

Trends in Somerville: Population Technical Report

April 2009



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REPORT INTRODUCTION

Somerville's population is constantly changing. While the city has remained the most densely populated municipality in New England since the World War II era, profound shifts in family composition, education, income and ethnicity have occurred. Certain population trends mirror changes observed at the national, state and regional scales, while in other aspects Somerville has changed in ways that are different even from immediate neighbors such as Boston and Cambridge.

This report was prepared by the Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD) in order to establish a solid foundation of data from which to inform future policy decisions. Additionally, with the 2010 federal Census approaching, an understanding of previous population trends will be critical to ensure an accurate count of Somerville's residents. Key findings of the report include the following:

- After four decades of population losses, Somerville gained population between 1990 and 2000.
- Population losses during the second half of the twentieth century are associated with major transportation projects such as highway construction, which facilitated the movement of jobs and middle-class residents to suburban areas.
- Consistent with national and state trends, household and family sizes have decreased during the last several decades. In Somerville, increasing education and income levels tended to be associated with decreases in household and family size between 1990 and 2000.

- More than the state, the region or neighboring cities, Somerville is a community of immigrants, with nearly three out of ten residents in 2000 born outside the United States. The most common countries of origin were Brazil, Portugal, El Salvador, Haiti and China.
- Youth under age 18 represent the most racially and ethnically diverse segment of Somerville's population.
- Concentrations of elderly residents tended to be associated with concentrations of low income households in 2000. These concentrations reflect large complexes of age- and income-restricted apartments, but also naturally-occurring clusters of senior citizens (many of whom live on fixed incomes).

The Population Trends report is divided into seven subject sections. They are:

1. Population and Population Density
2. Households and Families
3. Youth Population
4. Senior Population
5. Race and Ethnicity
6. Income and Poverty
7. Education

In addition, an introductory section on Population History is provided.

Data Sources and Methodology:

The primary data source for this report is the US Census. The Census provides demographic data that are extremely rich in detail; however, significant limitations must be acknowledged:

1. The most complete Census data currently available was collected in 2000, and may not accurately reflect conditions on the ground in 2009.
2. Annual estimates published by the Census Bureau since 2000 (the “American Community Survey”) offer significantly less detail and less accuracy than the decennial Census. The margin of error for many of these datasets is very high.
3. The Census is prone to undercounting specific groups of persons: low-income persons, young adults, non-English speakers, recent immigrants, and persons “doubled up” in housing units.

Where time-series data is presented in this report, rigorous quality-assurance work has been conducted to standardize data.

- All historical income values have been adjusted for inflation to 2000 US dollars.
- Youth and senior population data has been cleaned to reference only those persons younger than age 18, or older than age 65, respectively.
- Analyses of racial and ethnic groups use only the four major classifications affecting Somerville: white, black, Hispanic and Asian. Totals may add up to less than 100%, since respondents may fall outside of these categories. Additionally, totals may add up to more than 100%, since the Census methodology changed in 2000, allowing respondents to select more than one racial/ethnic category.

Maps showing changes at the Census Block Group level have accounted for Block Group boundary changes between 1990 and 2000 (see below for detail).

Comparison with Other Jurisdictions:

To provide context for Somerville’s demographic changes, this report uses a number of comparable statistics, including data at the national, state, metropolitan and local scales. Statistical data for the Boston metro area (roughly 100 cities and towns in eastern Massachusetts) are prepared and published by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). Since the MAPC region is so large and diverse, data are also summarized and published for “sub-regions” of similar communities. Somerville is part of the MAPC Inner Core sub-region, which includes eighteen other cities and towns:

Arlington	Everett	Newton
Belmont	Lynn	Quincy
Boston	Malden	Saugus
Brookline	Medford	Watertown
Cambridge	Melrose	Waltham
Chelsea	Milton	Winthrop

A Note on Demographic Mapping:

The US Census Bureau collects demographic data by household, but aggregates the data to larger units before publication in order to maintain respondents’ privacy. The most detailed data are generally published by “Block Group” (clusters of city blocks, generally




containing roughly 1,000 residents). In 2000, the Census Bureau divided Somerville into 67 Block Groups, with total Block Group populations ranging from 425 residents to over 2,700.

Block Group boundaries change from Census to Census. For example, the 1990 federal Census divided Somerville into 76 Block Groups. These administrative changes reflect the Census Bureau's best understanding of conditions on the ground, and are often informed by recommendations from local governments. **A critical finding of this report is that Census Block Group "3501001" (Assembly Square and The States neighborhood of East Somerville) should be subdivided into two new Block Groups for the 2010 Census.** The Assembly Square portion of Block Group 3501001 (north of Interstate 93) currently has no residential land uses, while The States neighborhood is one of the city's oldest and most densely populated residential and mixed-use districts.

All of the maps included in this report show Block Group 3501001 divided along Interstate 93. The demographic information recorded by the Census Bureau for the Block Group is attributed to the southern portion to enhance its accuracy. This reallocation of data is critical to prevent any skewing of the demographic profile for these two neighborhoods. Furthermore, as the City implements its redevelopment plans for Assembly Square, an accurate record of base conditions will be essential going forward.

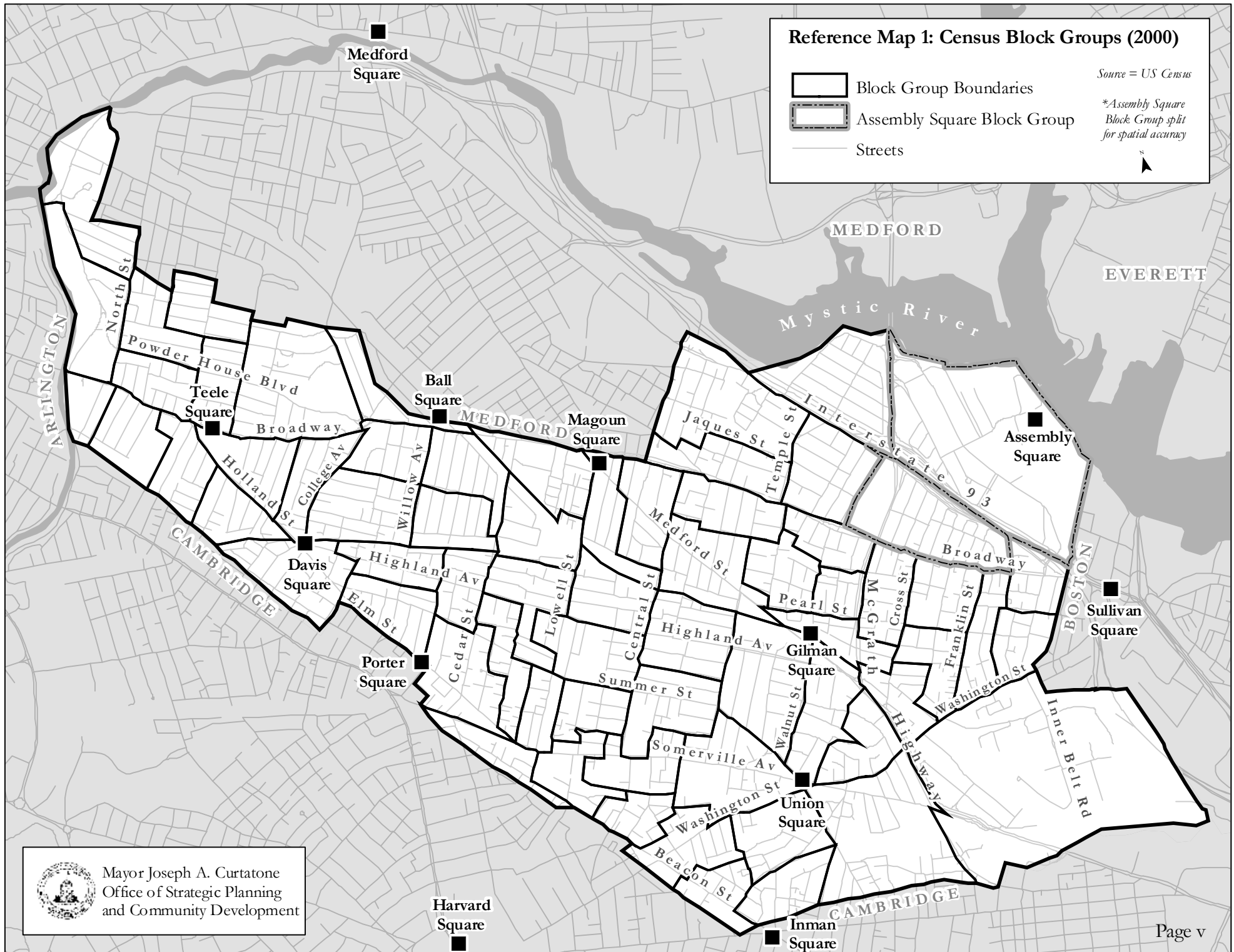
To enhance the readability of the Block Group maps, reference points such as streets and squares are not shown. Please see Reference Map 1 on the following page for an overlay of Block Group boundaries with the city's street grid and major commercial squares.

Reference Map 1: Census Block Groups (2000)

-  Block Group Boundaries
-  Assembly Square Block Group
-  Streets

Source = US Census

*Assembly Square
Block Group split
for spatial accuracy



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POPULATION HISTORY

Somerville has an extremely rich history, and the City's historical population trends reflect individual residents' legacies in addition to large-scale social and economic processes. Somerville's strategic location and environmental attributes attracted the first European settlers, and centuries of investment have yielded its dense residential fabric and its diverse citizenry. As illustrated in Figure 1, Somerville's major period of population gain (1850-1930) corresponds with industrialization, while the major period of population loss (1950-1980) reflect public and private disinvestment following construction of the federal Interstate Highway System.

1. Colonial Period and Early Industrialization: 1637-1842

The first Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Governor John Winthrop, lived in Somerville in the early 1600s and owned over 600 acres of land between what is currently Broadway and the Mystic River. Between 1637 and 1681, land grants tended to be for common pasturage, and Somerville's land area was largely

uninhabited.¹ Individual land grants were issued beginning in 1681 and by 1700 only 10-15 houses are estimated to have existed in present-day Somerville.²

In 1775, just before the American Revolution, Somerville had approximately thirty houses and 250 residents.³ Following the war, private investors began to finance infrastructure improvements such as toll roads and canals that facilitated residential and industrial growth.⁴

Construction of the Boston & Lowell railroad began in 1835, and encouraged development along the northern slopes of Prospect Hill and Central Hill, and the southern slopes of Winter Hill. In 1841 the Charlestown Branch rail line (predecessor of the Fitchburg line) was extended west from Union Square to present-day Porter Square, providing similar development stimulus for the Beacon Street corridor and the southern slopes of Spring Hill.⁵

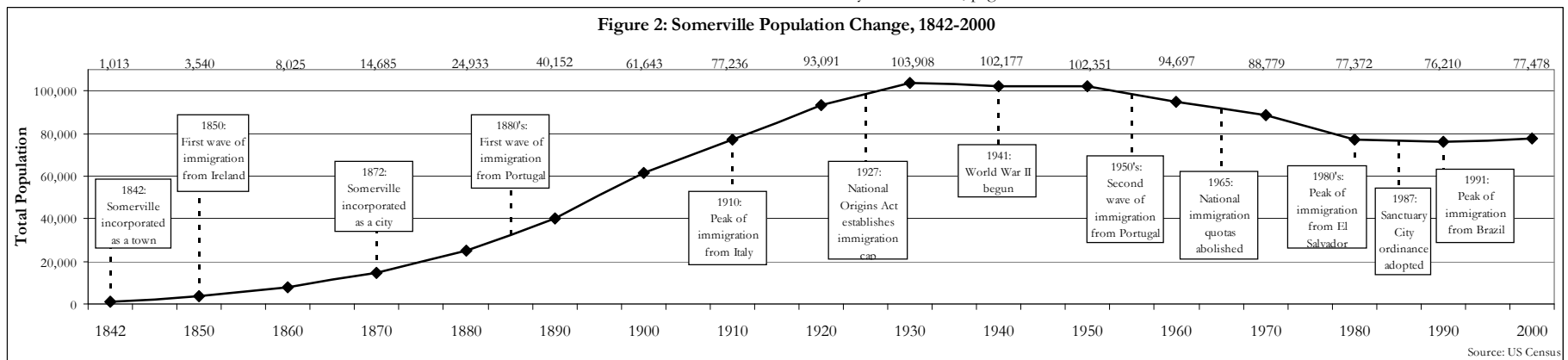
¹ Beyond the Neck: The Architecture and Development of Somerville, Massachusetts, page 10

² Beyond the Neck, page 11

³ Somerville, Massachusetts: A Brief History, page 13

⁴ Beyond the Neck, page 18

⁵ Beyond the Neck, page 18



2. Incorporation and Industrial Expansion: 1842-1900

In 1842, Somerville separated from Charlestown and incorporated as an independent town. At this time, there were still only 200 dwelling units and 1,000 residents in Somerville.¹ Major rail lines (including the Boston & Lowell and the predecessor of the Fitchburg line) had been extended in 1835 and 1839, respectively, and attracted industrial growth along their corridors.² Subdivision of land for residential lots began in earnest, with early examples of new neighborhoods including the Mt. Vernon/Perkins Street area of East Somerville.³ By 1850, Somerville's population had risen to 3,540 persons.

The industrial revolution arrived in Somerville, just prior to its incorporation as a city in 1872. Entrepreneurs capitalized on Somerville's natural resources and labor supply. The City quickly became home to a variety of industries, the most prominent including brick-making and meatpacking, in addition to the pre-Industrial Revolution industries of dairy farms and stone quarries. In addition to industrial growth, the introduction of new streetcar lines and rail stations contributed to Somerville's greatest period of population growth.

Between 1870 and 1900, the population grew from under 15,000 to over 60,000.

The economic and population growth of this period generated demand for residential construction in Somerville. Construction activity between 1890 and 1900 was so significant that approximately 50% of all of Somerville's residential structures were built during that ten-year period.⁴ The railroads connected the expanding population to neighboring communities and regional job markets: by 1900, Somerville was home to eight passenger rail stations.⁵

Major changes in land use occurred during this period. In West Somerville, Tufts University was chartered in 1852 and officially opened in 1855.⁶ Construction of a major sewer line in 1876 allowed the filling of the Miller's River basin in Ward II, creating new land for development.⁷ The large McLean Asylum complex in Cobble Hill/Brickbottom was sold in 1895 and converted for use as a rail yard.⁸

¹ Beyond the Neck, page 22

² Beyond the Neck, page 69

³ Beyond the Neck, page 24

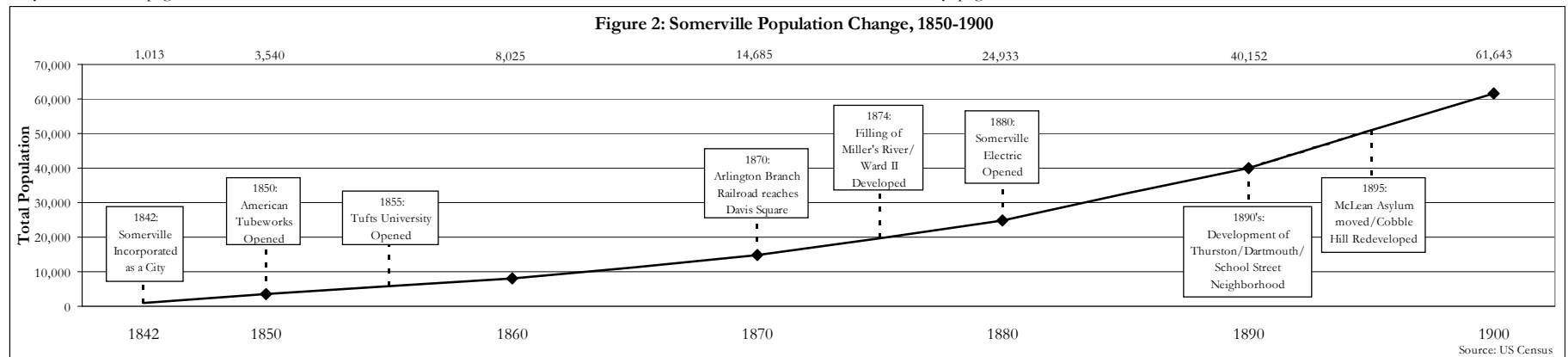
⁴ Beyond the Neck, page 74

⁵ Beyond the Neck, page 23

⁶ A Brief History, page 124

⁷ A Brief History, page 56

⁸ A Brief History, page 51



3. Residential Build-Out and Population Peak: 1900-1950

By the early 1900s, the array of employment opportunities drew workers to Somerville, increasing the demand for housing. Two-family homes and triple-deckers were built throughout the City, and private land holdings were subdivided to create new neighborhoods such as The States in 1913¹ and Ten Hills in 1919.² This housing boom helped create the dense residential fabric that Somerville is known for; resulting in the nickname “the city of homes”.

In addition to two- and three-family homes, large apartment buildings were constructed along a number of the City’s thoroughfares. Notable examples include the 42-unit “Bryant Chambers” building on College Avenue, constructed in 1925³, and the 52-unit building at 391 Broadway (constructed in 1923). These new dwellings primarily served commuters while the wealthier residents of earlier days began a pattern of leaving the City for more suburban locations.

Industrial expansion continued, leveraging the City’s extensive rail network and attracting immigrant laborers. In the Brickbottom area the A and P Food warehouse and bakery opened in 1923, and the Ford Motor Company constructed a major assembly plant in 1926 on the site of present-day Assembly Square.⁴ By 1930, Somerville was home to nearly 30,000 foreign-born residents, with the majority of new immigrants during this period coming from Canada, Ireland, Italy and Portugal.⁵ The 1930 Census reported 103,908 residents, and the City’s population peaked at 105,813 during World War II.⁶

This period of rapid growth and construction was also accompanied by increasing debate about the quality of growth in the City. Reformers lamented the loss of open areas and urged the integration of landscaping into development plans. Reflecting nationwide trends toward regulation of land uses, the City enacted its first zoning ordinance in 1925. The new regulations likely contributed to a general slowdown in residential construction, as evidenced by the fact that only about 20% of the City’s current housing stock was built after 1920.

¹ Beyond the Neck, page 97

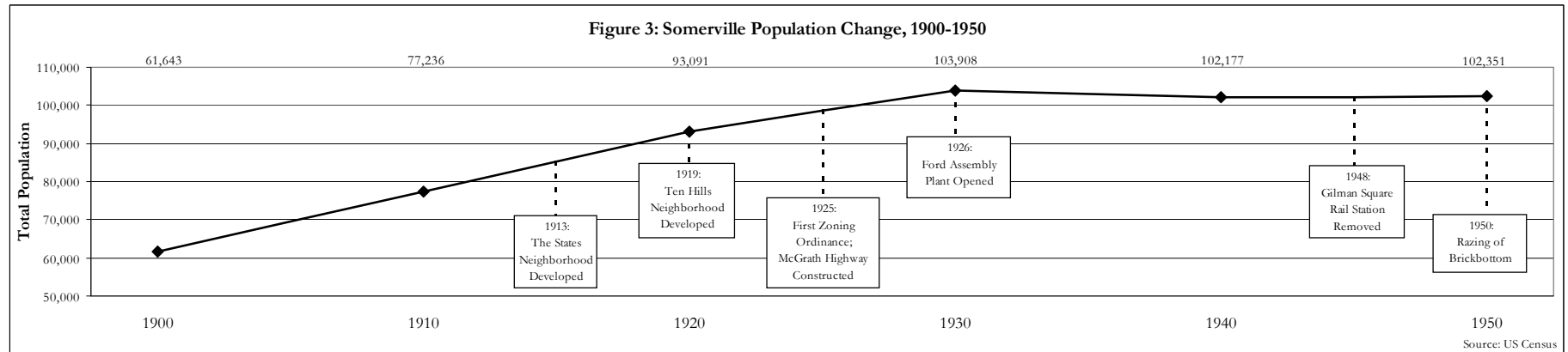
² Beyond the Neck, page 84

³ Beyond the Neck page 139

⁴ Beyond the Neck, page 79

⁵ Beyond the Neck, page 51

⁶ Beyond the Neck, page 51



4. Postwar Disinvestment and Contemporary Revitalization: 1950-2000

The postwar period was characterized by the ascent of the private automobile, which carried significant implications for Somerville. Passenger rail service along the Fitchburg and Lowell lines had been declining for some time, and stations such as Gilman Square were removed as early as the late 1940's.¹ Passenger service was discontinued altogether in Somerville by 1958.

Highway projects were advanced in the wake of the Federal Highway Aid Act (1956), in some instances displacing entire neighborhoods. The Brickbottom neighborhood was razed in 1950 to prepare for a proposed Inner Belt Expressway, and construction of Interstate 93 resulted in demolition of homes in The States neighborhood during the late 1960's.

Somerville's population began a steady decline in 1950 that did not stabilize until 1980. Industry slowly moved outward to the metropolitan fringes, encouraged by highway access and cheap, unbuilt land. The Ford Motor Plant, which had been one of the region's largest employers, closed in 1958.² Immigration had slowed from its prewar peak:

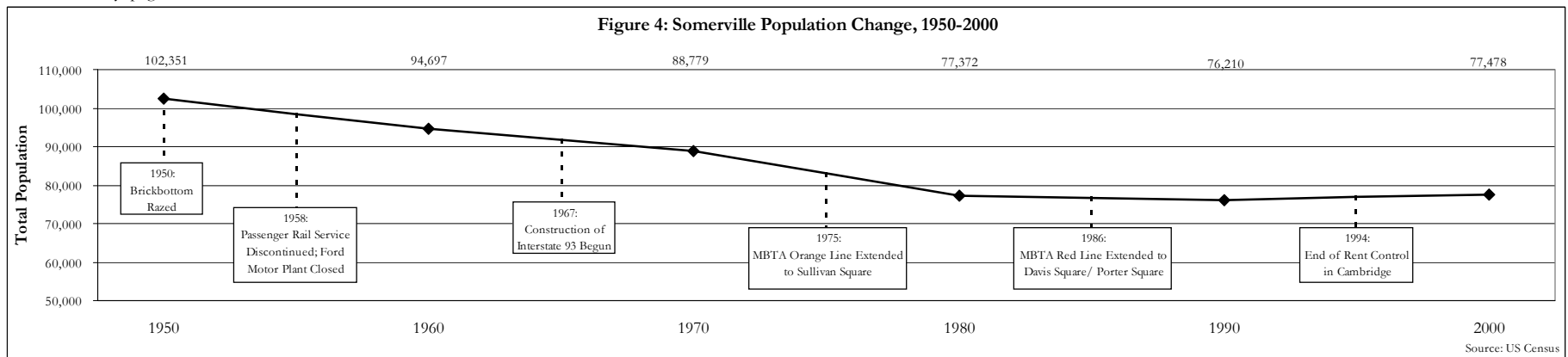
according to the 1970 Census, only 13,000 Somerville residents were born outside the United States, compared with 30,000 in 1930. Another important factor was shrinking household size: in 1960, the average Somerville household was 3.3 persons, whereas that figure had decreased to 2.5 persons per household by 1980.

In the last years of the 20th century, more rapid growth and change returned to Somerville. Subway service was extended to West Somerville in 1986, encouraging reinvestment in neighborhoods such as Davis Square and Porter Square. Rent control in neighboring Cambridge ended in 1994, resulting in an inflow of residents seeking affordable housing. Immigration has helped reinvigorate Somerville: foreign-born residents numbered 17,000 in 1990 and 23,000 in 2000.

In the first decade of the new century, Somerville has positioned itself for renewed population growth. The redevelopment of Assembly Square will create a vibrant new neighborhood, and infill projects of all sizes have been encouraged by the proposed MBTA Green Line extension.

¹ Beyond the Neck, page 103

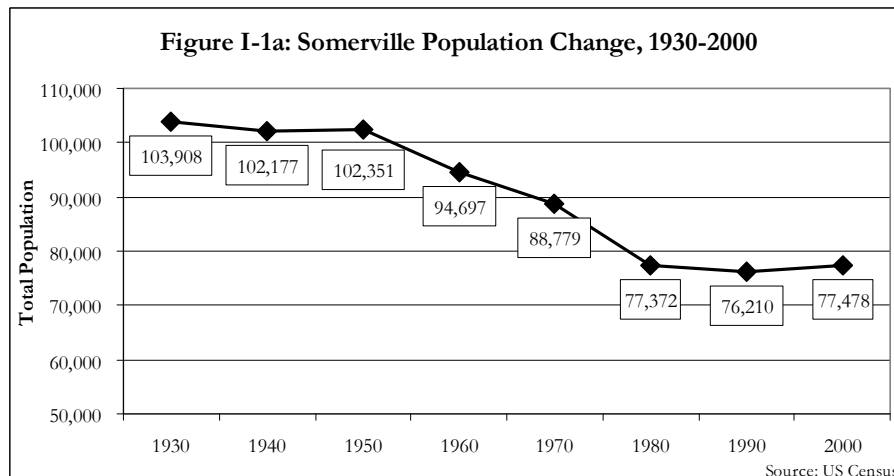
² A Brief History, page 25



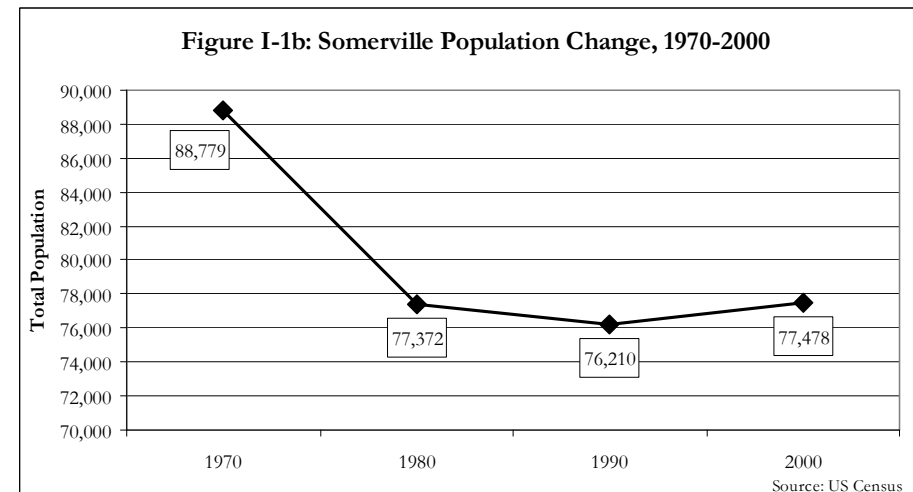
POPULATION AND POPULATION DENSITY

1. At its peak, Somerville housed over 100,000 residents in more or less the same housing stock that it has today. The greatest decreases occurred during the 1970's, when population declined by 12.8% (-11,000 residents).

