

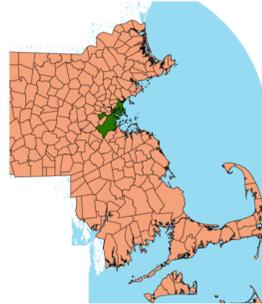
Snapshot of Boston: Examining Need and Access

Cartographer: Breann Jeffries Fall 2014
 Data Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Factfinder, Reference USA, Mass GIS, U.S. Dept. Housing and Urban Development
 Projection: NAD_1983_Stateplane_Massachusetts_Mainland_FIPS_2001



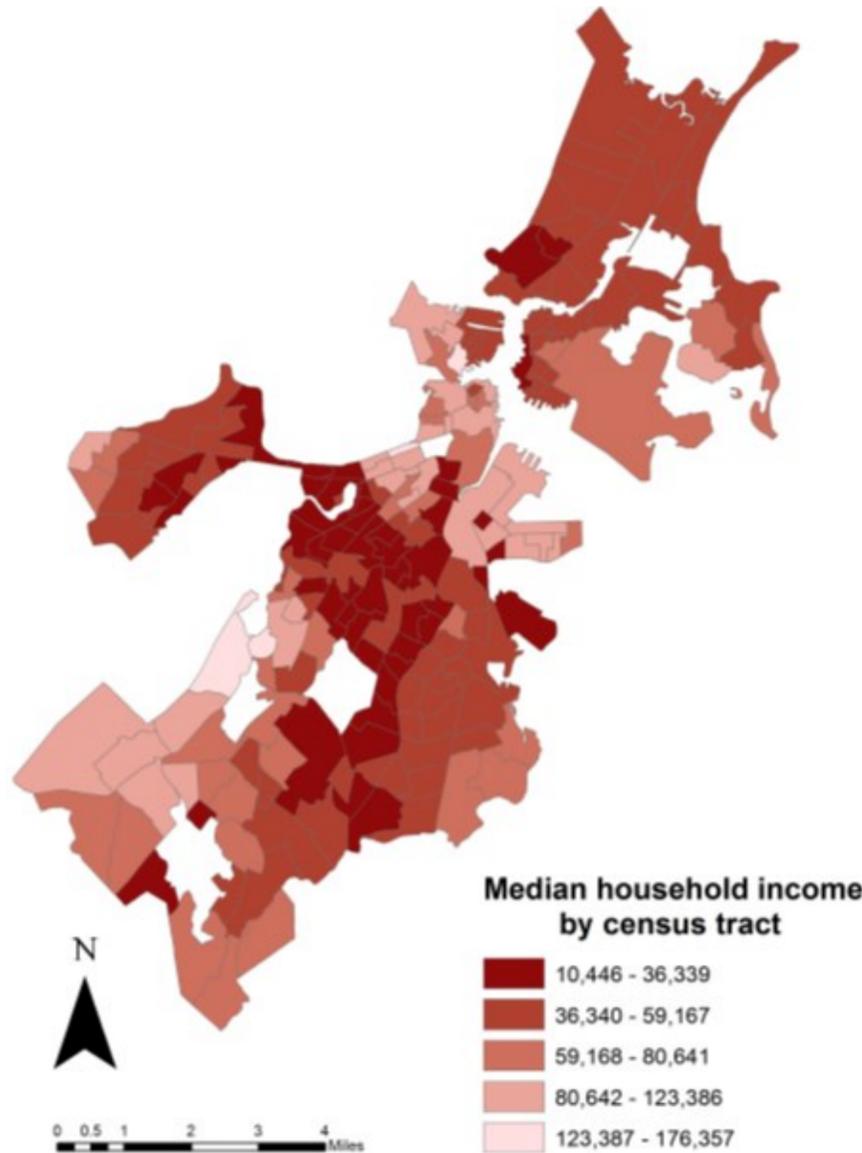
Introduction

The city of Boston and the rest of Suffolk County have seen many racial, ethnic and socioeconomic shifts over time. Recently, gentrification has pushed lower income communities of color away from inner Boston to the surrounding neighborhoods that are, in comparison, underfunded and underserved. This project aims to provide an illustration of the current economic state of Suffolk County to support these ideas. Income and poverty data are from ACS 2012 5-year estimates and assisted housing data are based on the 2010 Census. As seen in the maps below, lower income census tracts correlate positively with the concentration of households using government subsidized mobile housing vouchers and households living in poverty. These tracts are farther away from downtown Boston, which is visually represented by higher income levels.



Spatial access has been identified as a tool for achieving community integration which in turn can act as an intervention against poverty and homelessness.¹ Public transit plays an integral role in community access, especially for low income communities. Further, public schools predominantly populated by low income students of color are a result of wealthier students being enrolled in private and charter schools.² Schools in these impoverished neighborhoods are at risk of continued underfunding and the students' education at risk of being compromised.

The Economic Climate of Suffolk County



Moving Forward

Amenities such as schools, community oriented non-profits and grocery stores are either highly concentrated around public rapid transit or they are more widely dispersed outside of a walkable radius from rapid transit. The census tracts that are lower income have fewer of these amenities, and less convenient ways to access them as rapid transit lines do not serve the entirety of the county.

