

Low-Income Family Housing: A Suitability Analysis in Suffolk County, MA

Purpose

In September, 2013, Boston Mayor Thomas Menino released a report titled *Housing Boston 2020*, detailing 2.1 billion dollar plans to create 5,000 new long-term affordable housing units. The purpose of this project is to conduct a suitability analysis of the best locations for low-income family housing units in Suffolk County and to provide concrete site recommendations to the governments of Boston, Chelsea, Revere, and Winthrop.

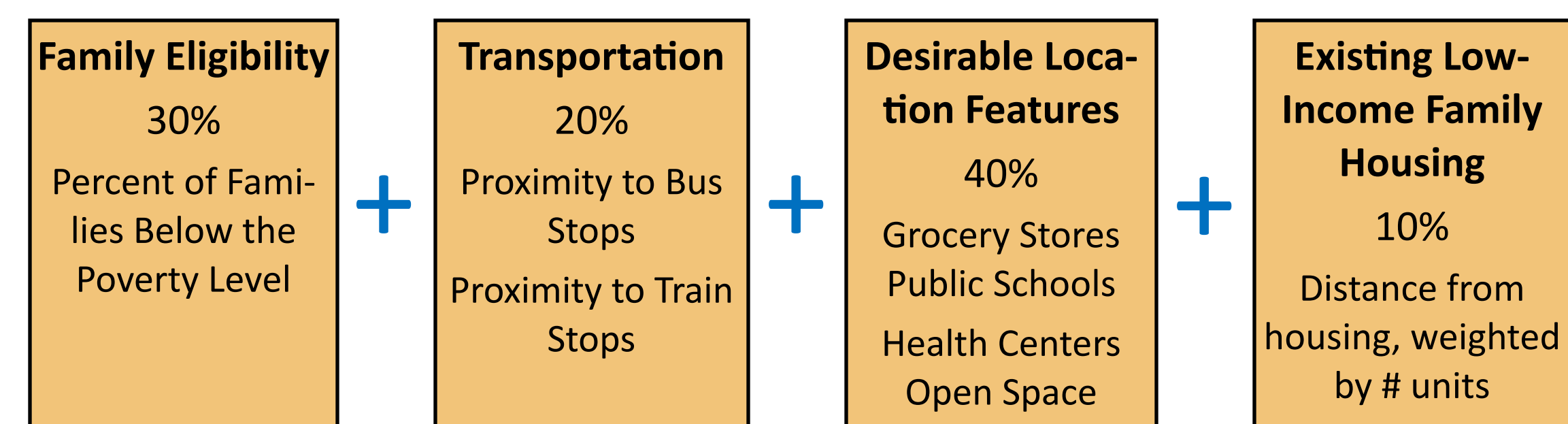
Background

With over 1 in 5 people living below the poverty line in Boston, finding affordable housing for all residents is enormously challenging. The Boston Housing Authority runs a wide variety of subsidized housing programs, housing 10 percent of Boston's residents. These projects range from federally- and state-funded voucher programs that allow residents to live in decentralized market-rate apartments, to 60 large-scale concentrated low-income housing developments. The latter are divided into 36 elderly/disabled and 24 family developments. A slight misnomer, family developments are open to single people as well as families, and units range from 1-6 bedrooms. In Suffolk County, three other housing authorities (Chelsea, Re-

vere, and Winthrop) add to the supply of public housing, though developments are generally smaller than the ones in Boston.

Large-scale family housing developments are the focus of this project. Despite the scale of family public housing in Suffolk County, resources are still lacking. Waitlists can be years long. In 2011, Boston counted 7,600 homeless individuals, one third of whom were children. When shelters fill up, the state places families in motel rooms, costing \$80 per family per night. The state of Massachusetts spent \$45 million to do this in 2011. Additionally, 23,000 households in Boston pay over half of their income in rent and are at high risk for becoming homeless.