Somerville's population reached its historic peak in 1930, when the US Census reported 103,908 residents. Significant population decreases (-24%) were recorded between 1950 and 1980, with nearly 25,000 fewer residents in 1980 than in 1950. Neighborhoods that experienced the sharpest population decreases during that period include East Somerville (-4,251 residents), Spring Hill (-2,564 residents), and Union Square/Beacon Street (-4,413 residents). The only neighborhood to experience a population gain between 1950 and 2000 was the area to the south and west of Tufts University, and this modest gain (+333 residents) is likely explained by construction of college dormitories.



The city's population reached its low point as of the 1990 Census, which recorded 76,210 residents. By the 2000 Census, Somerville's population had rebounded to 77,478, an increase of 1.7% from 1990. Population increases during that period are at least partially due to immigration: Somerville's foreign-born population doubled as a percentage of the total population between 1970 and 2000.



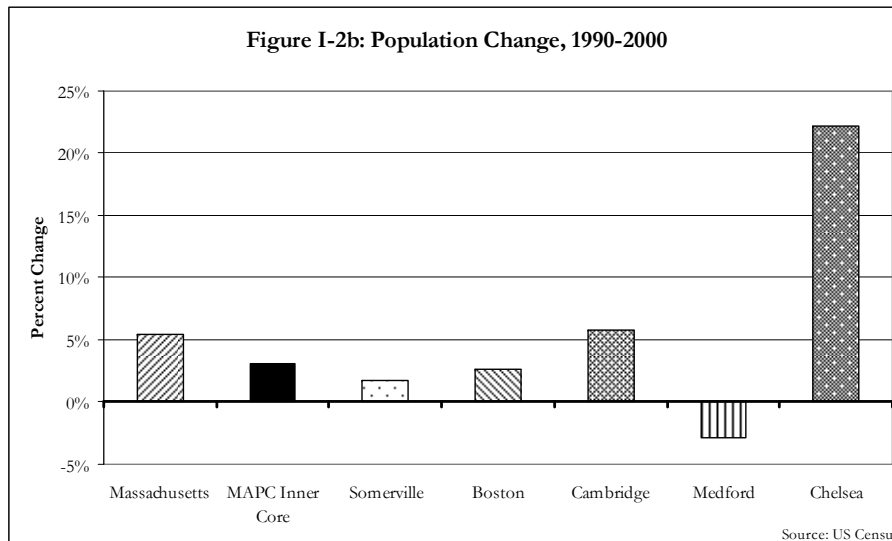
2. During the last decade, Somerville's population growth was slower than regional and state growth rates.

While Somerville gained population during the last decade, its growth (+1,268 persons, or +1.7%) was significantly less than the metropolitan core (+3.1%) or the state as a whole (+5.5%). The large neighboring cities of Boston and Cambridge also exhibited greater percentage growth than Somerville did. Medford was the only neighboring jurisdiction to experience a population loss between 1990 and 2000, as illustrated in Figure I-2a. The nearby City of Chelsea experienced a remarkable 22% growth rate during the last

decade, which is attributable to high rates of immigration combined with major residential infill development.

Figure I-2a: Population Change, 1990-2000		
	Percent Change	Absolute Change
Massachusetts	+5.5%	+332,672
MAPC Inner Core	+3.1%	+48,510
Somerville	+1.7%	+1,268
Boston	+2.6%	+14,858
Cambridge	+5.8%	+5,553
Medford	-2.9%	-1,642
Chelsea	+22.2%	+6,370

Source: US Census

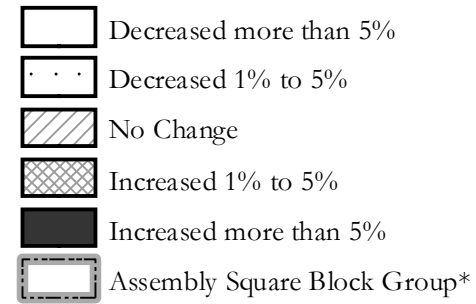


3. East Somerville tended to gain population between 1990 and 2000, while West Somerville tended to lose population.

Population data at the Census Block Group level provide a much more nuanced view of Somerville's population changes between 1990 and 2000 (see Map I-3a). Significant population decreases (> 5%) were observed in 18 of the city's 67 Block Groups, while smaller decreases occurred in 22 Block Groups. Most areas that lost population are located in West Somerville. The most substantial losses occurred in the neighborhood northwest of Teele Square (-9.5%); the neighborhood northeast of Davis Square (-9.2%); and in one Block Group in Spring Hill (-8.8%) stretching from Highland Avenue to Somerville Avenue.

Seven Block Groups experienced population increases of more than 5%, while 18 exhibited smaller gains. In general, most Block Groups that gained population during the 1990's are located in East Somerville. The largest percentage increase (+9.4%) was observed in a Block Group between Union Square and Porter Square, east of Belmont Road between Summer Street and Somerville Avenue.

Map I-3a: Population Change, 1990-2000

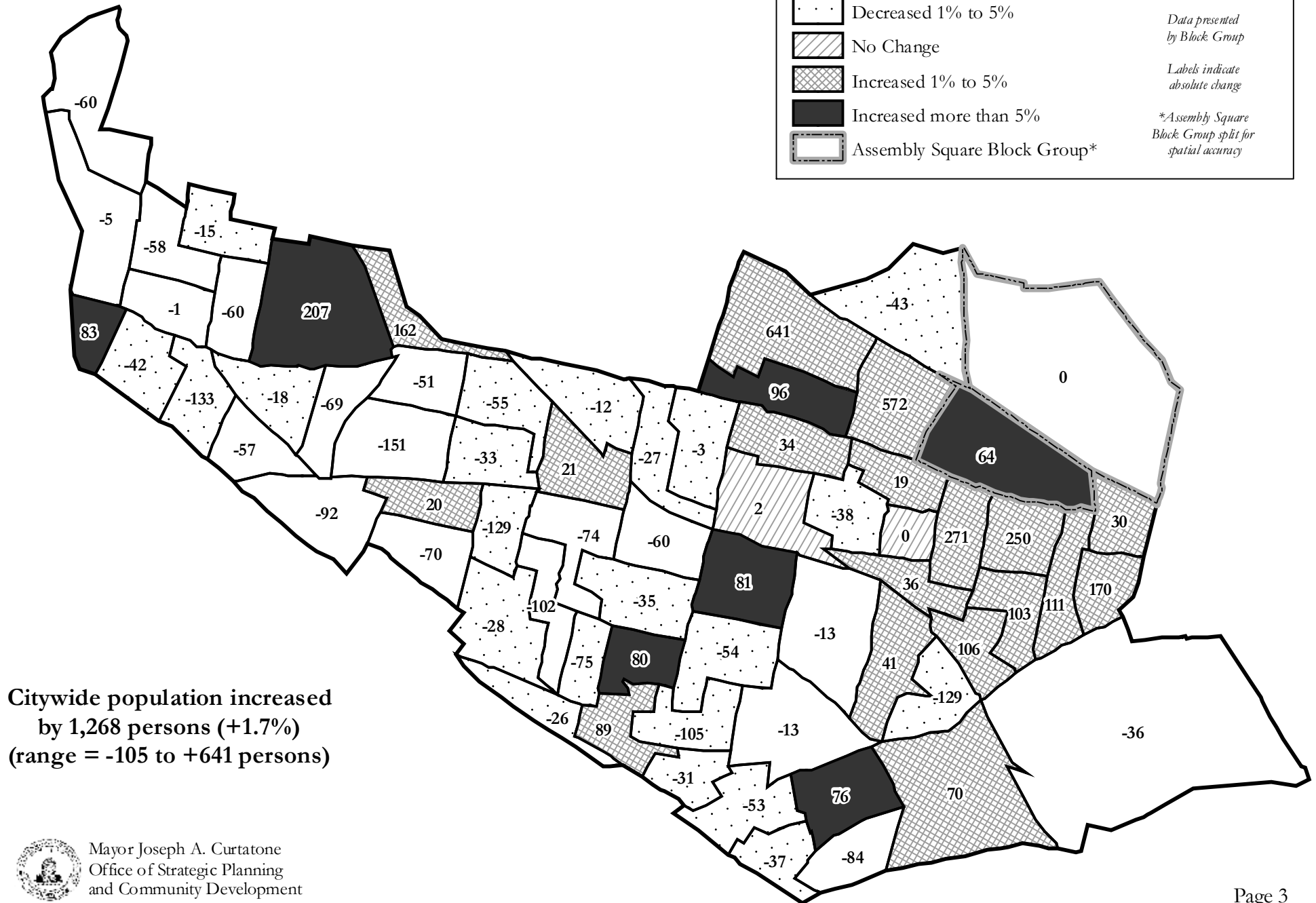


Source = US Census

*Data presented
by Block Group*

*Labels indicate
absolute change*

**Assembly Square
Block Group split for
spatial accuracy*



4. Despite population losses in the second half of the twentieth century, Somerville remains one of the most populated and densest municipalities in the urban core.

With its relatively large population and its relatively small area (4.1 square miles, or 2,624 acres), Somerville's population density is the highest among New England municipalities (18,879 persons/square mile, or 29.5 persons/acre). Among its immediate neighbors, only Cambridge approaches Somerville's population density. Chelsea, which does not immediately border Somerville, boasts the second-highest population density in Massachusetts at 25.2 persons/acre.

Figure I-4a: Population Density, 2000				
	Total Population, 2000	Land Area, Square Miles	Land Area, Acres	Persons /Acre
Somerville	77,478	4.1	2,649	29.2
Chelsea	35,080	2.2	1,394	25.2
Cambridge	101,650	7.2	4,587	22.2
Boston	592,347	48.1	30,788	19.2
Malden	56,340	5.1	3,247	17.4
Everett	38,037	3.4	2,205	17.3
Medford	55,765	8.5	5,426	10.3
Arlington	42,389	5.4	3,481	12.2

Source: US Census

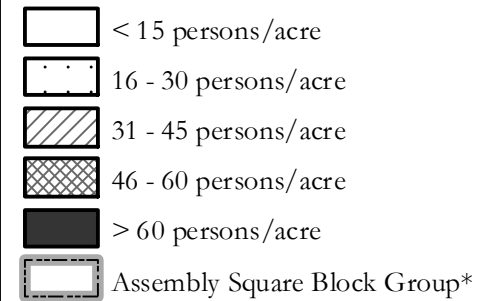
5. Somerville neighborhoods with population densities significantly above the citywide average include East Somerville, Inman Square, Ball Square, Spring Hill and Winter Hill.

As illustrated in Map I-5a, Somerville's population density is not evenly distributed across the city. The 2000 Census reported that 50 of Somerville's 67 Block Groups had population densities above the citywide average. Particularly dense areas of the city, including Ball Square, East Somerville, Gilman Square, Inman Square, Spring Hill and Winter Hill contain 40-60 persons/acre. The city's highest density (greater than 60 persons/acre) occurs in a West Somerville Block Group containing the Clarendon Hill residential towers.

On the other end of the spectrum, only 17 of Somerville's 67 Census Block Groups show population densities under the citywide average. Block Groups in Assembly Square and the Inner Belt are notable for their particularly low densities (fewer than 15 persons/acre), due to land uses dominated by industry and transportation infrastructure.

Several neighborhoods have densities between 16-30 persons/acre. For Census Block Groups around Magoun/Albion and Somerville Avenue, this is attributable to the presence of railroads and industry. Around Alewife Brook Parkway in West Somerville, extensive parkland lowers population density. The Ten Hills neighborhood is characterized by single-family homes, which serves to keep density low. Finally, neighborhoods around Porter and Davis Squares feature particularly low average household sizes, implying that fewer residents will occupy the area's housing stock.

Map I-5a: Population Density, 2000

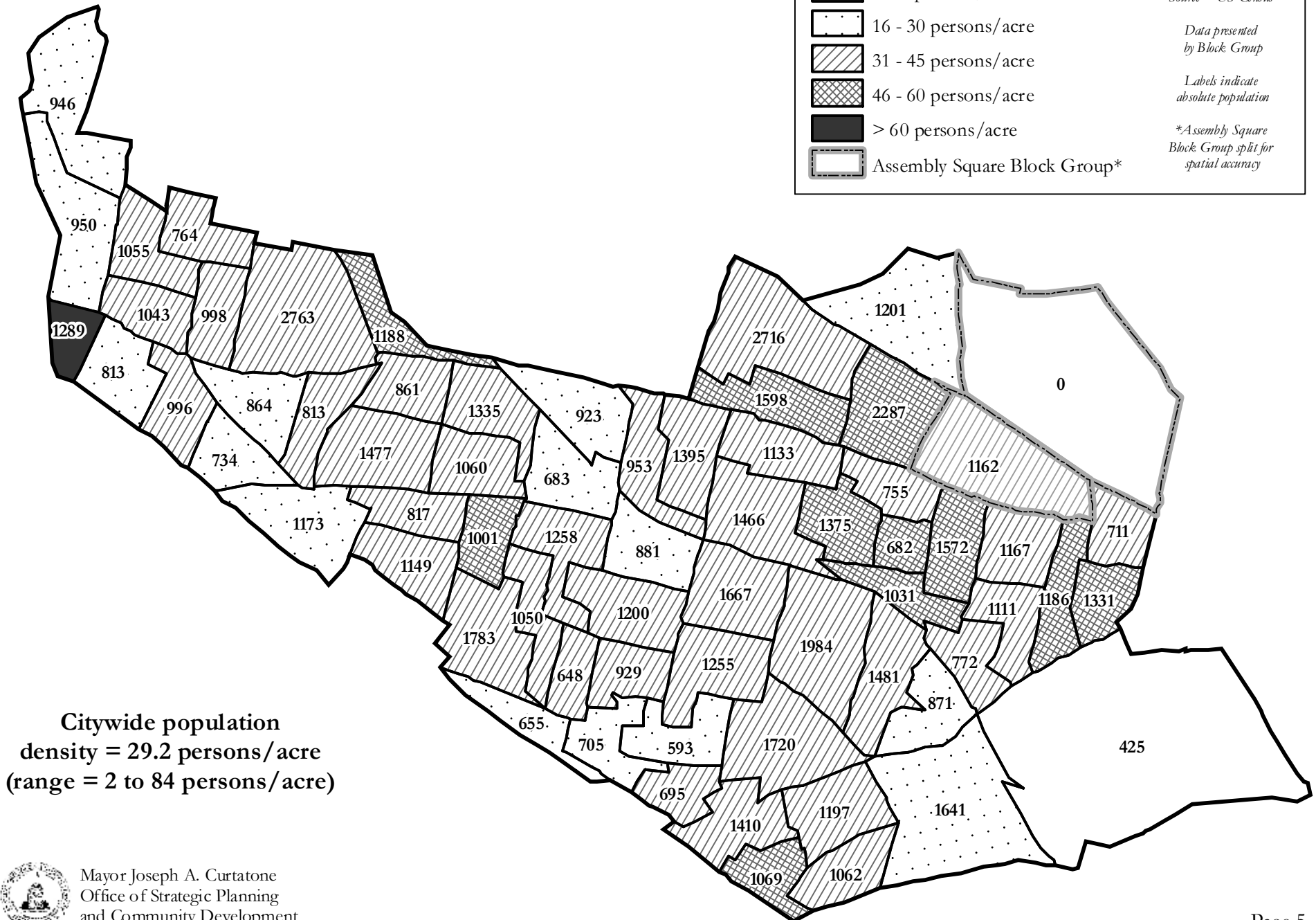


Source = US Census

Data presented
by Block Group

Labels indicate
absolute population

*Assembly Square
Block Group split for
spatial accuracy

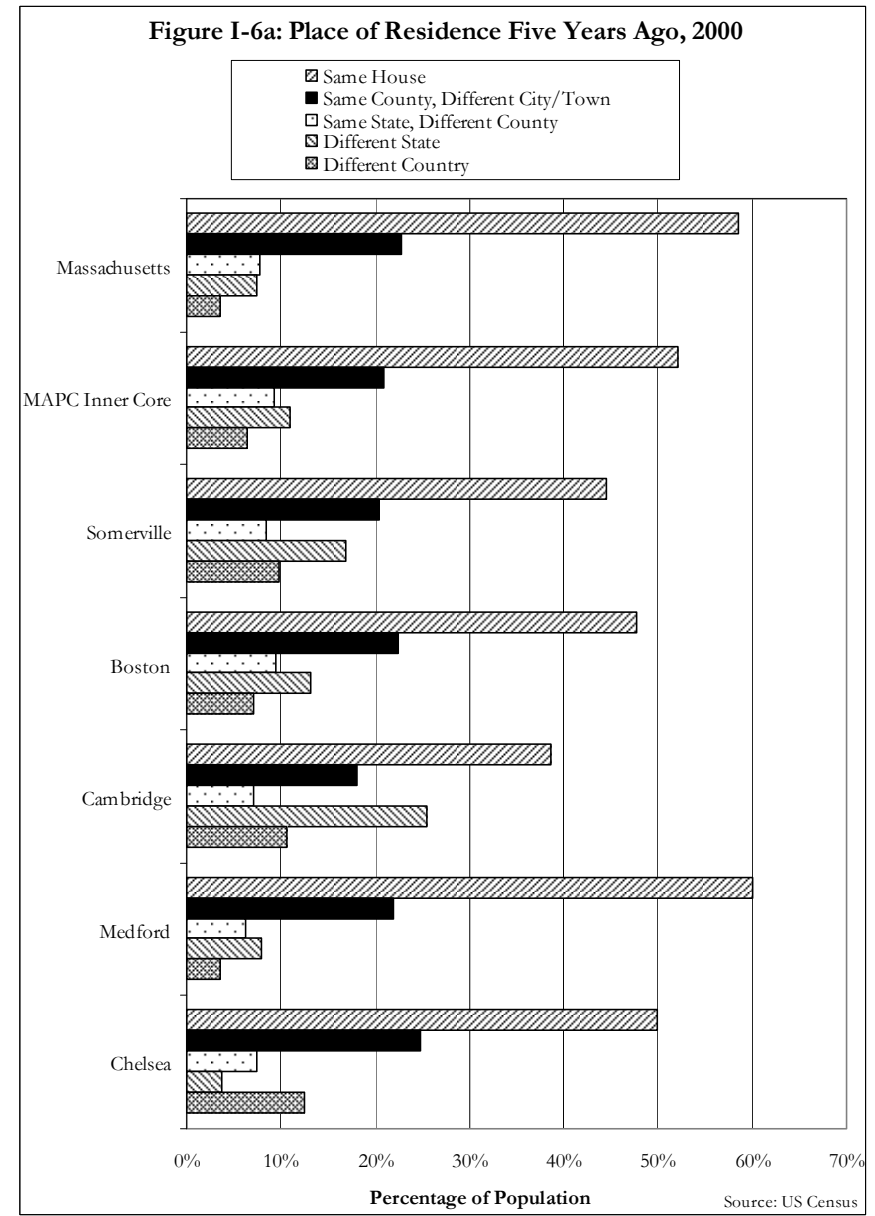


6. During the last two decades, Somerville's rate of residential turnover has been higher than regional or state averages.

Somerville has a high rate of residential turnover. The percentage of residents who reported living in the same house five years prior to the 2000 Census (44%) was noticeably lower than the regional (52%) and state (58%) percentages. The 1990 Census shows similar data: 49% of Somerville residents reported living in the same house five years prior, compared to 54% of the region and 58% of the state. This trend can be attributed in part to largely transient student populations: neighboring “college towns” Boston and Cambridge also had higher rates of turnover than the metropolitan core or the state as a whole.

Somerville appears to consistently attract a significantly higher percentage of new residents from out-of-state and outside the United States than the regional or statewide averages (Figure I-6a). In 2000, 17% of Somerville residents reported living in another US state in 1995, compared to 11% of Inner Core residents and 8% of Massachusetts residents. For the same period, 10% of Somerville residents reported living outside the US previously, compared to 6% of Inner Core residents and 4% of Massachusetts residents. Data from the 1990 Census show similar trends.

Interestingly, people living in other Massachusetts cities and towns do not appear more likely to move to Somerville than to other communities in the state. According to the 2000 Census, roughly 20% of Somerville residents had lived in another Middlesex County city or town in 1995. Only 8% of Somerville residents had lived in another Massachusetts county in 1995. As illustrated in Figure II-6a, the region, the state and Somerville's neighboring cities of Boston and Cambridge had comparable statistics. In other words, Massachusetts residents who relocated within the state did not appear to choose Somerville more frequently than other cities and towns.



7. Somerville's median age is lower than the regional and state medians, and the difference has become more pronounced during the last decade.

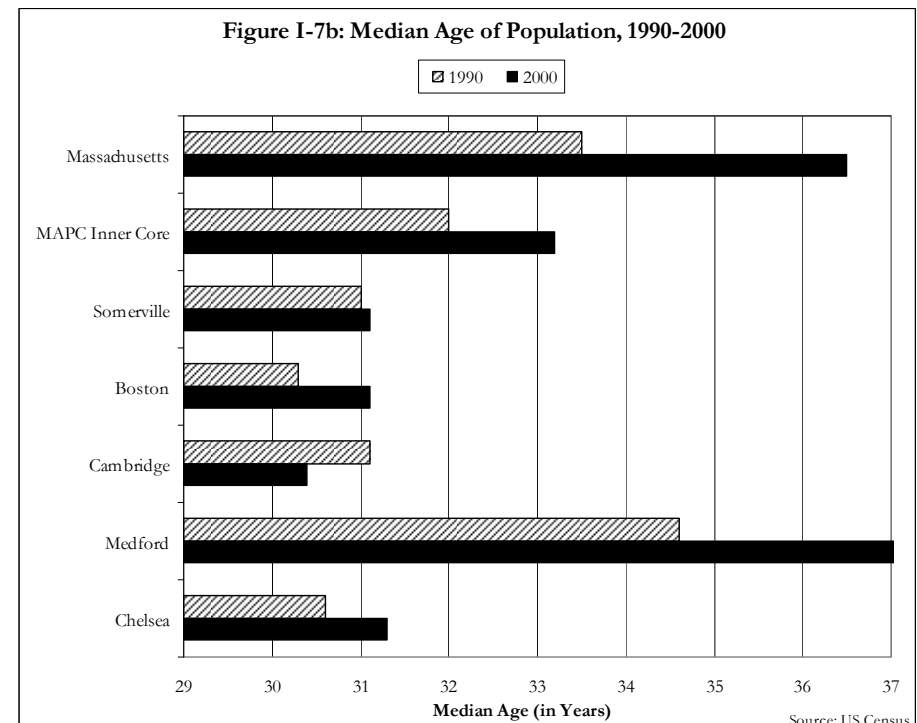
Somerville's reputation as a young city was reinforced by the 2000 US Census, which recorded a median age (31.1) well below the median age of both the MAPC Inner Core (33.2) and the state as a whole (36.5). The median age for Boston (31.1) and Chelsea (31.3) were comparable to Somerville, while the median for Cambridge (30.4) was slightly lower. As shown in Figure I-7a, Medford is notable for its high median age, which was even higher than the statewide median in both 1990 and 2000.

Figure I-7a: Median Age, 1990-2000			
	1990	2000	Percent Change
Massachusetts	33.5	36.5	+9.0%
MAPC Inner Core	32.0	33.2	+3.6%
Somerville	31.0	31.1	+0.3%
Boston	30.3	31.1	+2.7%
Cambridge	31.1	30.4	-2.3%
Medford	34.6	37.5	+8.3%
Chelsea	30.6	31.3	+2.3%

Source: US Census

The trend of an "aging population" during the 1990's was not as pronounced in Somerville as it was in most other Massachusetts communities. Between 1990 and 2000, the region, the state, and the city of Boston experienced an increase in their median age (see Figure I-7b). Cambridge experienced a noticeable decrease in its median

age, while Somerville's percentage increase (+0.3%) is small enough that it can be considered nearly static. Although the constant influx of students and young professionals into Somerville likely contributes to this trend, Census data also show significant decreases in older residents during the 1990's (see Finding 10 of this section for more detail).



8. Somerville's population is weighted toward young and middle-aged adults, and contains a higher percentage of residents aged 20-34 years old than the regional or state populations do. Somerville experienced major increases in this age group between 1970 and 1990.

Figure I-8a illustrates Somerville's age distribution, which is more heavily weighted toward young adults than the regional and state averages are. This trend can be attributed to Somerville's geographic proximity to the job markets, educational institutions and transit network of the urban core. In particular, the location of Tufts University (straddling the Medford border in West Somerville), Lesley University (on the Cambridge line in Porter Square), and Harvard University (just across the Cambridge line south of Beacon Street) serve to attract and retain students and other young professionals.

