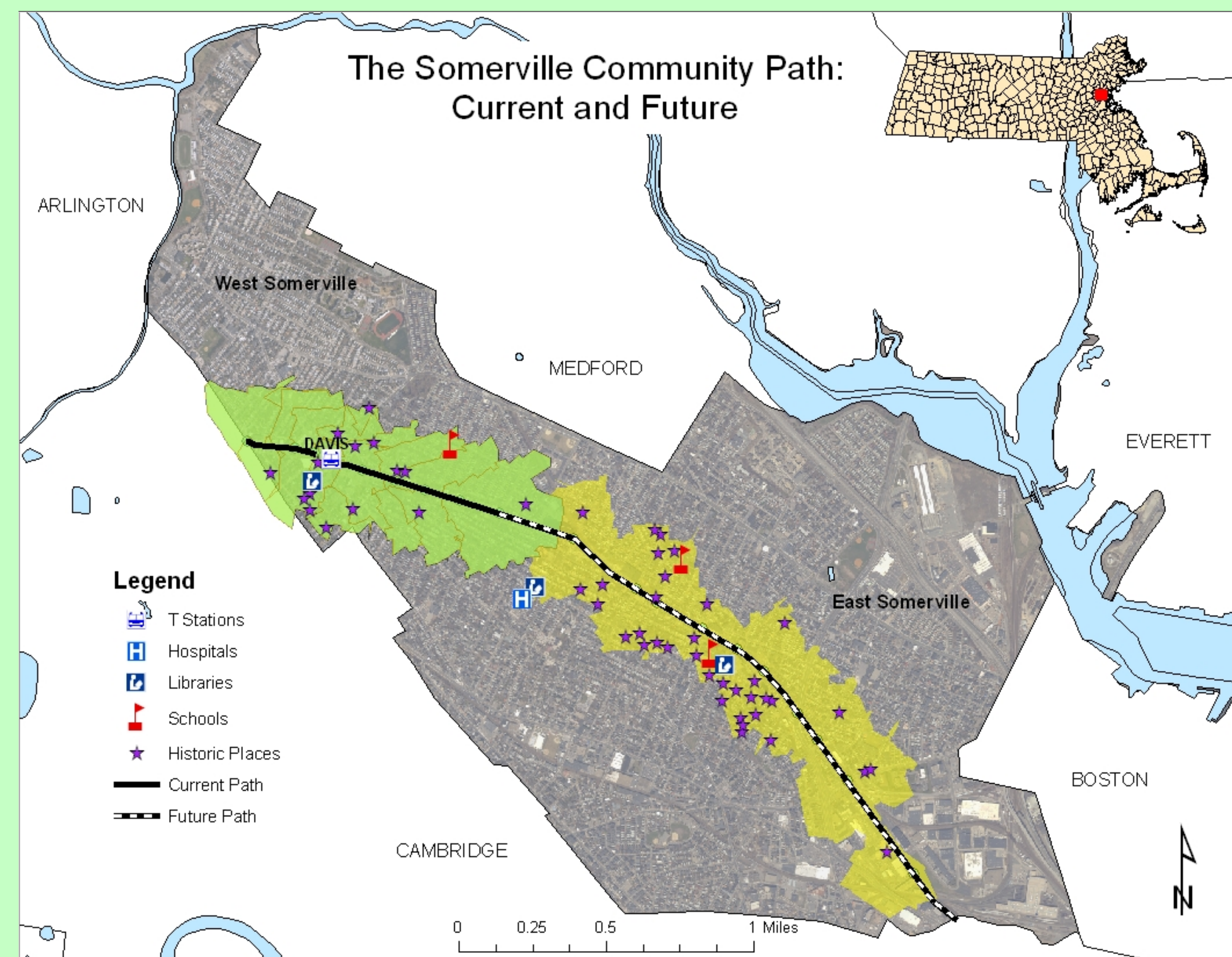


The Somerville Community Path: Access and Demographics



The Somerville Community Path is 8/10 of a mile long and runs from Davis Square to Cedar Street. It is used daily by hundreds of pedestrians, bikers, runners, dog walkers and commuters. The City of Somerville is currently in the planning phase of extending the path all the way to Boston. The map to the left illustrates the current and future path, with a quarter mile network buffer, to indicate the areas within walking distance of the path.