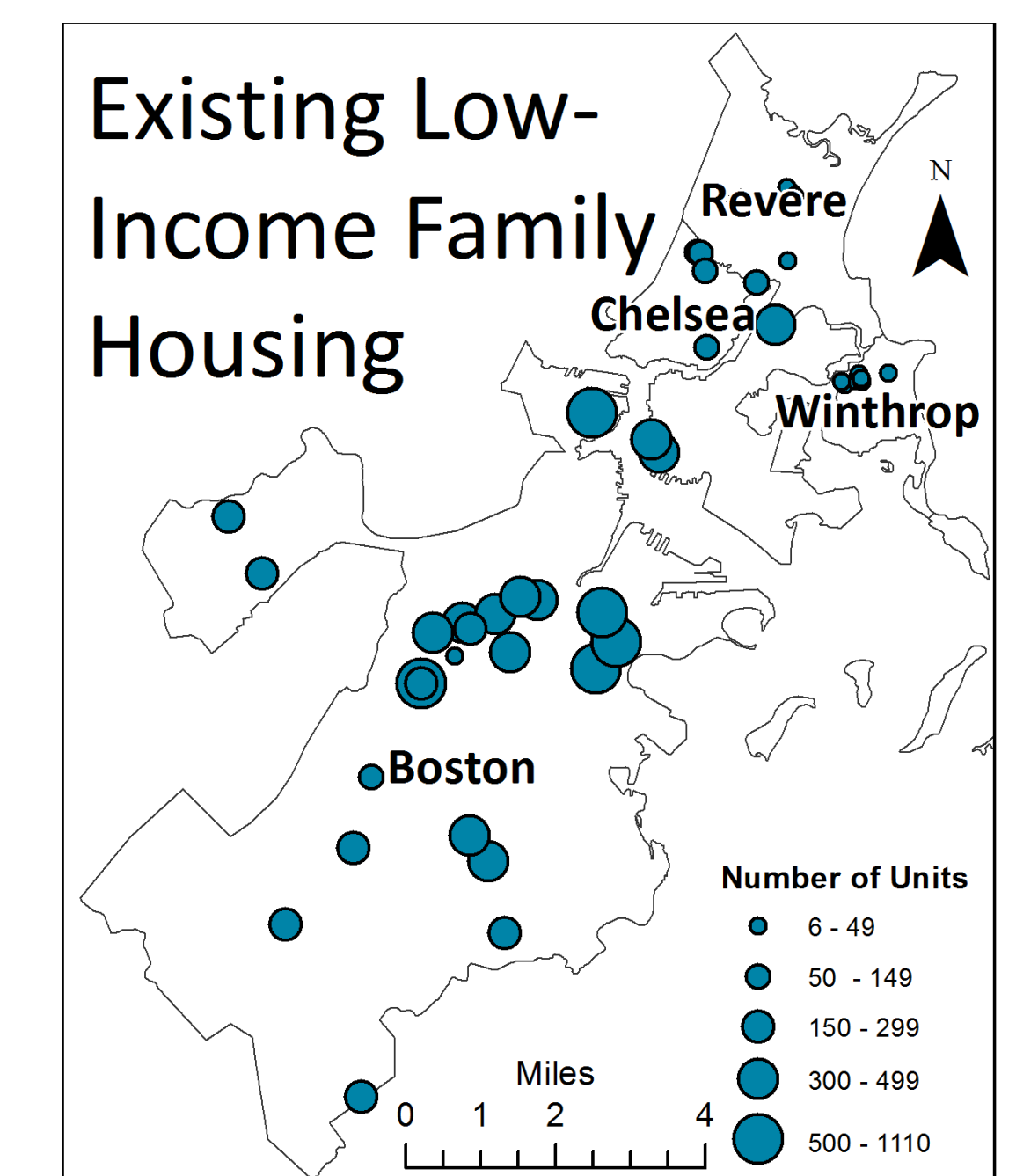
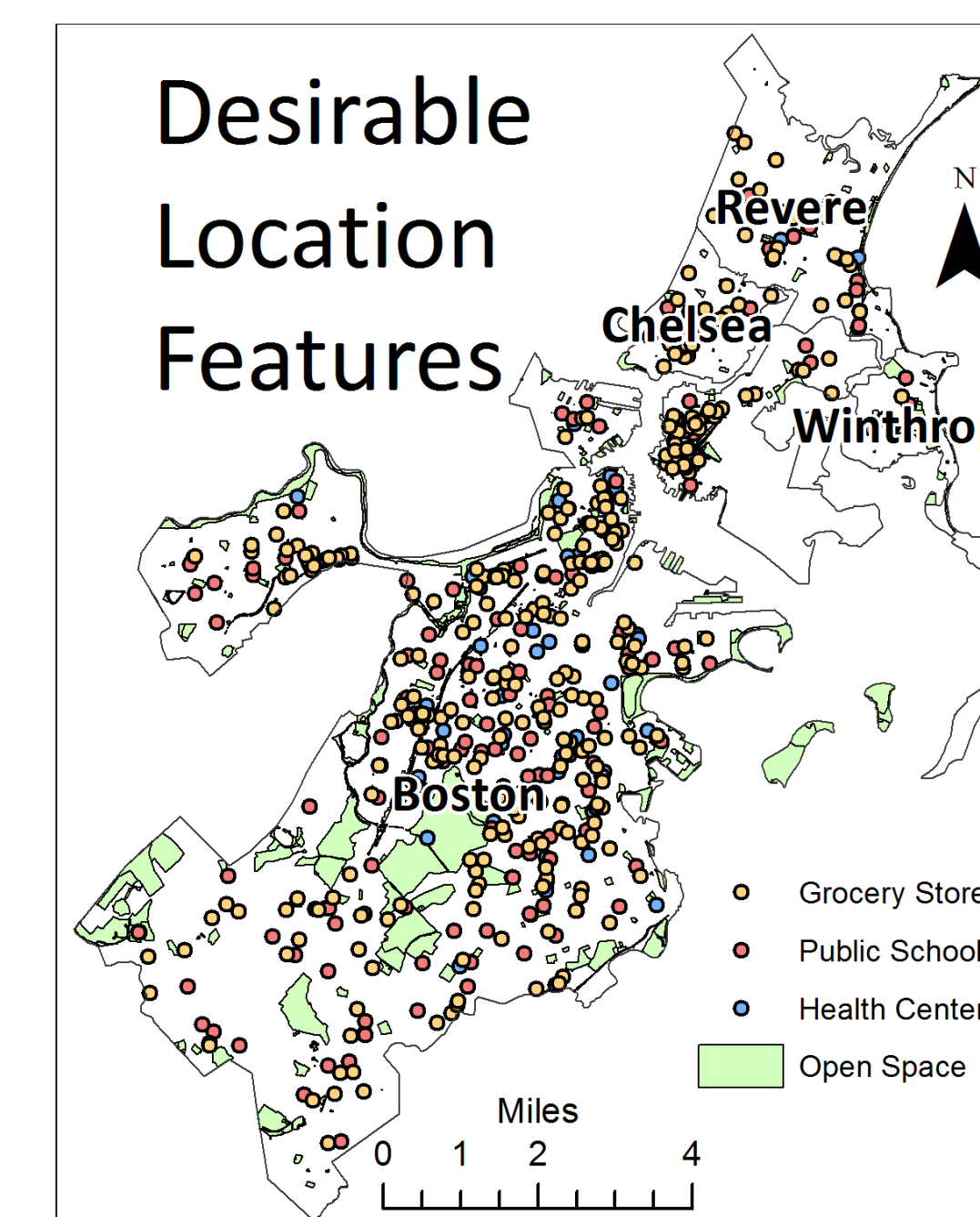
