

# STRATEGIES TO MITIGATE INSTITUTIONAL AND STUDENT IMPACTS ON THE ROXBURY HOUSING MARKET

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Ruined Roxbury Mural – Liberation News

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The neighborhood of Roxbury has long been a cultural and historical center in Boston, MA, known for its strong sense of community activism and significance to the Black Boston community. Long-term Roxbury residents have increasingly witnessed and been affected by multiple variables, including Boston's recent population growth and diminishing affordable housing supply. The most substantial result of this is displacement of Roxbury residents and loss of local culture.

This report was commissioned by The American City Coalition (TACC) in order to understand the specific impacts that nearby Boston colleges and universities are creating on the Roxbury housing market. It uses a combination of quantitative data analysis, best practice research, review of Institutional Master Planning documents, and long-form interviews with Roxbury residents and stakeholders to propose three distinct sets of policy recommendations to TACC, the City of Boston, and Northeastern University. This report concludes with a student guidebook for Northeastern students to help share the historical and cultural importance of Roxbury, and provides guidelines to help students become responsible Roxbury neighbors.

This report finds that, despite efforts by Northeastern to house more students on-campus by producing more student housing and introducing programming to make residential student life more attractive, the number of Northeastern students living in Roxbury has doubled over the past four years. This is putting increased demand on Roxbury housing which has resulted in growing concentration of rent-burdened households, displacement of Roxbury residents, and detrimental impacts on neighborhood quality of life. This trend is not unique to Northeastern University or Boston, and is indicative of decades-long university and community tensions, particularly within urban neighborhoods, which in some cases have been made worse by university neighborhood revitalization initiatives by inadvertently driving up the cost of living and driving out longtime residents of color and low-income residents in abutting communities. Still, this report finds there are specific policies and plans that Northeastern University can adopt -- with strategic support from TACC and stronger protections and enforcement from the City of Boston -- to better serve community needs and offset its harmful impacts on Roxbury housing stock and affordability.

**POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TACC** seek to cement TACC's position as a conduit between Northeastern and Roxbury residents and an advocate for affordable housing. This includes:

- Helping to monitor and preserve existing affordable housing in Roxbury
- Working with Northeastern to develop Master's level and certificate programs on best practice community development principles
- Supporting Northeastern to advertise its existing community programming and any future targeted affordable housing initiatives

**POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CITY OF BOSTON** serve to reinforce effective approaches to community engagement across university planning processes and decisions. This includes:

- Enacting a city-wide ordinance to require community engagement and community-based partnerships as part of institutional master planning processes
- Surveying Roxbury community needs to ensure new housing developments meet the needs of longtime residents
- Enforcing housing quality standards to prevent predatory landlord activity

**POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY** aim to build on existing institutional efforts by developing more targeted affordable housing initiatives and strengthening the university-community relationship. This includes:

- Using membership within higher education institutional consortia to advocate for targeted affordable housing initiatives in Roxbury (e.g. the Boston Consortium for Higher Education)
- Strengthening the university-community partnership by appointing TACC and/or a Roxbury community-organization to facilitate community engagement in planning processes and decision-making
- Undertaking and better communicating longitudinal research to understand the long-term institutional and student impacts on housing affordability and quality of life in Roxbury

## VISION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

**VISION:** Roxbury residents will have access to quality and affordable housing, opportunities to benefit from the educational and economic assets from neighboring higher education institutions, and clear pathways to provide feedback and/or endorsement of institutional programming and future housing developments.

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. **GOAL:** Minimize the impact of Northeastern University and neighboring higher education institutions on the supply of affordable housing in Roxbury.
  - a. **Objective:** Institutions will increase production of affordable on-campus student housing, and create institutional strategies and incentives to attract and retain students to reside in on-campus housing
  - b. **Objective:** Institutions will develop targeted approaches to mitigate institutional and student impacts on affordable housing (e.g. Affordable Housing Clinics, classes on homeownership, etc.)
  - c. **Objective:** Institutions will undertake longitudinal research to understand the long-term impacts of the Northeastern community on affordable housing and quality of life in Roxbury
  - d. **Objective:** Institutions in Roxbury will work collaboratively to monitor student impacts on affordable housing and resident quality of life and aggregate resources to mitigate negative student and institutional impacts
2. **GOAL:** Maximize the amount of affordable housing in Roxbury.
  - a. **Objective:** Institutions will work more closely with community partners and residents to prevent unlawful eviction and displacement
  - b. **Objective:** Institutions will work more closely with the City of Boston to monitor landlord and speculative activity
  - c. **Objective:** Institutions will work with developers to ensure new student housing developments are accompanied by commensurate production of affordable community housing
3. **GOAL:** Preserve the quality of life and cultural richness of Roxbury



Man on bike in Nubian Square - Jesse Costa for WBUR

- a. Measure: Economic stability (housing insecurity; poverty), Social and community context (discrimination; social cohesion), and Neighborhood and built environment (environmental conditions; quality of housing) as social determinants of health
  - b. Objective: Institutions will educate students on the historical institutional impacts in Roxbury and the importance of being a respectful neighbor as part of institutional anti-racism work and to forge better community relationships
  - c. Objective: The City of Boston will enforce clear housing quality standards to ensure off-campus student rentals in Roxbury are compliant with municipal codes
  - d. Objective: The City of Boston will develop infrastructure for elderly-specific housing for people experiencing homelessness
  - e. Objective: The City of Boston will provide for increased data collection and tracking of the number of students living in off-campus housing in Roxbury, and the landlords who rent to them
4. **GOAL:** Prioritize Roxbury community voices in future institutional programming and housing development decisions
- a. Objective: Institutions will develop a year-round online, public comment tool with clear, reporting structures to elevate and respond to community comments
  - b. Objective: Institutions will survey community needs to inform institutional programming (e.g. library access, Affordable Housing Clinics, etc.)
  - c. Objective: The City of Boston will survey community needs to understand Roxbury resident housing needs, including affordable housing markets outside of Section 8 and other types of public assistance vouchers and housing
  - d. Objective: Institutions will appoint Roxbury community organizations to facilitate representation of the community voice and feedback in master planning process and decisions
  - e. Objective: The City of Boston will ensure institutional compliance with community development principles as part of any institutional and regional planning processes, including partnering with a community-based organization

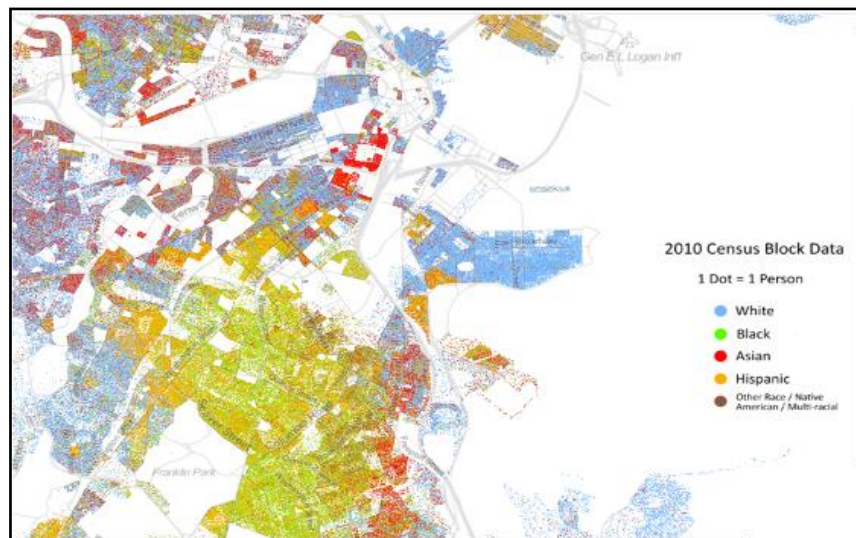


Roxbury street art by Cedric Douglas – Greg Cook for WBUR

## BACKGROUND

Roxbury is a neighborhood centrally situated in the City of Boston. The demographic profile of Roxbury stands in contrast to the Boston population at-large, as a majority-minority community with more than 55% of residents identifying as Black or African American, and nearly 30% identifying as Hispanic or Latino (2010 Census). Roxbury is also a culturally diverse community, with high populations of immigrant and second-generation families from locations such as Haiti, Jamaica and Somalia. Due to systemic racism in policy implementation, Roxbury is largely a low-income community, with a high proportion of renters and a diminishing number of owner-occupied units (American Community Survey, 2015). Despite the challenges that Roxbury residents have had to face, Roxbury's demographics and historical significance have made it the center and heart of Black Boston, serving as a home to Black leaders, individuals and families since the Great Migration.

Figure 1. 2010 Boston Demographics by Race. Source: The University of Virginia



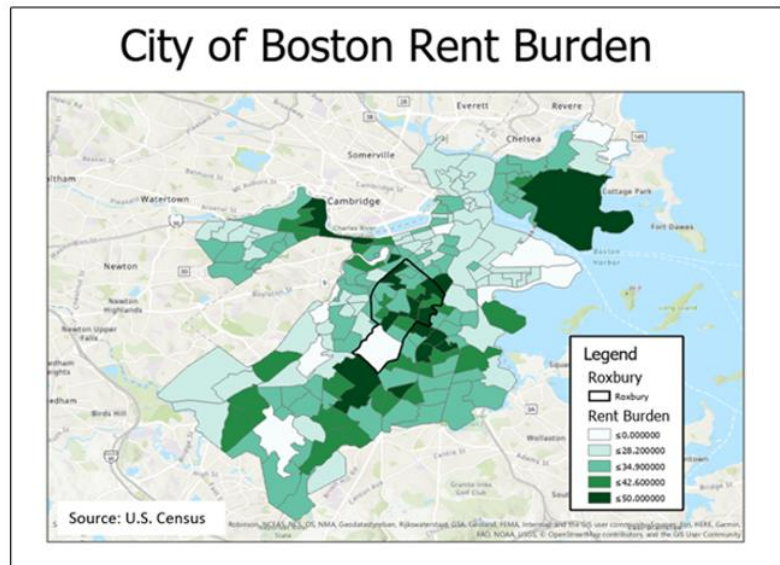
In addition to being a more diverse neighborhood, and lower-income neighborhood, Roxbury has become a focal point of rent burden in the City of Boston. Roxbury residents are far more likely to be paying 30% or more of their income toward housing costs than the majority of Boston residents (U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2019). Considering that residents are struggling to afford their rents, further increases in housing prices puts lower-income and long-time residents of the neighborhood at increased risk of displacement. However, Roxbury has a rich history of civic and community engagement around systemic racism and key areas that are affected by it, such as housing. While many local and national institutions have worked with and in Roxbury to ameliorate the effects of housing displacement and neighborhood change, Roxbury residents have shown time and again that local knowledge and community-developed solutions can be most effective in sustaining local growth and reducing the individual and community fatigue from increased and widespread adversity.

Northeastern University is a private higher education institution which sits directly adjacent to Roxbury and has the highest student enrollment in the region (Northeastern, 2019). Whereas enrollment at other nearby colleges has been either stagnant or in decline in recent years, student enrollment at Northeastern has been steadily increasing since 2008 (Northeastern, 2019; Boston.gov, 2019). Northeastern has increased its supply of housing in response to growing student enrollment, yet recent analysis indicates there remains a shortfall of 5,474 beds for Northeastern undergraduate students alone (Byrne McKinney, 2019). This is the second highest unmet bed demand for undergraduate students in Boston, second only to UMass Boston (Byrne McKinney, 2019). Partially as a result, Roxbury has become one of the top 10 neighborhoods in Boston for student off-campus housing (City of Boston, 2019). As universities implement new “de-densification” plans to

meet state social distancing requirements and limit transmission of COVID-19, this could create further pressure on neighboring communities such as Roxbury, which had already been contending with housing insecurity prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to community reports provided to TACC, the incoming student population has had significant ramifications on long-term Roxbury residents' ability to secure stable housing and live comfortably and affordably. In fact, studies have shown that Roxbury has been identified as particularly vulnerable to resident displacement, as 81% of residents are renters and there have been notable declines in people of color living in the community (NCRC, 2020). The influx of students not only has repercussions for the local housing market, it can also change the character and cultural richness of communities. Areas with high student populations create demand for more student-oriented consumption, leading to increased competition between local business owners and corporate operators as they vie for student consumers (Chatterton, 2010).

**Figure 2: Percent of Rent Burdened Residents in Boston**



Changes to urban neighborhoods and affordable housing shortages are not problems unique to Boston. Universities across the country are contending with the issue of how to house their growing student populations. Nationally, university student enrollment has increased by 6.4 million students over the past 20 years (Black, 2019). However, universities have not been able to produce enough student housing to match the growth in student enrollment. According to one report, universities can only typically provide enough on-campus housing to accommodate one fifth of the student body (Black, 2019). The growing student bed demand and the inability of universities to accommodate all students puts strain on off-campus housing markets and places neighboring long-term residents at risk of displacement.

This report has been commissioned by The American City Coalition (TACC) to help identify effective university and municipal policies that will serve to minimize strain on the Roxbury housing market. The scope of work included conducting a combination of qualitative and quantitative research, alongside analysis of best practices and university Institutional Master Plans, to understand existing institutional policies relating to student accommodation, the experience of Roxbury community members in being able to secure quality, affordable housing, and effective university-community partnerships that can serve as a model for Boston universities whose student populations are increasingly residing in Roxbury.

This report concludes with specific policy recommendations for three distinct stakeholders: TACC, the City of Boston, and Northeastern University, as well as an educational resource for Northeastern students to communicate the historical and cultural significance of Roxbury as the heart of Black Boston, as well as the responsibility that students carry when choosing to live there.

## OUR APPROACH

This report employed a diverse approach to data and information gathering. This includes:

- PUBLICLY AVAILABLE DATASETS FROM THE U.S. CENSUS, AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY, HOUSING AGGREGATOR WEBSITES, AND BOSTON COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
- A BEST PRACTICE SCAN OF EFFECTIVE APPROACHES TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS, AND MUNICIPAL POLICIES
- ANALYSIS OF UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL MASTER PLANS (IMPS) AND CASE STUDY RESEARCH OF URBAN UNIVERSITY PRACTICES RELATED TO STUDENT HOUSING ACCOMMODATION
- LONG-FORM INTERVIEWS WITH ROXBURY RESIDENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS

This diverse research design is responsive both to existing gaps in analysis of institutional and student impacts on the Roxbury community which have tended to focus on quantitative analysis, as well as the project brief provided by TACC, which emphasized the importance of incorporating Roxbury community perceptions and voice.

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### BEST PRACTICE SCAN

The best practice scan concentrated on effective university-community partnerships and approaches to community engagement. Universities, as anchor and research institutions, undertake a wide range of community focused programs and therefore this scan focused specifically on efforts to preserve or increase the production of affordable housing. In order to understand best practices for community engagement, this review concentrated on approaches that gave residents and community members decision-making power in collaboration with public and private sector agents.



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### QUANTITATIVE APPROACH



The quantitative research component focused on data collection around the number of students living in Roxbury over the past five years, a price-point comparison of the average and median rental price in Roxbury as compared to Northeastern on-campus student housing, and the extent to which Roxbury residents experience housing burden -- defined as the proportion of monthly income expended on rent -- in comparison to residents of other Boston neighborhoods. The goal of the quantitative research portion of this report is meant to complement other important analyses of institutional and student impacts on affordable housing in Roxbury, including a 2019 report commissioned by Northeastern University and conducted by Boston real estate consultants, Byrne McKinney & Associates.