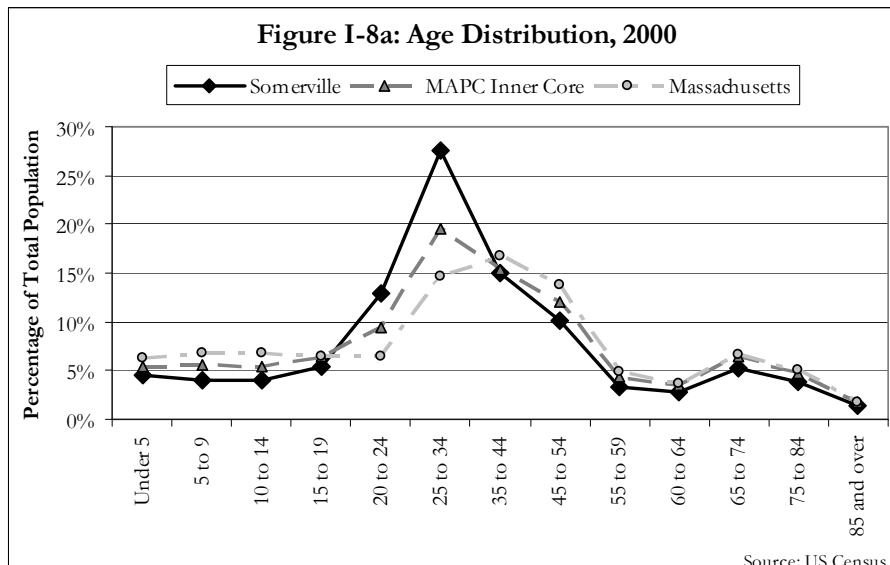
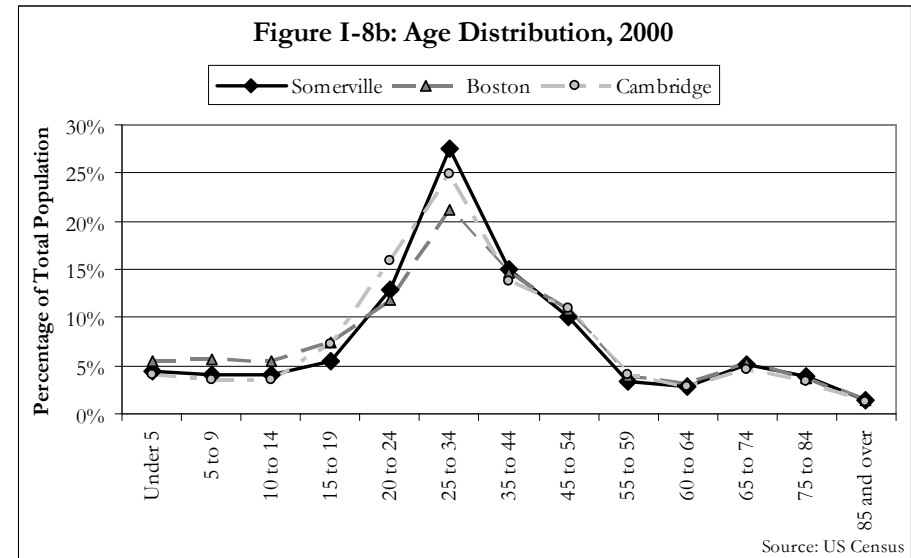
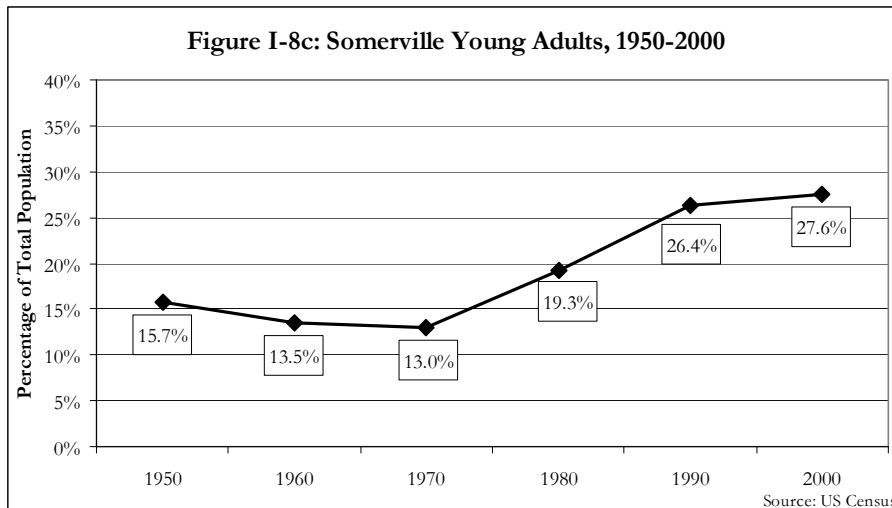


Figure I-8b provides the same comparison against Boston and Cambridge, two cities known for their populations of students and young professionals. While their age distributions more closely resemble Somerville's, Somerville still has a noticeably higher percentage of residents aged 25-34.



Although Somerville's recent reputation is that of a young community, it is worth noting that young adults are much more common than children and teenagers in Somerville. In 2000, more than one-quarter of the city's population reported ages between 25 and 34, compared to 17.9% aged 19 and under (13,827 residents). See Section III of this report for findings specific to the city's youth population.

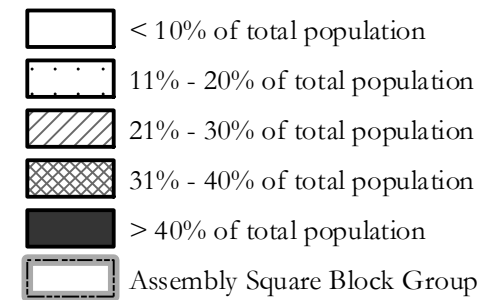
Somerville's population has not always been so heavily skewed towards young adults. As illustrated in Figure I-8c, residents aged 25-34 represented only 13% of the city's total population in 1970. Between 1970 and 1990, dramatic increases in the young adult population can be seen, with an obvious leveling-off between 1990 and 2000.



9. Somerville's highest concentrations of young adults occur in Spring Hill and Teele Square, with high frequencies also occurring in the neighborhoods along the Cambridge border.

The 25-34 age group, which represented 28% of the city's total population, accounted for more than 40% of the population in three Census Block Groups in Spring Hill, and one Block Group east of Teele Square. As illustrated in Map I-9a, additional concentrations of young adults can be observed along the Cambridge border, where residents aged 25-34 represent 30%-40% of the total population for eight Block Groups. These neighborhoods offer access to the MBTA Red Line transit stations at Davis and Porter Squares, facilitating commutes to job centers and educational institutions in downtown Boston and Cambridge. Additionally, graduate students and young professionals affiliated with Harvard, Tufts and Lesley may be attracted to these neighborhoods because of their proximity to the universities.

Map I-9a: Population Aged 25-34 (2000)

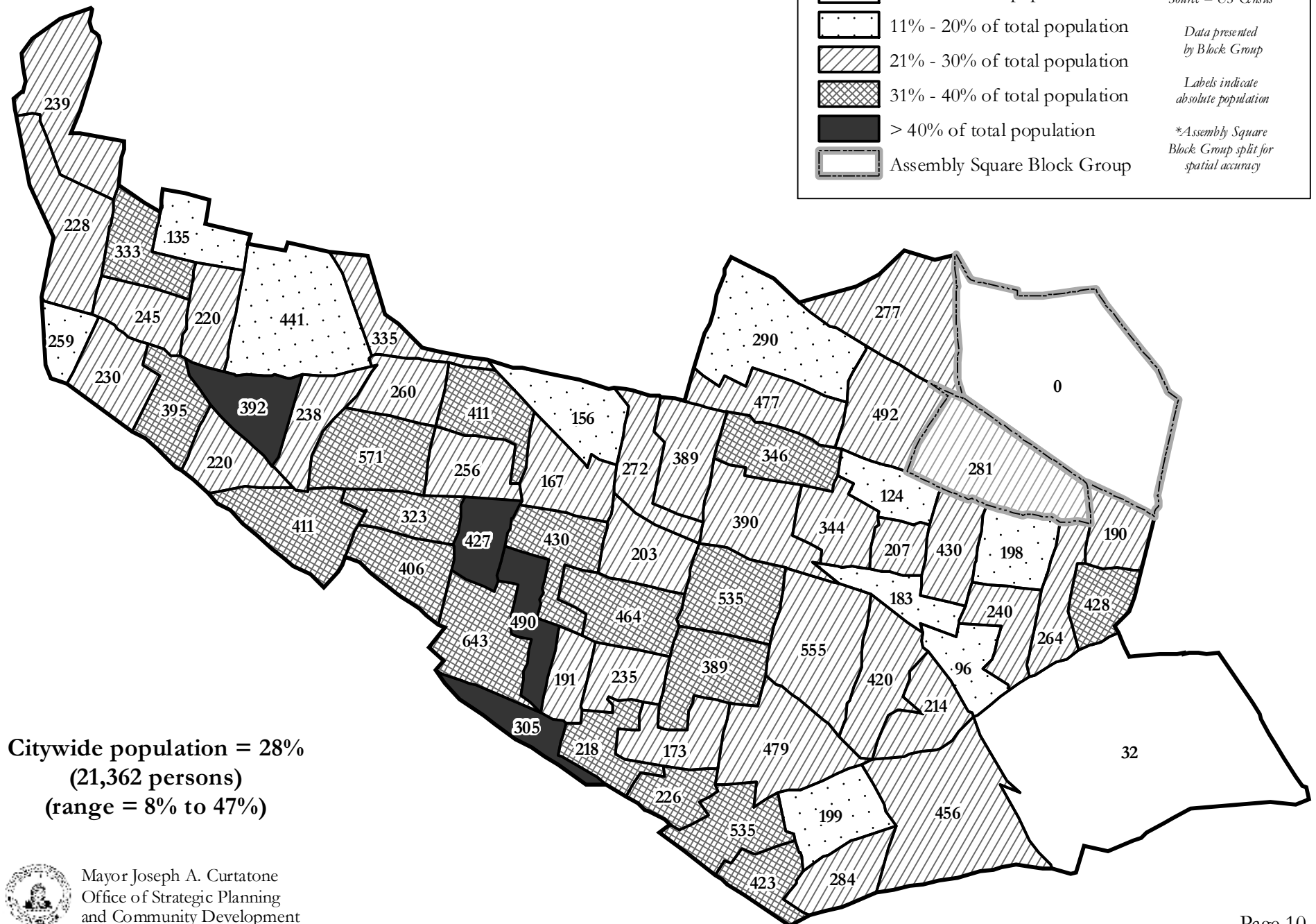


Source = US Census

*Data presented
by Block Group*

*Labels indicate
absolute population*

**Assembly Square
Block Group split for
spatial accuracy*



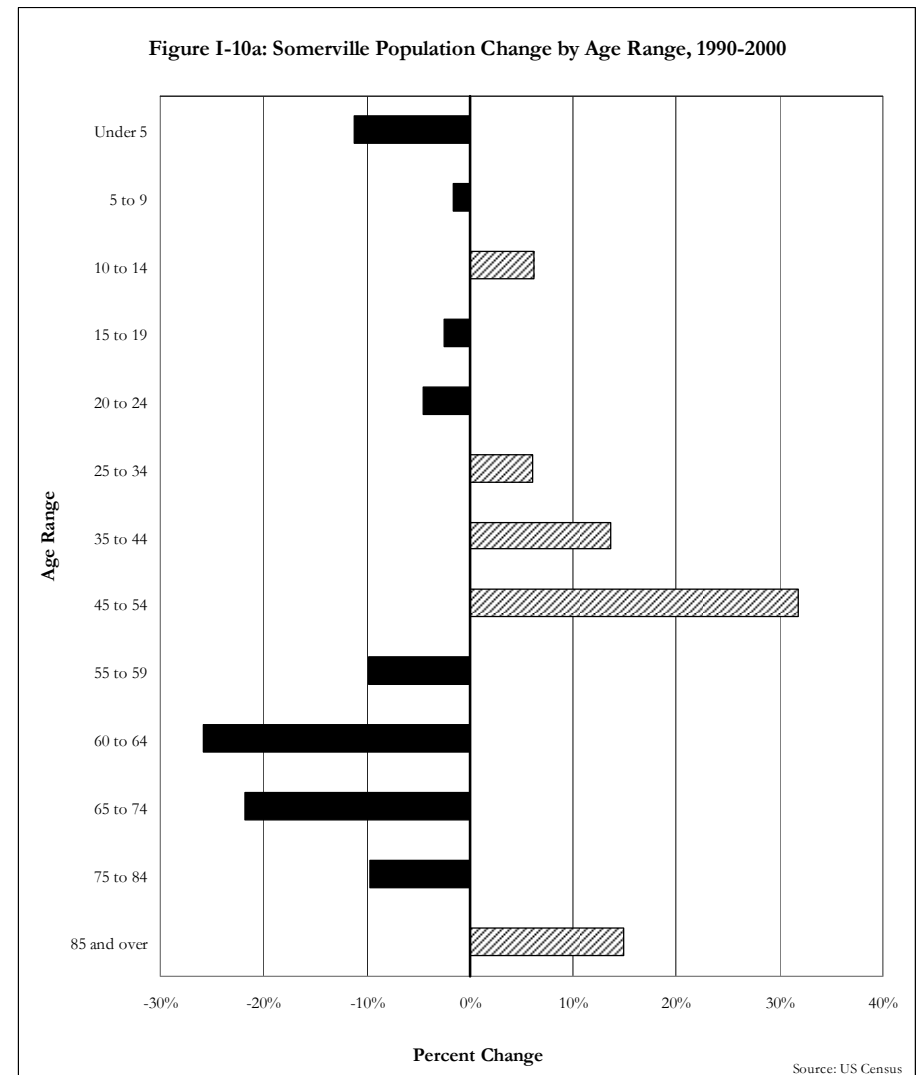
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10. Older adults represent a smaller percentage of Somerville's population than they did in 1990, while middle-aged adults have increased as a percentage of the population.

Between 1990 and 2000, young adult and middle-age groups tended to increase as a percentage of the total city population, while youth and senior populations tended to decrease as a percentage of the total. The greatest increase for that period was in residents aged 45-54 (+32%, or +1,800 persons). Significant percentage decreases were observed for residents aged 60-64 (-26%, or -764 persons) and for persons aged 65-74 (-22%, or -1,135 persons).

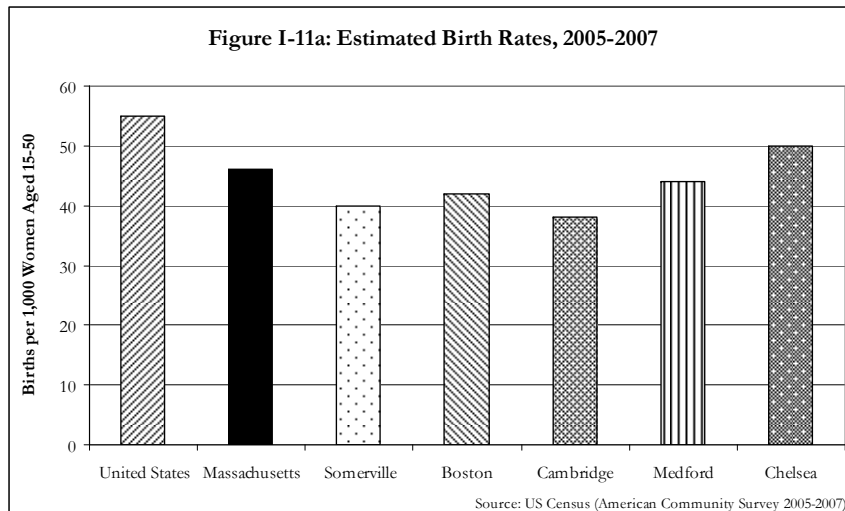
As illustrated in Figure I-10a, the only age group among seniors to increase as a percentage of citywide population was residents aged 85 and older (+15%, or +143 persons). The only age group among youth to increase as a percentage of citywide population was residents aged 10-14 (+6%, or +180 persons). For a more detailed discussion of trends in Somerville's youth population, see Section III of this report. Trends in the senior population are discussed in Section IV.

The increase in residents aged 45-54 between 1990 and 2000 may indicate that Somerville can expect a significant increase in its population aged 55-64 in the coming years. Unless middle-aged adults have been moving away from Somerville in large numbers, the city is likely to experience a surge in the number of residents approaching retirement age. This demographic shift would likely increase the demand for elder services in Somerville, which in turn would represent an opportunity for the city to target job growth in specific industries including health care, arts and entertainment, and transportation.



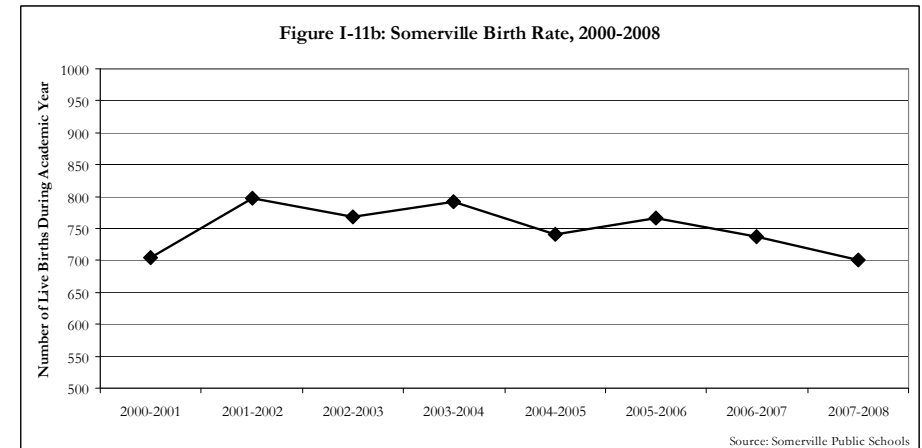
11. Birth rates in Somerville tend to be lower than national and state averages, and also are lower than most neighboring communities' rates.

In recent years, Somerville's fertility rate appears to be relatively low. The Census Bureau's American Community Survey estimated that for the 2005-2007 period, there were only 40 births per 1,000 Somerville women of child-bearing age. As illustrated in Figure I-11a, this estimate is low relative to Somerville's neighboring cities, the state average and the national average for the same period. Only Cambridge (38 births/1,000 women aged 15-50) had a lower fertility estimate than Somerville did.

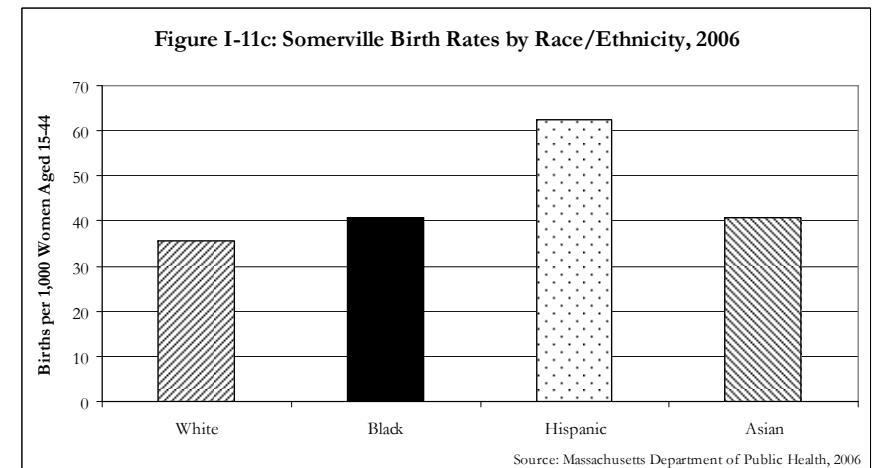


The Somerville Public Schools (SPS) tracks local birth rate data in order to inform its enrollment projections. According to SPS data, Somerville's birth rate has remained fairly constant since 2000. As illustrated in Figure I-11b, a significant increase in the number of live births was recorded from the 2000-01 school year (705 births) to the

2001-02 school year (798 births). Since then, the birth rate has trended slowly downward, reaching 705 births in during the 2007-08 school year.



Birth rate data collected by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health suggests that birth rates vary by race and ethnicity. As illustrated in Figure I-11c, Somerville's Hispanic population had a significantly higher birth rate in 2006 than any other population.



12. The Metropolitan Area Planning Council forecasts that modest population growth (roughly 2,400 new residents) will occur in Somerville between 2000 and 2030.

In 2006, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) published a series of population forecasts for cities and towns in the Boston metropolitan region. MAPC forecasts that Somerville will continue to experience modest population growth through the next several decades, totaling roughly 2,400 new residents by 2030.

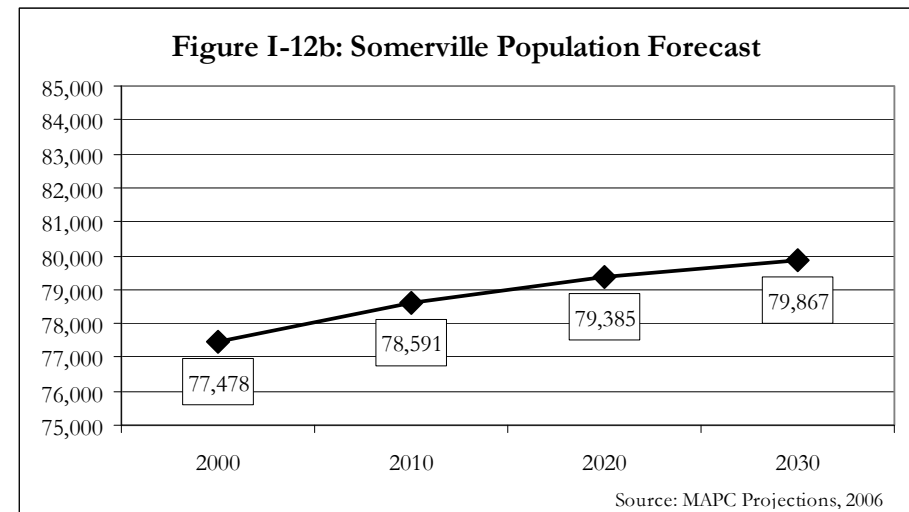
As shown by Figure I-12a, this would represent a 3% increase from Somerville's Census 2000 population count. Forecasted growth during that period is similarly modest for Medford (3%) and Boston (5%). By comparison, Chelsea's population is predicted to grow by nearly 11% and Cambridge is forecasted to increase 14% by 2030.

The MAPC methodology is heavily reliant on two major assumptions: projected changes in average household size, and projected new construction. Following publication of the forecasts, the City of Somerville submitted a request for revised MAPC estimates, based on internal 2007 calculations of completed residential developments and projects under construction. For example, the city estimated an increase of 5,500 residential units between 2000 and 2010, compared to the MAPC estimate of 3,147 for the same period.

In addition, major redevelopment projects such as MaxPak (200 permitted new units), Assembly Square (2,100 planned new residential units) and Union Square (1,000 expected new units) will add to the city's housing stock. As a result, it is likely that Somerville's actual population growth through 2030 will exceed the published MAPC forecasts.

Figure I-12a: Population Forecast, 2000-2030		
	Percent Change	Absolute Change
MAPC Inner Core	+6.0%	+97,670
Somerville	+3.0%	+2,389
Boston	+5.4%	+32,048
Cambridge	+14.3%	+14,572
Medford	+3.3%	+1,863
Chelsea	+10.7%	+3,750

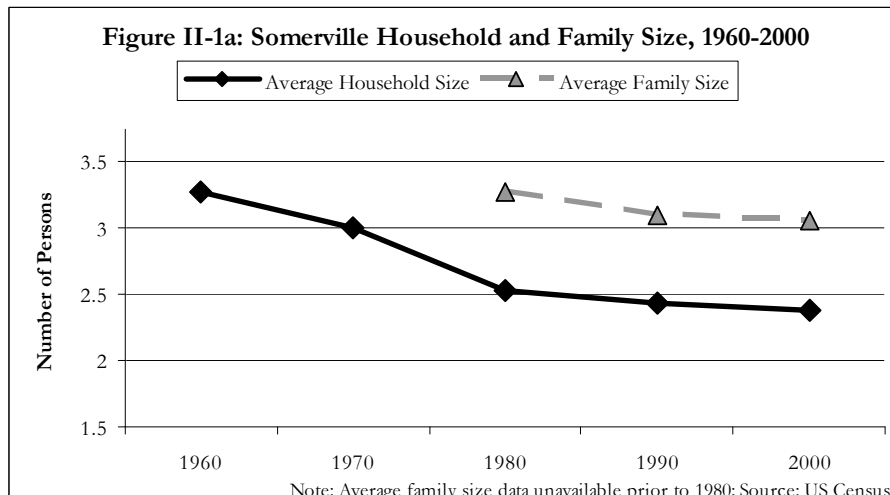
Source: MAPC Projections, 2006



HOUSEHOLDS AND FAMILIES

1. Household and family size have consistently declined in Somerville during the last forty years. The decreases that occurred between 1980 and 1990 were more pronounced than the decreases between 1990 and 2000.

The US Census defines a household as all people living in a housing unit. This definition captures many diverse household types: single householders, families, and unrelated roommates living in apartments are all counted as households. A family household, on the other hand, is defined as two or more people living in a household who are related by birth, marriage or adoption. As shown by Figure II-1a, average household size and average family size in Somerville have been steadily decreasing in recent decades, reaching 2.38 persons per household in 2000. This trend is in keeping with the rest of the United States, as families have fewer children, divorce becomes more common, and individuals remain single until later in life.



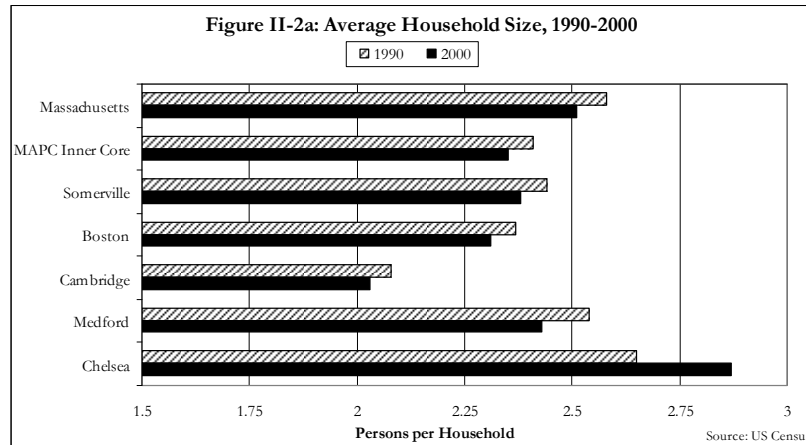
The trend of decreasing household and family sizes has serious implications for supply and demand regarding the city's housing stock. If an increasing number of housing units are occupied by a decreasing number of residents, housing options for families and other larger households will be reduced. Housing prices could conceivably increase if increasing numbers of smaller households compete for the same housing stock.

Shrinking household and family sizes will impact other elements of community life. Smaller households and fewer families can influence school enrollment, since the number of school-age children may continue to decline during the next decade. Neighborhood retailers and service providers can be negatively impacted if fewer potential customers live in proximity to shops and offices. Transit infrastructure may not be used to its fullest potential, if a decreasing number of residents live in transit-rich areas.

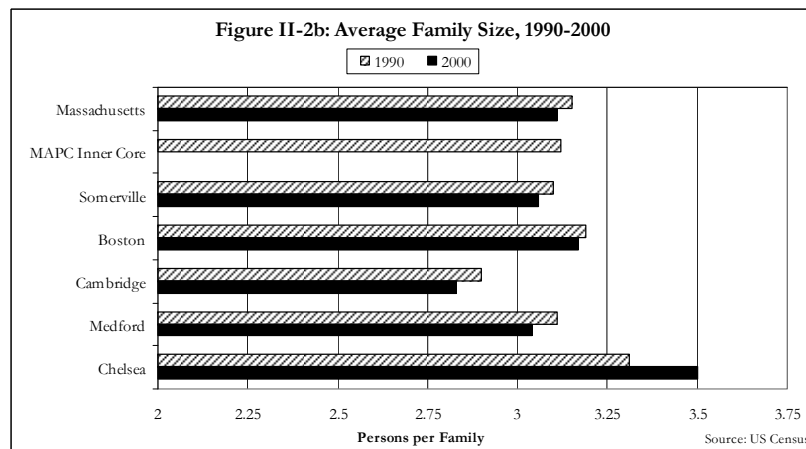
2. The changes in household size and family size in Somerville mirrored regional and state trends during the last ten years.

From 1990-2000, Somerville's average household size decreased by 2.5%. This change is less significant than the previous decade's decrease (Somerville's average household size had decreased 3.6% from 1980-1990). It is also less significant than the changes from 1960-1970 and 1980-1990.

Somerville's change from 1990-2000 is roughly the same as changes observed at the regional and state levels (Figure II-2a). Somerville's rate of change was also comparable to changes for its neighbors Boston and Cambridge. Medford's decrease in average household size was nearly twice as large as Somerville's. Chelsea showed the opposite trend, with average household size increasing significantly between 1990 and 2000.



