Background
The Greater Boston Community Land Trust Network (GBCLTN) seeks to promote community land trusts to increase community-led development and prevent gentrification and displacement in the Greater Boston Area. Due to high private market prices, GBCLTN is developing a different strategy to acquire land to keep within community hands—public land. The City of Boston owns land that is managed through the Department of Neighborhood Development (DND) and the Boston Planning & Development Authority (formerly known as the Boston Redevelopment Authority). The purpose of this analysis is to understand the current public land dispossession practices of these agencies and ask: How does public dispossession of land relate to gentrification within a neighborhood? This will ultimately be used to inform GBCLTN as they continue their mission to make “Public Lands in the Public’s Hands”.

Methodology

**Parcels:**
1. Identify public, dispossessed parcels.
2. Code the parcel grantee as CDC, Non-Profit, City, MBTA, For-Profit, NHI, MIHI (City programs to address housing affordability), or Individuals.

**Gentrification (faster rates of demographic change than citywide—upsetting neighborhood makeup):**
1. Calculate Boston’s % change of the population proportion for each category from 2013–2017: White Population (90.94%), 25+ year olds with a Bachelor’s degree (3.5%), Owner Occupied Housing (9.38%), Household Median Income (1.21%) & Gross Rent (6.64%)
2. Calculate the above for each census tract.
3. Calculate gentrification score with field calculator.
   I. Select by attribute for each category:
      - tract change ≤ Boston % change score 0
      - tract change > Boston % change score 1
   II. Sum category scores for final gentrification score per tract.

Additional analysis:
1. Spatial join Parcel Layer to Census Tract layer.

**Limitations:** Included only census tracts fully within Dorchester boundaries, use of ACS 5-year estimates, not checking for statistical significance of tract to city difference, using rent data from ACS, coded parcels using best knowledge, simplification of gentrification score

Results & Discussion
Most public, dispossessed parcels were sold under the city’s Neighborhood Homes Initiative. 90% of NHI parcels were in 4 census tracts in SW Dorchester. These tracts scored 1-3 on gentrification. As a whole, the most frequent signs of neighborhood changes is the increase in white population (19/29 tracts) and gross rent (13/29 tracts). Interestingly, only 8/29 tracts household median income increased faster than Boston, this could mean higher rate of housing burden.

This analysis shows that most Dorchester census tracts are only starting to show signs of gentrification. The low scores create hope that GBCLTN can make change if they act creatively & urgently. GBCLTN will need to focus their efforts to make the case for CLT benefits to communities, instead of highlighting the negative impacts of selling to other ventures, since those impacts take time to show. This should include measures that are more qualitative in nature and speak to the autonomy and agency CLTs engender in communities. By making a qualitative case and partnering with others to pilot land development work, GBCLTN can help enrich and deepen community roots.