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## INSTITUTIONAL MASTER PLAN AND CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

The policy and case study analysis built on this report's quantitative research by concentrating on Northeastern University, Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (MCPHS), Wentworth Institute of Technology, and Simmons University -- the four institutions with reported student increases residing in private, off-campus housing (Byrne McKinney, 2019). Each institution's most recent Master Plan was reviewed to identify policies to help retain students in on-campus housing, and more broadly each institution's approach to engagement with Roxbury residents. This was supplemented by two in-depth case studies of the University of Southern California (USC) in Los Angeles, CA and Temple University in Philadelphia, PA, two institutions with large student populations which are situated in historically Black / African American neighborhoods.



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## QUALITATIVE APPROACH



Approaches to community empowerment and elevating local voices have resulted in sustained relationships for both the community, local organizations, and large institutions. In order to elevate the voice of Roxbury residents and stakeholders, as it pertains to housing and the impact of students residing in the community, key informant interviews were conducted with eight members of the community, including current residents (both homeowners and renters), stakeholders (community development corporations, elder and disabled service providers, community board members), and displaced residents. Interviews were conducted for one-hour each and provided insight into the effects of displacement and housing costs, relationships with nearby higher education institutions, and community-driven solutions.

## BEST PRACTICE SCAN

Higher education institutions serve a critical role within communities. They are employers, research centers, service providers, and significant contributors to local and regional economies. Over 50% of universities in the US are located in urban areas which in some cases has created friction with neighboring communities, especially as urban universities have expanded and increasingly adopted residential campus models and abandoned previous commuter school configurations (Ehlenz, 2015). In response, universities have adopted



Boston Apartment Buildings – Bostoncurbed.com

a diverse range of approaches to engage with community members,

improve university-community relations, and offset student and institutional impacts on the availability of affordable housing and “studentification” of neighborhoods (Smith et al, 2016).

The following section identifies best practice approaches to effective university-community partnerships, city policies to protect neighborhood housing adjacent to universities, and approaches to community engagement. Together, these policies work to empower local residents and mitigate neighborhood displacement in light of university expansion plans.

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### UNIVERSITY INITIATIVES

University neighborhood revitalization programs were developed to serve both universities and abutting communities (Taylor Jr. et al, 2018). University investments in public infrastructure, neighborhood schools, job training programs and others to improve neighborhood socioeconomic conditions were seen to make neighborhoods more desirable for community residents, and at the same time attract prospective students (Ehlenz, 2015; Taylor Jr. et al, 2018).

However, university investments in surrounding urban neighborhoods have also created adverse effects by contributing to increases in median home and rental prices (Ehlenz, 2019). According to one study, university neighborhood revitalization efforts led to increases in home and rent prices at nearly double the rate compared to other city neighborhoods (Ehlenz, 2019). Median home values in university neighborhoods appreciated particularly significantly -- 86% compared to 39% of median home values in non-university areas (Ehlenz, 2019). University neighborhoods can also experience artificially inflated rental prices, as landlords renting to students are able to charge more per square foot because monthly rents are typically sub-divided by several roommates (Black, 2019). Given the transient nature of students, the high turnover of rental units near universities further inflates prices in cities like Boston that do not have municipal rent controls or stabilization laws, to continuously increase the price of rental units when students move out (Black, 2019).

Traditional university neighborhood revitalization programs are also increasingly viewed as one-sided and motivated by university self-interests. For example, volunteer and service-learning opportunities that prepare students for the workforce in some cases may be seen as more beneficial to students than neighboring businesses and community residents (Bruning et al, 2006). Some studies have found that community residents crave more opportunities to be invited onto university campuses, which additionally has been found to have a positive impact on community views of universities (Bruning et al, 2016).

In addition, research shows that few universities have attempted to understand the external, neighborhood effects created by revitalization initiatives, which are often excluded from university self-evaluations of community engagement programs. These impact reports have instead tended to focus on one-dimensional outputs such as the number of new retail space added to a neighborhood through university developments (Ehlenz, 2019). As a result, many universities have not specifically evaluated the impact of increased university investment on local housing demand and the availability of affordable housing. There also appears to be a lack of longitudinal research and analysis to understand the longer-term outcomes of university revitalization efforts and neighborhood investment (Ehlenz, 2019).

Against this backdrop of problematic university interventions, there are also examples of constructive university policies and actions which have resulted in strengthened university-community relationships. The university-community partnership model in particular is seen to be more effective in mitigating student impacts and community displacement. Examples of best practice university initiatives include:

- **UNIVERSITY TRAINING TO HELP LOCAL RESIDENTS INTERESTED IN HOMEOWNERSHIP (WIEWEL ET AL, 2000).** Training can also be incorporated into university curriculum. For example, an affordable housing advocacy group in Chicago -- the Chicago Rehab Network -- developed a one-year certificate program in partnership with the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) to help build the capacity of community development practitioners. It includes courses in housing and community development policy and resident issues (Wiewel et al, 2000; Chicago Rehab Network, 2000).
- **PROVIDING DIRECT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO HELP UNIVERSITY STAFF AND FACULTY PURCHASE HOUSING IN NEARBY NEIGHBORHOODS (Wiewel et al, 2000).** Universities such as Ohio State, Clark, Washington University, Yale, Howard University, Loyola University at Chicago, and the University of Pennsylvania offer these types of Employer Assisted Housing (EAH) programs. However, these programs may also contribute to displacing local residents by increasing local demand, and may be looked upon negatively when not done in coordination with local, community groups (Wiewel et al, 2000). In some cases, these EAH programs originated as part of neighborhood revitalization efforts by universities (Wiewel et al, 2003).
- **UNDERTAKING DIRECT POLICY ADVOCACY AROUND AFFORDABLE HOUSING.** For example, the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta developed a program to help expedite the transfer of tax delinquent properties to local nonprofit affordable housing developers (Wiewel et al, 2000).
- **DIRECTLY FUNDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING INITIATIVES.** For example, Harvard University's 20/20/2000 program provides 20-year loans to local nonprofits at an interest rate of 2% (Wiewel et al, 2003). These loans are used to create new or preserve existing affordable housing for local residents (Wiewel et al, 2003).
- **FORMING AN ANCHOR INSTITUTION CONSORTIUM WITH NEIGHBORING HOSPITALS, CULTURAL CENTERS AND OTHER ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS.** For example, the Atlanta

University Center Consortium (AUCC) Institution Network includes members from Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, and Spelman College, and undertakes neighborhood capacity building programs, housing and economic development, among other programs (AUCC, 2020).

- **FORGING UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS (CDCS).** To ease town-gown tensions in Worcester, MA during the 1980's, Clark University received grant funding to form the Main Street CDC, which has since worked to improve affordable rental opportunities and home ownership for local residents (Main South CDC, 2020).
- **APPLYING FOR GRANT FUNDING TO PRODUCE AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR COMMUNITY RESIDENTS.** This includes working in partnership with CDCs and local community groups to renovate income-restricted homes for local residents, acquire building lots, or subsidizing the price of new homes (Wiewel et al, 2003).
- **ADOPTING A "THIRD-PARTY APPROACH" TO NEW COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENTS (COOPER ET AL, 2014).** This consists of appointing a nonprofit or community organization to undertake public engagement and serve as the mediator between university and community interests.

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## COMMUNITY-CENTERED APPROACHES

This section reviews best practice approaches to community empowerment and elevating local voices to create sustained, positive relationships. Examples have been drawn from across multiple sectors including housing, public health, public policy, climate change, education, and grassroots advocacy. Most approaches to ensuring community perspectives are considered have been facilitated through the development of tools and strategies that were specifically designed to engage with and empower community voices. The most effective of these approaches have been developed and led by the underrepresented community voices they seek to uplift. By exploring these approaches, pathways can be identified that encourage Roxbury residents to build collective momentum around displacement, as well as to help institutions forge bidirectional relationships that also assist in elevating the community voice.

Examples of best practices for community-centered approaches include:

- **BUILDING COMPREHENSIVE INFRASTRUCTURE TO APPROACH AN ISSUE FACING THE COMMUNITY, SUCH AS HOUSING ACCESS, FROM A VARIETY OF ANGLES TO INFLUENCE POLICY AND ENSURE CONCERNS CANNOT BE DISMISSED AS ONE-NOTE.** One of the most comprehensive examples of approaching an issue from multiple lenses comes from Alaska Native tribes, who have developed infrastructure in the forms of nonprofit research organizations (Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, n.d.), distinguished medical centers (Alaska Native Medical Center, n.d.), community organizing groups (Culturalsurvival.org, n.d.), research papers (Ahtuanguak, 2015), and public education campaigns to advocate for the rights of tribal government over energy development and the community impacts it has.
- **PAIRING LOCAL ADVOCACY AND PROTEST MOVEMENTS WITH CONCENTRATED EFFORTS TO INCREASE REPRESENTATION ON DECISION-MAKING BOARDS AND COMMITTEES.** The Los Angeles school system found that when advocacy efforts have been paired with opportunities for leadership around educational decision-making, many aspects of school cultures and climates have improved as a result – showing the long-term benefit of including all communities in these processes (Auerbach, 2009).
- **ADVANCING COMMUNITY ORGANIZING CAPACITY AND TRAINING MODELS WITHIN NONPROFITS.** Community organizers have long held a key role in elevating the voice of the community to the public's ear and have been used across policy areas as well as social justice movements. However, in order for these efforts to be effective community organizers place a heavy

emphasis on the need to strategize and train dedicated stakeholders in messaging and approach, as well as a willingness for institutions to be taught by the community instead of approaching the situation as working on the behalf of marginalized groups (Renée, 2011).

- **REPURPOSING PROVEN MODELS FOR SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WITHIN THE FIELD OF HOUSING ACCESS.** Many fields outside of housing access and higher education have built testable models that can be modified to advance bidirectional, community-driven relationship building. For example, the public health field has developed a set of planning tools to make public health goals actionable for communities to advance social determinants of health in their own communities (ODPHP, n.d.) and have been tested in a variety of other sectors (Bolin, 2015).
- **PROVIDING RESOURCES AND DATA ACCESS DIRECTLY TO THE COMMUNITY TO REDUCE GATEKEEPING AND ADVANCE COMMUNITY-DRIVEN APPROACHES.** Roxbury residents have consistently proven their ability to resolve issues within their community by collecting data and working with partners, such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, to reduce local inequities (Loh, 2002). By making data that is collected by community organizations publicly available, and providing resources such as funding or mentorship, the process of resolving local issues can be led by community-driven solutions.

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## POLICY INITIATIVES

City governments can also play a critical role in setting policies which encourage responsible university neighborhood investment and community engagement. Cities have a wide range of tools at their disposal to do this, for example setting rental or zoning ordinances, establishing community land trusts, or even prohibiting students from living in certain neighborhoods (Black, 2019). Specific best practice examples include:

- Inspecting off-campus student rentals to ensure they are compliant with municipal codes and quality standards (Black, 2019)
- Passing city ordinances to prohibit non owner-occupied student housing in specific neighborhoods vulnerable to resident displacement. For example, the City of Philadelphia passed an ordinance to prohibit student housing in the Yorktown neighborhood (Temple University, 2020)
- Implementing a minimum distance requirement between student housing in a particular neighborhood to prevent student housing from taking over an entire block (Black, 2019). Two small college towns in Pennsylvania passed similar ordinances to prevent new student housing within 675 to 720 feet of an existing student rental (Black, 2019)
- Requiring universities located in residential neighborhoods to submit Institutional Master Plans (IMPs) which detail how the university will accommodate the growing student population (Black, 2019). Washington D.C. is an example of a city that requires this
- Enacting city ordinances to require new university developments to adhere to a set of community development principles (City of Oakland, 2018). The City of Oakland passed an ordinance in 2018 which requires any new residential developments with 50 or more units to prepare an inclusive community engagement plan, and identify a community-based organization with experience working with the stakeholders that would be impacted by the new development (City of Oakland, 2018)

## HOUSING DATA AND ANALYSIS

In order to better understand the impact of students on affordable housing in Roxbury, the quantitative portion of this research set out to answer three research questions:

1. HOW MANY NORTHEASTERN STUDENTS CURRENTLY LIVE IN ROXBURY, AND HOW HAS THE MOVEMENT OF STUDENTS INTO THE ROXBURY COMMUNITY CHANGED OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS?
2. WHAT, IF ANY, FACTORS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE MOVEMENT OF STUDENTS INTO THE ROXBURY COMMUNITY?
3. WHAT ARE THE PATTERNS OF AFFORDABILITY FOR ROXBURY COMMUNITY RESIDENTS?

By conducting statistical and mathematical analysis of data on the number of Northeastern students living in Roxbury, quantitative research can be a useful tool to analyze the impacts of Northeastern students on the supply of affordable housing in Roxbury. Additionally, these results are used to provide strategic recommendations to minimize the impact of students and advocate increasing the production of affordable on-campus student housing.

The quantitative research also attempts to gain further insight into the key reasons why Northeastern students decide to live off-campus, and specifically in Roxbury, by undertaking a comparative price point analysis of Northeastern-managed housing and both the average and median prices of Roxbury housing. The purpose of this review is to understand if there is a price differential and whether this could be contributing to student decision-making around housing. Other reasons that motivate students to live off-campus, in addition to price, for example on-campus housing policies, are also discussed. Furthermore, the quantitative data analysis of the median house and rental prices over the past five years was used in support of this report's interviews with Roxbury community members to understand the consequences of students living off-campus for Roxbury residents.

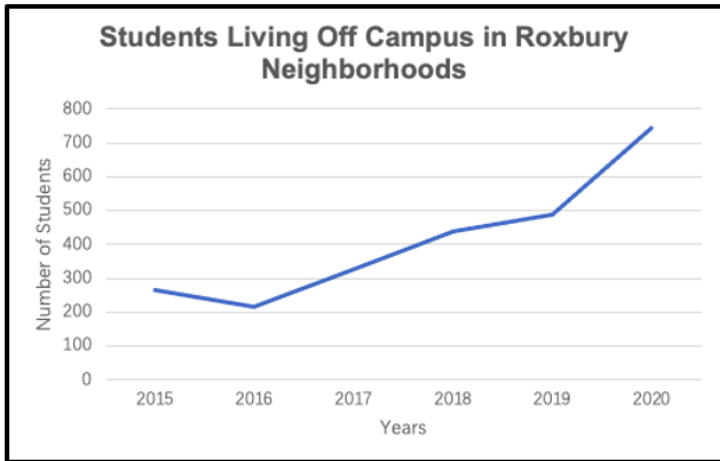
The final research question relates to patterns of affordability for Roxbury community residents. It focuses on analyzing the housing burden for owners and renters in Roxbury and new housing development over the past five years to build a basis for providing recommendations to the City of Boston.

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### THE MOVEMENT OF NORTHEASTERN STUDENTS

This research initially set out to analyze the total number of university students living in private, off-campus housing in Roxbury, however owing to data request refusals, non-response from adjacent universities, and limited publicly available data relating to neighborhood-specific student housing, the analysis presented is restricted to Northeastern University students only. However, according to the 2019 report by Byrne McKinney & Associates, the number of graduate students from Wentworth Institute of Technology, Simmons University, and the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (MCPHS) living in private, off-campus housing increased from a range of 2% (Simmons) to 19% (MCPHS) from 2016 to 2017 (See Appendix I). Although data on the number of these students living in the Roxbury neighborhood specifically was not available, a discussion of these institutions' approaches to student housing accommodation is included in the Institutional Master Plan (IMP) and Case Study Analysis section of this report.