As illustrated in Figure II-2b, average family sizes also decreased, but the changes were more varied across jurisdictions. For example, Somerville and Massachusetts both experienced decreases of 1.2% in the average family size. Boston showed a smaller percentage decrease during the 1990's, while the decrease for Cambridge and Medford were much larger. Chelsea showed a significant increase (+5%) in average family size.



3. In 2000, West Somerville tended to exhibit smaller household and family sizes than East Somerville did.

Average household sizes vary across the city, with roughly one-third (27 of 67) of Somerville's Census Block Groups showing average household sizes greater than the citywide average. As illustrated in Map II-3a, these Block Groups tend to be clustered in East Somerville, Union Square, and along the Medford border. Three East Somerville Block Groups stand out, with average household sizes that dramatically exceed the citywide average. The three neighborhoods are: west of the McGrath Highway between Broadway and Pearl Street; east of McGrath Highway between Broadway and Flint Street; and, east of McGrath around the intersection of Cross Street and Tufts Street.

A broad arc of Block Groups exhibiting household sizes lower than the citywide average can be observed running from West Somerville through Spring Hill and south to Inman Square. The most dramatic departures from the citywide average tend to correspond with large senior housing complexes: the Block Group containing Cobble Hill apartments has by far the lowest average household size in Somerville (1.24 persons per household).

The exception to this trend appears to be the Block Group south of Davis Square, which has a low average household size (1.79) but does not contain any major senior housing facilities. The 2000 Census data suggest that this is due to a low percentage of family households (29% of all households), along with a low percentage of youth under age 18 (9% of total population).

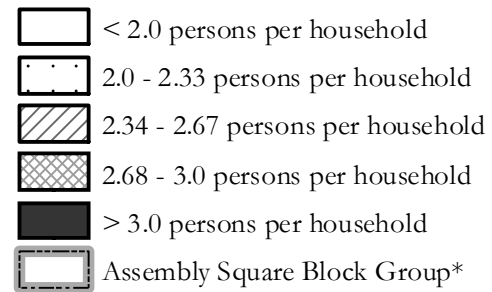
Map II-3a: Average Household Size (2000)

Source = US Census

Data presented
by Block Group

Labels indicate
absolute average
household size

*Assembly Square
Block Group split for
spatial accuracy



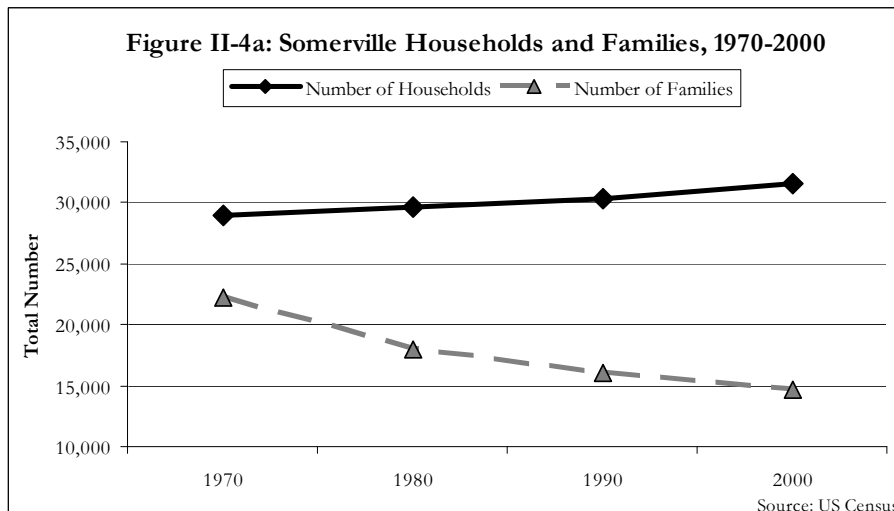
**Citywide Average =
2.38 persons/household
(range = 1.24 to 3.48 persons)**



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4. While the number of households in Somerville increased slowly during the last thirty years, the number of families decreased sharply.

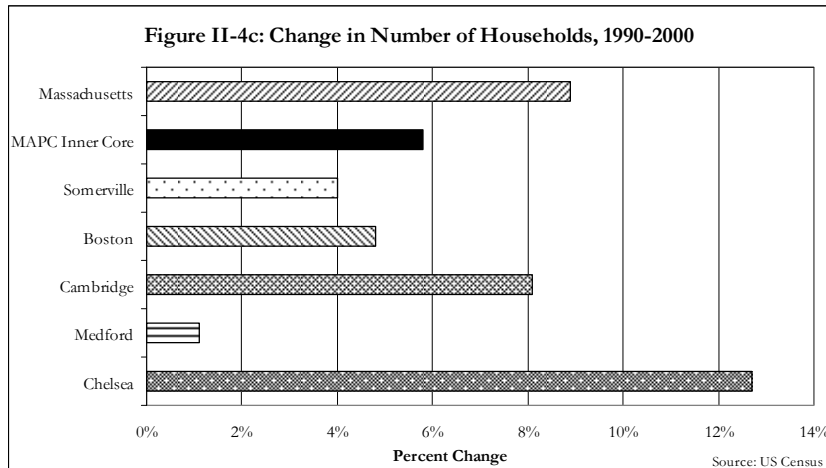
The 2000 Census reported 31,535 total households in Somerville, a gain of 1,216 households (+4.0%) from 1990. This increase is greater than the increase that Somerville experienced between 1980 and 1990 (+2.3%). The number of families in Somerville decreased by 1,361 (-8.5%) during the 1990's, compared to a decrease of -11% (2,000 families) during the 1980's. As illustrated in Figure II-4a, the increasing number of households essentially mirrors the decreasing number of families in Somerville during the last two decades. This trend is not surprising, given that the City's housing stock did not change much during that time. Instead, as a family moved out of a unit, it was often replaced by a non-family household. These data imply that Somerville households are more likely to be comprised of singles and unrelated individuals than in years past.



During the 1990's, Somerville experienced a smaller percentage increase in the number of households compared to the region, the state and most neighboring cities (see Figure II-4b). Of Somerville's neighboring cities, only Medford exhibited a smaller percentage increase in the number of households. It is noteworthy that Cambridge's percentage growth was twice that of Somerville, while Chelsea's growth was three times Somerville's.

Figure II-4b: Number of Households, 1990-2000			
	1990	2000	Percent Change
Massachusetts	2,244,406	2,444,588	+8.9%
MAPC Inner Core	623,767	659,740	+5.8%
Somerville	30,319	31,535	+4.0%
Boston	228,464	239,528	+4.8%
Cambridge	39,405	42,615	+8.1%
Medford	21,829	22,067	+1.1%
Chelsea	10,553	11,888	+12.7%

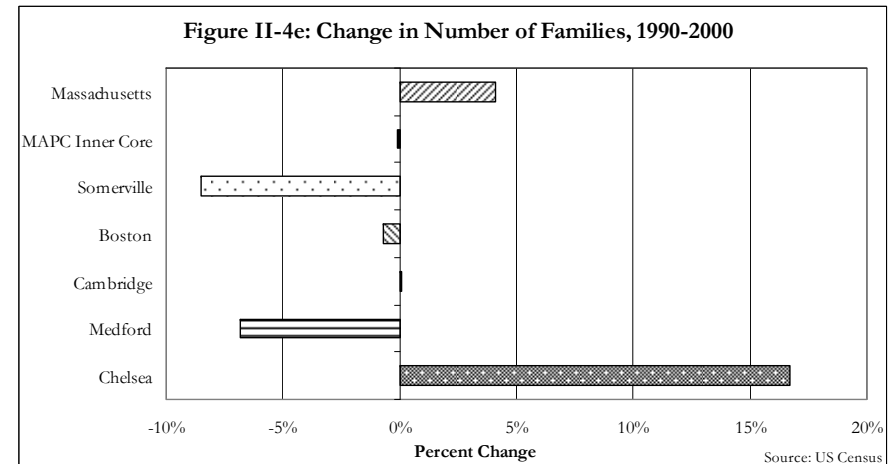
Source: US Census



As shown by Figure II-4d, the number of families in Somerville decreased by 1,361 (-8.5%) during the 1990's. Compared to the region, the state and neighboring cities, Somerville lost more families during the last ten years (Figure II-4e). Of Somerville's neighboring cities, only Medford showed a comparable percentage loss.

Figure II-4d: Number of Families, 1990-2000			
	1990	2000	Percent Change
Massachusetts	1,514,746	1,576,696	+4.1%
MAPC Inner Core	354,590	354,300	-0.1%
Somerville	16,029	14,668	-8.5%
Boston	115,927	115,906	-0.7%
Cambridge	17,575	17,595	+0.1%
Medford	14,477	13,494	-6.8%
Chelsea	6,552	7,614	+16.7%

Source: US Census

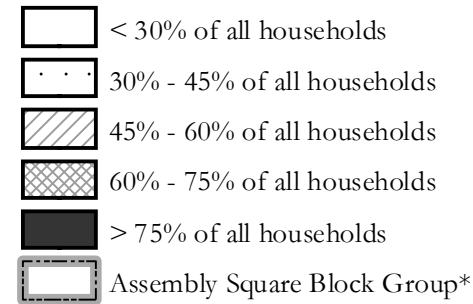


5. Family households are much less common in West Somerville than in other parts of the city.

While families represent roughly 46% of all Somerville households, Census Block Group data indicate a substantial variation around the city. Families appear much less common in West Somerville neighborhoods than in East Somerville. In five Block Groups around Davis Square and Porter Square, family households represent less than 30% of all households. Families represent an obvious minority of households along Somerville's western border with Cambridge. As shown by Map II-5a, none of the twelve Block Groups between Alewife Brook Parkway and Inman Square have more than 45% of all households represented by family households.

Family households are most frequent (>75% of all households) in three East Somerville Block Groups. They are: north of Gilman Square between Walnut Street and the McGrath Highway; north of the intersection of the McGrath and Washington Street along Tufts Street; and east of the McGrath between Broadway and Flint Street.

Map II-5a: Frequency of Family Households (2000)

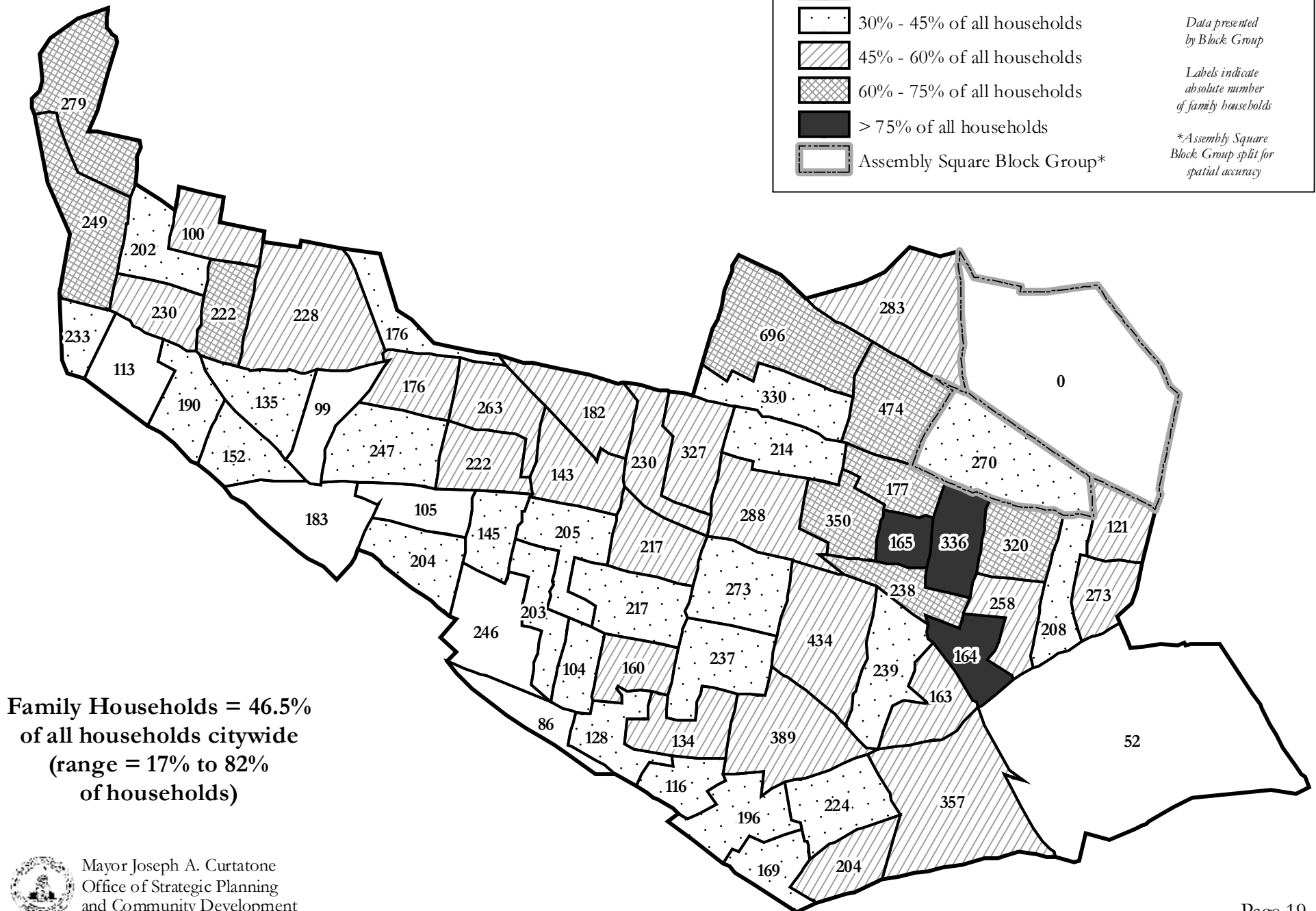


Source = US Census

Data presented
by Block Group

Labels indicate
absolute number
of family households

*Assembly Square
Block Group split for
spatial accuracy



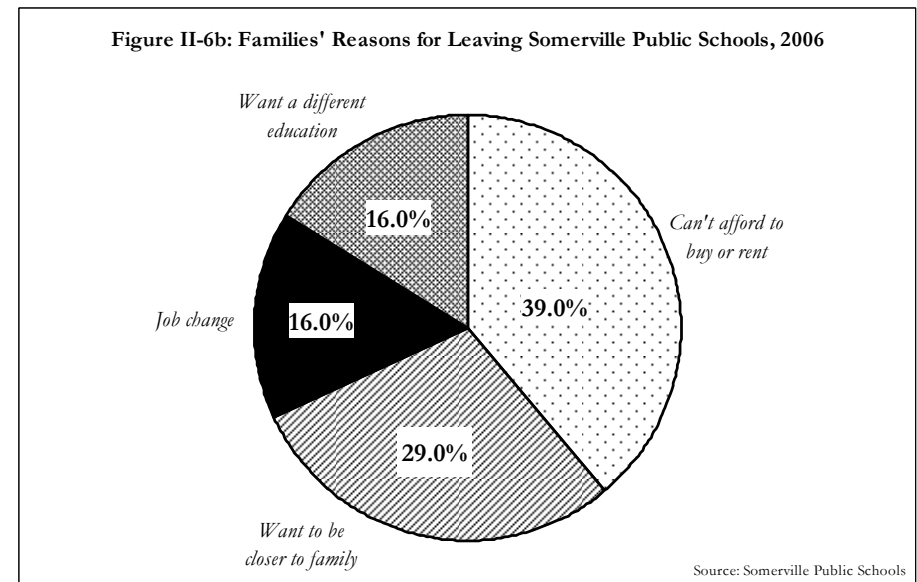
6. Unlike trends observed for the state, region and neighboring cities, Somerville experienced a decline in the number of families with children during the last decade.

According to Census data, the number of Somerville families with children under age 18 decreased by approximately 275 families between 1990 and 2000 (-4.5%). As shown in Figure II-6a, this trend directly contradicted observations for the metropolitan core, the state as a whole, and Somerville's neighboring cities of Boston and Cambridge. The Census does not provide enough detail to judge how much of this decrease is attributable to migration, and how much is due to declining birth rates.

Figure II-6a: Families with Children Under Age 18, 1990-2000			
	1990	2000	Percent Change
Massachusetts	689,104	748,865	+8.7%
MAPC Inner Core	147,329	157,961	+7.2%
Somerville	6,221	5,944	-4.5%
Boston	51,540	54,310	+5.4%
Cambridge	7,461	7,503	+0.6%
Medford	5,265	5,198	-1.3%
Chelsea	3,348	4,327	+29.9%

Source: US Census

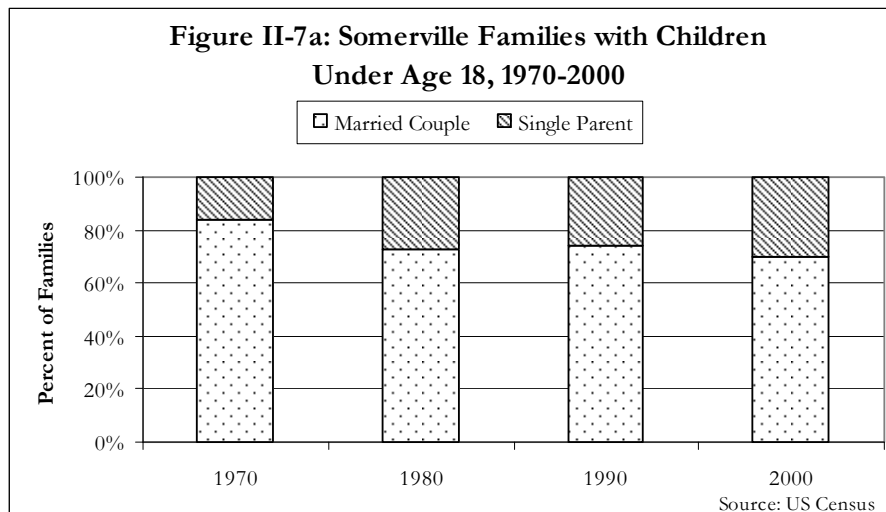
In 2006, the Somerville Public Schools recently began conducting exit interviews with parents withdrawing their children from the public school system. The survey found that the vast majority (90%) of these families were leaving Somerville. Figure II-6b illustrates the breakdown of reasons that these families gave for leaving the city, with housing affordability representing the most common factor in families' decisions to leave.



7. Single-parent families represent an increasing percentage of Somerville families with children.

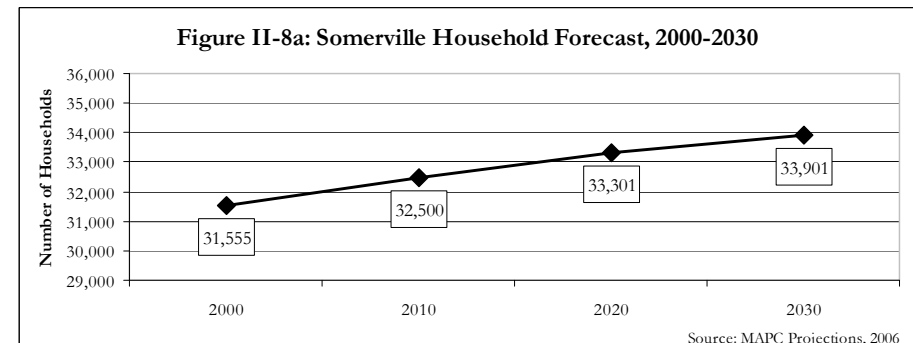
In 2000, married-couple families represented approximately 70% of all Somerville families with children under age 18. Since 1970, single-parent families have increased from 16% to 30% of all Somerville families with children, mirroring trends observed at the national, state and regional levels.

As discussed under Finding #1, shrinking household and family sizes are likely to have negative consequences for housing availability and economic development. It is also important to consider the impact that single-parent families can have on demand for child care and related services. Single parents are more likely to depend on day care, after-school programs and social networks in order to support their role as the family's primary wage-earner. See Section III of this report for findings specific to Somerville's youth population.



8. The MAPC forecasts slow but steady growth in the number of households in Somerville for the next several decades.

In 2006, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) published a series of demographic forecasts for the Boston region. The MAPC projections suggest that the number of households in Somerville will continue to increase during the next two decades. The city will be challenged during that time to ensure that an appropriate range of housing options are available for all household types, sizes and income levels.



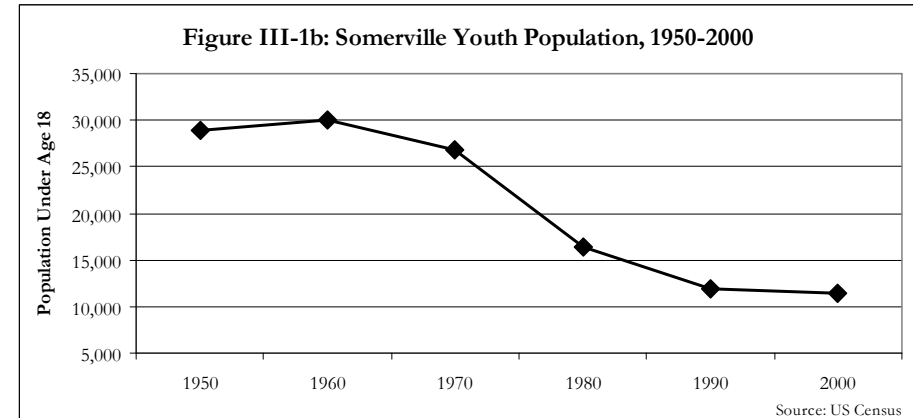
YOUTH POPULATION

1. Somerville's youth population has declined in absolute terms and as a percentage of the total population in every decade since 1960.

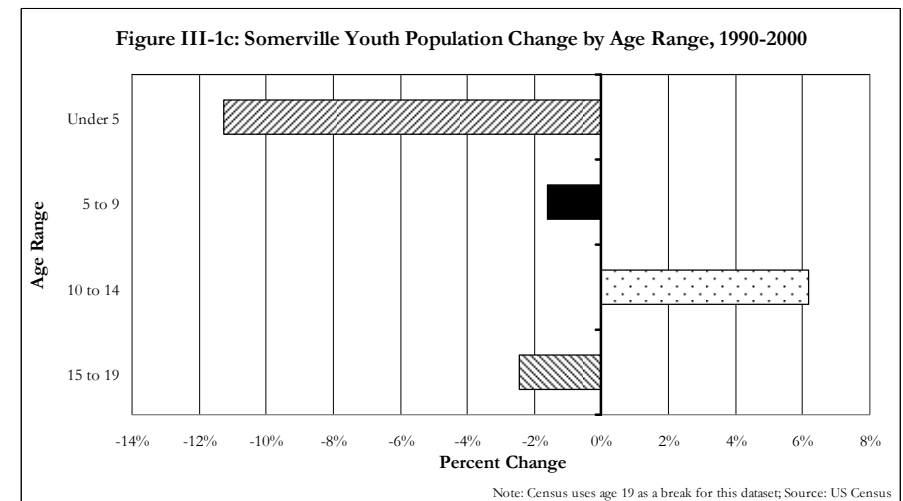
Somerville has experienced a steady decrease in the number of residents under age 18 during the last four decades. As illustrated in Figure III-1a, the city's youth population declined by roughly 18,000 individuals during that time. The sharpest drops in Somerville's youth population were recorded between 1970 and 1990. As shown in Figure III-1b, the rate of decrease leveled off between 1990 and 2000.

Figure III-1a: Somerville Youth Population, 1950-2000		
	Residents Under Age 18	Percent of Total Population
1950	28,975	28.3%
1960	29,920	31.6%
1970	26,743	30.1%
1980	16,619	21.5%
1990	11,867	15.6%
2000	11,495	14.8%

Source: US Census

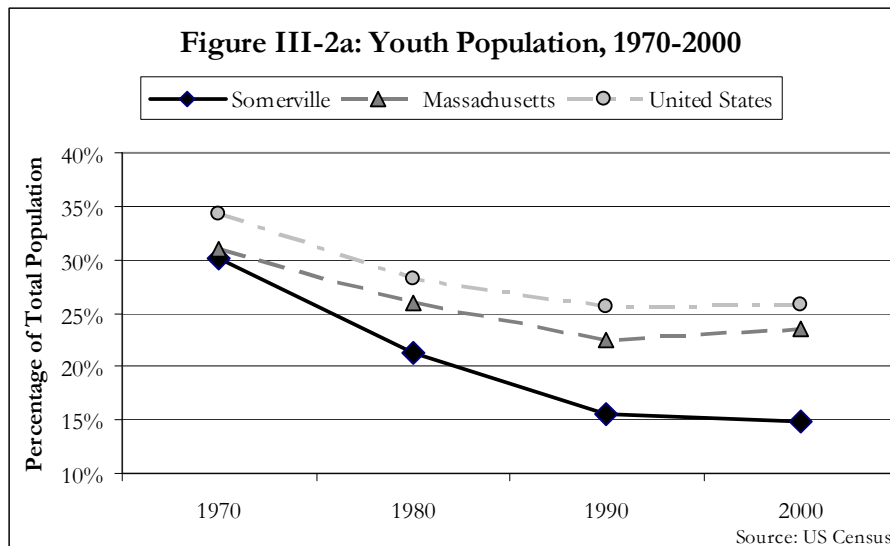


Between 1990 and 2000 the city's youth population decreased by 372 individuals under age 18. The changes within Somerville's youth population for this period were not uniform. As illustrated in Figure III-1c, a sharp drop in children under age 5 was recorded. Youth aged 10-14 actually increased during the 1990's, but not enough to offset decreases in other age ranges.

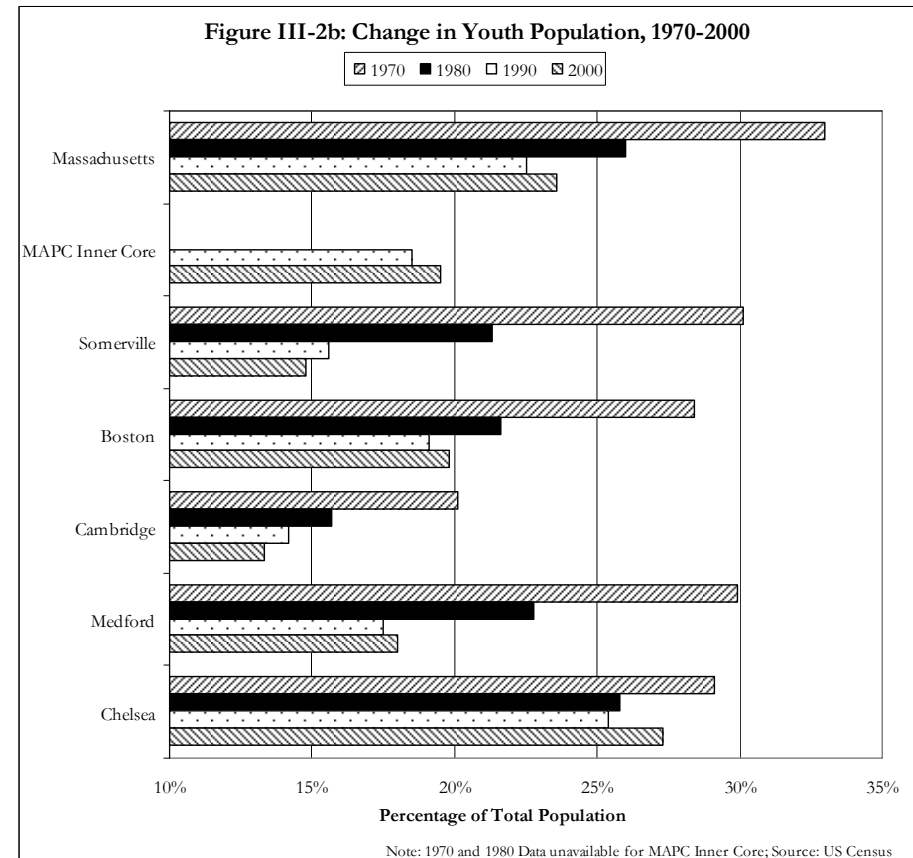


2. Unlike the state and the region, Somerville's youth population did not rebound during the 1990's after declines during the 1970's and 1980's.

