

# PUSHED OUT: An Analysis of Populations at Risk for Displacement in Boston and Their Potential Relocation Options

Ashley Pierre-Louis  
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## Introduction

In November 2018, the Boston Herald reported on a community meeting held in Roxbury, MA where residents expressed their frustrations and anger to how gentrification in their area is being addressed and not being addressed. It is reported that "housing prices jumped 70% between 2010 and 2015 compared to 36% elsewhere in the city, according to the mayor's Imagine Boston 2030 report." But this is not strictly a Roxbury problem. For neighborhoods all across Boston, Massachusetts, and part of the country gentrification and displacement are issues facing long-time residents. For residents that are forced to make the decision to move out of Boston, what are their options for relocation?



## Methodology

### Determining the Population:

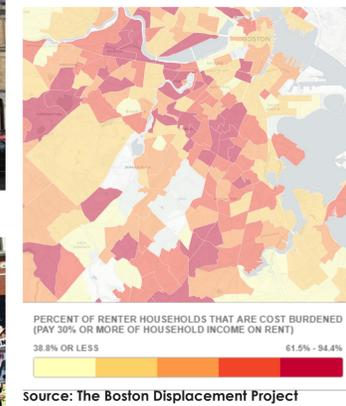
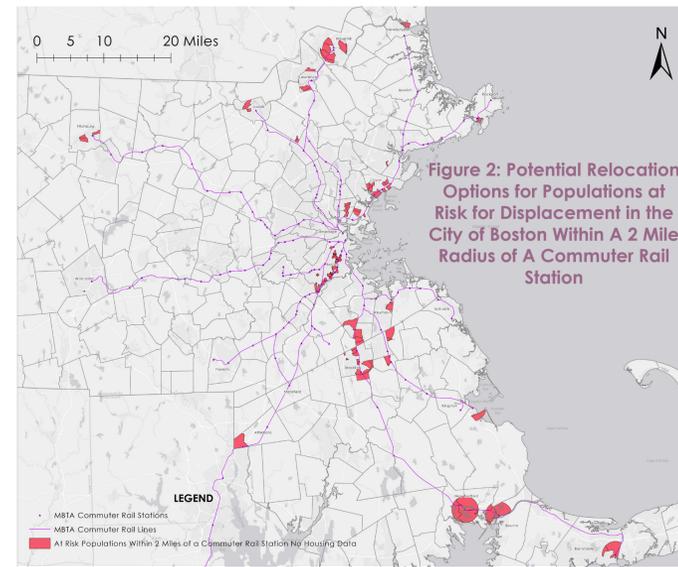
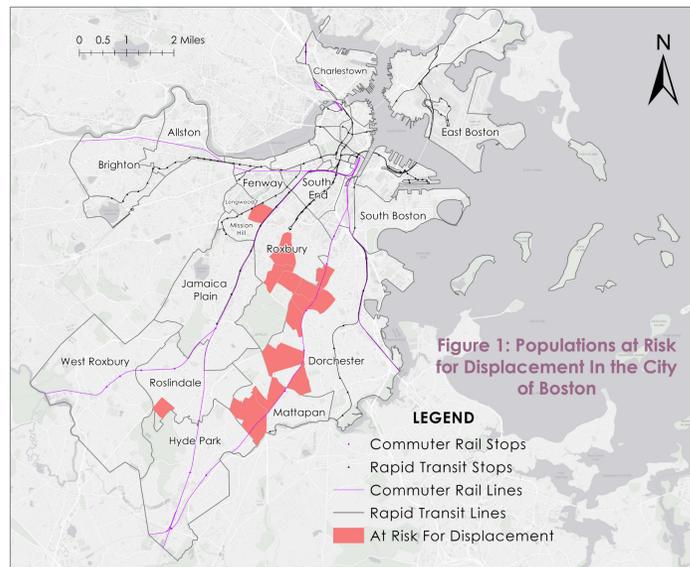
The factors: a high population of seniors age 60+, a high percentage of low-income residents, low levels of education attainment, and a high percentage of renters within the area. Racial data was purposefully excluded as a factor because historical factors have concentrated disadvantaged groups and populations together as a way of exclusion, isolation, and generational wealth deprivation.