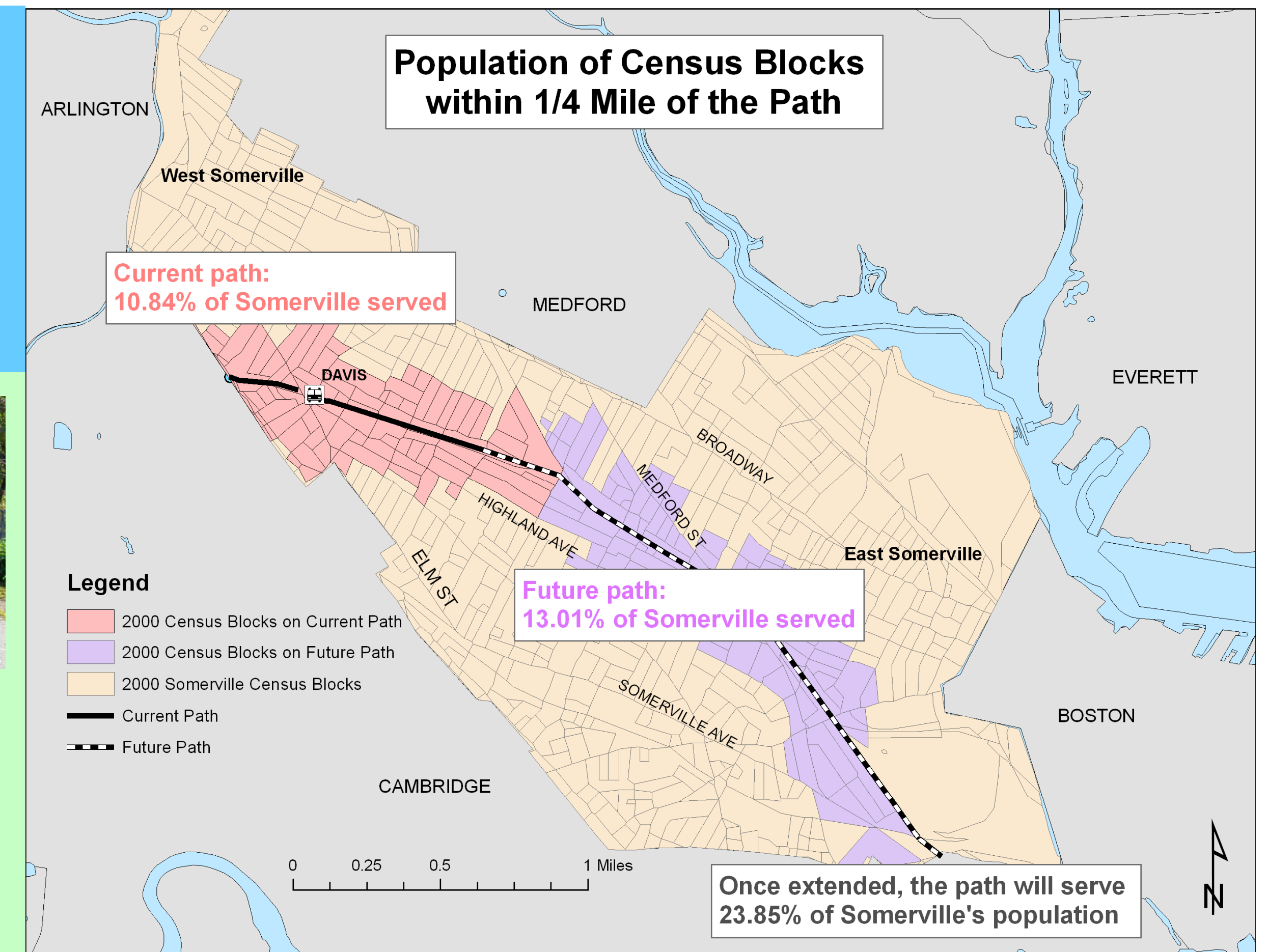


Current path

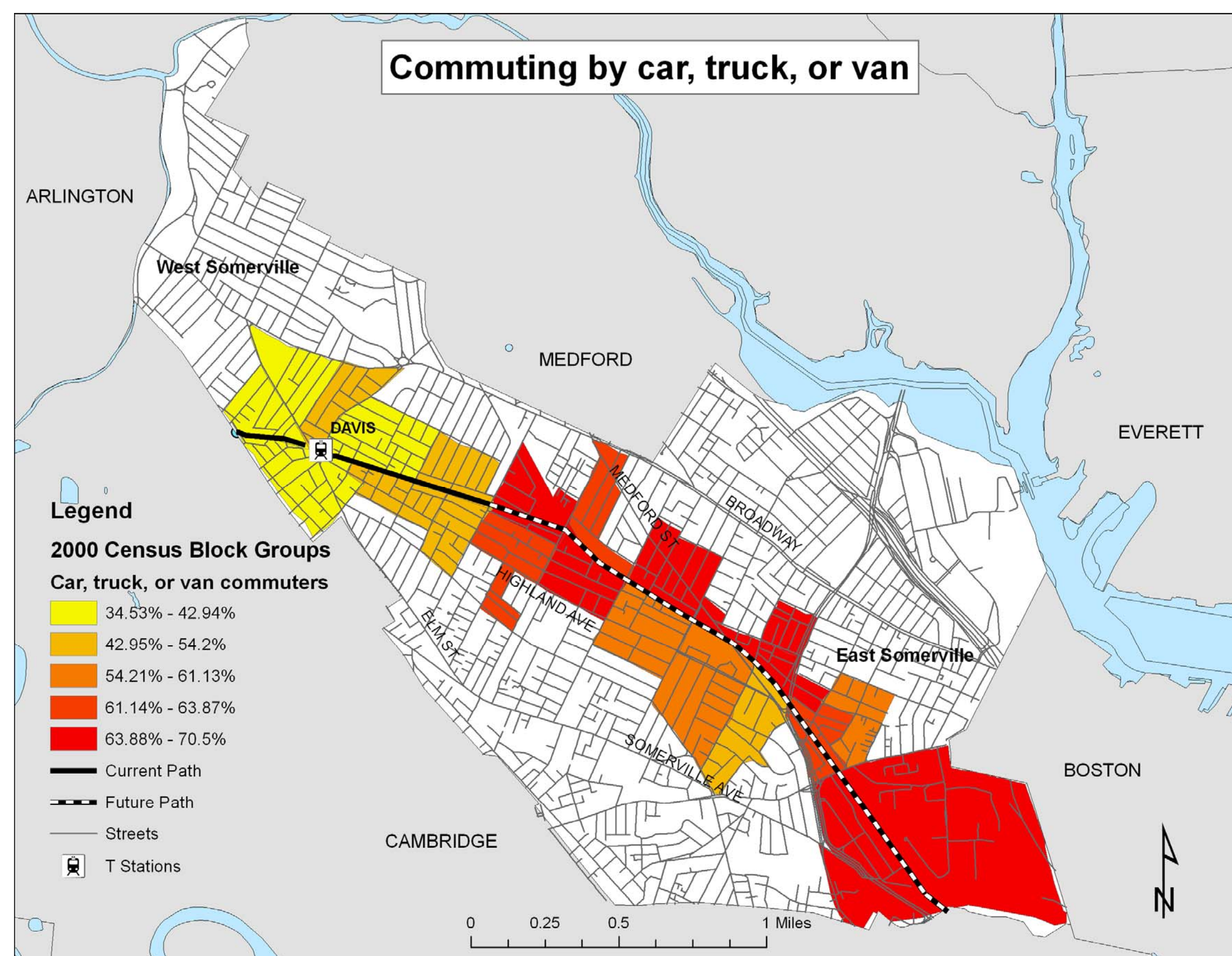