**Figure 3: Northeastern students living in Roxbury from 2015 to 2020**



*Created by author. Resource from: University Decision Support at Northeastern.*

**Figure 3** reveals the number and trend of Northeastern students living in the 02119 zip code of Roxbury from 2015 to 2020. These data were provided by the University Decision Support Office at Northeastern. According to these data, a total of 744 Northeastern students are living in the Roxbury community in 2020, which represents a 52% increase from 2019 to 2020, and a 200% increase from 2016.

In addition to providing a breakdown of the number of Northeastern students living off-

campus since 2015, the Northeastern University Decision Support Office also provided demographic data for students living in Roxbury which can be seen in **Figure 4**. These data indicate that the majority -- 67% -- of Northeastern students residing in Roxbury in 2020 are male, and 33% are female. Other student gender identities were not provided. Another interesting data point is that the majority of Northeastern students living in Roxbury are either White (32.4%) or international students (37.5%). The second largest group living in Roxbury by racial/ethnic profile is Asian at 9.9%, followed by Hispanic or Latino at 7.4% as of 2020.

**Figure 4: Northeastern Students Living in Roxbury 2020**



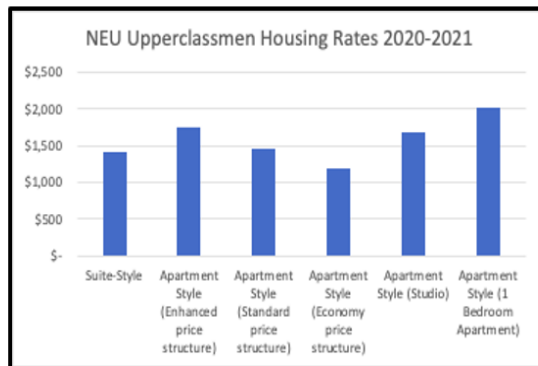
*Created by author. Resource from: University Decision Support at Northeastern*

## RENTAL PRICE POINT ANALYSIS

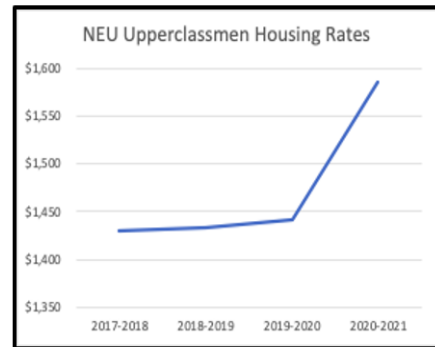
### ON-CAMPUS PRICE POINT

Northeastern University on-campus housing has a total of seven types of apartments and each apartment contains different types of rooms, including single, double or triple occupancy bedrooms. **Figure 5** shows the price of Northeastern University on-campus housing and meal plans. The average price for this type of housing is \$1,586 per person per month in the 2020-2021 academic year. Also, **Figure 6** shows the price change of Northeastern on-campus housing rate, which indicates small price increases each academic year. From the 2019 to 2021 academic year, the price of Northeastern student housing increased by 10%.

**Figure 5: Northeastern 2020-2021 Academic Year on-campus Housing Rate**    **Figure 6. Price point change for Northeastern on-campus housing**



Created by author. Resource from NEU Housing and Residential Life.



Calculated by author. Resource from NEU Housing and Residential Life.

To understand why students choose to live off-campus, other potential factors -- for instance additional fees associated with living on campus -- were analyzed to better interpret students' choices. In some residence halls of Northeastern campus housing, for example suite-style residence halls, students are required to purchase meal plans. The price of mandatory meal plans per semester range from \$2,330 to \$4,245. The different meal plan tiers include unlimited, 17 meals per week, 12 meals per week, and seven meals per week. According to the Northeastern University website, meal plans are required for all freshmen and any students residing in Northeastern housing that does not come equipped with kitchens. The Northeastern policy states that all students residing in meal-plan required residence halls will be automatically billed for a 17-meal plan (17 meals per week), which costs \$3,955 per semester (Northeastern Tuition and Fees, 2020).

**Figure 7: Northeastern 2020 on-campus monthly dorm rates and additional cost (Upperclassmen)**

Type	Monthly Dorm Rate	Monthly Costs (Meal Plan)
Suite-style Residence Hall	\$1,420	\$582 (\$2,330 / 4 months)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,420 + \$582</b>	<b>\$2,002</b>

Created by author. Resource from: NEU Housing and Residential Life.



As **Figure 7** shows, if upperclassmen choose to live in suite-style residence halls, they are required to buy a 7-meal plan at minimum. The total of housing and meal plan is equal to \$1,420 plus \$582 (seven meals per week: \$2,330/4 months), which is over \$2,000 per month in the 2020-21 academic year.

Other reasons that may result in some students living off-campus include limited room numbers, restrictive guest policies, and quiet hours and university noise policies. First-year and second-year students at Northeastern University are under mandatory accommodation. Upperclassmen choosing to apply to live on-campus housing might be placed on a waitlist, and rooms may be limited after accommodating all first-year and second-year students; therefore, the time-consuming waitlist process could force upperclassmen students to live off-campus where, as explained in the next section, there are more affordable housing options.

Strict university guest policies may be another factor motivating student housing decisions. For instance, Northeastern students' on-campus housing handbook details the following guest policy: all guests are required to present a picture ID and obtain a guest pass from Residential Life Professional staff members before visiting. In addition, it is prohibited to sublease or rent space to other students. Lastly, COVID-19 has made these policies more restrictive in order to prevent virus transmission. As of writing, Northeastern does not allow any guests, visitors, or additional occupants to visit students in their room (Guide to Residence Hall Living, 2020).

The final indicator is the quiet hours and noise policy. The policy enforces the minimum quiet hours for all housing buildings in the university. The violation of courtesy hours has negative consequences for students at Northeastern, where students can be written up for violating the quiet hours. There is also a certain level of subjectivity to the implementation of these policies which are set by the university and monitored by appointed student Resident Advisors (Guide to Residence Hall Living, 2020). Ultimately, all of these types of restrictions -- visitor policies and quiet hours -- in addition to mandatory meal plans may motivate students seeking to assert their independence to choose to live off-campus, and do not appear to be accounted for in university student housing strategies.

#### OFF-CAMPUS PRICE POINT

Roxbury's rental housing market contains an assortment of apartment and housing types, as well as a range of housing prices. **Figure 8** shows the median gross rent for Roxbury from 2014 to 2018 derived from the Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA) as well as US Census data. These data points indicate an increase in the median gross rental price from \$882 in 2014 according to US Census data, and increasing by 4.2% to \$919 in 2018. The BPDA data shows slightly different data compared to the US Census.

**Figure 8. 2014-2018 Roxbury Median Rent**

Year	Median Rent (BPDA)	Median Gross Rent (U.S. Census)
2014		\$882
2015	\$827	\$923
2016		\$909
2017	\$810	\$917
2018		\$919

*Created by author. Resources from: BPDA & U.S. Census.*

**Figure 9. 2020 Roxbury Real-time Average Rent Price**

Roxbury housing Real-Time Average Rent Prices (Nov.9)						
Region	1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms	4 Bedrooms	5 Bedrooms	Studio
Back Bay	\$2,502	\$3,364	\$4,140			\$1,811
Brookline	\$2,253	\$2,630	\$3,356	\$4,064	\$5,215	\$1,805
Dorchester	\$1,743	\$2,130	\$2,512	\$2,876	\$3,574	\$1,071
Fenway	\$2,251	\$2,807	\$3,773	\$4,800	\$5,838	\$1,795
Mission Hill	\$1,987	\$2,530	\$3,179	\$3,916	\$4,751	\$1,517
<b>Roxbury</b>	<b>\$1,839</b>	<b>\$2,168</b>	<b>\$2,685</b>	<b>\$2,978</b>	<b>\$3,235</b>	
Jamaica Plain	\$1,898	\$2,415	\$2,915	\$3,048	\$4,035	\$1,286
<b>City of Boston</b>	<b>\$2,090</b>	<b>\$2,537</b>	<b>\$2,979</b>	<b>\$3,553</b>	<b>\$4,266</b>	<b>\$1,745</b>
Average price per person per month (Roxbury)	\$1,839	\$1,084	\$895	\$744.5	\$647	

*Created by author. Resource from Boston Pads*

compared to other Boston neighborhoods, data also show that the average rental price in Roxbury is increasing which is putting additional strain on Roxbury residents who are already among the most rent burdened in the city. From 2017 to 2019, the price for a two-bedroom apartment increased by 6% (Boston Pads, 2020).

In contrast, the housing aggregator website, Boston Pads, provides average as opposed to median price points for Roxbury rental housing. This is shown in **Figure 9** and compares average Roxbury rental prices to other Boston neighborhoods. **Figure 9** aims to show a clear difference in price in Roxbury and other communities. Compared with the City of Boston and other neighborhoods, Roxbury has a relatively cheaper average rental price in 2020. However, despite the relative low-cost of Roxbury housing when

COMPARISON OF NORTHEASTERN ON-CAMPUS AND OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING PRICE POINT

**Figure 10: 2020 Comparison of Northeastern on-campus housing with the average price of Roxbury off-campus housing**

2020 Average Housing Rate						
Type	1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms	4 Bedrooms	5 Bedrooms	Average Price
Average price per person per month (Roxbury)	\$1,839	\$1,084	\$895	\$744.5	\$647	\$1,042
NEU Average price per person per month						\$1,586

*Created by author. Resources from: Boston Pads; NEU Housing and Residential Life.*

The last key finding of the price point analysis is that the average rate of Northeastern on-campus housing is more expensive than the average price of off-campus housing per person per month in Roxbury, seen in **Figure 10**. These price points do not take into account the mandatory meal plans referenced earlier in the report, which when factored in would increase the price differential. In 2020, the average monthly housing cost in Roxbury according to the Boston Pads housing aggregator website is \$1,042, which is \$544 less than the cost of on-campus housing at Northeastern. Additionally, for the off-campus housing, the more rooms there are the less each person will pay on average. For instance, if five students rent a 5-bedroom house, they only need to pay a \$647 rental fee per month, and compared with the shared rooms of on-campus housing, they have a single room to live in.

This price point comparison of Northeastern-managed housing versus Roxbury housing is notably missing from Northeastern University’s recent IMP, as well as the 2019 Byrne McKinney report. Other Boston universities such as Wentworth included a price point comparison analysis in their IMP to understand student motivations for moving to Mission Hill, and also to ensure that Wentworth student housing options presented an affordable alternative to off-campus residences. This type of exercise seems an important addition to Northeastern’s IMP materials in future iterations.

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#### HOUSING COST AND HOUSING BURDEN

The relationship between median household income and housing cost is another key variable analyzed in this report in order to understand the relative affordability of housing in Roxbury. Using data from the US Census, this report analyzed the extent to which monthly housing costs in Roxbury exceeded 30% of the neighborhood median household income.

**Figure 11** displays the data of median household income in Roxbury and other communities. From 2014 to 2018, Roxbury’s median household income increased by 12.5%. However, it is still over \$35,000 less than the median household income in the City of Boston overall. Additionally, compared to specific neighborhoods within the City of Boston, it is also evident that the median household income in Roxbury is lower than neighboring communities such as Mission Hill and Fenway.

**Figure 11. Median Household Income**

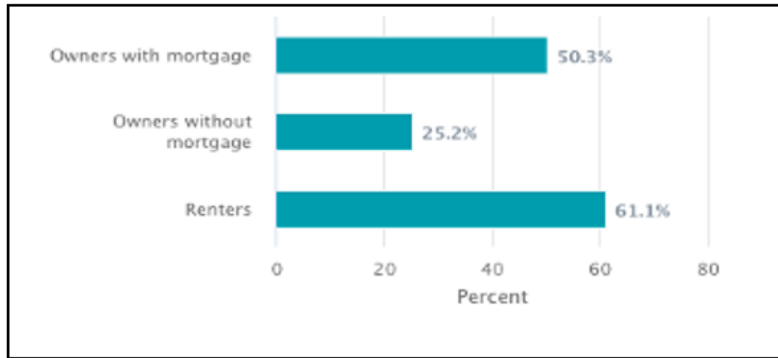
2014-2018 Median Household Income (Roxbury)		
Year	Median Household Income	Boston
2014	\$27,159	\$54,485
2015	\$28,885	\$55,777
2016	\$30,278	\$58,516
2017	\$30,663	\$62,021
2018	\$30,551	\$65,883

Neighborhood Communities' Household Income		
Year	Community	Median Household Income
2018	Back Bay	\$105,559
	Brookline	\$121,763
	Dorchester	\$56,318
	Fenway	\$37,340
	Mission Hill	\$33,727
	Jamaica Plain	\$90,813

*Created by author. Resource from the U.S. Census (ACS).*

**Figure 12. Housing Cost Burden in Roxbury (2014-2018)**



*Resource from the American Community Survey.*

mental health issues, or displacement if residents are ultimately priced out of their neighborhood. According to one report, families with high housing burden may be closer to survival or minimum food demand thresholds (Luea, 2005).

In summary, there are a total of four key findings based on the data collection and statistical analysis presented in this report. First, between 2015 to 2020, the number of Northeastern students living in Roxbury continually increased, with an overall increase of 180%. Second, compared with other neighborhood communities in the City of Boston, both the median and average rental prices are lower in Roxbury -- using data derived from a range of sources including ACS, US Census, and Boston Pads -- than any other Boston neighborhood. However, the median rental prices and the average rents are still increasing. Third, Northeastern University's on-campus housing rate is more expensive than the average cost of off-campus housing in Roxbury. Lastly, the housing cost burden in Roxbury is severe which means that Roxbury residents are at-risk of displacement if there continues to be growing competition for housing from students and increasing rental prices.

According to American Community Survey (ACS) data from 2014 to 2018, homeowners and renters in Roxbury both suffer from a housing burden that is over 30%. This was determined using ACS data for residents in the Roxbury zip code 02119. Renters with a high housing cost burden represent the largest share of Roxbury residents. Their housing cost burden is over 60% as shown in **Figure 12**. The severe housing cost burden could give rise to other issues such as food insecurity,

## INSTITUTIONAL MASTER PLAN AND CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

The following section contains:

1. AN IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF CURRENT NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND PRACTICES DERIVED FROM THE MOST RECENT INSTITUTIONAL MASTER PLAN (IMP) AND SUBSEQUENT AMENDMENTS, AND A REVIEW OF IMPs SUBMITTED BY THE WENTWORTH INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, SIMMONS UNIVERSITY AND MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF PHARMACY AND HEALTH SCIENCES (MCPHS) -- ALL UNIVERSITIES WHOSE STUDENT POPULATIONS ARE INCREASINGLY LIVING IN PRIVATE, OFF-CAMPUS RENTALS.
2. TWO IN-DEPTH CASE STUDIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA (USC) AND TEMPLE UNIVERSITY IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND HOW LARGE UNIVERSITIES LOCATED IN URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS HAVE ATTEMPTED TO MITIGATE IMPACTS ON THE SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES.

## INSTITUTIONAL MASTER PLAN REVIEW

### NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

Northeastern University is a private research institution with the highest student enrollment in the City of Boston. As of 2019, Northeastern University had 18,359 enrolled undergraduate students and 9,032 graduate students for a total student population of 27,391 (Northeastern, 2019).