Although decreasing youth populations between 1970 and 1990 were a trend at the state and national levels, Somerville's losses were more pronounced. As illustrated in Figure III-2a, Somerville's youth population continued to decrease during the 1990's while Massachusetts and the United States experienced gains for this age group.



As illustrated in Figure III-2b, the sharp drop in youth population between 1970 and 1990 was consistent across local jurisdictions as well. Somerville and Cambridge continued to experience a relative decline in their youth populations during the 1990's. Boston, Medford and Chelsea gained youth as a percentage of the total population during the 1990's.



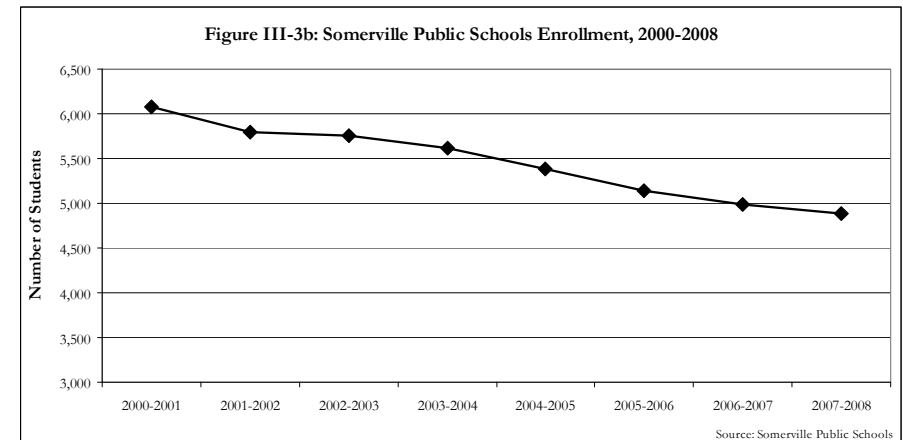
Compared with the region and the state, Somerville had a smaller percentage of youth residents in 2000. Only Cambridge had a smaller percentage of residents under the age of 18. Communities in the metro Boston region with particularly high percentages of youth tend to be located in the western suburbs: Medfield, Hopkinton, Sudbury, Southborough and Sherborn all had youth populations in excess of 30% of their total populations.

3. Public school enrollment data for Somerville indicate that youth populations may have decreased since the 2000 Census.

The Somerville Public Schools record annual enrollment data, which are published by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. As illustrated in Figure III-3a, total enrollment in the district's schools has decreased since the 2000-2001 school year. The district's total enrollment (pre-kindergarten through grade 12) for the 2007-2008 school year was approximately 80% of the 2000-2001 enrollment. It should be noted that these numbers do not include children younger than pre-school age, and they do not include children enrolled in private schools.

Figure III-3a: Somerville Public Schools Enrollment, 2000-2008	
School Year	Number of Students
2000-2001	6,081
2001-2002	5,800
2002-2003	5,757
2003-2004	5,616
2004-2005	5,383
2005-2006	5,136
2006-2007	4,984
2007-2008	4,890

Source: US Census



4. Several Somerville neighborhoods house notable concentrations of residents under age 18. These include East Somerville, Ten Hills and Alewife Brook Parkway.

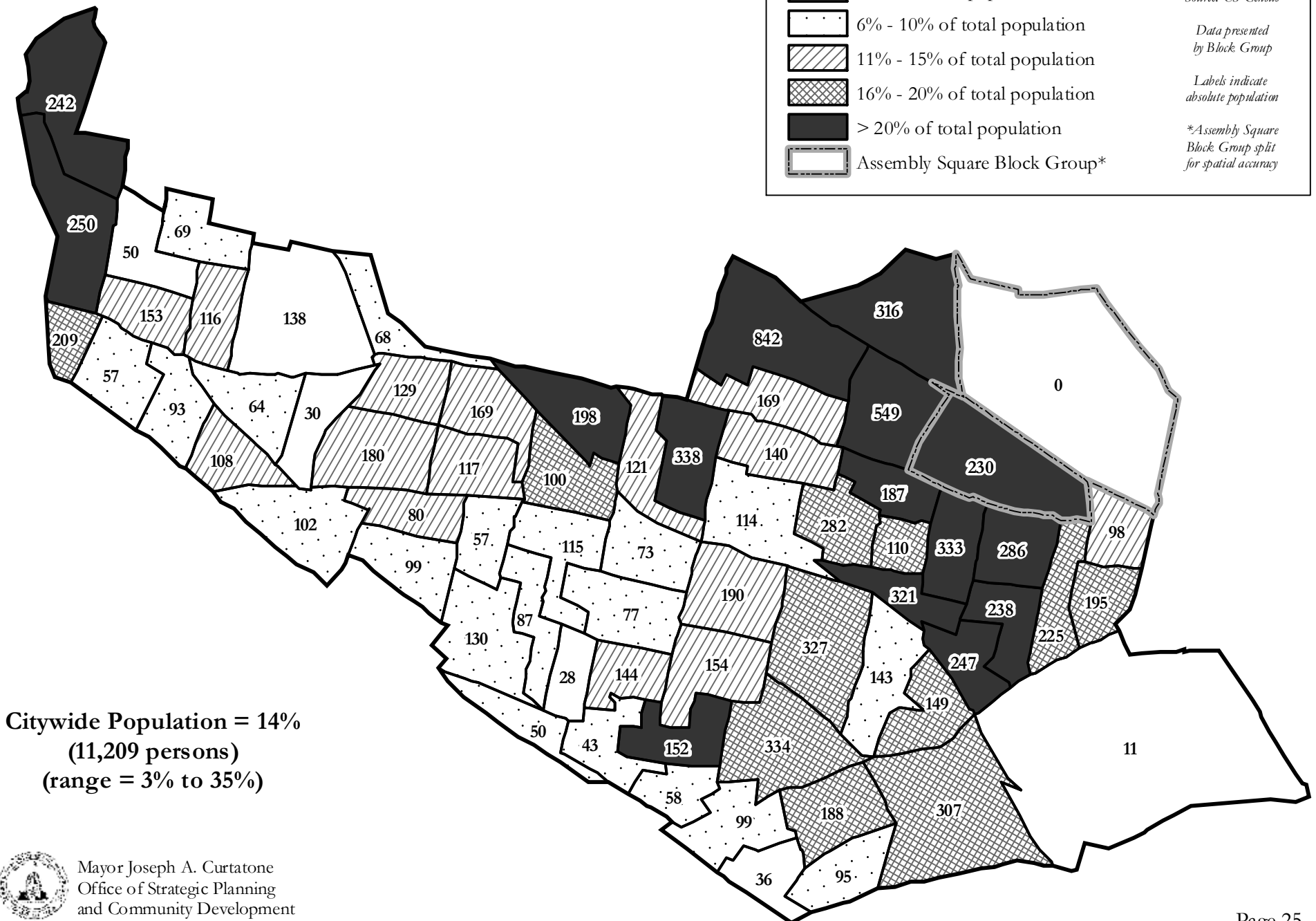
While youth represent roughly 15% of the citywide population, fifteen Census Block Groups feature youth populations exceeding 20% of the total population. As illustrated in Map III-4a, most of these concentrations occur in East Somerville and Ten Hills. The area bordered by the McGrath Highway to the west, Broadway to the north, Franklin Street to the east and Washington Street to the south is a major concentration of residents under age 18. The neighborhoods north of Broadway, from Austin Street in the east to Temple Street in the west are also characterized by large youth populations.

Two Block Groups where youth represented at least 20% of the total population were located in West Somerville along Alewife Brook Parkway, north of Broadway and west of North Street. Union Square is also notable for its concentration of young people: residents under 18 represent between 15% and 20% of the total population in five of its six Block Groups.

Legend for the map showing population percentages of total population for different Assembly Square Block Groups:

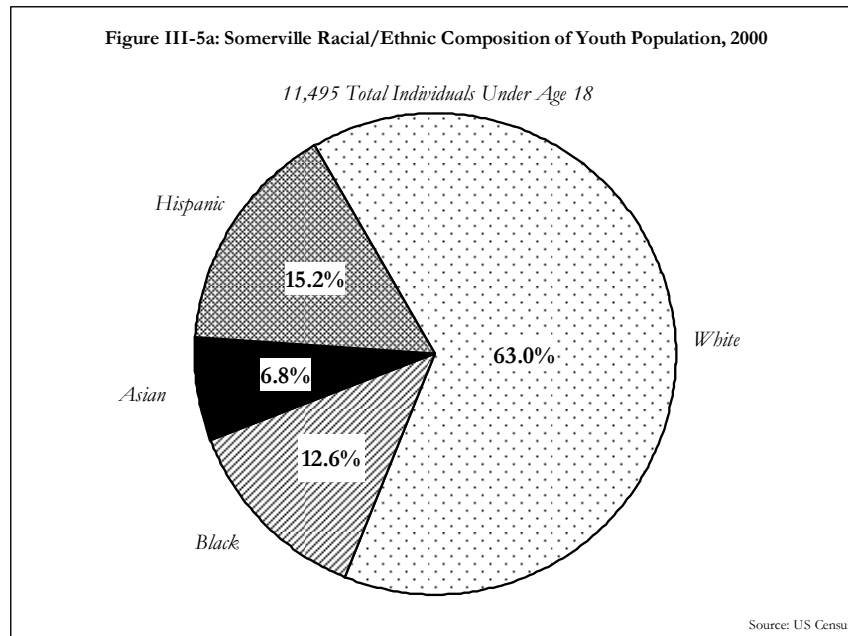
- < 5% of total population
- 6% - 10% of total population
- 11% - 15% of total population
- 16% - 20% of total population
- > 20% of total population
- Assembly Square Block Group*

**Assembly Square
Block Group split
for spatial accuracy*

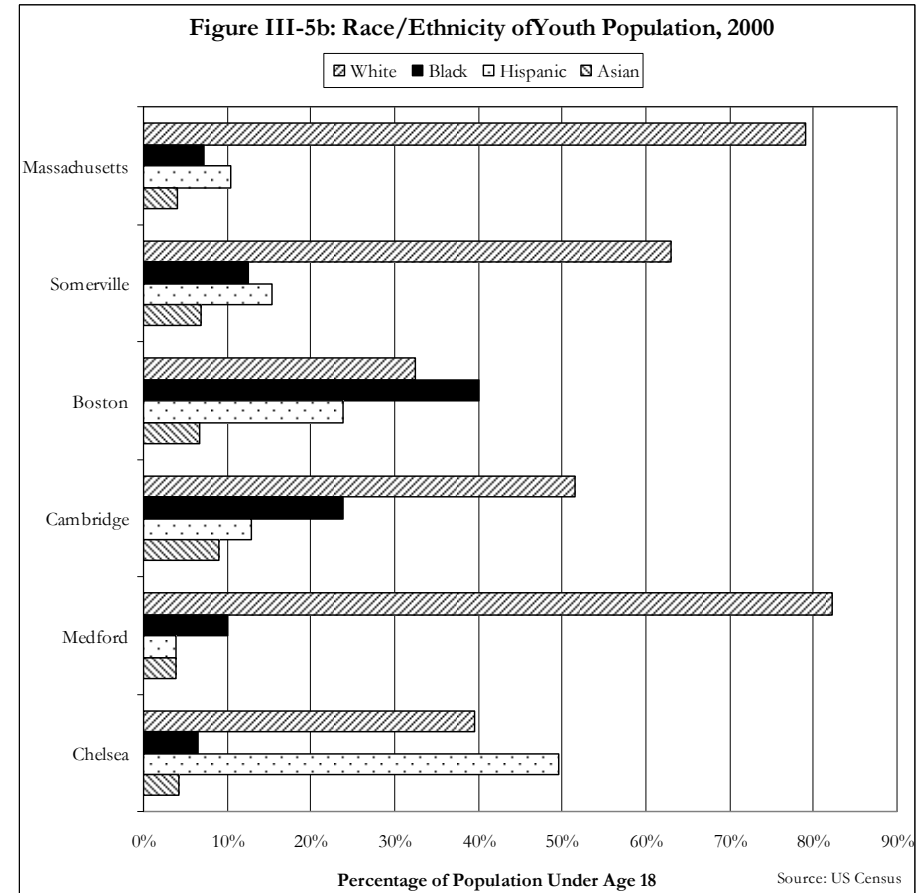


5. In 2000, Somerville's youth population was more racially and ethnically diverse than the city's population as a whole.

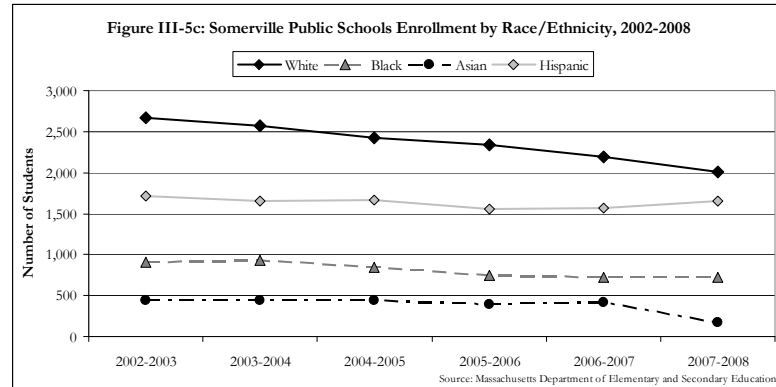
Whereas racial and ethnic minorities represented roughly 23% of the citywide population in 2000, they represented roughly 37% of the population under age 18. As illustrated in Figure III-5a, Hispanic youth represent the largest minority group in the under-18 population (15%), with Black youth representing roughly 12% of the under-18 population.



Somerville's youth population in 2000 was significantly more diverse than the under-18 population of Massachusetts. However, as illustrated in Figure III-5b, Boston, Cambridge and Chelsea all had higher percentages of nonwhite youth than Somerville did.

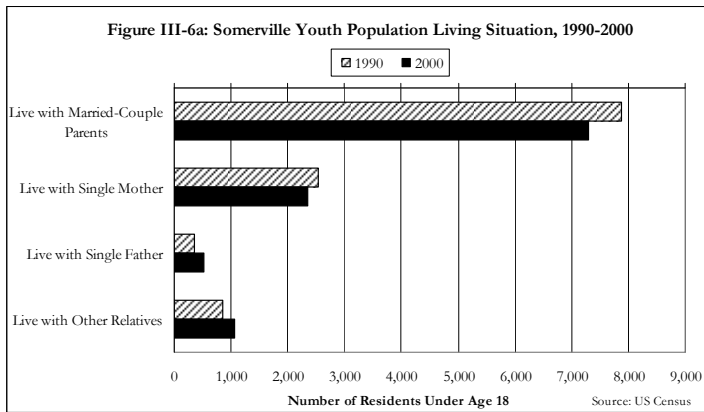


School enrollment data suggest that racial and ethnic diversity in Somerville's youth population has continued to increase since the 2000 Census. As illustrated in Figure III-5c, minority student populations have remained essentially stable, while white students have continued to decline. For a more complete discussion of race and ethnicity, see Section V of this report.



6. The majority of Somerville youth live in married-couple households, and single-parent households are less common in Somerville than in neighboring communities.

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of Somerville's youth live in married-couple households, although that percentage has decreased slightly since 1990, when 67% of youth lived with married couple parents. As illustrated in Figure III-6a, youth living with a single mother have decreased during the last ten years, while the number of youth living with a single father or another relative has increased.



According to the 2000 US Census, two out of three Somerville households with youth under age 18 were married-couple households. While this percentage (67%) is slightly lower than the statewide rate (71%), it is higher than most of Somerville's neighbors in the metro core region (see Figure III-6b). Only Medford (74%) had a higher percentage of households with youth that were married-couple households.

Figure III-6b: Households with Residents Under Age 18, 2000

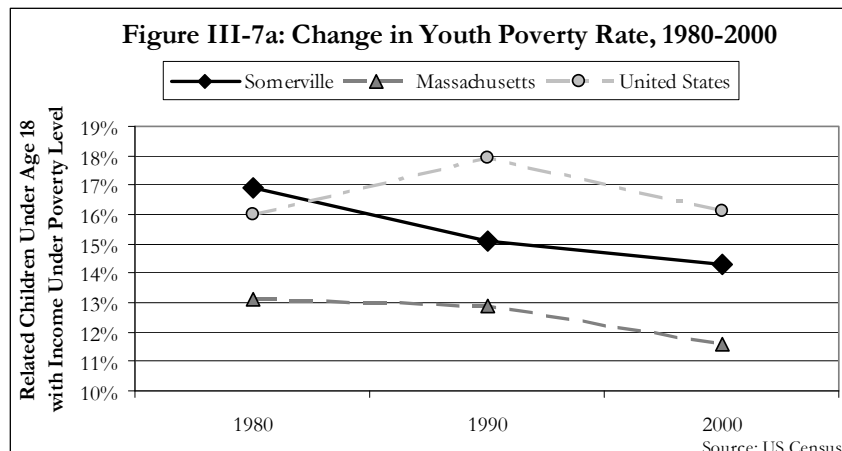
	Households with one or more people under age 18	Percentage that are married-couple households	Percentage that are single-parent households	Percentage that are other households
Massachusetts	804,940	70.9%	28.3%	0.8%
MAPC Inner Core	173,517	60.0%	N/A	N/A
Somerville	6,603	66.6%	32.3%	1.1%
Boston	61,428	49.0%	50.1%	0.9%
Cambridge	8,056	61.9%	37.3%	0.8%
Medford	5,637	73.6%	25.7%	0.8%
Chelsea	4,843	53.2%	46.0%	0.9%

Source: US Census

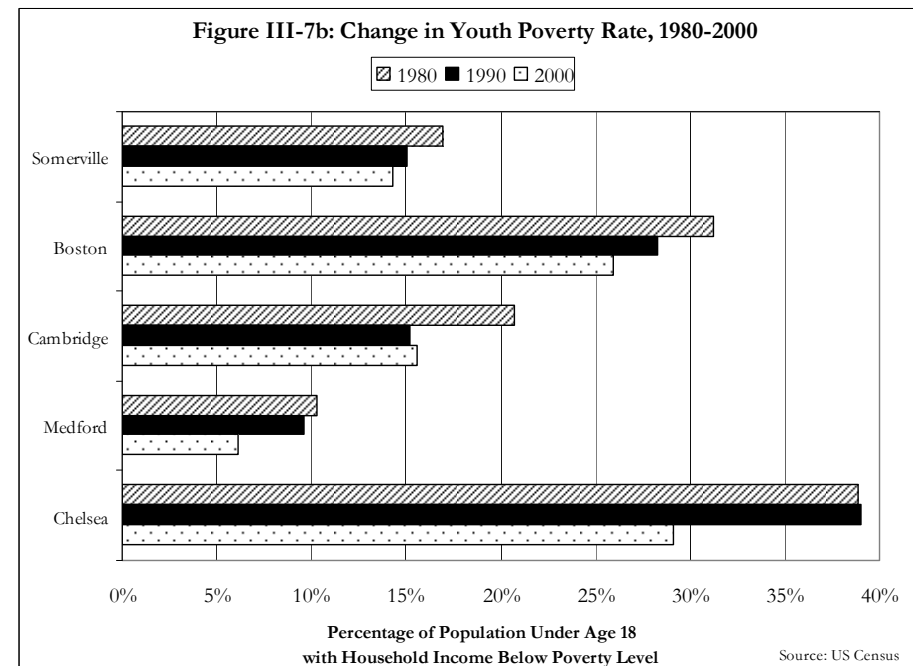
7. Poverty rates for Somerville's youth population declined steadily from 1980 to 2000, but the percentage of youth living in low-income households appears to have remained constant since 2000.

Data from the US Census suggest that the incidence of youth poverty in Somerville has declined since 1980. In 2000, roughly 14% of the city's youth under age 18 lived in households with income below the poverty level. This represents a significant decrease from the 1980 rate of roughly 17%. The Census takes family size and age of householder into account for its poverty calculations. In 2000, the poverty level ranged from \$10,409 (family of two, householder over 65 years old) to \$33,291 (family of nine or more).

As illustrated in Figure III-7a, this trend is roughly consistent with observations at the state level. The national poverty rate for youth increased significantly between 1980 and 1990, but dropped again during the 1990's. The Census does not publish comparable data from 1970 or earlier, preventing an analysis of longer-term trends.

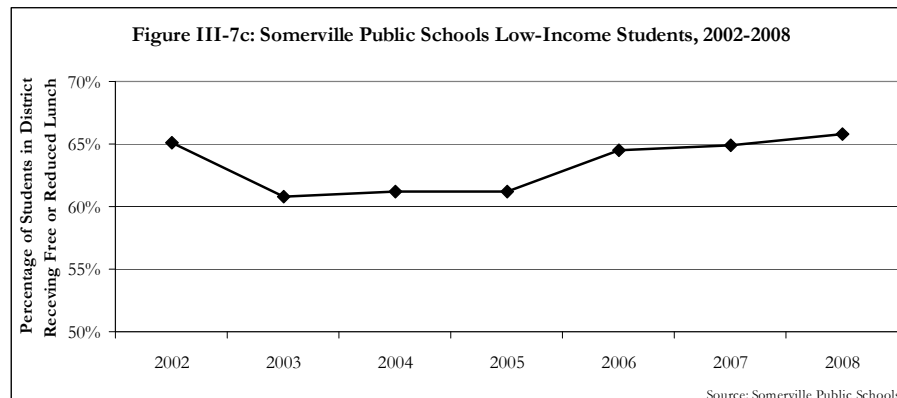


Somerville's neighboring cities have also experienced declines in youth poverty rates since 1980. As illustrated in Figure III-7b, Somerville's decrease was steady, but not as pronounced as its neighbors Boston, Chelsea or Medford. Of this group, only Cambridge experienced an increase in the youth poverty rate between 1990 and 2000. For a more complete discussion of income and poverty, see Section VI of this report.



Data maintained by the Somerville Public Schools suggest that the number of youth living in low-income households has remained essentially constant during the last decade. The school district administers a free/reduced lunch program for income-eligible students. Like the federal poverty calculation, eligibility depends on household size, but the income cutoffs used by the school district are significantly higher than the equivalent federal poverty level.

Under the current (2008-2009) guidelines a two-person household must earn less than \$25,900 to qualify. The threshold for a four-person household is \$39,200, and a six-person household can earn up to \$52,540. As illustrated in Figure III-7c, the percentage of students qualifying for lunch benefits has remained fairly constant (approximately 62%) since 2002.



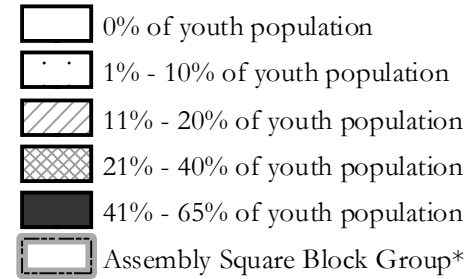
8. In 2000, youth poverty was much more prevalent in East Somerville than in West Somerville. However, the single highest concentration of youth poverty occurred in West Somerville.

The citywide poverty rate for individuals under age 18 was roughly 15% in 2000. Census Block Group data indicates that while only two West Somerville Block Groups had youth poverty rates above the citywide average, eighteen East Somerville Block Groups exceeded the average. As illustrated by Map III-8a, significant concentrations of youth in poverty (20%-40% of all youth) occurred in the Ten Hills neighborhood, and between Gilman Square and Union Square.

The single highest concentration of youth poverty was observed in the Block Group that contains the Clarendon Hill Apartments. Of that Block Group's 250 residents under age 18, 65% (162 individuals) lived in households with income below the poverty level. The city's second-highest concentration occurred in the East Somerville Block Group abutted by Broadway to the north, McGrath Highway to the east and Marshall Street to the west. This Block Group included 89 individuals living in poverty (48% of all residents under age 18).

Two Block Groups in the Ten Hills area (south of Interstate 93 and west of Foss Park) had the city's highest absolute number of youth in poverty. The Block Group including the Mystic View apartment complex had 256 residents under age 18 whose household income was below the poverty limit, while the Block Group between Temple Street and Foss Park had 202 youth in poverty. These data suggest a potential need for youth programming in the area.