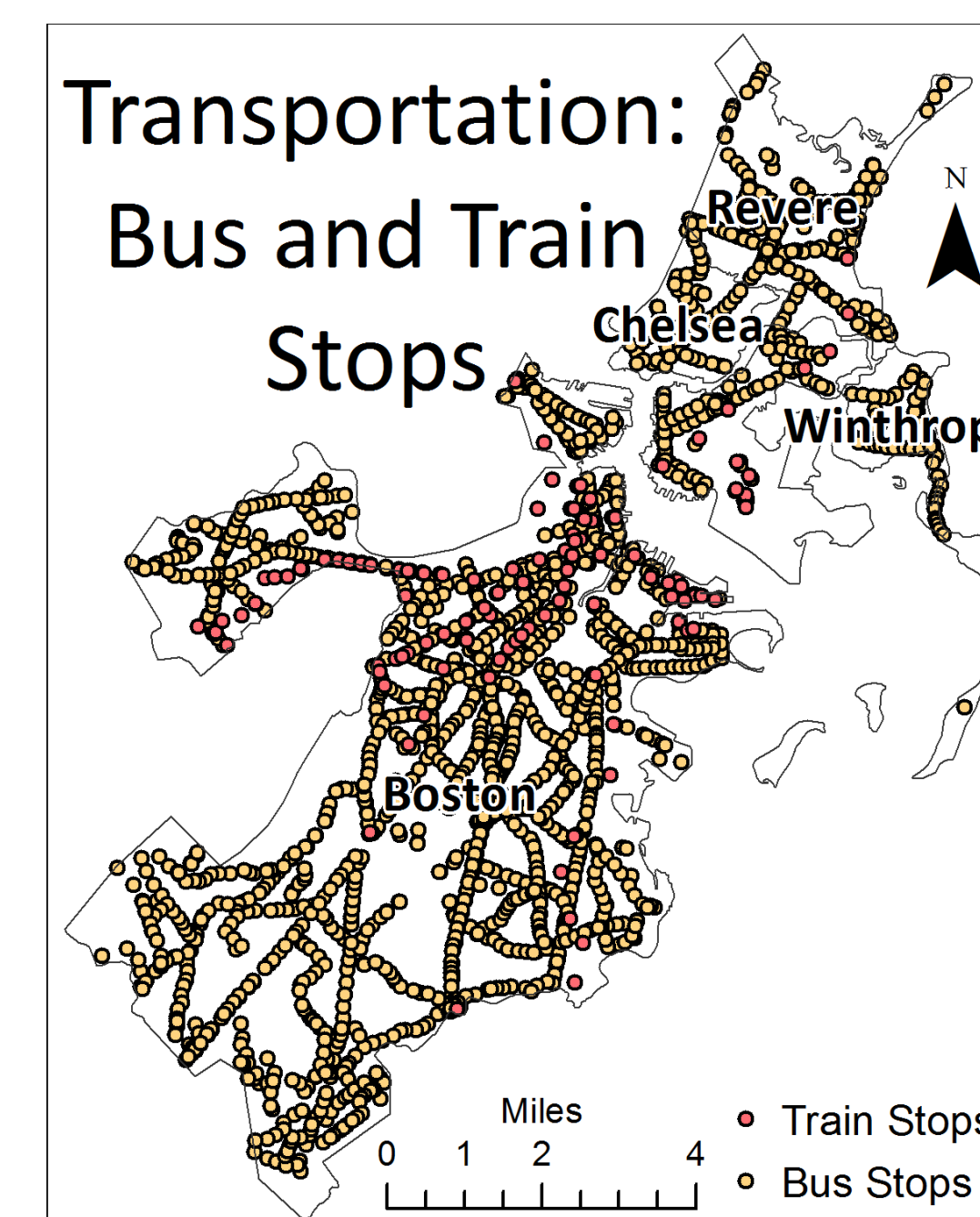