Northeastern's physical presence has transformed substantially over the past 20 years from a predominantly commuter school to a

large residential campus occupying 67 acres, 105 buildings, and a growing student body; student enrollment at Northeastern has increased at a rate of 28% since 2008 (Northeastern, 2019; Boston.gov, 2019). In addition, Northeastern University is one of the top 10 largest employers in Boston, supplying nearly 6,000 jobs to Boston residents (Byrne McKinney, 2019).



Northeastern University – Bostoncentral.com

Northeastern University's current IMP was submitted in 2013 and contains progress on the University's previous IMP approved in 2000, as well as proposed IMP projects covering a ten-year period until 2023. Northeastern's 2013 IMP includes specific sections devoted to plans for student housing, and the transportation, workforce, utility, and environmental impacts of Northeastern's current and future developments. A more detailed impact evaluation is released annually by the University's Office of City and Community Engagement (formerly named the Office of City and Community Affairs), which outlines achievements against some of the community programming mentioned in the most recent IMP (Northeastern University, 2019).

Northeastern University's most recent IMP outlines plans to accommodate students and relieve pressure on abutting neighborhood housing. For example, all freshmen and sophomores not commuting from homes in the Boston area are required to live on the Northeastern University campus (Northeastern IMP, 2013). The stated intention of this policy is to reduce the number of underclassmen residing in adjacent neighborhoods, and as a result, a main focus of the University's recent IMPs has been to supply more student beds and accommodate the growing student population. This can be seen in the multiple, subsequent amendments made to both the 2000-2012 IMP and the present 2013-2023 IMP to incorporate more than six additional student housing projects (Northeastern IMP, 2013). These developments have been framed in furtherance of the City of Boston's 2030 Student Housing goals to increase the supply of student housing and relieve pressure on the availability of off-campus, private housing for local residents (City of Boston, 2014).

In 2019, Northeastern University commissioned local real estate consultant, Byrne McKinney, to conduct an in-depth analysis of the impact of Northeastern University students on the surrounding real estate market. The report showed that Northeastern currently accommodates 48% of all undergraduate student bed demand, and is projected to accommodate 69% of undergraduate bed demand by 2023 (Byrne McKinney, 2019). This projection is based on Northeastern's increased bed supply and attention to building more apartment-style housing which is reported to be more appealing to students, as well as growth in online education enrollment (Northeastern, 2016; Byrne McKinney, 2019). Northeastern also details its strategy to make student life more attractive and thereby increase the appeal of living on-campus for upperclassmen. This includes improvements to campus rehearsal and exhibition space, increased athletic facilities, and enhanced collaborative study spaces. The combined impact of these measures is expected to relieve pressure on the local housing market in Roxbury and neighboring communities.

Northeastern's IMP also contains provisions related to student conduct. It details disciplinary actions that will be taken against students found to be in violation of the Student Code of Conduct for incidents both on and off campus (Northeastern IMP, 2013). Northeastern works closely with the Boston Police Department to monitor and report on student behavioral incidents that take place off-campus, and specifically in Area B-2 (Roxbury). The IMP also details the formation of NU PLEDGE, a University group that works in coordination with neighborhood Crime Watch and community meetings, in order to respond more expeditiously to off-campus student behavioral incidents (Northeastern IMP, 2013). In 2020, NU PLEDGE appears to no longer be in operation. However, a new Northeastern University Police Department (NUPD) Community Advisory Board was recently established to build better trust between the Northeastern Campus Police and community members, with a specific stated focus on Black and African American residents (Shimamano, 2020).

Northeastern University's 2013-2023 IMP includes attempts to more proactively incorporate community feedback into the planning process, and a deliberate planning and design framework which emphasizes integration with the surrounding urban context, and a focus on improving underutilized facilities (Northeastern IMP, 2013). For example, the University set up a Community Task Force in 2012, which contains a subcommittee focused specifically on Northeastern's impact on local housing supply (Northeastern IMP, 2013). The committee is made up of 18 appointed members, seven of whom are representatives from the Roxbury community (Northeastern IMP, 2013). In 2014, Northeastern created an additional IMP Advisory Council which aims to "maintain regular and continuous dialogue and transparency with neighbors, address issues of concern as and when they arise, and explore new possibilities for community-university engagement" (Northeastern University, 2015).

Finally, Northeastern outlines its Community/Public Benefits Program in the 2013-2023 IMP, which was revised following the public comment period. The program includes multiple commitments to give back to the local community through, for example: workforce development and job training programs, local hiring

initiatives, procurement opportunities for local businesses, small loan programs and on-campus business siting, recreational and cultural opportunities, and scholarship programs for Boston students, among others. The five underlying principles guiding Northeastern's community benefits program include those which serve the mutual interests of the community and University, and lead to sustainable partnerships, with specific attention to Roxbury. There are additionally seven priority initiatives highlighted including creating a neighborhood opportunity center, starting a fund to support economic development of neighborhood businesses, prioritizing working with minority and women owned businesses, working with the MBTA to improve accessibility to the Orange Line, and introducing housing proposals which can reduce presence of undergraduate students in adjacent neighborhoods (Northeastern IMP, 2013).

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## IMPLICATIONS OF DATA

Northeastern's 2013-2023 IMP, subsequent amendments and IMP Notification Forms (IMPNF) reveal many discrete projects to improve community relations and engagement in the planning process. However, initial investigation of certain projects such as NU PLEDGE and The Stony Brook Initiative -- a planned neighborhood alliance with Roxbury, Mission Hill, the South End, and Fenway -- has shown that several of these initiatives are now defunct, rebranded, or have been absorbed by other University programs, and it is therefore difficult to locate them to assess their progress. This includes the University's external-facing office charged with tracking and reporting progress against the IMP, which has changed its name as recently as 2019, and is referenced in multiple places as either the Office of City and Community Affairs and now the Office of City and Community Engagement. The motivation and incentives underlying these changes is not clear and warrants further investigation, but it is evident that better communication of community programming, and monitoring and evaluation of institutional goals as laid out in the IMP is needed. Moreover, as detailed later in this report, the wide range of discrete projects under the banner of Northeastern's Community/Public Benefits program appear to be poorly communicated to Roxbury residents who were unaware of many of these programs.

The 2013-2023 IMP states that Northeastern has committed to restricting undergraduate enrollment to 15,000 students for the duration of the IMP. However, current undergraduate figures as of 2019 show that undergraduate enrollment exceeds 18,000 students. There appears to be no stated ceiling for graduate student enrollment in spite of the fact that graduate enrollment has increased at a faster rate and is projected to continue to increase; the reason being that this growth is likely to come from enrollment in online degree programs and/or satellite campuses (Northeastern IMP, 2019).

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## WENTWORTH INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

The Wentworth Institute of Technology is another higher education institution situated adjacent to the Roxbury neighborhood. By comparison to Northeastern University, Wentworth is a much smaller institution with 4,396 enrolled undergraduate and graduate students (City of Boston, 2019). In spite of Wentworth's small student population, reports show that the university is not able to accommodate over 600 of its students (City of Boston, 2019). In addition, the number of graduate students living off-campus has increased from 2016 to 2017 (Byrne McKinney, 2019).

To address this, Wentworth has implemented several university policies. For example in 2011, Wentworth made it a requirement for sophomores not living at home with their families to remain in on-campus housing (Wentworth, 2010). Much like Northeastern University and others, Wentworth also plans to build more on-campus student housing, and create more opportunities for on-campus student entertainment and activities in

order to remain competitive, keep students on campus, and relieve housing demand in surrounding neighborhoods (WIT, 2010).

However, unlike Northeastern, Wentworth sets out a detailed student retention strategy in its most recent IMP which was released in 2010. For instance, Wentworth now requires students to declare housing plans by Spring Break for the coming academic year. This policy was intended to reduce the number of students looking for off-campus housing during Spring Break by requiring them early on to pay a non-refundable deposit for on-campus housing (Wentworth, 2010). Sending marketing materials to parents about the benefits of living on-campus such as higher student GPAs, increased student satisfaction, and higher graduation rates was another strategy used to secure parental buy-in. Finally, Wentworth includes a detailed price point analysis in its IMP comparing an average room in Mission Hill to the expense of living in an on-campus dormitory, something which was not included in many other IMPs.



Wentworth Institute of Technology's Beatty Hall – SGA Architects

In terms of community engagement, Wentworth invests in four key areas: Service Learning and Civic Engagement, Workforce Development, College Access and Success, and Community-Campus Relations (Wentworth, 2010). Specific approaches to engage the Roxbury community, ease town-gown relations, solicit community feedback, or mitigate student demand for off-campus housing is limited, aside from the strategies detailed above. Much like Northeastern University, Wentworth's development plans include building more apartment-style dormitories on campus to attract upperclassmen. As of February 2020, a new 208 bed dormitory was being planned for 630 Huntington Avenue, just northwest of Lower Roxbury.

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#### MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF PHARMACY AND HEALTH SCIENCES

The Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (MCPHS) is a small private, higher education institution located on the edges of Lower Roxbury. MCPHS offers healthcare-focused undergraduate and graduate programs, and has 4,346 enrolled students as of 2019 (MCPHS, 2020). According to the College's most recent IMP submitted in 2014, 1,774 MCPHS graduate and undergraduate students live off campus in the City of Boston, including 804 in the Mission Hill/Roxbury Crossing neighborhood (MCPHS, 2014). The IMP does not state any university policies or strategies to keep students in university housing, and similar to Northeastern University, MCPHS discusses the projected importance of online learning as potentially alleviating future demand for student housing (MCPHS, 2014).

However, MCPHS details a number of innovative approaches to community engagement. This includes a neighborhood consortium of nearby institutions such as the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Simmons University, and Wentworth Institute of Technology. The stated goal of this local anchor institution consortium is to pool resources for the benefit of students at all universities, and includes specific reference to forging



strategic relationships within the consortium for the purposes of student housing (MCPHS, 2014). Northeastern University is not a named partner in this neighborhood institutional consortium.

MCPHS also outlines several community engagement efforts including:

- Community Alliance Meetings involving MCPHS students, staff, and faculty as well as Mission Hill residents and elected representatives, intended to listen to community members discuss quality of life issues in the neighborhood (MCPHS, 2014)
- Mission Hill Problem Properties Task Force which meets monthly to discuss quality of life issues and concerns that neighborhood residents and business owners have (MCPHS, 2014). An appointed MCPHS Coordinator of Community Partnerships serves as the university representative on the task force (MCPHS, 2014)
- Direct sponsorship and grant funding of locally based community organizations and neighborhood housing services (MCPHS, 2014)

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## SIMMONS UNIVERSITY

Simmons University is situated to the northwest of Lower Roxbury and has 7,033 enrolled students as of 2019. This represents 1,809 undergraduate students and 5,224 graduate students. The total number of enrolled students at Simmons University has nearly doubled over the past 10 years, with particular growth in the number of enrolled graduate students. Simmons University currently accommodates 1,581 graduate students in on-campus housing (Simmons University, 2019) with 414 students reportedly living in off-campus housing in the City of Boston (Simmons University, 2020). Although Simmons University's 2020 Institutional Master Plan indicates a plan to construct more on-campus student housing, there is little detail about institutional measures to mitigate student demand for off-campus housing, especially given the growing enrollment of graduate students.

## CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

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### TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

Temple University is a public research university with over 40,000 students enrolled across undergraduate, graduate and doctoral programs (Temple University, 2014). Temple University's flagship campus is located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and the university operates an additional seven campuses across the state of Pennsylvania and internationally in cities such as Tokyo and Rome (Temple University, 2014).

Temple University's most recent campus master plan was published in 2014 and covers the institution's plans, academic priorities, and opportunities for campus improvement over a 10-year period. It was developed over an 18-month process, with input from over 3,000 Temple University students, alumni, faculty and staff (Temple University, 2014). Among its stated Master Plan Goals are: academic and research growth, supporting innovation, providing a rewarding urban residential experience, and "engaging the city," which includes continuing "investment and development in campus edges and adjacent communities to remain an education, cultural and economic anchor in the city, the region, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania" (Temple University, 2014).

Temple University details its campus engagement process as including outreach to students, faculty, staff and alumni, as well as soliciting input from committees, focus groups, and through open houses to understand university needs. Importantly, Temple University notes its development of an interactive website called Visualize Temple to solicit community feedback and reach individuals who would otherwise be unable to



North Yorktown, Philadelphia – David Maialetti for the

attend public open houses and other in-person engagements (Temple University, 2014). This method of engagement appeared to reach the biggest audience, with over 12,000 people reached and the majority of participants coming from North Philadelphia (Temple University, 2014). The topics and recurring themes from the public comment process are set out in the campus master plan and include housing strategies, community relationship and community connections, among others (Temple University, 2014).

In contrast to the campus planning process detailed by Northeastern University in its IMP, Temple University does not mention any concerted effort to involve neighboring residents in the campus master planning process. The “engage the city” goal stated as being one of the key priorities in the 2014 Campus Master Plan, has very few details, no clear mechanism to receive neighborhood feedback, and no acknowledgement of the potential harmful impacts on housing affordability that future Temple University developments may inflict.

In contrast to the campus planning process detailed by Northeastern University in its IMP, Temple University does not mention any

Instead, Temple University’s community engagement initiatives appear to take place within the Office of Community Engagement, which is explained as “supporting volunteerism in the Temple community, hosting and partnering with community organizations, and providing direct services to our neighbors” (Temple University, 2020). According to its website, the Office of Community Engagement offers over 300 community programs including (Temple University, 2017):

- Awarding 25 scholarships annually to students from zip codes in North Philadelphia
- Helping local nonprofits and faith-based organizations located near the university to receive Temple University student volunteers for short-term projects
- Offering low-cost continuing education classes such as GED preparation and professional development through its Pan-African Studies Community Engagement Program
- Free, monthly job readiness workshops, professional development and career training for local unemployed job seekers
- Offering an annual, free neighborhood job fair
- Providing consulting, training, and technical assistance for aspiring or existing small business owners and entrepreneurs
- Providing free STEM education programs for middle and high school students including a two-week residential science camp, Saturday programs to learn how to code, among others
- Providing arts programs including a community choir and band which are open to members of the community for \$25 per semester
- Other initiatives such as free or discounted admission to student film festivals, Temple basketball or football games, theatre, dance and other performing arts events

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## UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

The University of Southern California (USC) is a private research university located in the city of Los Angeles. USC has a total student population of 46,000 students, including 19,500 undergraduates and 26,500 graduate and professional students (USC, 2020). USC is the largest private sector employer in the city of Los Angeles and contributes \$8 billion to the local economy every year (USC, 2020).

USC has two major campuses in Los Angeles: the University Park campus located to the southeast of downtown Los Angeles, and the Health Sciences campus located to the northeast of downtown Los Angeles. Unfortunately, neither the University Park nor Health Sciences campus master plan are publicly available, and the University did not respond to our information request. However, a review of publicly available summary documents, alongside a review of activities undertaken by USC's Office of Civic Engagement yielded information to understand the university's approach to mitigating neighborhood residential displacement.

The University Park master plan "is designed to accommodate future needs in a way that is thoughtful, that uses the university's limited land effectively and that will create a safe, attractive, sustainable campus and neighboring urban community." Community engagement in the campus master planning process was solicited through a Master Plan Advisory Committee, chaired by the President of a local Economic Development Corporation, and comprised of representatives from local neighborhood organizations, churches, and museums (USC, 2008).