**Map III-8a: Percentage of Population Under 18
with Household Income Under the Poverty Level (2000)**

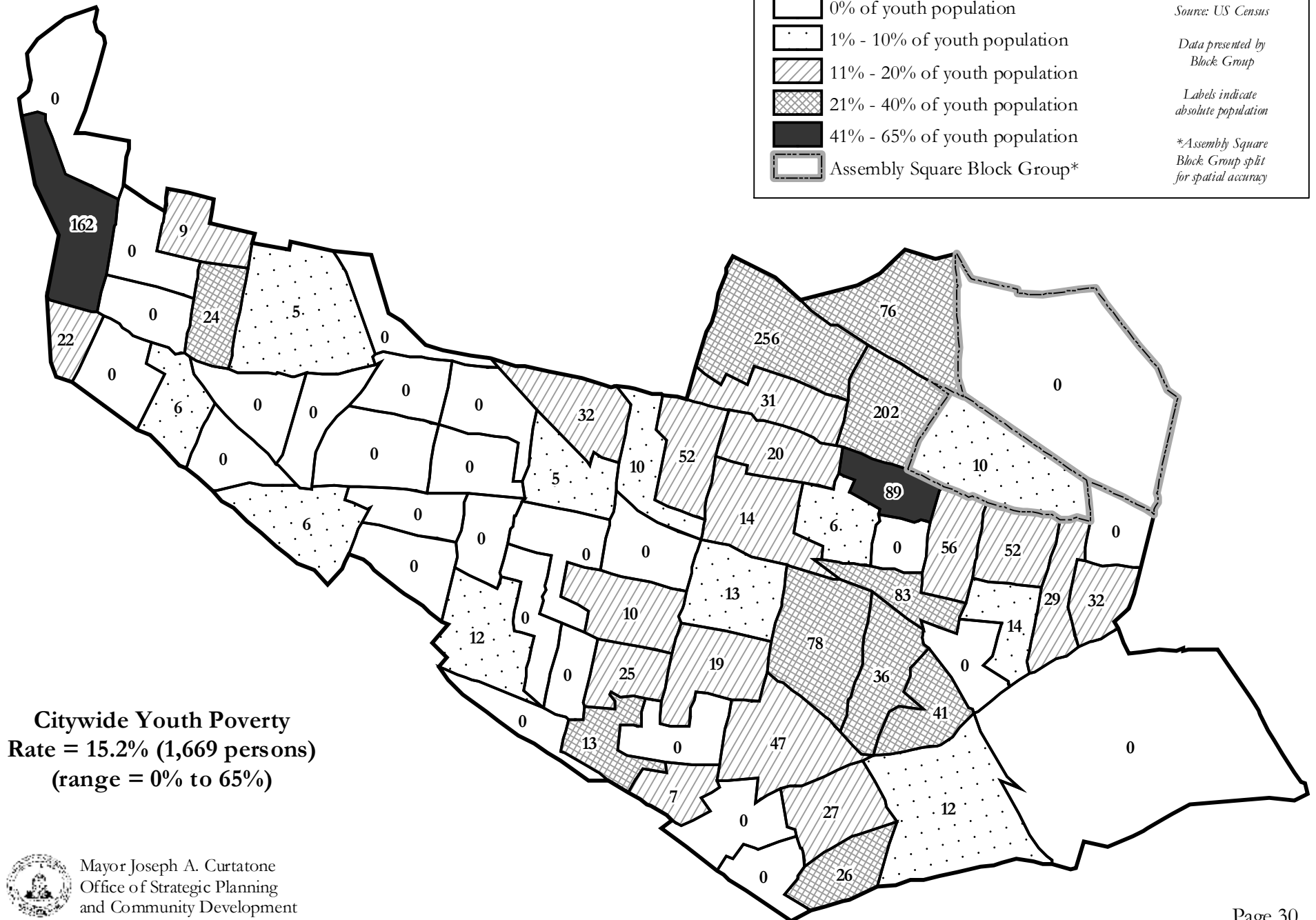


Source: US Census

*Data presented by
Block Group*

*Labels indicate
absolute population*

**Assembly Square
Block Group split
for spatial accuracy*



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9. Early education and school enrollment increased in Somerville from 1990-2000, but the increase was not as significant as increases at the regional and state levels.

According to Census data, Somerville experienced increases in early education enrollment during the 1990's. Nursery school and kindergarten enrollment increased by 552 students (+65%). The gains in Somerville are attributable in part to the work of a public-private partnership between the Somerville Public Schools and local providers of early childhood education know as the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC).

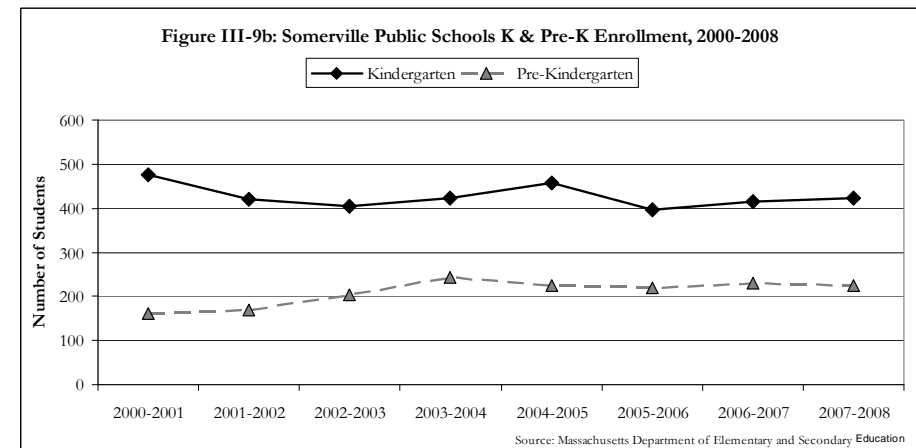
While significant, this increase was noticeably lower than increases at the regional (+92%) and state (+77%) levels. Somerville's percentage increase in early childhood education was comparable to the increase experienced in Cambridge (+70%). Increase for Boston (+138%) and Chelsea (+220%) were far greater than other jurisdictions.

Figure III-9a: Early Education Enrollment, 1990-2000

	Nursery School, Preschool or Kindergarten Enrollment (1990)	Nursery School, Preschool or Kindergarten Enrollment (2000)	Percent Change
Massachusetts	117,903	209,409	+77.6%
MAPC Inner Core	22,426	43,086	+92.1%
Somerville	849	1,401	+65.0%
Boston	6,202	14,767	+138.1%
Cambridge	1,199	2,045	+70.6%
Medford	926	1,372	+48.2%
Chelsea	402	1,286	+219.9%

Source: US Census

Public school enrollment data suggest that Somerville's kindergarten and pre-kindergarten populations have remained essentially constant since the 2000 Census. As illustrated in Figure III-9b, kindergarten enrollment peaked during the 2004-2005 school year, and has stabilized slightly since then. It should be noted that these numbers do not include children enrolled in nursery schools or other privately-run early education programs.



Somerville's increase in elementary and high school enrollment (grades 1-12) during the 1990's was a more modest 276 students (+3.7%). As illustrated in Figure III-9c, this increase was significantly lower than the regional (+16%) and state (+19%) increases. Cambridge was the only jurisdiction to experience a percentage increase (+5%) similar to Somerville's, as Medford (+10%), Boston (+12%) and Chelsea (+39%) all gained a much larger percentage of elementary and high school students between 1990 and 2000.

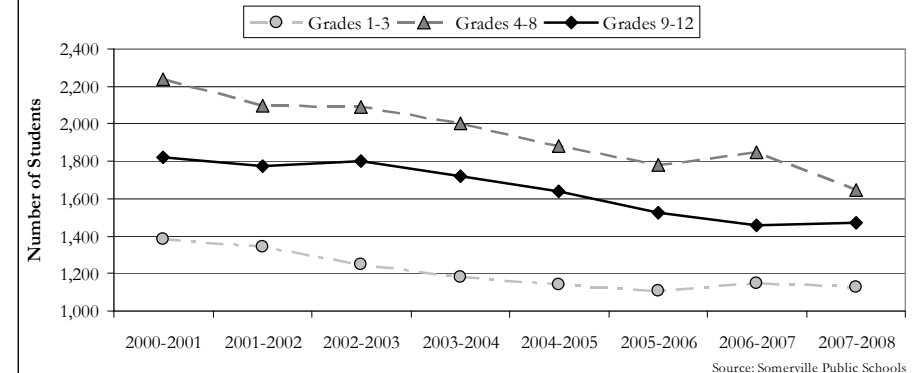
Figure III-9c: Elementary and High School Enrollment, 1990-2000

	Grades 1-12 Enrollment (1990)	Grades 1-12 Enrollment (2000)	Percent Change
Massachusetts	875,668	1,043,299	+19.1%
MAPC Inner Core	191,777	222,626	+16.1%
Somerville	7,462	7,738	+3.7%
Boston	75,475	84,770	+12.3%
Cambridge	8,603	9,065	+5.4%
Medford	6,397	7,071	+10.5%
Chelsea	4,826	6,704	+38.9%

Source: US Census

Since the 2000 Census, public school enrollment in Somerville has decreased significantly. As illustrated in Figure III-9d, enrollment numbers for grades 9-12 in the Somerville Public Schools are down, from roughly 1,800 in the 2000-2001 school year to 1,470 in the 2007-2008. Enrollment in grades 4-8 also decreased significantly during the first half of the decade, although it appears to have stabilized.

**Figure III-9d: Somerville Public Schools
Elementary and High School Enrollment, 2000-2008**

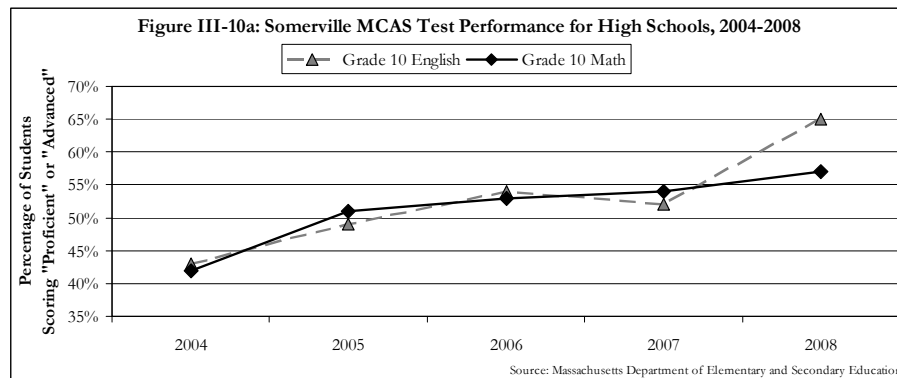


Although Somerville's enrollment indicators show declining student population, it should be noted that the city's schools are known for their high quality. The Somerville Public Schools was awarded the top rating among all urban school districts in Massachusetts for four consecutive years (from 2002-2005).

10. Since the Commonwealth implemented a new educational testing regime in 1998, Somerville has shown noteworthy improvements among high school students.

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) is an educational testing framework adopted by the state following the 1993 Education Reform Law. The MCAS is used to measure progress toward the federal No Child Left Behind educational directives. In addition, the state requires high school graduates to pass the Grade 10 MCAS tests in English and Math. Scores of "Proficient" or "Advanced" are required for issuance of high school diplomas.

The Somerville Public Schools (SPS) report improving results for the Grade 10 tests during the last five testing cycles. As illustrated in Figure 10, the percentage of students achieving “Proficient” or “Advanced” scores rose from roughly 42% in 2004 to roughly 56% in 2008 (math) and roughly 42% to 65% (English). These data indicate that the Somerville Public Schools have made significant progress in preparing their students for the state high school graduation requirements.



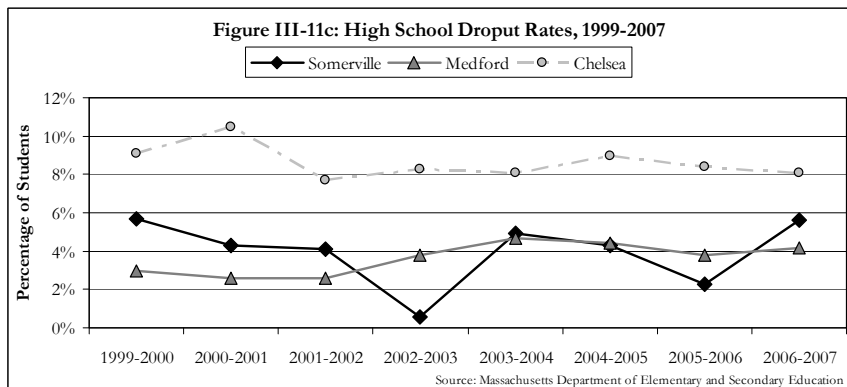
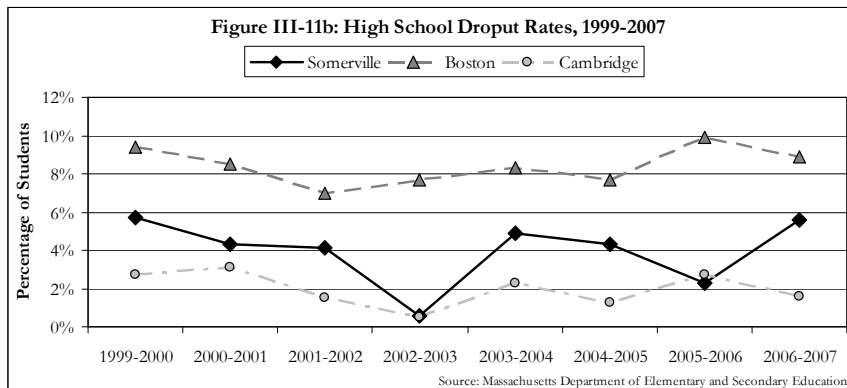
11. High school dropout rates for Somerville students have remained consistently low since 1999.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education uses high school dropout rates as an important indicator of youth health. Of the 1,505 students enrolled in Somerville’s public high schools in 2006-2007, only 84 (5.6%) were reported as dropping out. As illustrated in Figure III-11a, this rate represents a significant jump from the 2005-2006 rate (2.3%). During the last ten years, Somerville’s high school dropout rate reached its peak in 1990-2000 (5.7%), and its low point in 2002-2003 (0.6%).

Figure III-11a: High School Dropout Rates, 2000-2007					
School Year	Somerville	Boston	Cambridge	Medford	Chelsea
2000-2001	4.3%	8.5%	3.1%	2.6%	10.5%
2001-2002	4.1%	7.0%	1.5%	2.6%	7.7%
2002-2003	0.6%	7.7%	0.5%	3.8%	8.3%
2003-2004	4.9%	8.3%	2.3%	4.7%	8.1%
2004-2005	4.3%	7.7%	1.3%	4.4%	9.0%
2005-2006	2.3%	9.9%	2.7%	3.8%	8.4%
2006-2007	5.6%	8.9%	1.6%	4.2%	8.1%
Dropouts 2006-2007	84	1,659	25	65	121
Enrollment 2006-2007	1,505	18,585	1,606	1,563	1,493

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Compared to neighboring jurisdictions, Somerville's high school dropout rate is consistently lower than rates for Boston or Chelsea, but generally higher than the rates for Cambridge or Medford. As illustrated in Figures III-11b and III-11c, Somerville had a lower dropout rate than either Cambridge or Medford during the 2005-2006 school year, although Somerville's dropout rate increased significantly during 2006-2007.



SENIOR POPULATION

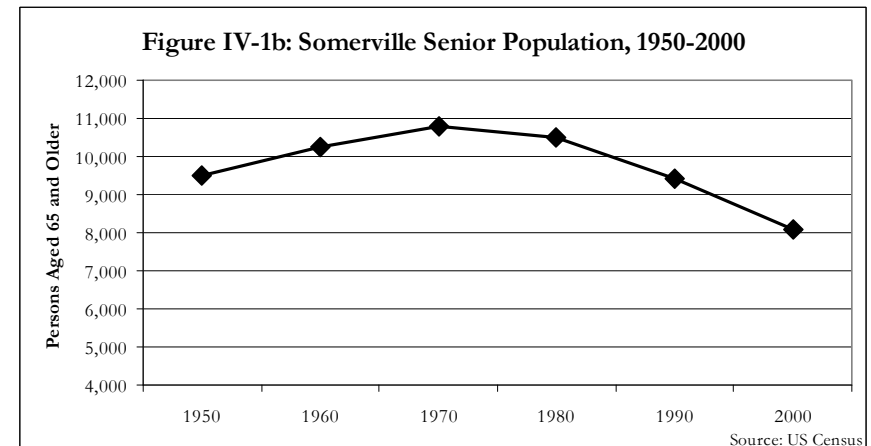
1. The number of Somerville residents aged 65 and older has decreased steadily since 1970. As a percentage of the city's population, seniors have declined since 1980.

Somerville has experienced an absolute decrease in its senior population in every decade since 1970. As shown in Figure IV-1a, the City was home to approximately 11,000 residents aged 65 and older in 1970, whereas the 2000 Census recorded only 8,100 seniors. As illustrated in Figure IV-1b, the sharpest drops were recorded between 1980 and 2000.

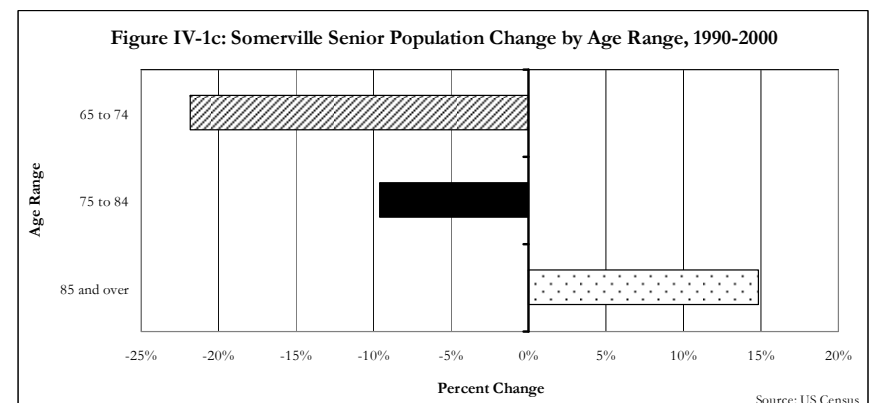
Census data does not provide a clear indication of the reasons for this trend, although anecdotal evidence suggests that southern and southwestern states have become popular retirement destinations for New England seniors.

Figure IV-1a: Somerville Senior Population, 1950-2000		
	Residents Aged 65 and Older	Percent of Total Population
1950	9,483	9.3%
1960	10,242	10.8%
1970	10,788	12.6%
1980	10,495	13.6%
1990	9,404	12.3%
2000	8,099	10.4%

Source: US Census

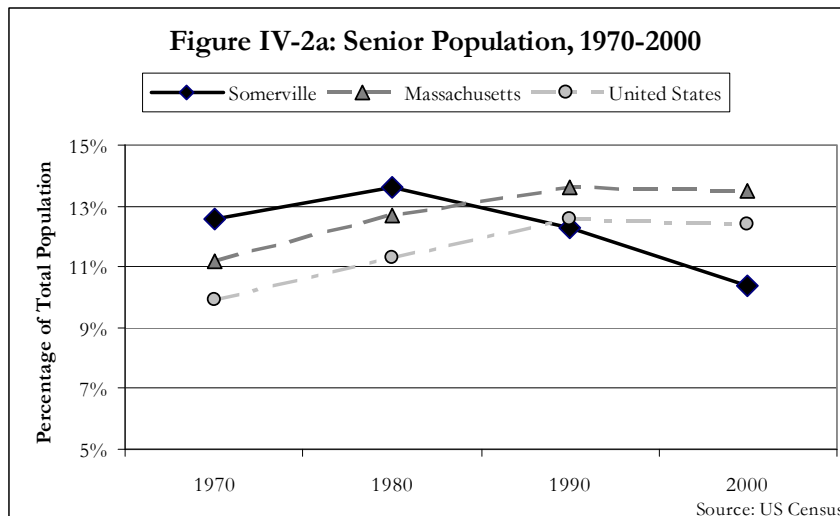


The changes within Somerville's senior population for the period from 1990-2000 were not uniform. As illustrated in Figure IV-1c, a sharp drop in residents aged 65 to 74 was recorded, with a more modest decline among seniors aged 75 to 84. Seniors aged 85 and older actually increased during the 1990's, but not enough to offset decreases in other age ranges. It is possible that many seniors are spending their early years of retirement elsewhere, but returning to Somerville later in life.



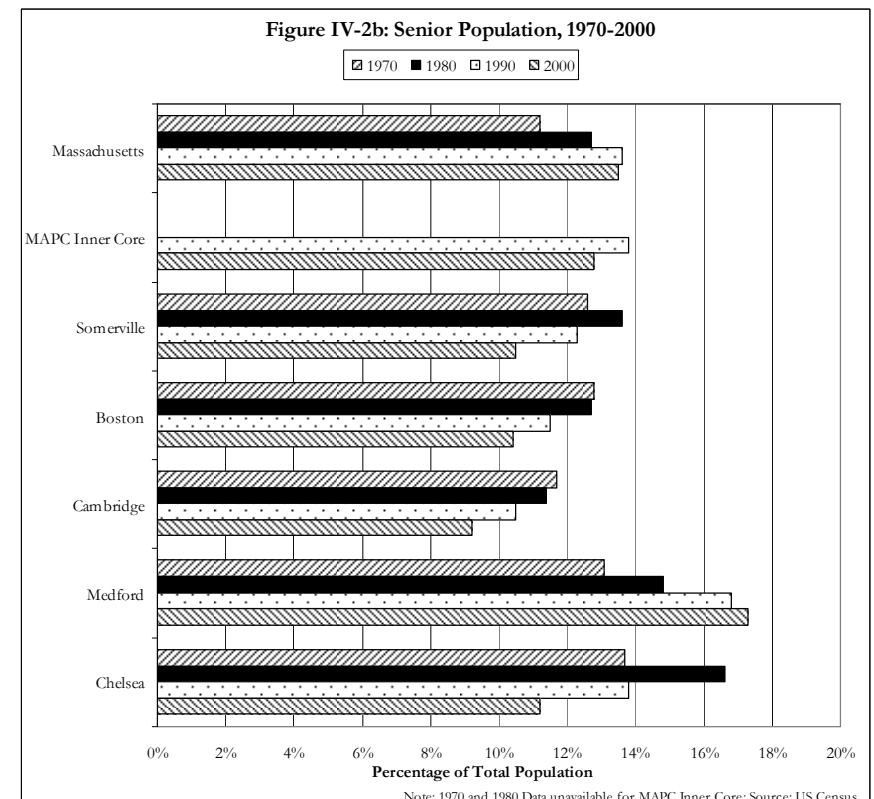
2. Somerville's trend of decreasing senior population is consistent with most neighboring cities and with the metropolitan region, but contrary to trends at the state and national levels.

Seniors in Somerville have decreased as a percentage of the total population since 1980. As illustrated by Figure IV-2a, this trend directly contradicts the state and national trends from 1980-1990, when seniors increased as a percentage of total population. During the 1990's the national and state growth trends leveled off, while Somerville's significant decrease continued.



Unlike the state as a whole, communities in the urban core tended to experience percentage decreases in their senior populations during the past three decades. As illustrated in Figure IV-2b, Somerville's percentage decrease was more significant than the decreases for Boston or Cambridge, but less significant than Chelsea's decrease.

Senior populations in both Somerville and Chelsea reached a peak in 1980, and have steadily declined since. Medford is unique among these cities in that its senior population has increased in every decade since 1970.



3. Several Somerville neighborhoods have concentrations of elderly residents. This is likely due to the presence of large age-restricted apartment complexes, although smaller “naturally occurring clusters” of seniors also play a role.

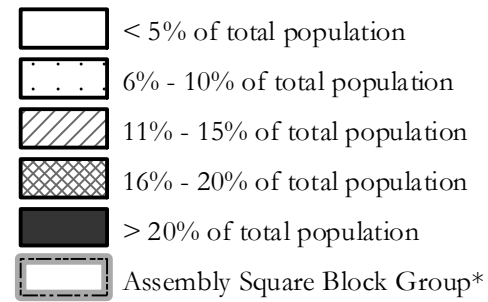
Somerville’s senior population is not evenly distributed across the city, as illustrated in Map IV-3a. Notable concentrations (>20% of total population, or twice the citywide average) occur in four Census Block Groups that contain large senior apartment complexes. These include the Clarendon Hill Towers (West Somerville), Cobble Hill Apartments (Inner Belt/New Washington Street), Faulkner and Brady Towers (Gilman Square) and Highland Commons (Spring Hill).

Seniors represent between 16% and 20% of the total population in two more Block Groups: in East Somerville between Broadway and Washington Street (Bryant Manor), and in Spring Hill (south of Summer Street between Central Street and Lowell Street).

Construction of new residential facilities for the elderly since 2000 is changing these patterns of distribution. The Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) opened a major group residence with 97 units on Lowell Street in 2005. The construction of a second VNA facility at Capen Court in West Somerville will be completed in 2009. This will be immediately adjacent to an expanded Somerville Housing Authority facility for seniors scheduled to open in 2010.

However, age-restricted apartment complexes and nursing homes are not the only concentrations seniors in the city. Somerville has partnered with the University of Massachusetts-Boston to research naturally-occurring clusters of senior citizens. This term refers to concentrations of private residences with senior occupants. Initial findings have shown sizeable clusters around Teele Square and in the Ten Hills neighborhood.