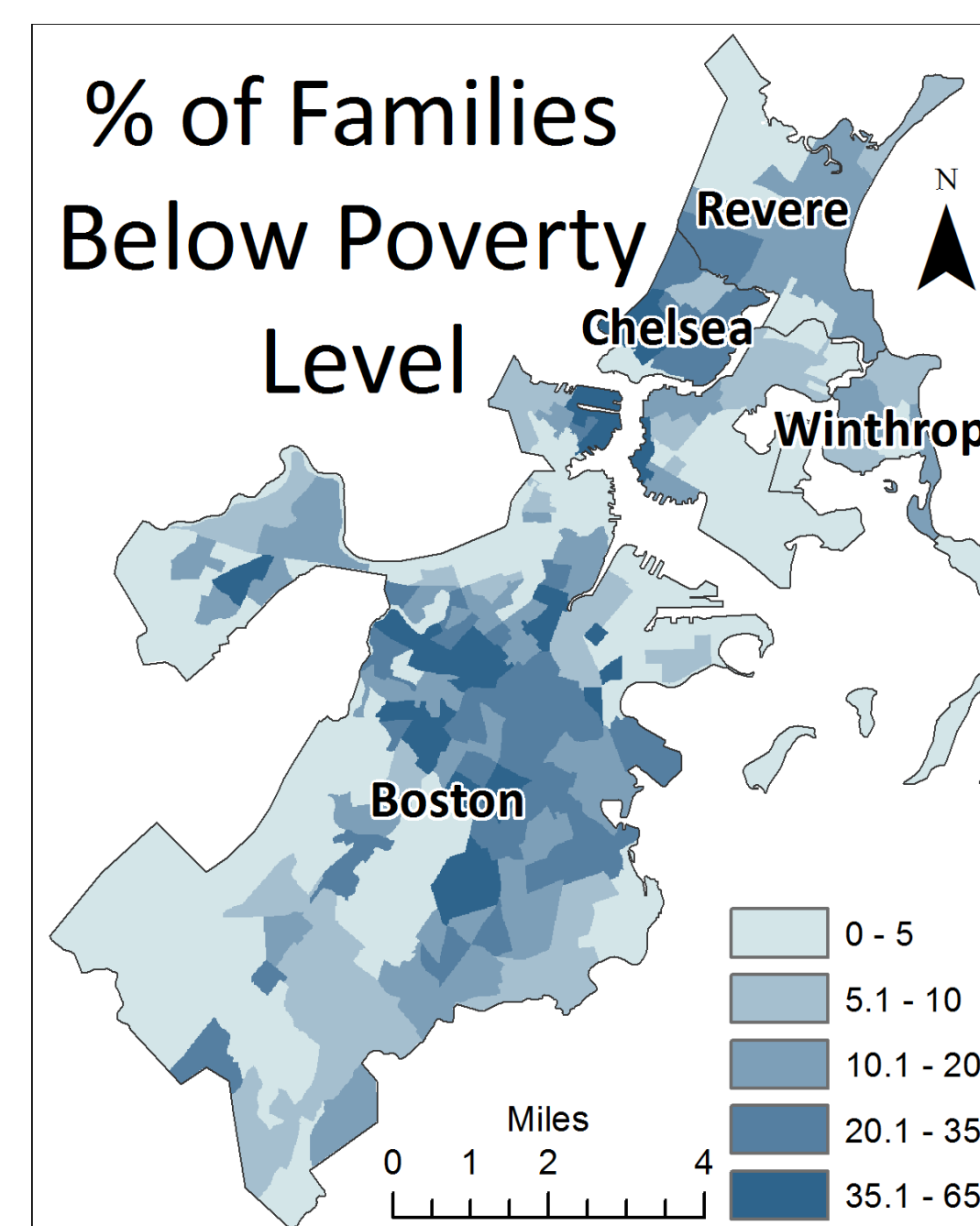