In 2006, USC began its most recent campus master planning process for the University Park campus through the year 2030 (USC, 2008). Importantly, this campus master plan included the \$700 million dollar, USC Village project which spans 15 acres and provides a mix of student housing, retail and dining options (Vincent, 2017). USC Village is the largest development project in the school's history and was seen as an attempt to revitalize the community without displacing local residents. As part of the university's development plans for USC Village, they provided \$20 million to an affordable housing trust in Los Angeles to create affordable housing for low-income households (Vincent, 2017).

Additional examples of USC's commitment to community engagement include:

- The Good Neighbors Campaign which collects donations from USC faculty and staff to support surrounding neighborhoods through USC Neighborhood Outreach Grants. Nearly 550 grants totaling \$17.5 million have been awarded to community organizations to support educational opportunities, preventative health and fitness programs, economic development, and USC hiring
- The USC Housing Law Clinic provides free legal advice to community residents facing unlawful eviction, housing discrimination, affordable housing issues and landlord disputes
- Specialized workforce development training programs to build the capacity of minority, women, and veteran business owners
- Partnerships with local high schools to help improve student test scores and graduation rates
- Student service-learning opportunities

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## ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The purpose of the IMP and case study analysis was to gain a better understanding of what Northeastern University is currently doing to meet student housing demand and its strategies for alleviating pressure on the Roxbury housing market in light of the growing student population. By reviewing the IMPs of Northeastern's institutional neighbors such as Wentworth, Simmons and MCPHS, this report attempted to

understand how smaller universities were responding to similar issues of student accommodation and impacts on affordable housing supply. Finally, a comparative case study analysis of two large, urban universities -- USC and Temple -- afforded this research another perspective into how urban anchor institutions situated adjacent to predominantly Black and majority-minority neighborhoods were engaging with abutting communities and attempting to counter issues of housing affordability.

In general, Northeastern University is undertaking many of the same community programs as its neighboring institutions -- Wentworth, MCPHS, and Simmons -- and when compared more broadly to larger urban universities such as USC and Temple University. This includes programs such as student service learning, community grants programs, community task forces, local hiring initiatives, and many others. However, this comparative case study analysis also revealed deficits in four key areas for Northeastern. These have been used to inform this report's recommendations for Northeastern and are summarized below:

- **DEDICATED AFFORDABLE HOUSING INITIATIVES.** Aside from commitments to produce more on-campus student housing and the establishment of Roxbury community task forces, Northeastern University appears to be less proactive than other urban universities in Boston and nationally. This ranges from significant financial investment in the production of community affordable housing, to free legal clinics to residents at risk of displacement, or classes and resources for community residents interested in homeownership.
- **PUBLIC PROCESS AND ENGAGEMENT.** Temple University, MCPHS and others appear to offer more ways to engage community residents, through for example monthly public meetings and an online public comment tool. Given the increases in Northeastern students residing in Roxbury over the past five years, this report recommends offering ongoing opportunities for engagement in order to be responsive to community needs. This includes both during the IMP process and new housing development decisions, as well as on a continuing basis to build stronger trust and relationships with community residents.
- **STRONG INSTITUTIONAL AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS.** The best practice scan and case study analysis revealed the importance of strong institutional coordination and consortia as being a central component to institutional affordable housing responses. It was interesting to observe that Northeastern does not appear to be a member of the neighborhood consortium described in MCPHS's most recent IMP. Although Northeastern is a member of other anchor institution consortia such as the Boston Consortium for Higher Education, there does not appear to be a dedicated focus on mitigating impacts on local housing supply (Boston Consortium, 2020).
- **DATA TRANSPARENCY AND MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS AS INCLUDED IN THE IMP.** Given the number of plans, policies, and programs offered by Northeastern University, it is important to have a convenient way to monitor and evaluate these. Changing names and broken website links made it difficult during the course of this research to track down some of the initiatives mentioned in the 2013 Northeastern University IMP such as the Stony Brook Initiative and NU PLEDGE. In the most recent Community Benefits Annual Report released by Northeastern's Office of City and Community Engagement, Northeastern Crossing is named as being charged with monitoring Northeastern's progress towards its IMP goals (CBAR, 2019). Better communication of the current plans and policies, as well as increased transparency and tracking of university plans, programs and policies, could also strengthen trust with community residents and increase the university's accountability.

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### INTRODUCTION

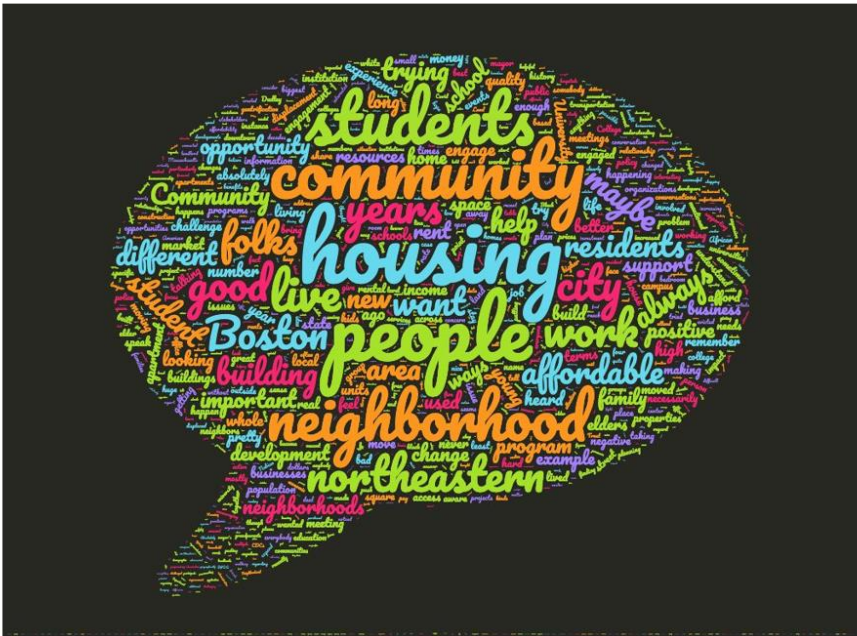
In addition to the quantitative and case study analysis, the usage of stakeholder and resident interviews aims to provide a better understanding of the impact of students and nearby universities on the quality of life and availability of affordable housing in Roxbury. These interviews sought to fill a gap in previous research which had not taken into account community perspectives. The goal of the interviews was to incorporate the voice of Roxbury residents and stakeholders with a focus on the voice of members of Roxbury's diverse community. This local perspective provides a more in-depth view of how the neighborhood has been changing in recent years as well as how the community views its relationship with nearby universities. This fills gaps in what can be effectively researched through quantitative methods.

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### METHODOLOGY

The interviews were conducted with a mix of eight Roxbury residents and stakeholders, many of whom work with local organizations, with the goal of understanding the role students and nearby universities have played in the changes the neighborhood has recently undergone. Each subject was interviewed for roughly one hour using either the Zoom video-conferencing platform or over the phone, and the participants were ensured anonymity in order to facilitate candid feedback. The participants were chosen from a list of local residents and stakeholders assembled by a combination of TACC and members of our research team. Of this list, a priority was placed on interviewing residents and stakeholders that represent the diversity of the Roxbury community. The ultimate decision of who to interview was based on outreach to potential participants and their availability and willingness to be interviewed. No payment was made to participants for agreeing to be interviewed, but the interviewers committed to sharing the research results with them, inviting them to the final report presentation, and encouraging TACC to provide the results of this report to the larger Roxbury community.

Participant demographics were diverse and representative with three of the key informants being current Roxbury residents, one key informant being a displaced Roxbury resident, two key informants being both Roxbury residents and stakeholders, and two key informants being stakeholders; stakeholders being employees or representatives of local organizations. Out of the eight participants, three identified as male, five identified as female, two identified as white, and six identified as Black or African American. Participant ages ranged from 26 to 77. Out of the current Roxbury residents, one stakeholder rented their unit while three identified as homeowners. A key data point missing from this research is that we were not able to interview current or displaced residents who occupied affordable housing in Roxbury. Each interview was recorded with the permission of our participants and was transcribed using Microsoft 365's transcription tool. This was done so our interviews could be further analyzed using NVivo 12 software to help identify common themes, or nodes, between participants.



Word cloud from key informant interviews

The qualitative interviews covered a variety of topics related to the Roxbury community, with a focus on neighborhood change, student impacts, housing challenges in Roxbury, and the community’s relationship with Northeastern (see Background section, Question 3 of Appendix IV). Participants were asked about both the positive and negative impacts they view students having on Roxbury (see Student Impacts section, Appendix IV). A key portion of the interviews was to determine the community’s view on its relationship with Northeastern and other nearby universities.

Nodes	Number of coding references
Nodes\\Northeastern Relationship	69
Nodes\\Student Impacts	62
Nodes\\Solutions	46
Nodes\\Roxbury Housing Challenges	41
Nodes\\City of Boston	28
Nodes\\Neighborhood Change	21
Nodes\\Boston universities	16

<b>Nodes\\TACC</b>	14
<b>Nodes\\Roxbury appeal</b>	12

Figure 13. Nodes, or common interview themes, compared by the number of references via Nvivo 12 analysis

## KEY FINDINGS

Based on the eight key stakeholder interviews, the most common themes that were referenced by the participants were identified under the themes of the community’s relationship with Northeastern, the impacts of students living within Roxbury, solutions to ameliorate negative impacts from other identified themes, and housing challenges within Roxbury, as shown in **Figure 13**. Other regularly discussed topics included the community’s relationship with the City of Boston and changes to the neighborhood of Roxbury. Lesser discussed themes which still included rich insight into the scope of the issue included the community’s relationship with higher education institutions in Boston overall, the community’s relationship or knowledge of TACC, and the appeal of living in Roxbury.

### NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE

Roxbury residents and stakeholders shared similar observations about how Roxbury has changed in their time working and/or living there. Each of our participants have either lived or worked in Roxbury for a significant amount of time, with each having experience with the neighborhood dating back more than 10 years. Both residents and stakeholders cited an increasing interest in Roxbury from developers, especially in housing. While the respondents were not opposed to this new development, many felt these developments were not producing housing that is affordable to local residents.

**COMMON THEMES**

- INCREASED DEVELOPMENT OF PREVIOUSLY VACANT LAND
- REVITALIZATION OF UNUSED BUILDINGS
- CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS AND INCREASING DISPLACEMENT
- INCREASING POPULATION OF STUDENTS AND YOUNG PROFESSIONALS
- RENT INCREASES

“I COME FROM 5 GENERATIONS OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE LIVED IN ROXBURY, ON BOTH SIDES OF MY FAMILY AND JUST FROM THAT PERSPECTIVE OF HAVING PEOPLE IN MY FAMILY WHO HAVE LIVED IN ROXBURY SINCE THEY WERE BORN, YOU KNOW I’VE DEFINITELY SEEN A TON OF CHANGES FOR ME PERSONALLY. THE MAIN THING I WOULD SAY IS ALL OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND DISPLACEMENT, AND I THINK WHAT THAT REALLY LOOKS LIKE IS JUST THE INCREASED DEVELOPMENT OF UNAFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR RESIDENTS.” – ROXBURY RESIDENT

Longtime Roxbury residents reported increasing development as a major change actively occurring in the neighborhood. Investors have shown greater interest in developing land in Roxbury with a focus on catering to a newer and younger population. This has steadily changed the appearance of Roxbury, as well as the local housing market resulting in displacement of local residents.

“YOU HAVE PROPERTIES THAT WERE IN AVERAGE CONDITION THAT WERE PURCHASED AND RENOVATED AND RENTED TO NEWCOMERS. STUDENTS, YOUNG PROFESSIONALS, THOSE RENTS ARE SO HIGH THAT IT’S ONLY THOSE WHO CAN AFFORD [THE NEW RENTALS] ARE A SUBGROUP AT THE TOP...” – ROXBURY RESIDENT

The renovation of vacant or underutilized land in Roxbury was brought up in multiple interviews. However, participants felt that much of the new development and investment occurring in the Roxbury housing market is directed toward an incoming population. This largely excludes longtime residents, especially those with lower incomes, and this is done through high rents which are unaffordable to most locals. This is essential feedback for Northeastern University as their IMP development goals and urban design framework focus on infill development and targeting vacant parcels of land (Northeastern IMP, 2014). These issues however, are not limited to just students, but also the rising number of young professionals moving to Roxbury.

“I SEE THE NEGATIVES. MORE ON THE HOMEOWNER SIDE ... I’VE SEEN NEWCOMERS BUYING HOMES AND KIND OF GETTING ACTIVE IN THE LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION AND KIND OF TRYING TO SPEAK FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD WHEN THEY’VE ONLY BEEN THERE THREE YEARS ... BUT I THINK THOSE ARE MORE LIKE, PEOPLE MORE IN THEIR LATE 30S, 40S, WHO ARE NOT COLLEGE STUDENTS OR RECENT GRADS AND THEY’RE KIND OF NOT BEING AS RESPECTFUL OF THE COMMUNITY AND THINGS ARE KNOWING THE HISTORY AND WHAT’S BEEN DONE BEFORE THEY GOT THERE.” - ROXBURY STAKEHOLDER

In addition, an influx of residents outside of the student demographic was consistently brought up by stakeholders and residents alike as both a negative, neutral, and positive force in the neighborhood. Mid-career adults have been seen as negatively impacting the available housing market for long-term Roxbury residents, and there is also a perception that they do not appreciate the voice and history of the local culture. Still, some felt that this population has also created positive impacts, for example through civic engagement and volunteering.

#### STUDENT IMPACTS

The majority of residents have noticed a general increase in the student and younger population in Roxbury, especially in specific areas such as Highland Park. However, their views differed on the overall impact of students on the neighborhood. Participants cited both positive and negative impacts, as well as possible opportunities for the new population to engage in the community. Respondents, however, were also clear about the negative implications the student population has for longtime Roxbury residents.

“AT WORST WE HAVE STUDENTS DISREGARDING AND DISRESPECTING THEIR NEIGHBORS BY HAVING LOUD PARTIES. ON THE POSITIVE SIDE, WE’VE HAD STUDENTS VOLUNTEER TO WORK ON COMMUNITY EVENTS, SO JUST LIKE ANY SUBPOPULATION, SUBGROUP WITHIN THE LARGER POPULATION, WE HAVE THE GOOD AND THE BAD” – ROXBURY RESIDENT

#### COMMON THEMES

- STUDENTS DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE HISTORY OR CULTURE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD
- LACK OF RESPECT FOR THE LOCAL POPULATION VIA LOUD MUSIC AND PARTYING
- INCREASED PRESENCE OF STUDENTS IN ROXBURY
- STUDENTS PAYING HIGHER RENTS DRIVES UP RENT THROUGHOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD
- STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN LOCAL ACTIVISM CAN UPLIFT LOCAL VOICES
- POSITIVE IMPACT STUDENT VOLUNTEERISM CAN HAVE ON THE COMMUNITY
- STUDENTS ARE A TRANSIENT POPULATION WHICH PRESENTS CHALLENGES FOR BUILDING THE COMMUNITY

The majority of residents and stakeholders were not regularly in contact with students, and their experiences with students has primarily been through reporting them for noise complaints. The noise and disrespect some students have shown toward their neighbors is the only direct experience that many residents have with the



student population. Residents however, have expressed interest in creating a stronger relationship with the student population, and have explained many ways in which they can add value to the community.

