Measuring Progress in a Regional Context:
The Boston Indicators Project

Fifth Annual ICLRD Conference

Enniskillen

January 21, 2010

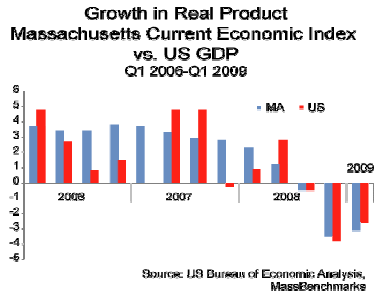
Click on www.bostonindicators.org
for an enhanced website about Boston and the region—with data, maps, charts and links

Boston today is one of the most successful cities in the US and a global center of innovation

It is also registering the impact of intensifying global forces…

- Global population growth
- Global energy demand
- Technological innovation & competitiveness
- Climate change

And the effects of sudden economic collapse…

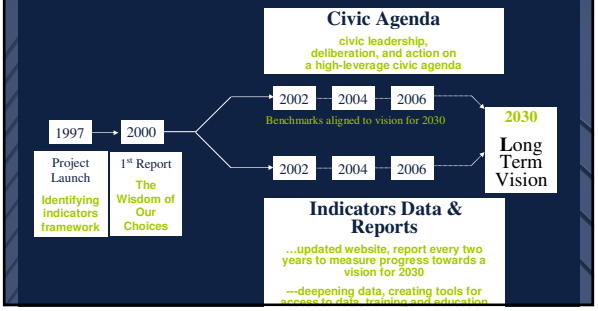


The Boston Indicators Project: Coordinated by the Boston Foundation with the City of Boston and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council

GOALS:

1. To democratize access to data & information;
2. To foster informed public discourse;
3. To track progress on shared civic goals.

Project Structure: A Long Time Frame, Two Tracks



10 primary sectors, 5 "cross-cuts"

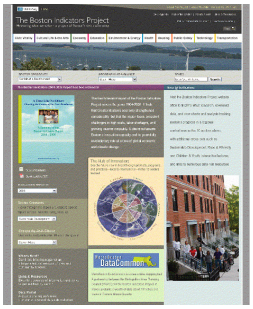
PRIMARY SECTORS

1. Civic Vitality
2. Cultural Life & the Arts
3. Economy
4. Education
5. Environment
6. Health
7. Housing
8. Public Safety
9. Technology
10. Transportation

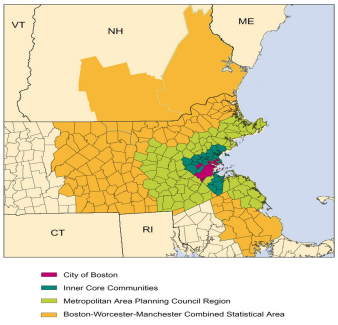
CROSS-CUTS:

- Neighborhoods
- Children & Youth
- Race & Ethnicity
- Environmental Sustainability
- Economic Competitiveness

www.bostonindicators.org



Measuring change through nested indicators in a regional context



A Civic Agenda

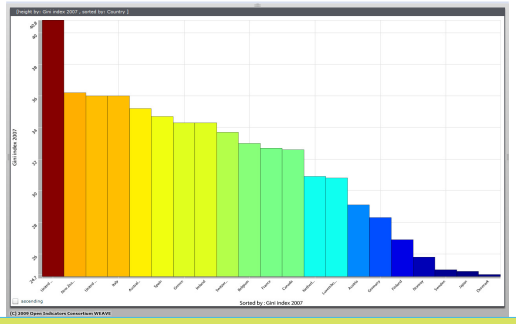
- Community convenings to elicit trends
- A provocative biennial Summary Report
- Strategic briefings & civic forums

GOALS:

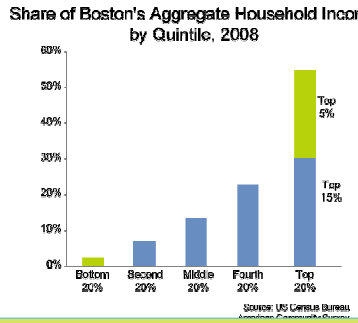
- Shared understanding
- Alignment of resources
- Action on key challenges & opportunities

Release of a biennial Boston Indicators Report….