**Steps:** An attribute join of each factor to census tract data and exported each as their own shapefile. Next, an attribute query for the specific at-risk qualifying factors and exported that as its own shapefile. After, a series of intersects to bring all of the factors together to create the "at-risk" population. Some of the other maps may include "at-risk populations without housing data". This means that all factors are included except for "high percentage of renters" to adjust for communities that have higher home-ownership rates than rentals (the suburbs).

Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic  
Coordinate System: GCS NAD 1983 2011 State Plane  
Massachusetts Mainland FIPS 2001 US Feet

Sources: MassGIS, ArcGIS Hub, American FactFinder/U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2016

For the determined at-risk populations, where could they relocate to within the state of MA that is still near Mass-transit connecting to Boston?



## Conclusion

There are many factors that make populations at risk for displacement, such as land values and uses, real estate speculation of an area, and transit-oriented development. These factors were not included in this analysis but have the potential to expand the size of "at risk" populations in Boston. Specifically for transit-oriented development, it has become a trend around rapid-transit lines within the City of Boston, but this analysis may hint at the next wave of transit-oriented development around commuter rail lines as the City and real estate investors attempt to attract suburban populations to Boston. Another aspect to consider is that this analysis is only a snapshot of populations at risk for displacement in 2016. Gentrification and displacement have been occurring for a number of years, so any future research should include a timeline of how the populations have moved or shifted within the city.

There was an element of Boston's Imagine 2030 Plan that discusses the theory of equity and creating a more equitable city. The plan also includes a potential solution for addressing the housing crisis: build more housing. But the solution of building more housing units does not relate to the demographics who are being pushed out of the city by high housing prices. Luxury apartments and condos, only 2-bedroom apartments, increasing rents due to student housing, and rental seasons based off of college student academic years are all topics that need to be addressed when considering a holistic way to approach housing equity for current and long-term residents of Boston as well as the state.

## Results

**Figure 1:** At-risk populations are mainly found in the neighborhoods of Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan between the Orange and Red Lines. Many of the census tracts also align with the Fairmount Line Commuter Rail Stations. The Mission Hill census tract aligns with Orange and Green Lines and commuter rail stations for the Needham Line and Providence-Stoughton Line. The at-risk populations align with the Boston Displacement Mapping Project's maps that reveal the pattern of which neighborhoods are facing the most risk for gentrification and displacement.

**Figure 2:** Many of equally at-risk populations are towards the end of commuter rail lines. Many of these areas are also Gateway Cities. Gateway Cities are seen as economic anchor mid-sized cities that residents use as gateways to find good jobs; they also are highly diverse communities. 17 out of the 26 Gateway cities are represented as communities with equally at-risk populations to the Boston population.

**Figure 3:** This map displays equally at-risk populations and similarly risked populations. Equally at-risk populations are located near each other. For example, in Springfield, equally at-risk populations are surrounded by similarly risked populations. There are also large areas in central and western MA that have similarly risked populations.

**Figure 4.1 & 4.2:** A large portion of government-subsidized housing was built in decades past. Generally, housing and at-risk populations are located within the same communities, but not necessarily in the same census tracts. This is an important factor because both populations may require similar services. Worcester is a clear example of this, the housing is located between the at-risk population and commuter rail without much overlap.

**Figure 5:** The areas between Boston and Worcester are concentrated with communities that have a low to a low-moderate presence of homes valued under \$100,000 (darker colors) According to Zillow, the average Massachusetts home was valued at \$355,000 in December 2016. Many areas that were cited as at-risk are also areas that have a high presence of home valued under \$100,000 (light colors).