Map IV-3a: Population Aged 65 and Over (2000)

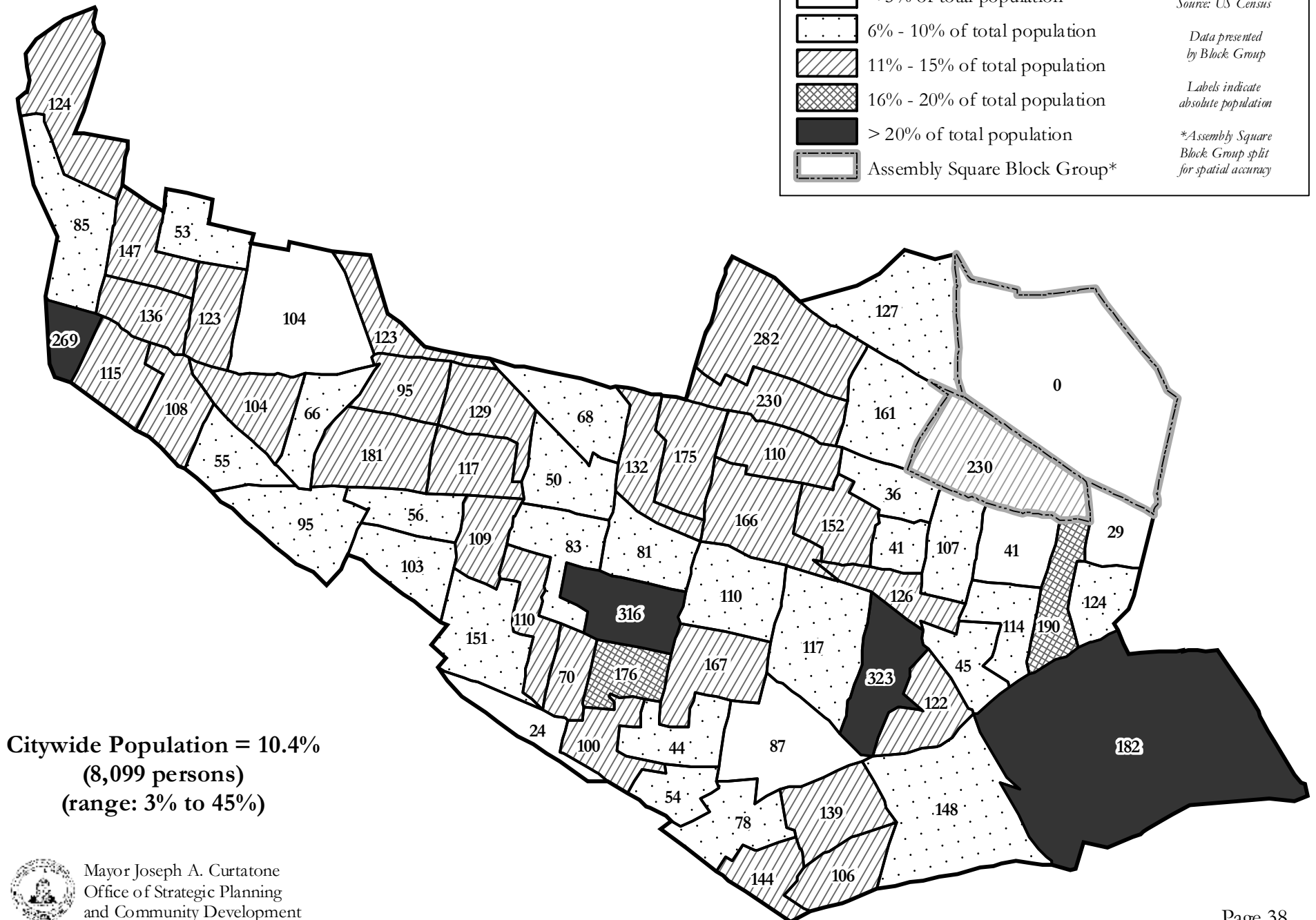


Source: US Census

Data presented
by Block Group

Labels indicate
absolute population

*Assembly Square
Block Group split
for spatial accuracy



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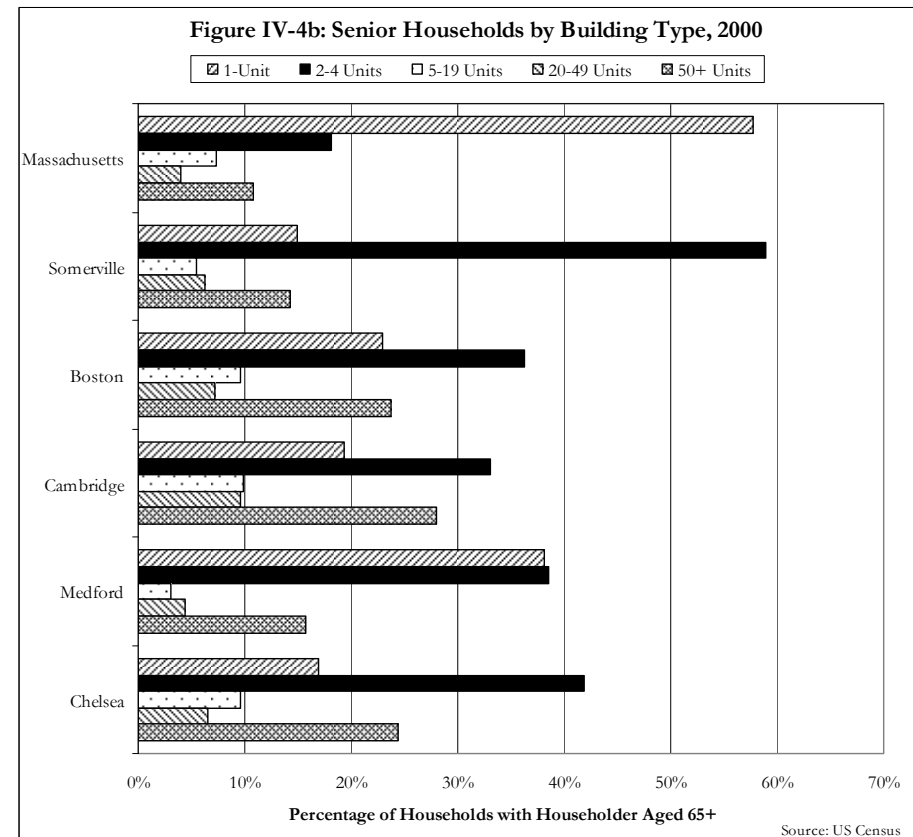
4. Only a small percentage of Somerville seniors lived in group facilities in 2000, and thousands of seniors lived alone.

In 2000, fewer than 5% of Somerville’s senior population (288 persons) reported living in group quarters (nursing homes or assisted-living facilities such as Little Sisters of the Poor, or the Somerville Home). Since age-restricted apartment complexes are not generally counted as group quarters, it should not be assumed that “households” implies “detached housing units”.

Figure IV-4a: Somerville Living Situation of Seniors, 2000		
	Number	Percent
Population Aged 65 and Over	8,099	100%
Population in Households	7,811	96.4%
Population in Group Quarters	288	3.6%

Source: US Census

Somerville’s senior population living in household situations appears to be heavily weighted toward 2-, 3- and 4-family dwellings, as opposed to single-family residences or larger apartment buildings (Figure IV-4a). As illustrated in Figure IV-4b, senior householders in Somerville were more far more likely to inhabit dwellings with 2-4 units than seniors in neighboring cities, or in the state as a whole. Somerville had 5,426 households headed by seniors in 2000, with 3,199 of these (59%) in buildings with 2-4 units.



Seniors living alone can be vulnerable if they lack access to a support network of neighbors, family, or service providers. According to the 2000 Census, nearly 2,800 Somerville seniors lived alone in a household situation. As illustrated in Figure IV-4c, this number represents a sharp decrease from the number of Somerville seniors living alone in 1990. By comparison, Boston, Chelsea, Medford and the MAPC Inner Core experienced decreases during the same period, though their percentage changes were smaller than Somerville’s. For Cambridge and for the state as a whole, the number of seniors living alone increased between 1990 and 2000.

Figure IV-4c: Seniors Living Alone, 1990-2000

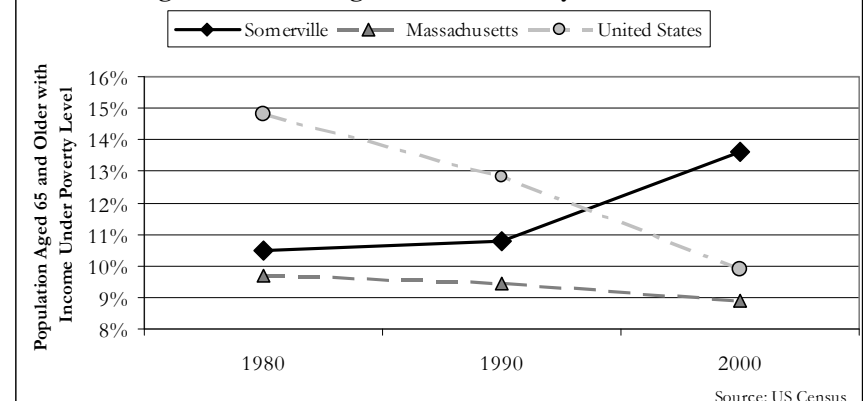
	1990	2000	Percent Change
Massachusetts	243,334	256,137	+5.3%
MAPC Inner Core	71,767	61,229	-3.5%
Somerville	3,289	2,774	-15.7%
Boston	23,297	21,796	-6.4%
Cambridge	3,755	3,909	+4.1%
Medford	2,805	2,743	-2.2%
Chelsea	1,416	1,278	-9.7%

Source: US Census

5. Although the national and state poverty rates among seniors have declined since 1980, Somerville has experienced a contrary increase in the percentage of seniors in poverty.

The absolute number of Somerville seniors in poverty has remained relatively stable over the last three decades (1980=1,061; 1990=978; 2000=1,063). However, the city's declining senior population has resulted in the percentage increase illustrated in Figure IV-5a (1980=10.5%; 1990=10.9%; 2000=13.6%). Nationally, a sharp decrease in the percentage of seniors in poverty has been observed, and Massachusetts has experienced a more modest decrease.

Figure IV-5a: Change in Senior Poverty Rate, 1980-2000



While the number of seniors in poverty remained constant or decreased slightly at the state and regional levels during the last decade, Somerville and the neighboring cities of Boston and Cambridge experienced increases. As illustrated in Figure IV-5b, Somerville's absolute increase was relatively modest compared to neighboring jurisdictions. If one assumes that some out-migration of seniors is occurring, the seniors who are leaving are likely to be wealthier than those who remain. This trend would have implications for Somerville's economy, as senior households with disposable income leave the city.

Figure IV-5b: Seniors Below Poverty Level, 1990-2000

	1990	2000	Percent Change
Massachusetts	72,323	71,435	-1.2%
MAPC Inner Core	22,917	22,796	-0.5%
Somerville	978	1,063	+8.7%
Boston	9,386	10,432	+11.1%
Cambridge	974	1,166	+19.7%
Medford	925	673	-27.2%
Chelsea	419	705	+68.3%

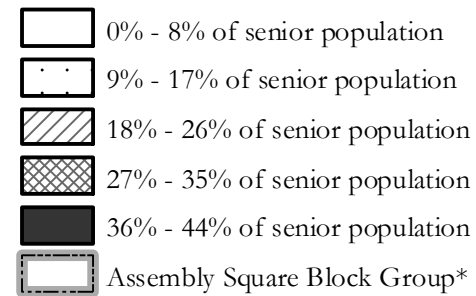
Source: US Census

6. East Somerville contains the city's highest concentrations of seniors below the poverty level.

As illustrated by Map IV-6a, senior populations in several neighborhoods have higher poverty rates than the citywide average (13.6%). According to 2000 Census data, senior poverty rates exceeded 20% in twelve of the city's Block Groups. Eight of these are located in East Somerville, three are located around Beacon Street, and one is located in Spring Hill.

Large age- and income-restricted apartment complexes appear to be part of the explanation for these concentrations: the Block Groups containing Cobble Hill, Gilman Square and Highland Commons all have poverty rates above 20% for their senior populations. The Block Group containing the Somerville Housing Authority's Mystic View Apartments also had an abnormally high frequency of poverty in its senior population.

Map IV-6a: Percentage of Population Aged 65 and Older with Income Below the Poverty Level (2000)

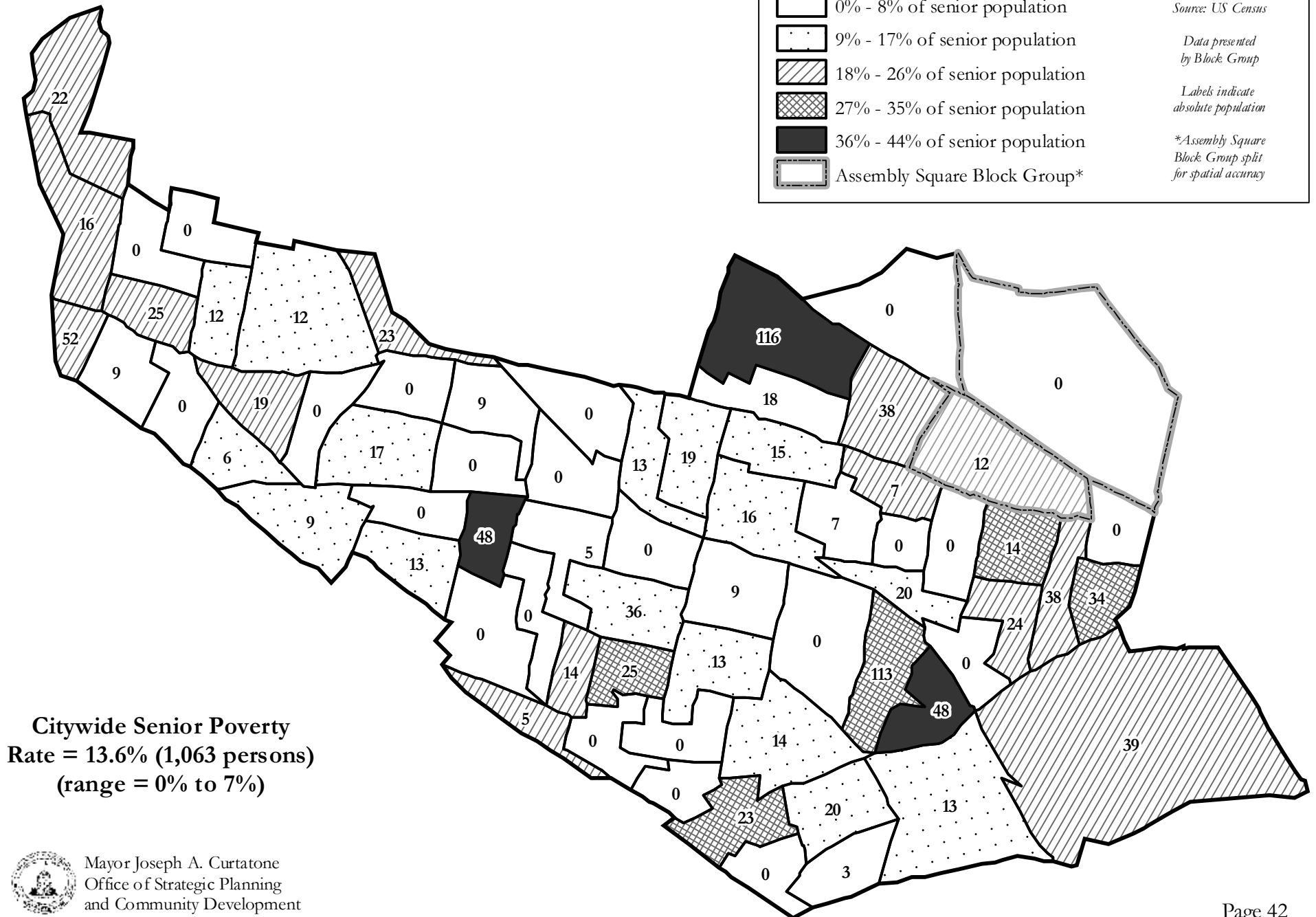


Source: US Census

*Data presented
by Block Group*

*Labels indicate
absolute population*

**Assembly Square
Block Group split
for spatial accuracy*



**Citywide Senior Poverty
Rate = 13.6% (1,063 persons)
(range = 0% to 7%)**



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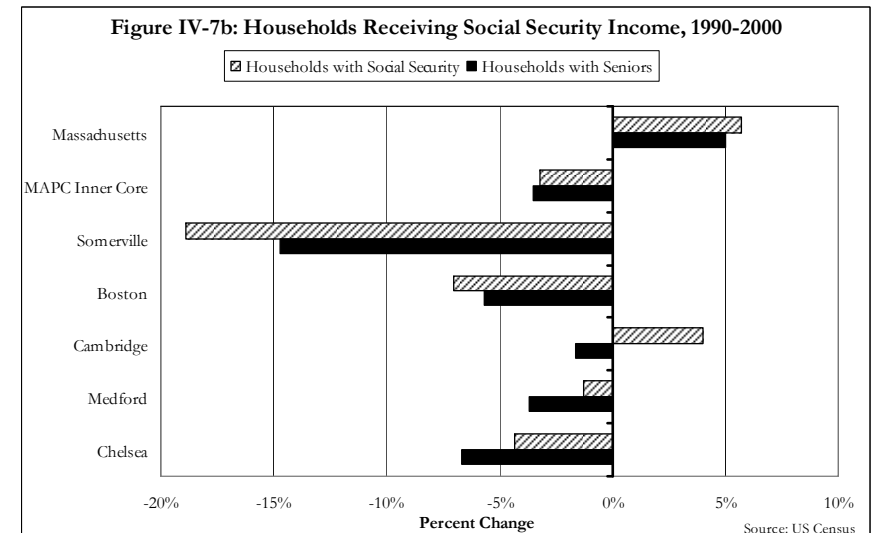
7. Social Security assistance to Somerville's seniors became less frequent between 1990 and 2000, although the mean value of Social Security income increased.

Somerville experienced a sharp drop (-19%) in the number of households receiving Social Security income assistance between 1990 and 2000. This change is not consistent with changes observed at the regional and state levels, as illustrated in Figure IV-7a. While the city of Boston and the MAPC Inner Core region experienced more modest decreases, the city of Cambridge and the state experienced increases in the number of households receiving Social Security.

Figure IV-7a: Households Receiving Social Security, 1990-2000			
	1990	2000	Percent Change
Massachusetts	606,057	640,561	+5.7%
MAPC Inner Core	157,809	152,766	-3.2%
Somerville	7,528	6,106	-18.9%
Boston	48,204	44,831	-7.0%
Cambridge	6,940	7,221	+4.0%
Medford	7,034	6,943	-1.3%
Chelsea	3,012	2,882	-4.3%

Source: US Census

This drop must be viewed in the context of Somerville's decreasing senior population. Figure IV-7b illustrates the change in recipient households alongside the change in households with a resident aged 65 or older. Whereas Somerville had 14% fewer senior households in 2000 compared with 1990, the number of households receiving Social Security decreased 19%. This discrepancy may be partly attributable to the fact that Social Security benefits can begin to be paid at age 62 in some cases, rather than at age 65.



In Somerville, the mean value of inflation-adjusted Social Security income assistance increased roughly 9% during the last decade. Although this increase is significantly greater than Boston's, it is significantly less than the increases for Medford or Chelsea (Figure IV-7c). These differences are likely attributable to complex formulas used to pro-rate Social Security benefits.

Figure IV-7c: Mean Social Security Income, 1990-2000

	1990	2000	Percent Change
Massachusetts	\$10,097	\$11,085	+9.8%
MAPC Inner Core	N/A	N/A	N/A
Somerville	\$9,356	\$10,175	+8.8%
Boston	\$8,976	\$9,243	+3.0%
Cambridge	\$9,369	\$10,386	+10.8%
Medford	\$7,681	\$11,484	+49.5%
Chelsea	\$6,272	\$9,433	+50.4%

Source: US Census

8. In 2000, Somerville's percentage of disabled seniors was higher than the state and national averages.

A higher percentage of seniors in Somerville suffer from a disability than the state or national averages. According to the 2000 Census, nearly 46% of Somerville residents aged 65 and older had a disability, compared with 38% in Massachusetts and 42% in the United States (Figure IV-8a).

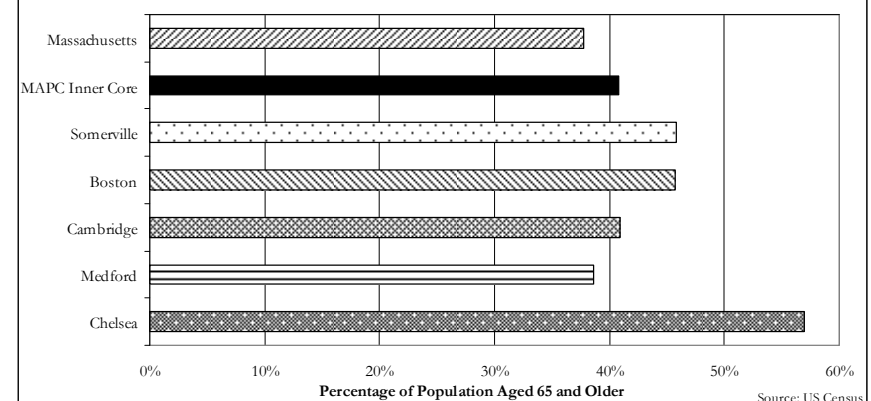
Figure IV-8a: Percentage of Seniors with a Disability, 2000

	Percentage of Residents Aged 65 and Older
United States	41.9%
Massachusetts	37.8%
Somerville	45.8%

Source: US Census

Somerville also has a high frequency of disabled seniors compared with the metropolitan region. As illustrated in Figure IV-8b, nearly 46% of Somerville residents aged 65 or older had a disability, compared with 41% for the metropolitan core. The city of Boston reported the same percentage of disabled seniors as Somerville, while Cambridge and Medford had slightly lower percentage (41% and 39%, respectively). Chelsea had a significantly higher frequency (57%) of disabled seniors than all other jurisdictions in 2000.

Figure IV-8b: Percentage of Seniors with a Disability, 2000

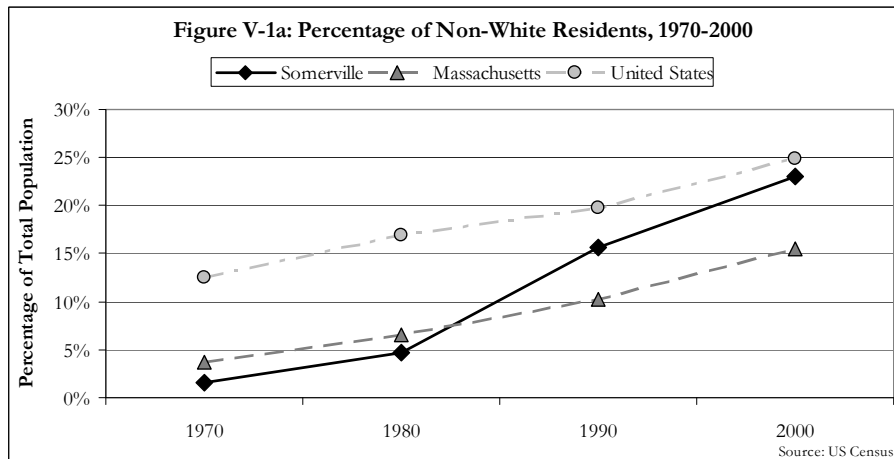


Source: US Census

RACE AND ETHNICITY

1. Racial and ethnic minorities have increased as a percentage of Somerville's total population since 1970. This is consistent with trends observed at the national and state levels.

Census data indicate that in 1970, Somerville was racially and ethnically homogeneous, with White residents representing 98.4% of the total population. By comparison, Massachusetts was 96.3% White and the nation as a whole was 87.5% White at that time. As illustrated in Figure V-1a, racial and ethnic diversity in Somerville increased significantly during the next three decades.



During the 1980's, growth in Somerville's minority population was more pronounced than at the national or state levels. This may be partly attributable to changes in total population: while Somerville's total population was essentially constant between 1980 and 1990, Massachusetts and the United States experienced population growth of +4.7% and +9.8%, respectively.

All three major racial/ethnic minority groups increased in Somerville during the 1980's. Somerville's Hispanic population increased from roughly 2% of the population to roughly 8% of the population, while the Black population increased from 3% to 6% of the total. The city's Asian population increased from less than 1% to nearly 4% of the total.

Between 1990 and 2000, the city's minority population continued to increase as a percentage of the total population (from 11% to 23%). As illustrated in Figure V-1a, Somerville's increase during the 1990's was more consistent with state or national trends during that decade.

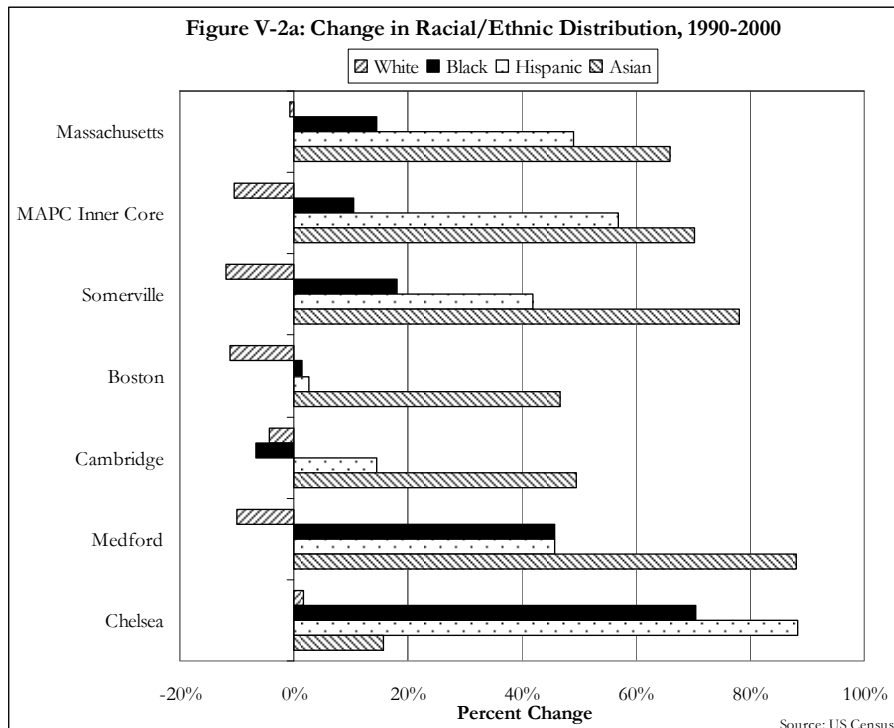
2. Between 1990 and 2000, population change within Somerville's racial and ethnic minority groups closely resembled changes at the regional and state levels. Like its neighboring cities, Somerville experienced growth in its minority populations.

During the last decade, Asian residents represented the largest rate of growth within Somerville's major racial and ethnic populations (+80%, or +2,217 individuals). The city's Hispanic population grew 44% (+2,070 individuals) for the same period, while the Black population grew 18% (+755 individuals).

The 12% decrease observed for Somerville's White population during the 1990's appears to represent a striking loss of 7,989 residents. This drop, however, may be partly attributable to changing Census survey methodology. Unlike the 1990 Census, the 2000 Census allowed respondents to select a racial/ethnic category of "Two or More Races". More than 3,700 Somerville residents selected the "Two or More Races" category in 2000. It is likely that a number of

these respondents were counted as “White” in 1990, thereby mitigating the apparent decrease in Somerville’s White population.

As illustrated in Figure V-2a, these changes closely resembled changes at the regional and state levels. Among neighboring cities, Medford experienced changes that most closely approximated Somerville’s. Boston’s primary change during the 1990’s was its 47% increase in the Asian population. Cambridge also featured significant growth in its Asian population (+50%), and its Hispanic population grew 15% during the same period. Chelsea was unique in its high growth rates among Black (+71%) and Hispanic (+88%) populations.



3. Somerville’s racial composition in 2000 was more diverse than the state as a whole, but is less diverse than the MAPC Inner Core region or the neighboring cities of Boston and Cambridge.

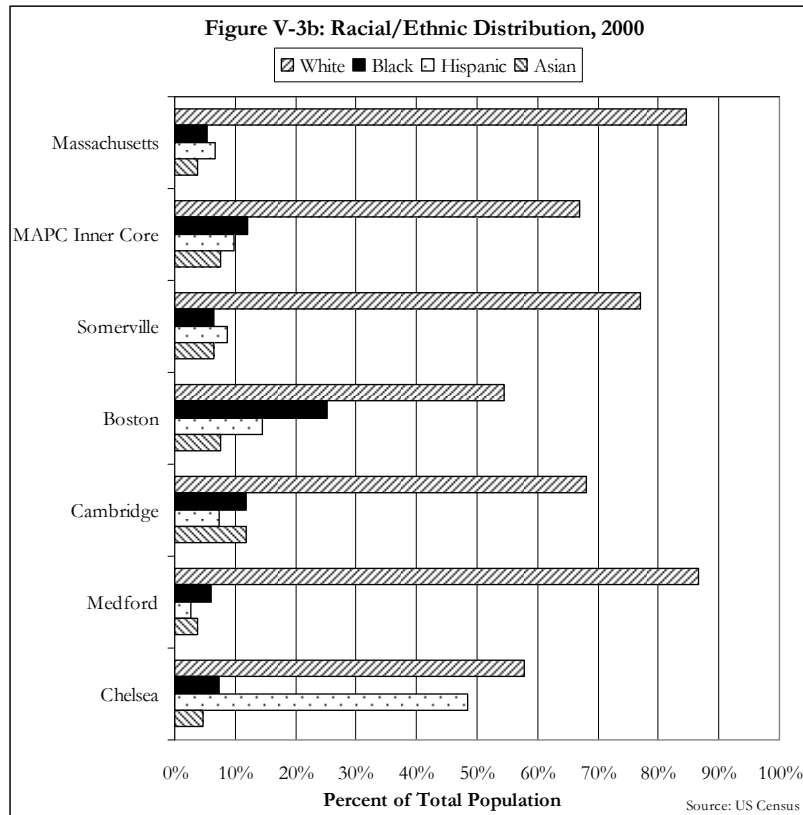
With racial and ethnic minorities representing roughly 23% of its 2000 population, Somerville is more racially diverse than the state as a whole (15% minority), but is slightly less diverse than the Metropolitan Core (33% minority). As illustrate in FigureV-3a, Hispanic residents represented Somerville’s largest minority group at roughly 9% of the total population. Black and Asian residents represented 6.5% and 6.4% respectively. Other groups comprise the remaining 6%.