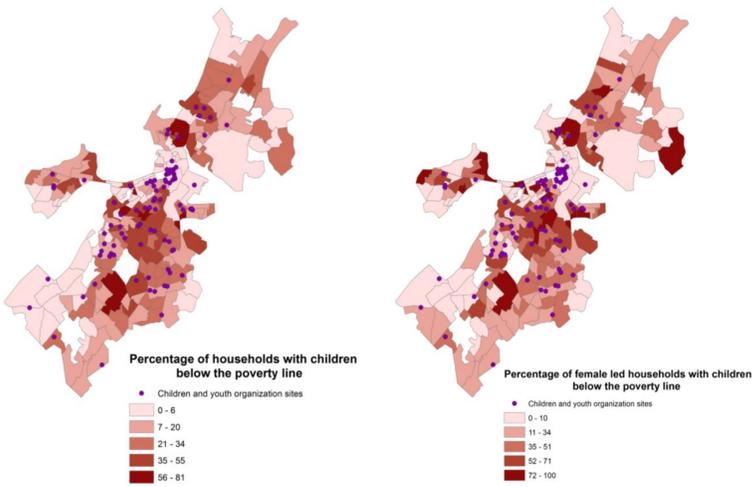


While this project is limited in scope, it provides a backdrop against which to continue exploring how Suffolk County can improve access for disadvantaged households. Some potential solutions are for rapid transit to extend into these communities, to make stronger investment in business, non-profits and schools in these struggling areas and to fund more affordable housing to reduce the need for government subsidies. In examining the spatial relationship between poverty and basic social amenities, policymakers and service providers can continue to work towards better community integration and socioeconomic equality.

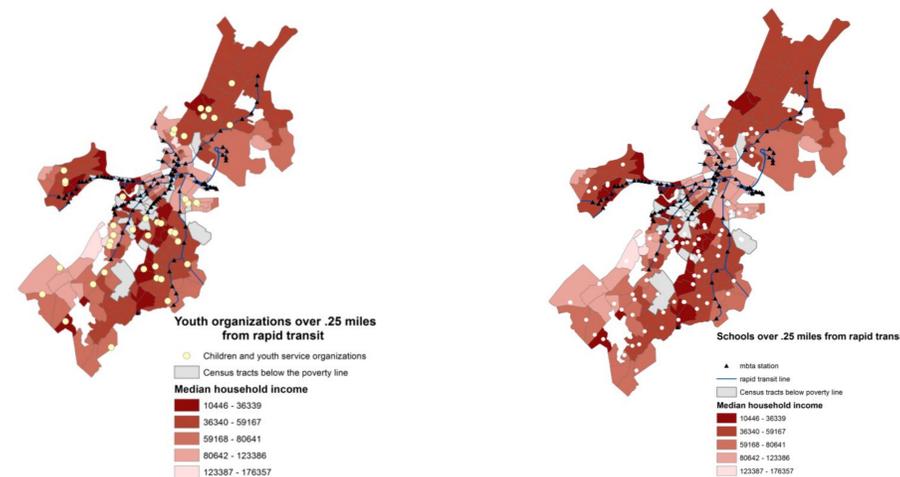
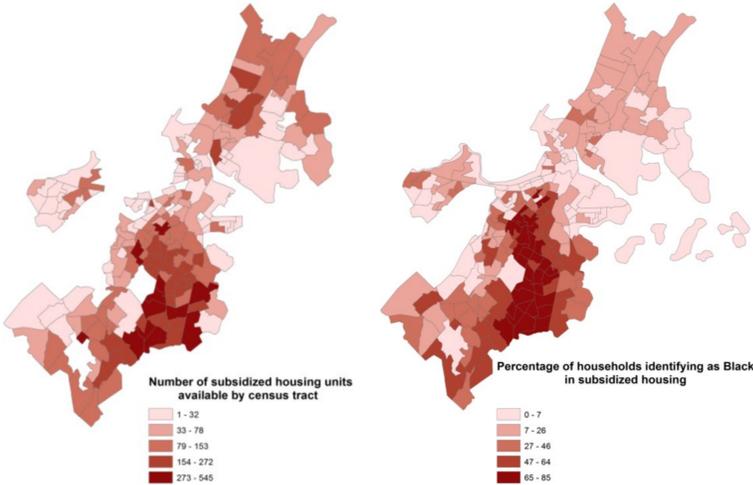
¹Chan, D. V., Gopal, S., & Helfrich, C. A. (2014). Accessibility patterns and community integration among previously homeless adults: A Geographic Information Systems (GIS) approach. *Social Science & Medicine*, 120, 142-152.

²Saporito, S., & Sohoni, D. (2007). Mapping educational inequality: Concentrations of poverty among poor and minority students in public schools. *Social Forces*, 85(3), 1227-1253.

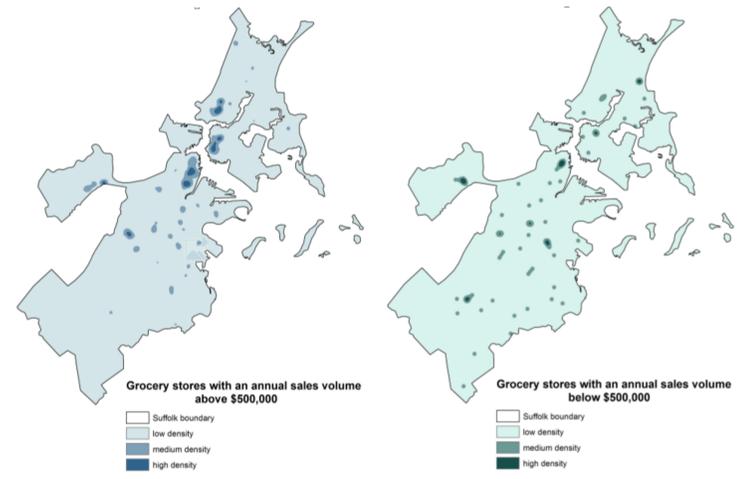
Families with children living in poverty



Assisted housing: mobile choice vouchers



Concentration of grocery store revenue



White collar vs. working class