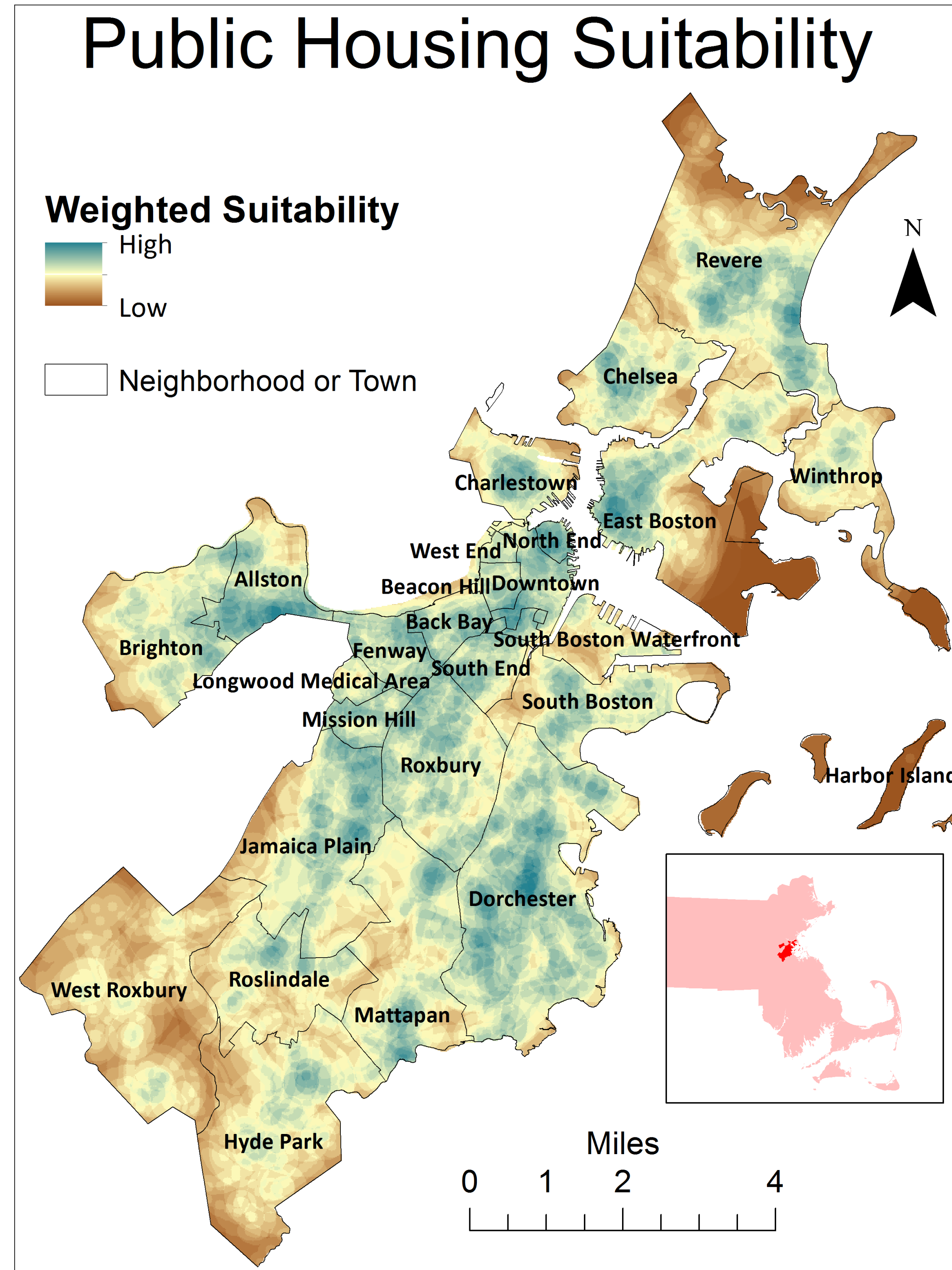
Methodology: Weighted Raster Addition