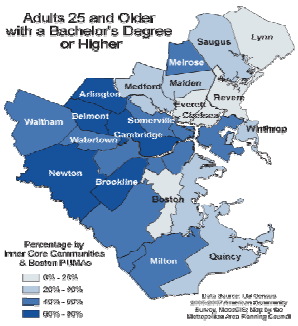
Income Inequality, OECD 2007: Among wealthy industrialized nations, the US is an outlier



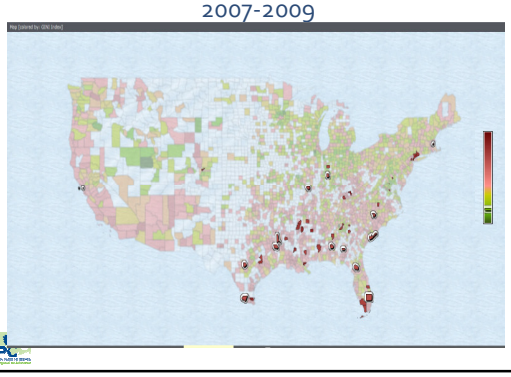
Income Inequality: Share of total household income in Boston by quintile, 2008



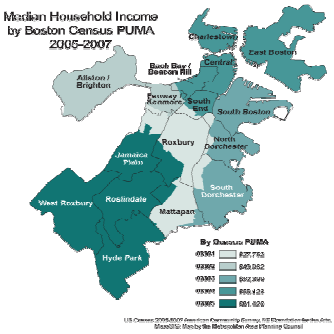
The Geography of Income Inequality: Suffolk County cities with low educational attainment



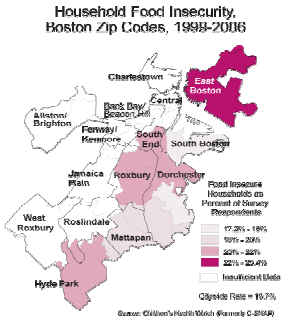
The Geography of Income Inequality: Just 47 of 3200 US counties had a Gini ratio >.51 2007-2009



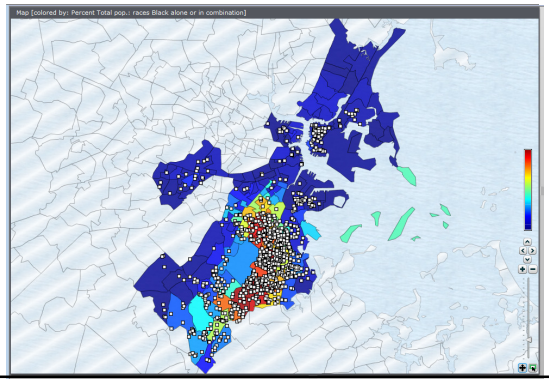
The Geography of Inequality: Household income, Boston



The Geography of Inequality: Household food insecurity by Boston Zip codes



The Geography of Inequality: Foreclosures by Boston Census Tract



The Open Indicators Consortium

Weave

open source **data visualization**

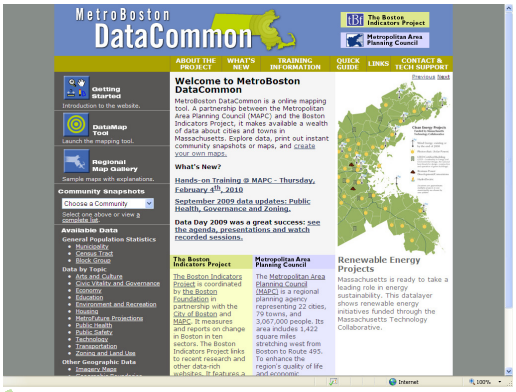
developed by students and faculty at
The University of Massachusetts Lowell
Institute for Visualization and Perception Research
Center for Industrial Competitiveness

in partnership with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), the Boston Indicators Project, and the
RI Department of Education, The Providence Plan, Greater Atlanta, Arizona, Connecticut, Metro Chicago and Columbus/Central Ohio

REGIONAL EFFORTS:
The Value and Challenges for Municipalities

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council

- MAPC is the regional planning agency for 101 cities and towns
- Provide planning assistance to cities and towns
- Coordinate collective purchasing and procurement
- Comment on development with regional impacts, and
- Advocate for legislative change on Beacon Hill
- MAPC launched MetroFuture – a new approach to developing a regional plan – in 2002