“I AM A NORTHEASTERN ALUM, AND THERE’S SO MUCH POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITY AND I THINK IT’S NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT. YOU HAVE STUDENTS THAT LIVE IN A NEIGHBORHOOD, IT COULD BE POTENTIALLY A RESOURCE TO A COMMUNITY CENTER. MAYBE STUDENTS WANT TO TEACH SOMETHING TO THE KIDS AT COMMUNITY CENTER, MAYBE THEY HAVE SOME INPUT AT A COMMUNITY MEETING.” – ROXBURY RESIDENT

While the experience for many residents with students to this point has been mostly negative, respondents felt there were opportunities for students to contribute to the community. Residents and stakeholders each expressed an interest in working with students to support the Roxbury neighborhood.

“ROXBURY HAS BEEN A HUB FOR PROTESTS FOR A LONG TIME, NOT JUST THIS CURRENT WAVE. I THINK I’VE SEEN A LOT OF STUDENTS IN THAT SPACE, WHICH I THINK IS IMPORTANT, BUT ALSO THERE’S REALLY BEEN A LACK OF CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF WHAT MOSTLY WHITE STUDENT BODIES, MOSTLY WEALTHY STUDENTS CAN. WHAT SPACE ARE THEY TAKING UP IN THOSE SITUATIONS AND PROTESTS? HOW CAN THEY UPLIFT PEOPLE RATHER THAN BEING THE LOUDEST VOICE?” – ROXBURY RESIDENT

Residents felt students have had a mixed impact on Roxbury, but student involvement in recent protests was widely seen as a positive. Supporting local voices and engaging with the community in this manner has been seen to empower locals and help advocate for important social change. This engagement has been a welcome sight to many residents, however many residents were interested in seeing more engagement in support of the community by students. Overall, a negative perception surrounding students in Roxbury has remained, with many expressing concern that their presence is causing rents to become unaffordable.

“THE DOWNSIDE TO THAT [STUDENTS MOVING INTO ROXBURY] IS THEY CAN AFFORD TO PAY \$3,000 FOR A TWO OR THREE BEDROOM AND SO WITH MARKET PRICES INCREASING IT’S DEFINITELY TAKING AWAY UNITS FROM LONGTIME RESIDENTS WHO HAD TO MOVE ELSEWHERE BECAUSE THEY JUST CAN’T CONTINUE TO LIVE HERE.” – ROXBURY RESIDENT AND STAKEHOLDER

Residents and stakeholders have cited the increasing competition for apartments, especially larger apartments typically rented by families as a key drawback of students in the neighborhood. They believe this competition is driving rents up to levels unaffordable to many residents. Certain respondents however disagreed with this sentiment, instead casting doubt on the overall impact students can have on a neighborhood and instead focusing on the impact of young professionals.

Views from Roxbury residents about increased competition for apartments align with the research presented elsewhere in this report -- specifically that landlords rent larger apartments to students who are often more willing to subdivide rooms, allowing landlords to charge higher rental rates. Although it was difficult to locate specific landlord data for Roxbury during the course of this research, this report recommends that the City of Boston can help to prevent this type of predatory landlord activity by ensuring compliance with municipal occupancy codes and quality standards.

## ROXBURY APPEAL

There was widespread agreement surrounding the appeal of Roxbury to students. The neighborhood itself is centrally located in Boston and is near many Boston universities. Additionally, the affordability of the neighborhood relative to other parts of Boston is a draw for students who may struggle to afford higher rents.

“ROXBURY, I SAY YOU CAN ALWAYS GET ANYWHERE THAT’S WITHIN A 5-MILE RADIUS IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE WITHOUT ANY DIFFICULTY, SO IT’S VERY CONVENIENT. THE SCHOOLS ARE CLOSE BY, HOSPITALS ARE CLOSE BY, SHOPPING, EVERYTHING YOU NEED IS ALL WITHIN THIS CLOSE-KNIT RADIUS OF LESS THAN 5 MILES” – ROXBURY RESIDENT

### COMMON THEMES

- ROXBURY IS CENTRALLY LOCATED IN BOSTON
- EASY ACCESS TO UNIVERSITIES AND THE MBTA
- AFFORDABLE RENTS RELATIVE TO OTHER NEIGHBORHOODS
- VIBRANT NEIGHBORHOOD CULTURE
- NEIGHBORHOOD IS BECOMING SAFER

Roxbury’s prime location is a major attraction for students. The neighborhood itself is adjacent or near to many universities, including Northeastern, Wentworth, MCPHS, Mass Art, and Simmons, among others. Its location also allows residents to easily access other parts of the city, which can be appealing to students looking to take advantage of Boston’s amenities. Additionally, it is near many hospitals, which is appealing for young professionals employed there. While the location is a major attraction to Roxbury, more affordable rent prices than other nearby Boston neighborhoods serve as a draw to students seeking low-cost housing options compared to on-campus housing.

“IF YOU’RE COST-CONSCIOUS, I THINK YOU PROBABLY GET A BETTER DEAL RENT WISE IN ROXBURY COMPARED TO SAY, ANOTHER NEIGHBORHOOD TO LIVE IN. IF YOU TRY TO GO TO JP [JAMAICA PLAIN] FOR INSTANCE, THE RENT MIGHT BE 20, 30, OR 40 PERCENT HIGHER, SO IT’S LESS AFFORDABLE IN THOSE PLACES. I THINK THOSE ARE THE TWO BIGGIES, GEOGRAPHY AND AFFORDABILITY.” – ROXBURY RESIDENT

Relative to other nearby options for students, Roxbury provides a more affordable option for students seeking off-campus housing. For many cost-conscious college students, this may be the only location with rents which are affordable. Overall, Roxbury’s central location and affordability make it an attractive option for students, especially when compared to the higher cost of on-campus student housing which also comes with mandatory dining plans and restrictive guest policies.

## ROXBURY HOUSING CHALLENGES

The rising rents and home prices within Roxbury have made the neighborhood’s housing challenges a major focus for many participants interviewed for this report. These struggles range beyond rising rents to the causes behind them, including the increasing difficulty in developing affordable housing and the types of housing being developed in Roxbury. Respondents frequently cited the increasing number of students as exacerbating these problems, and further contributing to Roxbury’s housing challenges.

“MY MOM AND I BOUNCED AROUND FROM APARTMENT TO APARTMENT AND WE ACTUALLY MOVED INTO OUR FAMILY HOUSE AFTER DEALING WITH REALLY HIGH RENTAL PRICES AND DECIDED THAT COMING TOGETHER AS A FAMILY WOULD MAKE THINGS EASIER. SO, YES DEFINITELY THE RENT IN ROXBURY IS RIDICULOUSLY HIGH. THAT’S SOMETHING THAT OUR NEIGHBORS ARE DEALING WITH ON A CONSISTENT BASIS SO THEY DON’T HAVE TO LEAVE THE COMMUNITY. IT IS RIDICULOUS AND YOU SEE SO MANY PEOPLE WHO ARE USING GO FUND ME’S TO MAKE RENT.” – DISPLACED ROXBURY RESIDENT

Rents in Roxbury have been steadily rising and it is becoming increasingly challenging for many residents to afford rent, lower-income residents in particular. The growing rent burden for many longtime Roxbury residents has led many to leave the neighborhood in search of more affordable rents, and others to resort to crowdfunding pages such as Go Fund Me to remain in their community. Further exacerbating the problem, much of the new housing being built in the community is not geared toward serving Roxbury families, but instead toward serving the growing population of students and young professionals.

#### COMMON THEMES

- SIGNIFICANT RENT INCREASES, ESPECIALLY FOR LARGER APARTMENTS
- APARTMENTS ARE BECOMING UNAFFORDABLE TO MANY LONGTIME RESIDENTS
- EXCEPTIONALLY HIGH DEMAND FOR A LIMITED SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS
- MOST HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IS TOO FOCUSED ON PROVIDING FOR STUDENTS RATHER THAN ROXBURY RESIDENTS
- LACK OF AFFORDABLE HOMEOWNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

“HOUSING IS MORE APT TO BE BUILT FOR A STUDENT SITUATION AS OPPOSED TO A FAMILY SITUATION, AND I THINK THAT IS VERY DETRIMENTAL TO A NEIGHBORHOOD...” – ROXBURY RESIDENT

Participants reported a major change they have seen in the neighborhood being the increasing development in Roxbury. Unfortunately, most of this development has been observed to be housing targeted toward students rather than families. Investors have focused on converting units to become more appealing to students versus families due to the higher rents they can receive for these apartments. In terms of affordable housing development there have been significant struggles as well.

“SO IF WE HAVE A BUILDING AND IT’S 60 UNITS MIXED INCOME WE USUALLY GET OVER 5,000 APPLICATIONS FOR THAT LITTLE BIT OF UNITS AND SO THAT JUST SPEAKS VOLUMES TOO ABOUT ... HOW THE HOUSING MARKET IS AND YOU KNOW THAT PEOPLE ARE STILL IN NEED OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING. AND THEN THERE’S ... HALF OF ROXBURY WHO THEY’RE AGAINST AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND THINK WE HAVE ENOUGH ... BUT WHEN YOU TALK TO, YOU KNOW, LOW AND MIDDLE INCOME RESIDENTS IT’S STILL NOT AFFORDABLE AND WITHIN THEIR REACH.” - ROXBURY RESIDENT AND STAKEHOLDER

There is a high demand for affordable housing in Roxbury which currently exceeds the supply. Adding to this problem, is the fact that -- according to some key informants -- there is a perceived opposition to the development of affordable housing in Roxbury, despite the significant need. Participants also reported a lack of homeownership opportunities for residents, which can provide an opportunity for longtime residents to avoid displacement from increasing rents.

“CREATING AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND CREATING AFFORDABLE HOMEOWNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES, I THINK THOSE ARE BOTH IMPORTANT, HOWEVER I DON’T THINK THAT THERE HAS BEEN A BALANCE FOUND YET. WE HAVE TO SUPPORT PEOPLE WHERE THEY’RE AT, GETTING THEM THE HOUSING THEY SO DESPERATELY NEED, BUT WE ALSO NEED TO SUPPORT PEOPLE TO BE UPWARDLY MOBILE AND GET THEM TO HAVE GENERATIONAL

WEALTH. SO HOMEOWNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES, AND I ALSO THINK THE BIG CHALLENGE IS DEVELOPING WITHOUT DISPLACEMENT. HOW DO WE MAKE SURE THERE'S MORE COMMUNITY CONTROL IN WAYS THAT LEAD TO THE PROTECTION OF LONG-TERM RESIDENTS, OF ELDERS AND THINGS LIKE THAT? – ROXBURY RESIDENT

Homeownership plays a major role in the ability of an individual or family to build long-term wealth. Unfortunately, similar to rents, homeownership is becoming increasingly unaffordable to local residents. Relying on a rental market, especially one with rapidly increasing prices, puts long-time, lower-income residents at risk of displacement. Programs geared toward affordable homeownership can both help residents remain in their community and build generational wealth.

#### NORTHEASTERN'S RELATIONSHIP

From the community's perspective, the relationship between Northeastern and Roxbury has been primarily negative. The overall sentiment conveyed during interviews was that Northeastern extracts more from the community than it gives back. Participants did feel there were ways for the relationship to be improved, and were optimistic that by taking on a stronger role as an anchor institution, the University and community can work together more productively. Specific programmatic recommendations made by Roxbury residents and stakeholders focused on more targeted initiatives to support the Roxbury community as well as increasing the production of on-campus student housing.

"THE PERCEPTION OF NORTHEASTERN IN THIS COMMUNITY IS THAT EVEN THOUGH THEY'RE HERE, THEY HAVE TAKEN OVER A LOT OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE SPACES HERE, AND IT'S A LARGE INSTITUTION, BUT THEY DO NOT GIVE BACK AS MUCH, AND THEY DO NOT CREATE RESOURCES FOR ROXBURY RESIDENTS, NOWHERE NEAR THE LEVEL IN WHICH THIS COMMUNITY THINKS THEY SHOULD. THE PERCEPTION IS THAT THEY'RE SELFISH, THEY'RE HERE, THEY JUST WANT SPACE, AND THEY'RE EXPANDING, BUT THEY HAVE JUST NOT SHARED ENOUGH CONCERN ABOUT REALLY WANTING TO BE MORE OF AN ALLY TO ROXBURY RESIDENTS." – ROXBURY RESIDENT AND STAKEHOLDER

#### COMMON THEMES

- NORTHEASTERN HAS A NET NEGATIVE IMPACT ON ROXBURY
- THE UNIVERSITY DOES PROVIDE SOME BENEFITS, BUT THESE ARE OUTWEIGHED BY NEGATIVES
- EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS OFFERED BY NORTHEASTERN HAVE HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE NEIGHBORHOOD
- THERE IS A NEED FOR MORE INVESTMENT BY NORTHEASTERN INTO THE COMMUNITY
- INCREASING NUMBERS OF NORTHEASTERN STUDENTS IN ROXBURY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO RISING RENTS
- SUPPORT FOR INCREASED DORM DEVELOPMENT BY THE UNIVERSITY
- THERE IS A NEED TO PROMOTE AND EXPAND CURRENT COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING

The negative perception surrounding Northeastern in Roxbury has damaged their ability to work together. With many locals viewing Northeastern as an institution that is seeking to take from the community without giving back, it is difficult to create a productive, bidirectional relationship. While the University does offer programs supporting the community, there is either a lack of knowledge throughout the community of these programs, or a need to offer more programming addressing the negative impacts the school has on the neighborhood.

"MY RELATIONSHIP WITH NORTHEASTERN RIGHT NOW WAS THROUGH NORTHEASTERN CROSSING. SO SINCE THE DIRECTOR IS NO LONGER THERE, IT'S KIND OF WAITING TO SEE LIKE WHAT'S THE NEXT STEP OF

THEIR PLAN TO DO FOR THE COMMUNITY, BUT NOW I DON'T THINK WE HAVE LIKE A TIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH NORTHEASTERN RIGHT NOW IN MY OPINION.” - ROXBURY RESIDENT AND STAKEHOLDER

Most participants were familiar with Northeastern Crossing, and the programs it offers Roxbury. The programming ranges from youth programs to volunteer programs for students to help nearby communities. To many locals, the perception is that these programs offer too little to the community, and serve more as a means of good public relations for the University. Specific relationships with certain Northeastern faculty and staff, while beneficial, also means that Northeastern’s community links can be broken if the staff or faculty person leaves the University.

The negative perception ranged beyond that of University programming and what the school was doing for the community to its overall commitment to housing its students. The impact students have on the local housing market is widely viewed as a net negative, and there is support for Northeastern to house their own students to reduce the number of students living in Roxbury.

“YES, THE STUDENTS PLAY A PART IN IT AS WELL, BUT IT’S THE INSTITUTION, TOO. SO I WOULD DEFINITELY SAY THAT ... WHILE STUDENTS THEMSELVES AND IN THEIR ACTUAL PRESENCE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD HASN'T BEEN THE MOST BENEFICIAL, I WOULD DEFINITELY SAY WHAT’S MORE HARMFUL THAN THE STUDENT IS NORTHEASTERN AS AN INSTITUTION NOT KIND OF TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR HOUSING THESE STUDENTS AND FOR MAKING SURE THAT, YOU KNOW, THE STUDENTS THAT THEY ACCEPT CAN GO TO SCHOOL HERE AND NOT ... HAVE TO BE BASICALLY LIKE FORCED, TO MOVE INTO AN OFF CAMPUS APARTMENT.” – DISPLACED ROXBURY RESIDENT

Participants viewed the role of students in Roxbury as a negative for many residents, and they felt that Northeastern needed to do a better job of housing their students. Northeastern has taken steps to develop more housing to meet the rising student housing needs of the university, however as evidenced throughout the report, the growing student demand for housing, combined with other factors, has led to growing student migration into the Roxbury neighborhood. This need for more student housing was a complicated issue, as there was wide agreement about the need for more student dorms, but there were concerns about increasing development within Roxbury itself.