Site of future path

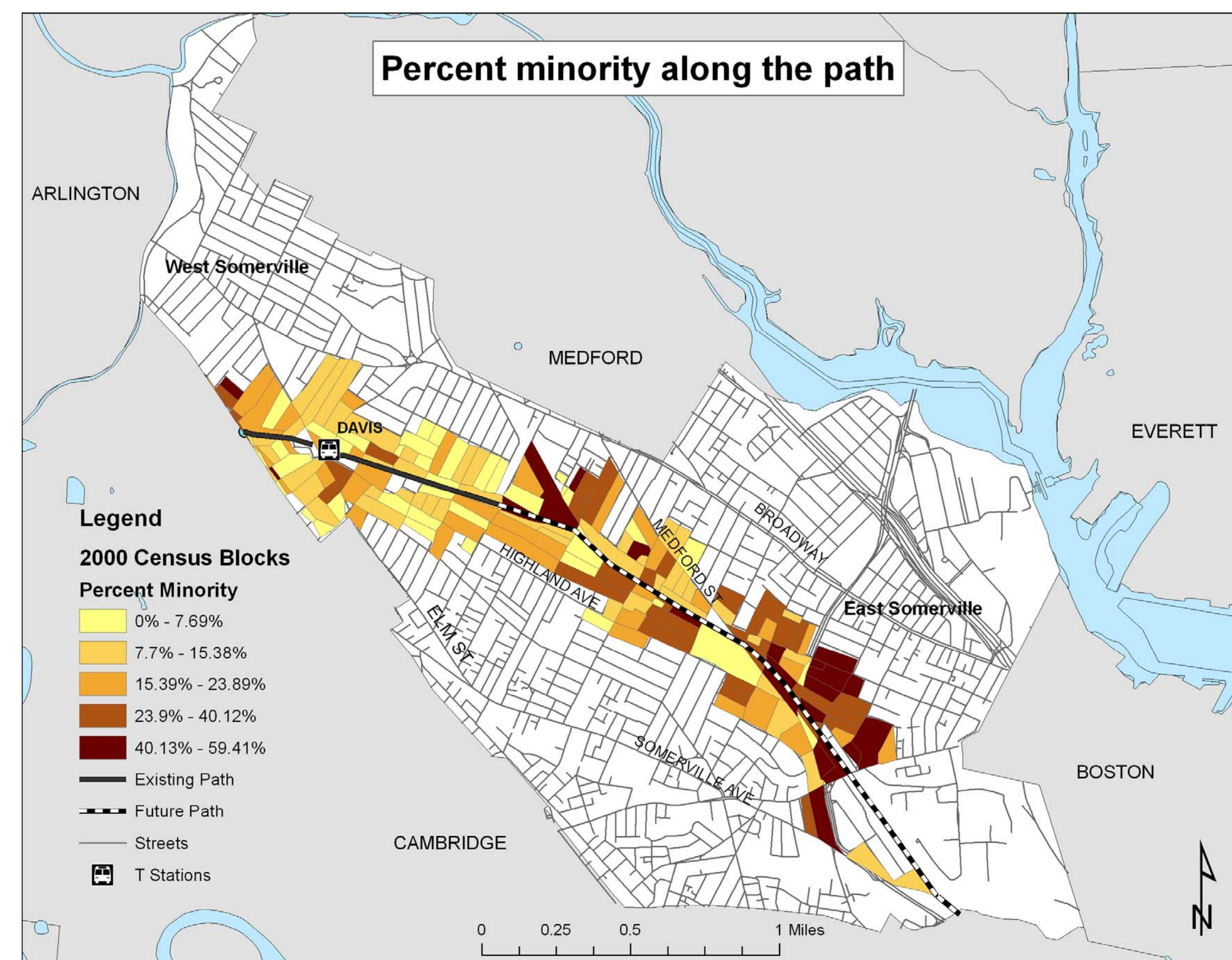
The following maps provide a demographic analysis of the neighborhoods around the current and future paths.