Metropolitan Mayors Coalition

- The Metro Mayors is a groundbreaking coalition made up of 13 communities in Greater Boston
- The membership includes mayors and managers
- Metro Mayors has become an effective vehicle to address common issues confronting urban governments and has made significant strides in overcoming the obstacles that hampered past attempts at inter-local cooperation

Metropolitan Mayors Coalition

- $150,000 for a feasibility study to determine the costs and benefits of a Regional Emergency Communications Center.
- Developing a on-line mapping service of available commercial and industrial sites to increase business development.
- Engaging with the Legislature's Commission on Municipal Relief to advocate for the inclusion of proposals of particular interest to Metro Mayors communities, with focused on the need for local option taxes and municipal health insurance reform.
- Establishing the Shannon Grant Community Safety- works to find regional solutions to gang and youth violence

Financial Imperatives for Municipalities

- 2008 Economic decline
  - Decrease in local revenues
- Decrease in local aid to municipalities
  - With revenue down state is cutting back
- Increasing costs:
  - Health care
  - Pension payments
  - Unfunded mandates
- Increased reliance on local property taxes

Regional efforts and shared services

- Collective Procurement
  - DPW/ Highway supplies
  - Office supplies
  - Municipal Fleets- Vehicles / Equipment, Fuel, Maintenance
- Municipal Services
  - Public Health, Human Resources & Hiring, Inspectional/Building Services, Assessing,
- Public Safety
  - E-911 Dispatch
  - Fire Inspection, Fire Prevention & Education, Trainings, Equipment and Software
  - Mutual Aid: Police & Fire

Melrose-Wakefield Health Consolidation

- Impetus:
  - Geographically contiguous
  - Demographically similar
  - History of cooperation
  - Better efficiency
- Agreement on form:
  - History of shared resources
  - Staff levels and plans - opportunity
  - Independent Boards of Health

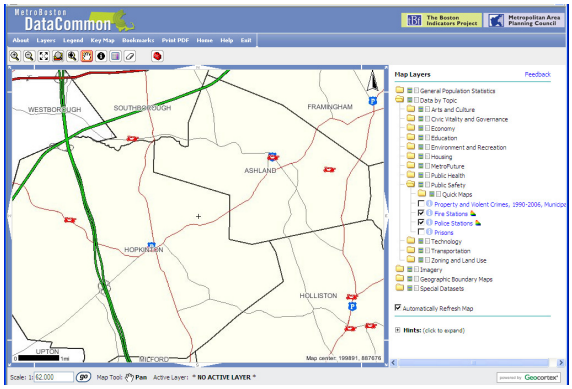
Melrose-Wakefield Health Consolidation

- Wakefield pays $83,000 per year to Melrose
- Estimated savings of $34,700 for Melrose
- Strong political support in both communities
- Agreement occurred quickly
- Began in FFY 2010

Arlington, Belmont, Lexington Regional Health Department

Arlington, Belmont, Lexington Regional Health Department

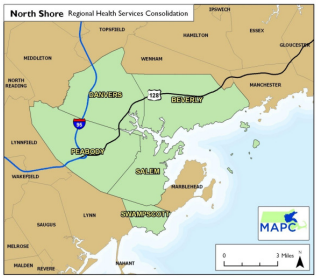
- Regionalizing public health for three municipalities
- Shared control of regional department
- Central employment and office
- Standardization of fees and regulations
- Greater efficiency for same or lower cost



Ashland & Hopkinton Fire Services Collaboration

- History of willing town leadership
- Local population growth in both communities
- Assessment of future needs
- Recommend responsive and applicable steps
- Create a plan for implementation
- Focus on Service vs. Savings

North Shore: Education, Health, E-911



North Shore: Education, Health, E-911

- Find cost-savings in school departments:
  - Recruitment and hiring
  - Collective procurement
  - Transportation
  - Professional development
- Investigate regionalizing health/municipal services
- Assist transition to a Regional Emergency Communications Center

Lessons Learned

- Inter Municipal Agreements Law -Critical Step
- Assess current operations
- Change is difficult
- Loss of jobs
- Back of the office functions vs front office
- Open process, public discussion
- Local control vs. Improved efficiency