“IN GENERAL, NON-PROFIT INSTITUTIONS BE THEY HOSPITALS, BE THEY UNIVERSITIES, AS THEY GROW, IF THEY’RE GROWING IN A NEIGHBORHOOD THAT IS CHARACTERIZED BY LOWER INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BLACK AND BROWN POPULATIONS, THERE’S A TENDENCY FOR TENSION. WHEN YOU’RE TALKING ABOUT LAND IT’S A ZERO-SUM GAME. IF YOU TAKE NORTHEASTERN FOR EXAMPLE PURCHASES A PROPERTY, THEY’VE TAKEN IT OUT OF THE PRIVATE MARKET, MAYBE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN DISPLACED.” – ROXBURY RESIDENT

While there is support for more student housing, the further expansion into Roxbury was a concern for local residents and stakeholders. There is a view that as Northeastern purchases land in Roxbury, that there will be less land to be developed to support local needs. In addition to these concerns, residents also expressed concerns that their voices were not being heard in the development process. There was an overall interest in maintaining some degree of local influence over development to ensure that the neighborhood would benefit from new development.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

This mixed-methods research study revealed a number of positive steps that Northeastern and neighboring Roxbury universities are taking to support the Roxbury community and offset student impacts on local housing supply. There are, however, strategic ways in which Northeastern can better engage with the Roxbury community and support affordable housing initiatives, with tactical support from the City of Boston and TACC.

In recognition of the multiple and complex factors that are contributing to the increasing demand on Roxbury's housing market, lack of affordable housing options, and loss of local culture, this report presents targeted recommendations for three distinct groups: TACC, the City of Boston, and Northeastern University. These recommendations seek to respond to this report's specific scope of work to find policies that can ameliorate the impact of students on Roxbury's housing market which center the Roxbury community voice. However, during the course of the interviews and research for this report, a number of other findings outside of the scope of this project brief were identified. This includes legislative steps the City of Boston can take to support Roxbury homeownership, as well as the need to develop elderly-specific housing options in Roxbury. These are presented in the Findings section following this report's main recommendations.

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### FEASIBILITY

Each policy recommendation provided has been ranked on a feasibility scale of low to high. A low feasibility rating indicates that a policy would be more difficult to successfully implement due to either political or technical challenges. A policy with higher feasibility would be more easily implementable and face fewer political or technical challenges. These were evaluated based on the following criteria:

- ✓ EFFICACY
- ✓ COST-EFFECTIVENESS
- ✓ TECHNICAL CAPACITY
- ✓ POLITICAL COST
- ✓ SUSTAINABILITY

Recommendations are presented with the intention of being developed over time, with high feasibility recommendations laying the groundwork for the implementation of low feasibility strategies. While high and medium feasibility recommendations may go into effect before low feasibility options, it is the understanding that low feasibility recommendations will require a longer planning process before implementation can begin. Low feasibility options may also benefit from evaluating the successes and challenges of high and medium feasibility work, to ensure their potential for immense impact will be successful.

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### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TACC

Our recommendations for TACC aim to position the organization as a community resource around the issues of housing and displacement and a key conduit between Northeastern University and Roxbury community residents. Recommendations range from medium to high, and include:

#### MEDIUM FEASIBILITY

- WORK WITH NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY TO ESTABLISH MASTER'S LEVEL AND CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS FOCUSING ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND PROVIDE DISCOUNTED PROGRAMS TO LOCAL NON-PROFIT EMPLOYEES.

TACC has a history of providing professional development opportunities to students at nearby universities through both student placements and curricula development. This recommendation is also informed by best practice research including the University of Illinois at Chicago's (UIC) work with locally based nonprofits to provide certificate programs to mid-career professionals and help build local knowledge of effective approaches to community and economic development. Collaborating with Northeastern to create discounted programming for employees of local organizations serves to improve the workforce in these communities, as well as to strengthen the university-community relationship.

- **BROKER A STRONGER RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEARBY UNIVERSITIES AND ROXBURY BY, FOR EXAMPLE, FORMING AN ADVISORY BOARD OF LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS, COMMUNITY MEMBERS, AND UNIVERSITIES.**

Interview respondents have expressed concerns about poor communication between universities and the Roxbury neighborhood. Forming an advisory board composed of both local Roxbury residents and university representatives opens a clear channel of communication between the community and institution ensuring the community voice is expressed to the university. Interview respondents also expressed a desire to ensure community voice was included at every step of the decision-making process, and to ensure advisory boards were actively listened to rather than being simply tokenistic.



Community Meeting

#### HIGH FEASIBILITY

- **PUBLICIZE AVAILABLE DATA ABOUT THE ROXBURY COMMUNITY AND HOUSING ACCESS TO ROXBURY RESIDENTS AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS TO ALLOW STAKEHOLDERS TO BETTER ADVOCATE FOR THE COMMUNITY'S NEEDS.**

Tracking and publicizing Roxbury's rapidly changing demographics will help community members stay informed on how the area is shifting. This will improve the ability of residents and stakeholders to advocate for their community needs. It will also help to reduce gatekeeping of data which was a concern expressed by Roxbury residents.

- **SUPPORT NORTHEASTERN TO PROMOTE ITS CURRENT COMMUNITY PROGRAMS INCLUDING FREE LIBRARY ACCESS, COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAMS, LOCAL HIRING INITIATIVES, AND SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR ROXBURY YOUTH.**

Given the lack of community knowledge of the extent of Northeastern community programming, promoting the university's programs and community benefits is an easy step in helping Roxbury residents gain access to these and increase overall awareness of current engagement opportunities.

- PROVIDE ROXBURY RESIDENTS WITH ANTI-DISPLACEMENT RESOURCES INCLUDING CITY OF BOSTON HOME REPAIR LOANS FOR HOMEOWNERS AND SMALLER LANDLORDS TO REPAIR PROPERTIES.

The rising displacement of longtime Roxbury residents is a growing community problem. Providing resources to these community members will help longtime residents remain in their community, and help to mitigate the possibility of displacement.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CITY OF BOSTON

Our recommendations for the City of Boston center around integrating Roxbury residents and the community voice into the decision-making processes that surround new development. Specific examples of policy recommendations include:

### LOW FEASIBILITY

- ADVOCATE FOR A CITY ORDINANCE PROHIBITING STUDENT HOUSING IN ROXBURY AS HAS BEEN DONE BY TEMPLE UNIVERSITY IN THE NORTH YORKTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD OF PHILADELPHIA.

Preventing the limited land in Roxbury from being developed for university and student usage allows more land to be used to serve the community's needs, whether that be for housing or green space. This option is likely to face significant political opposition from universities and possibly city leaders who have focused on increasing student housing citywide.



Affordable Housing – PNC Bank

- REQUIRE COMMENSURATE PRODUCTION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING AS PART OF UNIVERSITY PROPOSALS FOR NEW STUDENT HOUSING AS EXEMPLIFIED WITH THE DAVENPORT COMMONS DEVELOPMENT.

Developing land in Roxbury for student housing reduces the land available for both affordable and market-rate housing development, further exacerbating the housing crisis. Supplementing any



student housing development with affordable housing offsets the development's negative community-wide impacts, and has community precedence in Roxbury through the development of Davenport Commons which included mixed-residential student and community affordable housing options. Given the financial cost and political buy-in required, this policy option has been rated as low political feasibility, though carries high impact.

#### MEDIUM FEASIBILITY

- ENACT A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN ORDINANCE FOCUSING ON INCORPORATING COMMUNITY VOICE AND REQUIRING TRANSPARENCY, AND ROBUST AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AS A PART OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN ROXBURY, INCLUDING PARTNERING WITH COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS.

Many local residents and stakeholders expressed concerns that their voices were not fully taken into account in the development process. A citywide commitment ensuring stronger engagement between community members and developers ensures developers address community concerns and developments more closely match the needs of a community. Similar ordinances have been passed in cities such as Oakland, California and serve to ensure cities with new developments are responsive to community needs and adhere to best practice community development approaches.

- ENFORCE CLEAR HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS ENSURING OFF-CAMPUS STUDENT APARTMENT RENTALS ARE COMPLIANT WITH MUNICIPAL CODES.

Stricter citywide enforcement of current municipal codes ensures that all housing is up to city requirements, especially off-campus apartments typically rented to students. Doing so would also potentially mitigate unlawful landlord activity that is contributing to community displacement in Roxbury.

#### HIGH FEASIBILITY

- INCREASE DATA TRANSPARENCY AND COLLECTION TO TRACK THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS LIVING IN PRIVATE RENTALS IN EACH BOSTON NEIGHBORHOOD, AND CREATE A DATABASE TRACKING LANDLORDS WHICH PRIMARILY RENT TO STUDENTS.

Finding reliable data related to the number of university students residing in off-campus housing in the Roxbury neighborhood was difficult to obtain for this report. Many universities did not respond or simply refused data requests. Improving city-wide data collection to ensure publicly available sets related to neighborhood-specific trends is important to hold universities accountable and build trust with the community. Additionally, increasing transparency of landlord data is similarly important to identify potentially predatory landlord behavior. While there may be technical challenges and political barriers to successfully tracking these landlords, the city's prior commitments to gathering data surrounding student housing make this a highly politically feasible option.

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#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

Our recommendations for Northeastern are intended to establish the university as a true anchor institution and trusted resource for the communities it is adjacent to. Specific examples of policy recommendations include:

## LOW FEASIBILITY

- CONSIDER A MORATORIUM ON NORTHEASTERN DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN/ADJACENT TO ROXBURY UNTIL A MORE BIDIRECTIONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS, RESIDENTS, AND THE UNIVERSITY IS BUILT.

Members of the Roxbury community have begun pushing for a moratorium on development in the neighborhood due to their relationship to higher neighborhood housing costs and displacement. A temporary moratorium over development by the university until a better relationship is formed ensures community input is valued and development contributes to Roxbury. Considering Northeastern's existing planning and development goals to increase student housing production, this is felt to be a low feasibility but high impact option.

## MEDIUM FEASIBILITY

- STRENGTHEN THE UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP MODEL BY WORKING WITH TACC AND OTHER ROXBURY ORGANIZATIONS TO ENSURE COMMUNITY VOICE IS INTEGRAL TO PLANNING PROCESS AND DECISIONS, AND RELY LESS HEAVILY ON THE BPDA TO UNDERTAKE THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ASPECT OF THE IMP PROCESS.



Construction in progress – The Huntington News

Incorporating community voice into the planning process ensures that universities understand issues within the community and can address them.

Successful university-community relationships in other urban areas have utilized a “third-party approach” in which a community-based organization mediates the university and community needs. This is felt to be a highly effective policy option, though given longstanding ties with the BPDA, it is felt to have lower political feasibility owing to the set up and technical expertise required of appointing a new organization to take on this role.

- EDUCATE STUDENTS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING A RESPECTFUL NEIGHBOR IN THE ROXBURY NEIGHBORHOOD SPECIFICALLY AND THE CULTURAL/HISTORICAL IMPORT OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD TO BLACK BOSTON.

Northeastern's Off-Campus Housing and Support Services office has a number of existing resources for students residing off-campus. This includes a student handbook, a dedicated YouTube channel, and student Community Ambassadors (CAs) that help students navigate the process and responsibilities that come with living off-campus. Utilizing existing university infrastructure and dissemination channels through the Off-Campus Housing and Support Services, Northeastern could educate students on key messages -- such as public acknowledgement of historically racist practices, opportunities for students and faculty to contribute alongside the institution to local, Roxbury

advocacy initiatives, and/or public documentation of diversity data and metrics, that are reviewed and assessed for quality and improvement by a board of both faculty, students and community members. This report has developed a student resource example that could be used by the university (see Appendix II).

Encouraging more respectful behavior of students within these neighborhoods improves the overall impression Northeastern gives to the community. This option focuses on increasing Northeastern's efforts in this area, given the university's interest in ensuring its students are respectful off-campus, this is a moderately feasible option.

- DEVELOP MORE TARGETED APPROACHES TO MITIGATE INSTITUTIONAL AND STUDENT IMPACTS ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING THROUGH OFFERING AFFORDABLE HOUSING CLINICS, INFORMATION SESSIONS, AND RESOURCES ON HOW TO BECOME A HOMEOWNER.

Additional housing information and homeownership training provides lower-income individuals with necessary resources to remain in their communities. Expanding upon current offerings is a feasible option to support Roxbury residents at risk of displacement.

- CONTINUE INVESTMENT IN THE PRODUCTION OF ON-CAMPUS STUDENT HOUSING WHERE POSSIBLE, AND ENSURE SIGNIFICANT EFFORT IS TAKEN TO TAKE COMMUNITY FEEDBACK INTO ACCOUNT WHEN CONSIDERING OFF-CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT.

Building on-campus student housing provides a direct means of decreasing the number of students moving off-campus in need of housing. Northeastern has made on-campus housing development a priority in its most recent IMP, making this a feasible option. However, if not done in combination with other actions listed here, this option is likely to have lower impact.

#### HIGH FEASIBILITY

- DEVELOP ANCHOR INSTITUTION CONSORTIA REPRESENTING HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN AND AROUND THE ROXBURY COMMUNITY TO MONITOR THE STUDENT IMPACT ON NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES, IN ORDER TO LEVERAGE MUTUAL INTERESTS, AND AGGREGATE RESOURCES FOR NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENTS. LONG-TERM PLANS COULD INCLUDE OTHER NEIGHBORING INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS HOSPITALS AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS.

Increased collaboration between universities around their impacts on local communities can lead to joint projects and investment focusing on offsetting their impacts. Advocating for regular agendas and task force creation around displacement as a result of students living off campus can result in a coordinated effort to improve housing access in surrounding neighborhoods and improve university-community relationships overall.

- UNDERTAKE LONGITUDINAL RESEARCH OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INVESTMENTS IN ROXBURY TO UNDERSTAND LONG-TERM IMPACTS ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND QUALITY OF LIFE.

Understanding the overall impact the university has had on the community will help the school better target its community investments to address these issues. The university's efforts to provide community services and its active role in research make this a highly feasible recommendation.

- DEVELOP AND PROMOTE AN ONLINE PUBLIC COMMENT TOOL FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND FEEDBACK WITH A CLEAR TIMELINE AND REPORTING STRUCTURE FOR IMPLEMENTATION, AND MAKE THIS AVAILABLE YEAR-ROUND.

Considering many Roxbury residents feel their voice is not heard by the University, this provides a way for residents to bring concerns directly to the university. This tool would not require significant efforts from the university and is a highly feasible option.

- DEVELOP A LISTSERV FOCUSING ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS WITH THE GOAL OF ENGAGING COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO KEEP THEM UP TO DATE ON NORTHEASTERN'S COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOPMENT PLANS.

There is a lack of community knowledge surrounding Northeastern programming and its community investment. A listserv would allow the university to build on Northeastern Crossing's newsletter and provide important community investment and programming information directly to Roxbury residents. The school has an interest in promoting its investments and programs to residents and a listserv would provide a feasible means of improving its community relationship.