Suitability was determined by a weighted raster addition model with factors described above and shown to the right. To determine the site recommendations, parcels between 50,000 and 500,000 ft², within areas with zoning classifications of multi-family, medium density or multi-family, high density were selected (not

shown). In Winthrop, no parcels fit this criteria so a zoning classification of single family residential was used. Suitability values within each parcel were averaged to provide potential top candidates. They were manually narrowed down to avoid errors like selecting existing elderly/disabled housing, schools, or hospitals.

Results



Site Recommendations

Boston	Chelsea	Revere	Winthrop
309-319 Allston Street, Brighton	603 Broadway, Chelsea	364 Ocean Avenue, Revere	138-160 Revere Street, Winthrop
15 N. Beacon Street, Allston	47 Gerrish Avenue, Chelsea	370 Ocean Avenue, Revere	3 Walden Street, Winthrop
600 Commercial Street, Boston	390 Washington Avenue, Chelsea	382 Ocean Avenue, Revere	100-2500 Governors Drive, Winthrop
130 Auckland Street, Dorchester			
1109-1111 Boylston Street, Boston			

References

- Ariel Branz
- 12/12/13
- GIS 101
- Carl Zimmerman
- Projection: NAD 1983 Massachusetts State Plane FIPS 2001, meters
- Scale: 1:3,528,276
- Data Sources: Mass GIS, www.bostonhousing.org, www.chelseaha.com, www.revereha.org, www.town.winthrop.ma.us
- Site Recommendation Maps: www.bing.com/maps

