

# Gentrification In Boston

## Team 5

Caitlin Aarons (#82187708), Tatiana Allbritten (#36302296), Shanni De La Cruz (#39118455), Annika Del Rosario (#10134913)

### Introduction

- **All of Boston:** faces gentrification in one form or another, the main **causes of gentrification vary** between the different parts of Boston.
- **North and West Boston:** face the looming **threat of outside chains and developers**, whose developments in these areas cause the cost of living to skyrocket
  - solutions focused on educational programs and opportunities available exclusively to residents in underserved communities in Boston.
- **East and South Boston:** face gentrification closely linked to the **damage caused by climate change**, as well as the uneven development of climate resiliency planning.
  - solutions focused on making resiliency planning available to all residents, as to avoid green gentrification.
- Particular focus on **minority communities** in Boston, as they've been hit the hardest.



Figure 1: Projected Flooding in Boston by 2070 (40" of Sea Level Rise) via [Boston.gov](https://www.boston.gov) (Davis, 2016)

### Solutions

- **North and West Boston:** Combat lack of opportunities by increasing accessibility to **educational programs for adolescents**.
  - Pre-K services for younger children
  - Workshops for parents and health clinics
  - Post high school guidance programs
  - Closing gaps in education will relieve financial burdens placed on families, thus reducing gentrification.
- **East and South Boston:** Gear resiliency plans towards accessibility and affordability for long-term residents rather than wealthy newcomers.
  - **Leadership by local nonprofit organizations** (Boston Harborkeepers, Green Roots, Right to The City Boston) to guide conversations between community residents and city officials in creating equitable green infrastructure.
  - Make **planning meetings more accessible** to long term residents using Zoom, surveys, and detailed reports for those who cannot attend meetings in person.
  - **Center these planning meetings around equitability and affordability** in climate resiliency plans
    - **Climate Education:**
      - Improve local residents' understanding of urban waterfront issues,
      - Start conversations on accessibility of climate infrastructure between planners and residents.
    - **Neighborhood-wide resiliency planning:**
      - Emphasize planning for infrastructure that will benefit the entire community rather than creating individual luxury resilient housing.
      - Ensure that neighborhood resiliency infrastructure is affordable



Figure 2: Anticipated costs of sea level rising ([Climate Ready Boston Executive Summary, 2016](#))

### Mechanisms For Paying

- **Background:** United States Tax Cuts and Jobs Act
  - Investors profit from tax breaks if they do business in poorer areas, deemed "Opportunity Zones."
  - Created with good intentions, but new businesses coming in have raised the cost of living in Boston, making it 48% higher than the national average
- **Our proposal:** Take the existing tax code and change it so existing residents can afford to continue living in Boston
  - Boston should **give tax breaks to existing businesses** so "mom-and-pop shops" can stay open
- **Our proposal:** Boston should **tax existing luxury homes and all businesses** in order to pay for affordable housing fortified against coastal storms and flooding
  - Long term solution
  - Short term: **philanthropic efforts and fundraising for 1 year** (similar to the Boston Resiliency Fund)
- **Our proposal:** **Divert current Boston investments** to projects that would increase equity
  - Climate Ready Boston Campaign
  - Language and Communication Access Budget

### Cost/Benefit Analysis

- **Benefits to resiliency planning:**
  - **Reduction of future damage** to existing neighborhoods from flooding
    - Investments will be diverted from new developments into **protecting existing developed areas**
    - **Comparison:** Clippership Wharf: \$270 million vs. Climate Ready Boston: \$3 million for raising roads
    - Average cost to repair a flooded basement 3,000 to \$10,000 vs. average cost to flood proof a basement: \$2,000 to \$7,000
  - People won't die due to flooding and other natural disasters or lose their homes from displacement
    - **The local government has a responsibility to protect its residents** and their property from serious weather events and emergencies—no matter their economic status
  - **Reduced displacement** of small businesses
- **Potential costs:**
  - Loss of private investors
  - Current investment into climate protection would have to be diverted
  - Lack of new businesses

### Discussion

- **Summary:** The different areas of Boston are affected by different drivers of gentrification, and thus require unique solutions that are sensitive to the residents' needs, and do not cause further unintended consequences. We propose to adjust the tax code in order to divert funds from national chains to local small businesses, as well as neighborhood resilience planning.
- Main anticipated problem: Tax code change
- Additional questions or comments?

### Literature Cited

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