- REVIEW AND SURVEY COMMUNITY NEEDS, AND PROVIDE FREE OR LOW-COST SERVICES TO ROXBURY RESIDENTS AS WELL AS COVID-19 SUPPORTS IN THE FORM OF TESTS AND RESOURCES.

Northeastern has been a leader in national enforcement of guidelines to reduce the rate of transmission of the COVID-19 virus, providing its students, faculty, and staff with regular testing and strict guidelines around housing and visitor access to the campus. As COVID-19 has had a particularly devastating effect on Black and Brown communities across the country, providing these resources to Roxbury residents can show a level of commitment for ensuring the health not only of the Northeastern community, but the larger community it resides in.

## FINDINGS

The findings presented below are those that were identified throughout the course of this research -- through best practice research on affordable housing preservation and long-form interviews with Roxbury residents -- but were ultimately felt to be outside the scope of this particular project brief. These include:

- THE NEED FOR INCREASED HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAMS, INCLUDING ADVOCATING FOR THE TENANT OPPORTUNITY TO PURCHASE ACT (TOPA) AT BOTH THE STATE AND CITY LEVELS PROVIDING MORE HOMEOWNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS.
- DEVELOPING MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS OUTSIDE OF SECTION 8 DIRECTED TOWARD LONGTIME RESIDENTS AT RISK OF DISPLACEMENT BY WORKING WITH ESTABLISHED COMMUNITY PARTNERS TO DETERMINE LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS
- THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AFFORDABLE HOUSING PRESERVATION NETWORK FOR LOCAL NON-PROFITS, TENANT ADVOCACY GROUPS, AND OTHER IMPORTANT STAKEHOLDERS TO MONITOR AND PRESERVE EXISTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN ROXBURY IN COORDINATION WITH THE COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE CORPORATION (CEDAC).
- CONTINUED CITY AND STATE INVESTMENT IN CDCS SUPPORTING THE PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING, COMMUNITY ORGANIZING, AND LOCALLY BASED EFFORTS TO EMPOWER RESIDENTS

These options provide a means to offset the significant housing impacts on Roxbury in addition to our recommendations. They address important issues related to the overall housing market in the neighborhood.

## POLICY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

In order to most effectively implement the policy recommendations and provide stakeholders with a step-by-step process of implementation, recommendations have been broken down into three key steps: (1) Improve Community Engagement Practices, (2) Strengthen the Community-University Relationship, and (3) Promote Equitable Development. Improving community engagement practices of local institutions will help build trust between both parties, with a stronger relationship leading to both more investment into Roxbury, as well as more trust between residents and universities. The ultimate goal is that this will lead to more equitable development practices benefitting both locals and the institutions.

### Improve Community Engagement Practices

*Publicize available data on the Roxbury community focusing on demographic shifts*

*Advocate for increased data collection by the city tracking students living off-campus in private rents and landlords that primarily rent to students*

*Advocate for increased citywide enforcement of housing quality standards ensuring off-campus student rentals are compliant with municipal code*

*Advocate for a moratorium on Northeastern developments in Roxbury until a more bidirectional relationship is formed*

*Pressure nearby university to undertake longitudinal studies on community engagement and investment in Roxbury*

### Strengthen Community-University Partnership

*Broker a stronger relationship between nearby universities and Roxbury*

*Work with Northeastern to establish Master's level and certificate programs focusing on community development and provide discounted programs for local non-profit employees*

*Support Northeastern in broadcasting its current community programs*

*Advocate for citywide community engagement plan ordinance focusing on incorporating community voice*

*Form Anchor Institution Consortium with schools in and around Roxbury focusing mitigating the impact of students in local communities*

### Promote Equitable Development

*Advocate for citywide ordinance requiring commensurate production of affordable housing as part of University proposals for new student housing*

*Increased university involvement educating students on how to be a respectful neighbor, understanding the area's history and culture*

## APPENDIX I: GRADUATE STUDENTS RESIDING OFF-CAMPUS IN BOSTON (BYRNE MCKINNEY, 2019)

## GRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE PRIVATE HOUSING MARKET BY SCHOOL

Institution	2016	2017	Change: 2016 to 2017	% Change: 2016 to 2017
Bay State College	0	0	0	N/A
Benjamin Franklin Institute	0	0	0	N/A
Berklee College of Music	11	18	7	64%
Boston Architectural College	65	52	-13	-20%
Boston Baptist College	0	0	0	N/A
Boston College	882	894	12	1%
Boston Conservatory	151	179	28	19%
Boston University	4,092	4,040	-52	-1%
Emerson College	139	113	-26	-19%
Emmanuel College	0	0	0	N/A
Fisher College	0	4	4	N/A
Harvard University	482	509	27	N/A
MA College of Art & Design	45	33	-12	-27%
MA College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences	811	969	158	19%
MA Institute of Technology	469	497	28	6%
MGH Institute of Health Professions	0	0	0	N/A
NE College of Optometry	0	0	0	N/A
NE Conservatory of Music	0	0	0	N/A
New England Law Boston	0	0	0	N/A
<b>Northeastern University</b>	<b>5,376</b>	<b>5,138</b>	<b>-238</b>	<b>-4%</b>
School of Museum of Fine Arts	54	45	-9	-17%
SHOWA Institute	0	0	0	N/A
Simmons College	466	475	9	2%
St John Seminary	0	27	27	N/A
Suffolk University	468	406	-62	-13%
Tufts University (Health Sciences)	1,664	1,512	-152	-9%
University of MA-Boston*	1,011	928	-83	-8%
Urban College of Boston	0	0	0	N/A
Wentworth Institute	30	34	4	13%
Wheelock College	25	0	-25	-100%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16,241</b>	<b>15,873</b>	<b>-368</b>	<b>-2%</b>

This table includes both full-time and part-time students. UMB shows gross off-campus population only (not off-campus not-at-home) given that they did not distinguish between off-campus sub-groups. MGH Institute of Health Professionals, New England College of Optometry, New England Conservatory of Music, and New England Law of Boston, also did not distinguish between the off-campus subgroups, but their students are not included in this table as they most likely would be categorized as living-at-home.

Source: Student Housing Trends 2017/2018 Academic Year published by the City Department of Neighborhood Development (DND), p 9

Roxbury Mural – Mark Garfinkel for NBC10 Boston



## 1. STARTING THE CONVERSATION: MOVING TO NEW NEIGHBORHOODS

Moving to a new neighborhood outside of on-campus housing requires students to think of themselves as a part of the larger Boston community. While there are many exciting benefits to living off campus, there are also challenges and additional responsibilities that students must take on.

Northeastern University sits directly adjacent to Roxbury, a neighborhood of Boston that students have been moving to increasingly in recent years. Roxbury is a culturally diverse neighborhood in the City of Boston with high historic significance. Often dubbed the “Heart of Black Boston,” Roxbury has been a home to Black leaders, businesses and social justice movements since the Great Migration.

Despite this storied history, Roxbury’s long-term residents have been directly impacted by policy that exacerbates white supremacy, such as redlining, high rent burden, and employment discrimination. Northeastern has also been guilty of playing a part in reducing housing access in Roxbury.

Roxbury residents list the many benefits to living in their community, such as living close to all Downtown Boston has to offer, and local art and history. It is important to get to know the community you’re living in, how your choice to move to Roxbury impacts your new neighbors, and why being a friendly neighbor that is genuinely interested in the concerns of the community benefits all.

Take the time to meet the people you live near, ask them what it means to be a part of the neighborhood and how you can help, and read resources on the history of Roxbury to understand how you might be able to fit into the next phase of its story.



## 2. HOLDING YOURSELF ACCOUNTABLE: BEING A PART OF YOUR COMMUNITY

Living off campus means more than paying rent, it also means being a responsible neighbor. As the number of Northeastern students living in Roxbury has risen, so has the number of community complaints.

- **BE MINDFUL OF NOISE.** If you are planning on having a party, check in with your neighbors first as their situations may not be the same as yours. Many people you live near when you live off campus may have families, be elderly, or need to work early and/or late. If you do have a party, make sure it ends by the hour you have agreed upon with your neighbors.
- **DO NOT BRING ADDED HARM TO YOUR NEIGHBORS.** Substance use and noise can often result in local authorities being called, however your neighbors may not have the same set of privileges you do and interactions with the police can be traumatic. When you live off campus and choose to participate in these behaviors, you must be mindful that you are potentially endangering the people who live in your community in addition to yourself. Now that you live off campus, the choices you make do not only affect you and your school.
- **GET TO KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY.** Roxbury residents have said that students who move into their community do not appear to want to understand the neighborhood they've moved to or its residents. Make sure to learn your neighbors' names, say hello, and ask how you can contribute to the community you are now a part of.
- **CONSIDER NOT HAVING A CAR.** When students move to Roxbury, they take up valuable resources such as apartments. Conversations with Roxbury residents have shown that the number of affordable units has become less accessible as more students and young professionals make Roxbury their home. Because of this, consider not taking up additional resources that are needed by your neighbors. One reason you chose to move to Roxbury was its proximity to Northeastern. In addition to helping the environment, you may also help your commuting neighbor find reliable parking if you choose not to bring a vehicle.

## 3. BUILDING COMMUNITY WEALTH: SHOPPING LOCALLY

When you choose to move off campus, you are already choosing to invest in your new neighborhood's economy. In addition to paying rent, it is important to think locally about your purchases in order to ensure that long-time residents can thrive and that the qualities that drew you to live in said neighborhood remain for generations to come. When living in a neighborhood like Roxbury, in addition to taking time to get to know the community by interacting with your neighbors, you can also get to know the community by shopping locally.

- **GROCERY STORES:** Instead of ordering your groceries off of Amazon or driving to the nearest Star Market, try shopping at nearby Tropical Foods. Tropical Foods has been a beloved institution in Roxbury since 1974.
- **RESTAURANTS:** Roxbury is home to one of the most diverse populations in Boston, which is reflected in its food options. With residents from Haiti, Somalia, Jamaica and more, there are plenty of ways you can eat locally and stay healthy by only walking a short distance.

Some local eateries include: Deria Express Cafe, Fasika Cafe, Haley House, and Suya Joint Restaurant.

- **BLACK-OWNED BUSINESSES:** Supporting Black-owned businesses is one of the easiest and most helpful ways you can help reduce income inequality in Boston. By moving to Roxbury, there are many nearby businesses that you can frequent and support, including: Black Market (pop-up marketplace), Frugal Bookstore, and Giselle's Flowers & Gifts.

#### 4. INVESTING IN ROXBURY

Investing in your new community means going further than knowing your neighbors and shopping locally, it means caring about the health of your neighborhood and the politics that impact it. Roxbury residents have said that one of the best things that students living in the community can do is to give back through volunteering. As a student, you are learning unique skills that can help a local nonprofit, business, school, or community center. Take the time to give this knowledge back to the neighborhood you've chosen to live in, so that when you choose to move on you've left your mark.

In addition to volunteering, students can be important supporters of local advocacy movements and protests. By joining and supporting the causes that are near and dear to long-term residents, you can add additional weight to the importance of the moment simply through your presence. When joining in community meetings, boards, or protests, take a moment to make sure that your voice is not the loudest one in the room. While supporting advocacy is important, it is likely that many of your co-residents have been involved in the subject matter for their entire lives. Join the movement, but don't overtake the moment.

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## APPENDIX III: ROXBURY KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW QUESTION

### BACKGROUND:

1. Do you currently live in Roxbury? If yes, how long have you lived in Roxbury?
2. Do you work in Roxbury? If yes, how long have you worked in Roxbury?
3. How have you seen the neighborhood change during your time in Roxbury?
4. Are you familiar with The American City Coalition (TACC)?

### STUDENT IMPACTS:

1. Have you noticed more students living in Roxbury in recent years?
  1. If yes, how do you feel this has impacted the overall community?
  2. Are there any positives to having students in the community?
  3. Are there any negatives to having students in the community?
2. Do you regularly see, or are you regularly in contact with students in Roxbury?
  1. Do you know which schools these students attend?
3. Why do you think students want to move to Roxbury?
4. Do you own your home or do you rent? \*resident only question
5. Has your relationship with your landlord changed in recent years?
6. In recent years have you noticed significant increases in rental prices in Roxbury? Has your rent burden increased? Has it become more challenging to find a suitable unit? \*Resident only questions
7. How has the quality of life or quality of housing in Roxbury changed recently?
8. What do you see as the biggest housing challenge facing the Roxbury community?
9. What types of solutions do you think would be most effective at resolving these challenges?
10. What is your relationship with housing advocates or the City of Boston surrounding this issue?

### NORTHEASTERN RELATIONSHIP:

1. Overall, do you feel Northeastern has a positive or negative impact on the Roxbury Community? How so?
2. What has your relationship been with Northeastern in your community?
3. Are you aware of Northeastern's community engagement activities?
  1. Northeastern has a Community Task Force and a micro-grant program - have you heard of these opportunities?
  2. Would you be interested in being a part of any of Northeastern's community engagement activities? Why or why not?
4. Do you feel Northeastern could do a better job engaging with the Roxbury community? How so?
5. What is your opinion on Northeastern expanding its student housing?
  1. What if this expansion were to be within the Roxbury community?
  2. What if this expansion was in a nearby community, like Mission Hill or the South End?
6. What would you like to see Northeastern do for the Roxbury community?
7. Do you feel like colleges and universities in Boston like Northeastern value the voice and opinions of the Roxbury community?
  1. How do you think Northeastern can improve in showing they value Roxbury?

### STAKEHOLDER SPECIFIC QUESTIONS:

1. What have you heard from community engagement or community forums on the impact of students in Roxbury?
2. What has your working relationship been with Northeastern and other nearby universities?
3. Has developing affordable housing approaches been more challenging recently?

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## OUR TEAM



Liz Biskar is a Master of Public Policy student specializing in Urban Studies at Northeastern University. Liz's professional background is in non-profit grant writing and project management for organizations working on issues of education, housing, human rights and international development. Liz works as a Policy Assistant in the Office of Secretary Pollack at the Massachusetts Department of Transportation. Liz graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of Washington, Seattle in 2010. She served as the co-Team Leader and Project Manager for the Roxbury Housing Project.

Helen Hemley is a Master of Public Administration student at Northeastern University. Helen's professional career has focused on enhancing systems for engagement with patients and communities in research and healthcare. She is currently the Program Manager of the Community Access, Recruitment, & Engagement (CARE) Research Center at Massachusetts General Hospital, which focuses on researching access and addressing barriers to clinical research for groups that have been historically underrepresented in research. Helen graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Marketing Communications from Emerson College in 2011. She served as the team liaison for TACC.



Dylan Ricker is a Master of Public Policy student at Northeastern University with a specialization in Urban Analytics. Dylan graduated from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst with a Bachelor's degree in Political Science in 2016. Dylan's professional background includes working at the Office of Congresswoman Niki Tsongas's District Office focusing on constituent services, and currently serves as the Housing Mobility Specialist for the SNO-Mass Program at Community Teamwork, Inc, a Lowell based non-profit. He served as co-Project Manager for the Roxbury Housing Project.

Lin Zhai is a Master of Public Administration student at Northeastern's School Public Policy & Urban Affairs. Lin graduated from the University of Southern California with a Master's degree in Gerontology. She did an internship with The Scan Foundation, which is a non-profit organization that supports the creation of a more coordinated and easily navigated system of high-quality services for older adults that preserve dignity and independence. She served as a policy analyst for the Roxbury Housing Project.