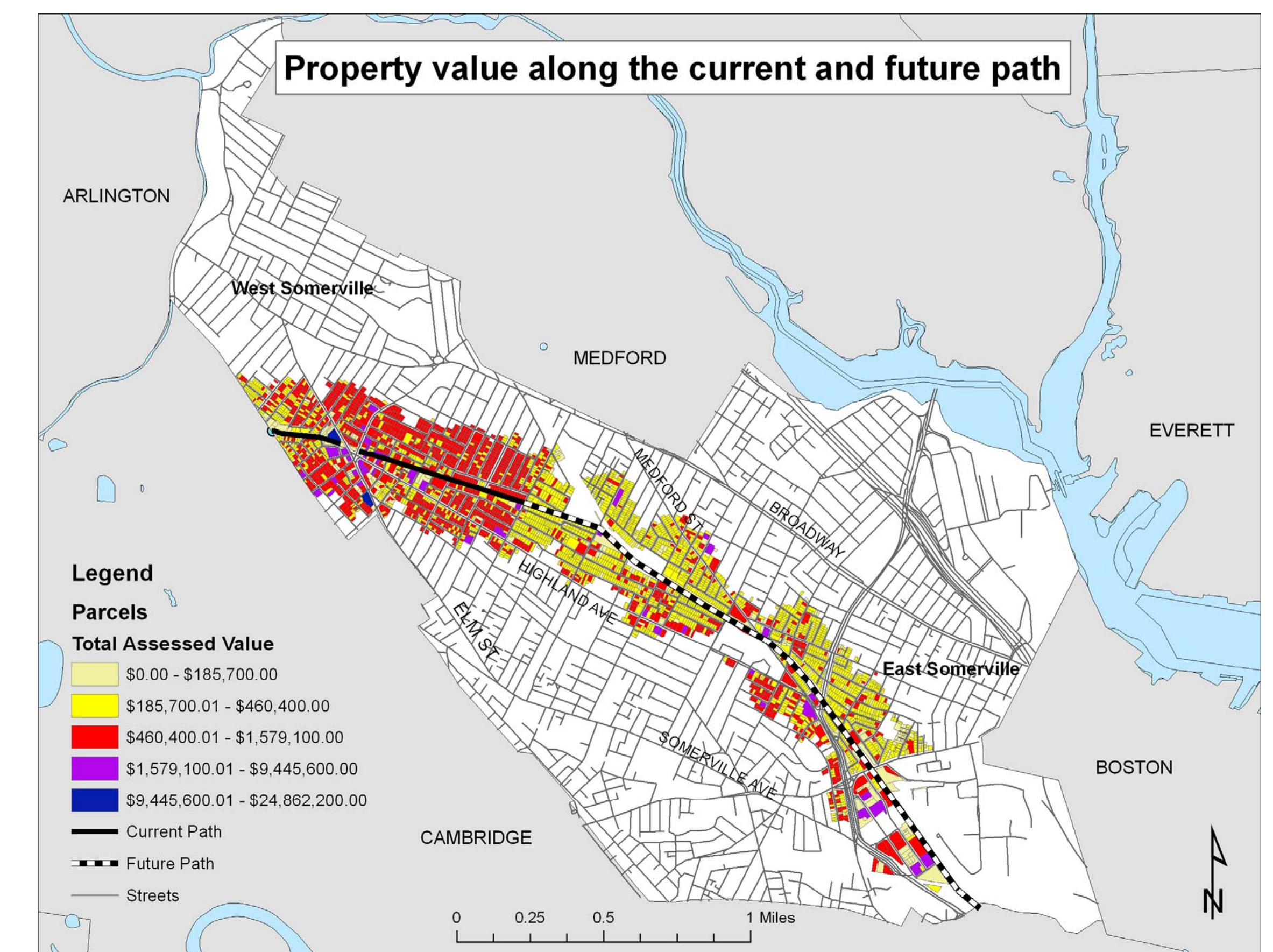
According to the 2000 Census Blocks, the population of Somerville is 83,846. The pink area shows blocks within about 1/4 mile of the walking path, with a total population of 9,090, or 10.84% of the population. The purple area shows blocks along the future path, with a total of 10,910 people, or 13.01% of the population. Once the future path is completed, the entire path will serve 23.85% of Somerville's population.



The presence of the path as well as the proximity to the Davis Square T station may be associated with a lower percentage of people commuting by automobile along the current path. The darker red sections in East Somerville indicate the need for greater access to alternative transportation.



Studies have shown that people of color are at a higher risk of becoming overweight or obese (Priority Populations and Physical Activity, 2008). The presence of the walking path in East Somerville may provide a new outlet for physical activity for residents.



The construction of the path is in line with principles of Smart Growth. Critics warn that smart growth development may drive up property values, thus gradually forcing out lower income people if there are no protections in place to limit this loss, such as affordable housing laws (Leinberger, 2008).