Figure V-3a: Racial Distribution, 2000

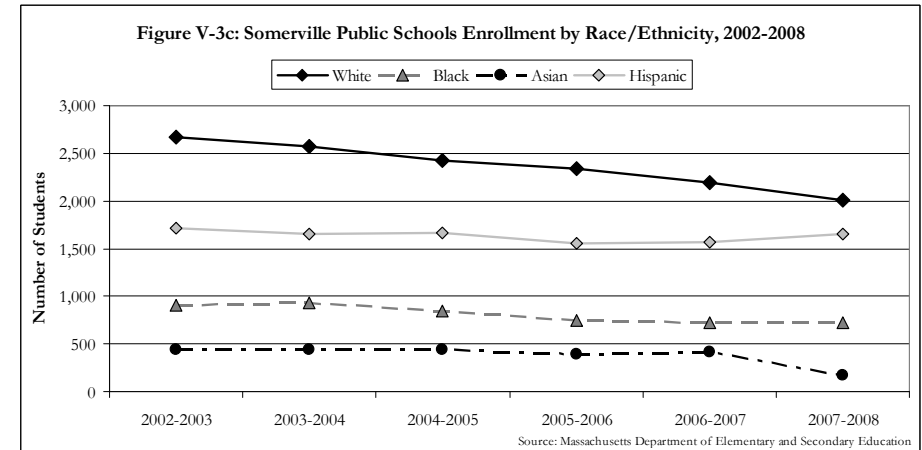
	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Massachusetts	84.5%	5.4%	6.8%	3.8%
MAPC Inner Core	66.9%	12.0%	9.9%	7.6%
Somerville	77.0%	6.5%	8.8%	6.4%
Boston	54.5%	25.3%	14.4%	7.5%
Cambridge	68.1%	11.9%	7.4%	11.9%
Medford	86.5%	6.1%	2.6%	3.9%
Chelsea	58.0%	7.3%	48.4%	4.6%

Source: US Census

Compared with the neighboring cities of Boston and Cambridge, Somerville is less racially diverse. In 2000, roughly one-quarter of Boston’s total population was Black, while Cambridge had the largest percentage of Asian residents (12%). Somerville was more diverse than the city of Medford, due to significantly higher percentages of Hispanic and Asian residents. In Chelsea, nearly half of the total population was Hispanic in 2000, while the proportions of Black and Asian residents were roughly comparable to Somerville.



Since the 2000 Census, Somerville's minority populations appear to be constant. Data collected by the Somerville Public Schools (SPS) show that the number of racial/ethnic minority students in the public school system has remained fairly consistent over the last six school years. As illustrated in Figure V-3c, a decrease in the number of White students has also been observed during the 2002-2008 period. These data may be indicative of changes in the overall racial and ethnic population groups in Somerville. For a more complete discussion of trends in the youth population, see Section III of this report.

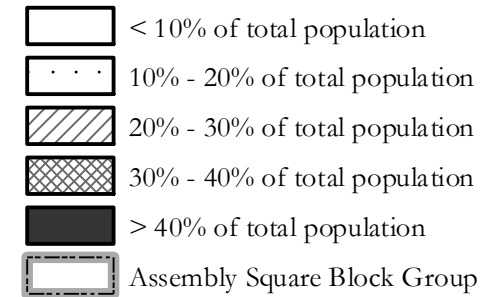


4. Somerville's racial and ethnic minority populations are concentrated in East Somerville.

Somerville's minority population is not evenly distributed around the city. In general, racial and ethnic minorities comprise a larger percentage of the total population in East Somerville, and a smaller percentage of the total population in West Somerville. As illustrated in Map V-4a, three Block Groups in East Somerville have minority populations greater than 40% of the total population, and another six have populations that are between 30% and 40% minority. In West Somerville, two Block Groups along Alewife Brook Parkway have minority populations between 30% and 40% of the total population.

The largest single concentration of non-White residents in 2000 (62%) occurred in the East Somerville Block Group bordered by Broadway to the north, Cross Street to the west, Franklin Street to the east and Pearl Street to the south. The city's least diverse area in 2000 (1% minority) was the West Somerville Block Group bordered by North Street to the east and Sterling Street/Alewife Brook Parkway to the west.

Map V-4a: Minority Population (2000)

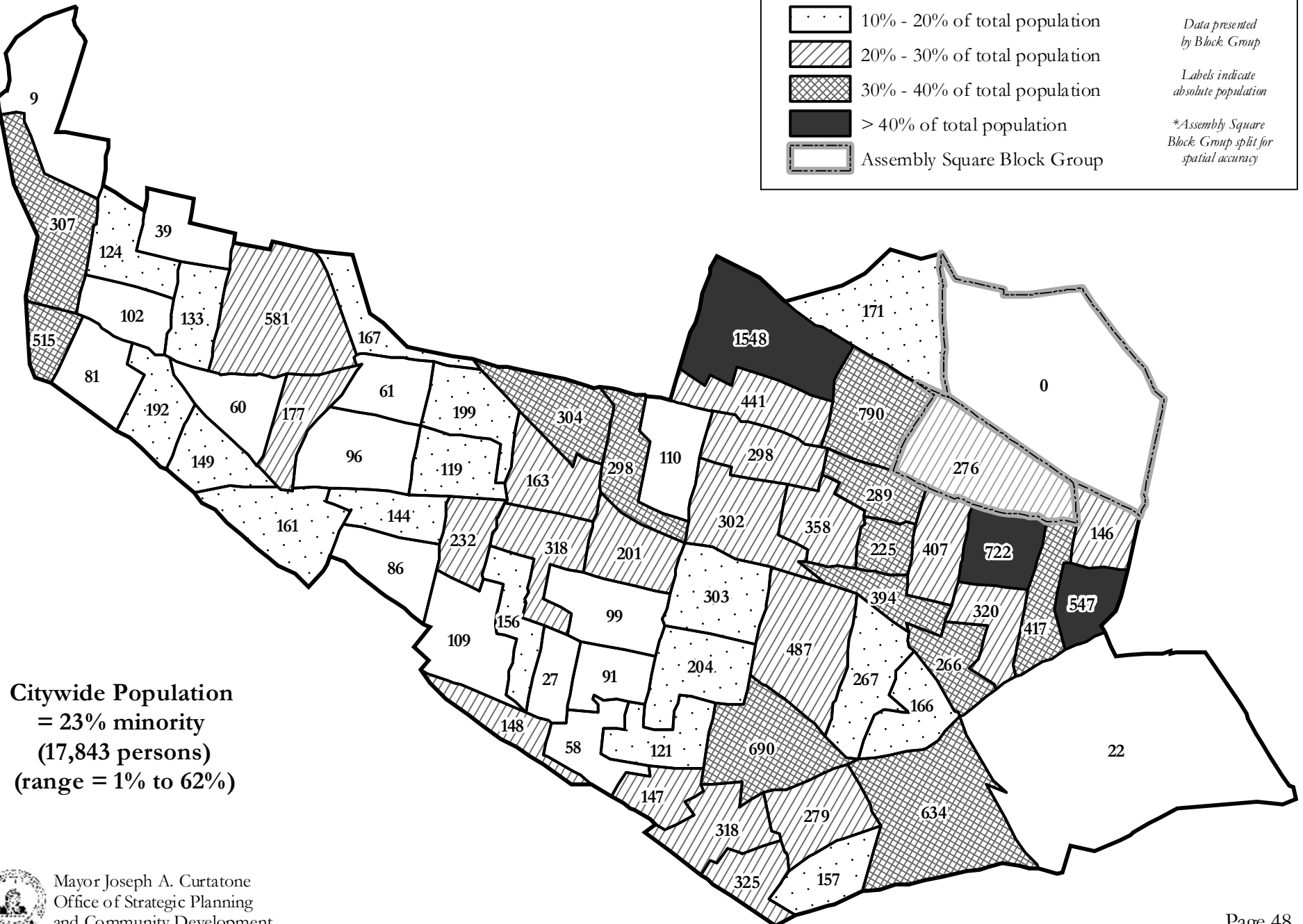


Source = US Census

Data presented
by Block Group

Labels indicate
absolute population

*Assembly Square
Block Group split for
spatial accuracy



Citywide Population
 = 23% minority
 (17,843 persons)
 (range = 1% to 62%)



Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone
 Office of Strategic Planning
 and Community Development






Census Block Group data can provide a more detailed breakdown of population concentrations within specific racial and ethnic groups. As illustrated in Maps V-4b, V-4c, and V-4d, these concentrations vary by racial and ethnic group.

According to the 2000 Census, Somerville had 4,751 Black residents (6% of the total population). The single highest concentration of Black residents (27% of total population) was in West Somerville Block Group where the Clarendon Hill Towers are located. Other neighborhoods with concentrations at or above 20% include Ten Hills / Mystic Avenue (22%), and Gilman Square (20%). See Map V-4b for more information.

Somerville's Hispanic population was larger, comprising 6,689 residents (9% of the total population). This population group was also significantly more concentrated in East Somerville neighborhoods (see Map V-4c). The single highest concentration of Hispanic residents (41%) was in a Block Group south of Broadway, between Cross Street and Franklin Street. Two Block Groups along the Charlestown line in East Somerville had populations that were 30% Hispanic in 2000, and one Block Group north of Gilman Square (between Walnut Street and McGrath Highway) had a population that was 25% Hispanic.

The City's Asian population in 2000 was approximately the same size as the Black population (5,013 persons, or 6% of the total population). However, Somerville's Asian population was concentrated around Union Square and Beacon Street/Inman Square (see Map V-4c). The single highest concentration was in the Block Group along Beacon Street at Dimick Street, where Asian residents represented 17% of the total population in 2000. The two Block Groups abutting the intersection of Beacon Street and Washington Street also had concentrations above 15%.

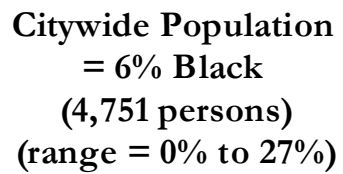
Map V-4b: Black Population (2000)

 < 5% of total population
 5% - 10% of total population
 10% - 15% of total population
 15% - 20% of total population
 > 20% of total population

Source = US Census
Data presented by Block Group
Labels indicate absolute population
**Assembly Square Block Group split for spatial accuracy*

*Data presented
by Block Group*

**Assembly Square
Block Group split for
spatial accuracy*



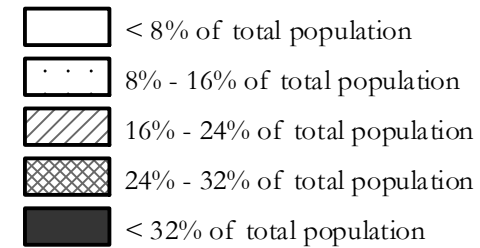
Map V-4c: Hispanic Population (2000)

Source = US Census

Data presented
by Block Group

Labels indicate
absolute population

*Assembly Square
Block Group split for
spatial accuracy



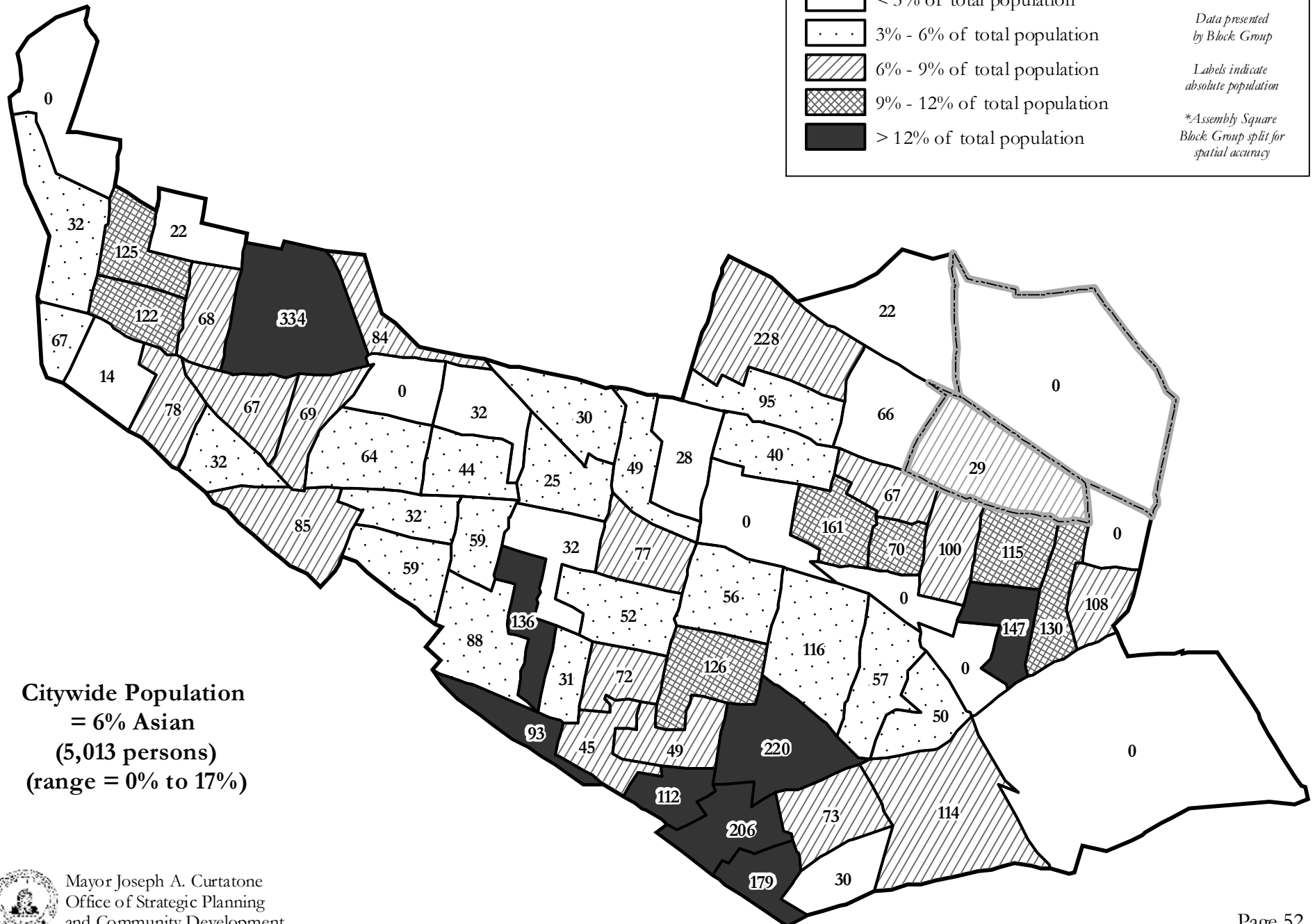
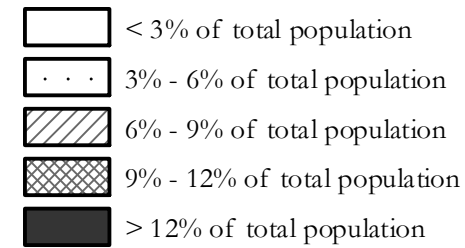
Map V-4d: Asian Population (2000)

Source = US Census

Data presented
by Block Group

Labels indicate
absolute population

*Assembly Square
Block Group split for
spatial accuracy



Citywide Population
= 6% Asian
(5,013 persons)
(range = 0% to 17%)



Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone
Office of Strategic Planning
and Community Development

5. The median ages of Somerville's minority populations are lower than the median age of the city's White population.

Significant variation can be observed in the median ages of various racial and ethnic populations in Somerville. As illustrated by Figure V-5a, the median age for White residents is 32.3 years, compared with 28.9 for Black residents, 27.7 for Asian residents, and 27.0 for Hispanic residents.

When comparing Somerville against the state, or against neighboring large cities, these variations take on an added dimension. The median age of Somerville's White population is lower than that of Massachusetts, Boston or Cambridge (data was not available for the MAPC Inner Core). This difference certainly contributes to Somerville's reputation as a young city.

On the other hand, Somerville's Hispanic population is relatively old compared to its neighbors and to the state as a whole. The median age for Somerville's Black population is higher than the state median, but lower than the medians for Boston and Cambridge. The median age for Somerville's Asian population is higher than the Cambridge median, but lower than the Boston or Massachusetts medians.

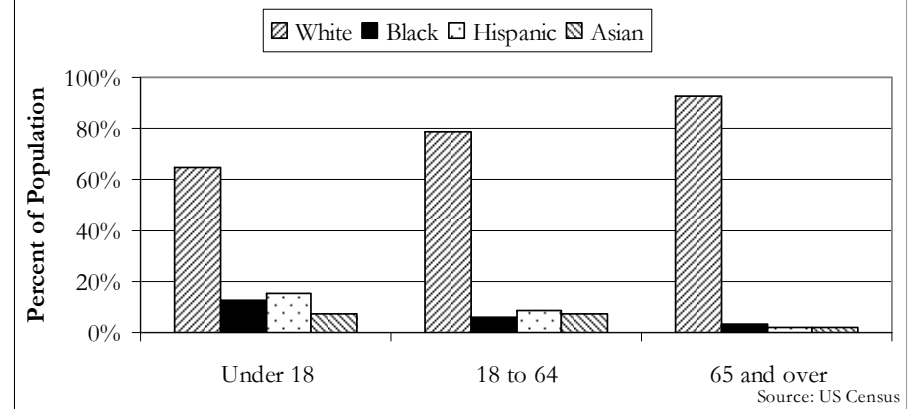
Figure V-5a: Median Age by Race, 2000

	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Massachusetts	38.3	27.9	24.5	29.3
MAPC Inner Core	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Somerville	32.3	28.9	27.0	27.7
Boston	33.0	30.3	25.9	28.7
Cambridge	32.4	29.4	25.6	26.1
Medford	39.2	32.2	28.1	28.6
Chelsea	36.1	27.9	25.9	28.8

Source: US Census

Figure V-5b illustrates what percentage of the population in basic age groups is represented by racial/ethnic groups. Clearly, minority representation in Somerville tends to decrease as age increases.

Figure V-5b: Somerville Race as a Percentage of Age Groups, 2000



**6. More than the state, the region, or neighboring cities,
Somerville is a community of immigrants.**

Somerville has long been a magnet for immigrants. According to the 2000 US Census, foreign-born residents represented nearly 30% of Somerville's total population. The national and state averages (11% and 12%, respectively) are much lower, as illustrated in Figure V-6a.

Although lower than Somerville, the MAPC Inner Core region is more comparable, with 23% of the total population born outside the United States. Even in the large gateway cities of Boston and Cambridge, immigrants represent smaller percentages of the total population than they do in Somerville. Among neighboring cities, only Chelsea (36%) has a higher percentage of foreign-born residents than Somerville.

Figure V-6a: Foreign-Born Residents as a Percentage of Total Population, 2000

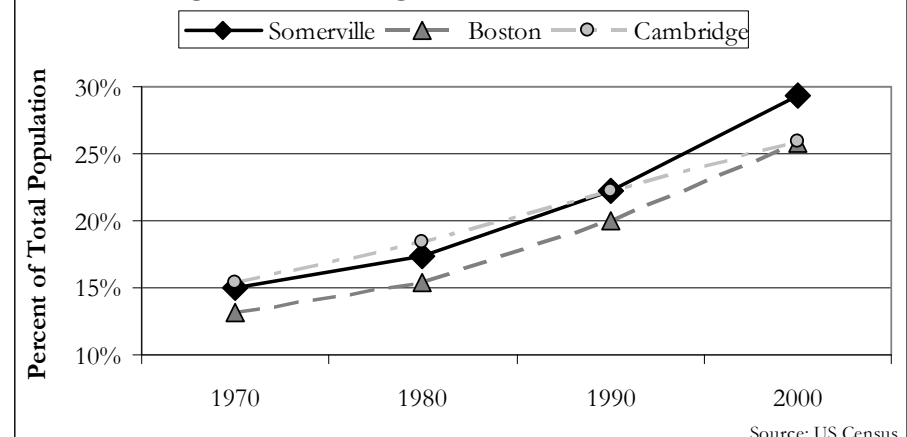
United States	11.1%
Massachusetts	22.5%
MAPC Inner Core	12.2%
Somerville	29.3%
Boston	25.8%
Cambridge	25.9%
Medford	16.2%
Chelsea	36.1%

Source: US Census

Foreign-born residents have doubled as a percentage of Somerville's population since 1970. While neighboring communities show similar trends (Figure V-6b), Somerville experienced a sharper increase in its

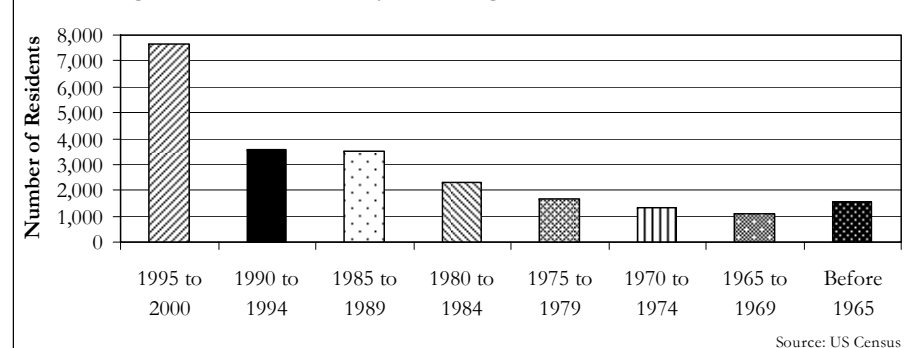
immigrant population during the last two decades than Boston or Cambridge did.

Figure V-6b: Foreign Born Residents, 1970-2000



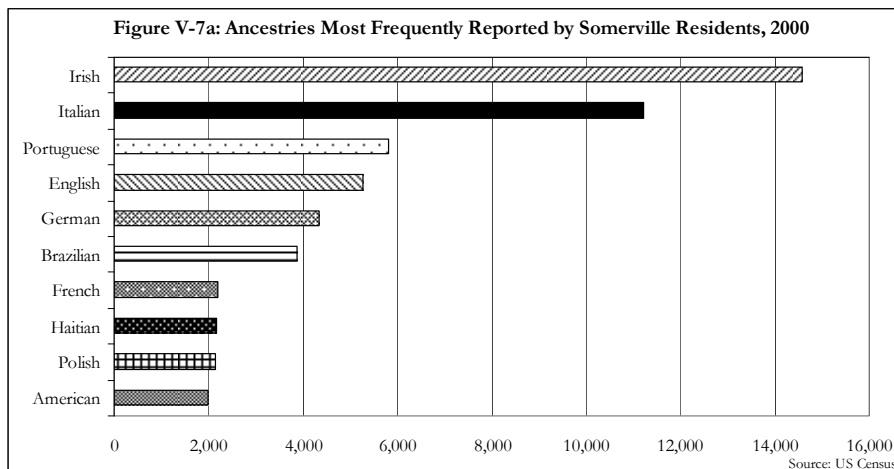
Somerville's foreign-born population is heavily weighted toward recent immigrants. Roughly 75% of the city's immigrant population arrived in the United States after 1980, and over one-third arrived after 1995 (Figure V-6c).

Figure V-6c: Year of Entry for Foreign-Born Somerville Residents



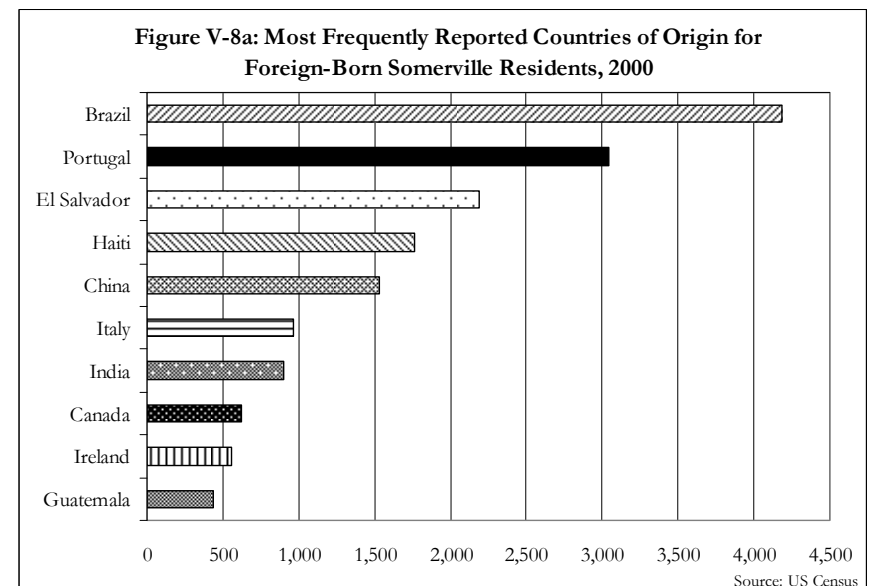
7. Somerville residents overwhelmingly report European heritage, with Irish and Italian ancestry the most commonly reported.

Somerville's current ethnic diversity reflects different waves of immigration to the area. Groups that arrived in the early twentieth century remain well-established: as shown by Figure V-7a, the top reported ancestries in Somerville's 2000 Census were Irish (19%) and Italian (15%). Earlier generations of immigrants, including British, French and Germans are not as well represented today. Somerville's Portuguese community developed in the mid-late twentieth century, and remains quite large today.



8. Somerville's immigrant population is primarily composed of Brazilians and Portuguese, with significant numbers of Salvadoran, Haitian and Chinese immigrants also present.

As illustrated in Figure V-8a, more recent waves of immigration have originated from Latin America and the Caribbean. According to the 2000 Census, Brazil (18.4% of the foreign-born population, or 4,182 residents) and Portugal (13.4% of the foreign-born population, or 3,039 residents) are the most common countries of origin for foreign-born residents. Significant numbers of residents were born in El Salvador (9.6%, 2,188), Haiti (7.8%, 1,765) and China (6.7%, 1,529).



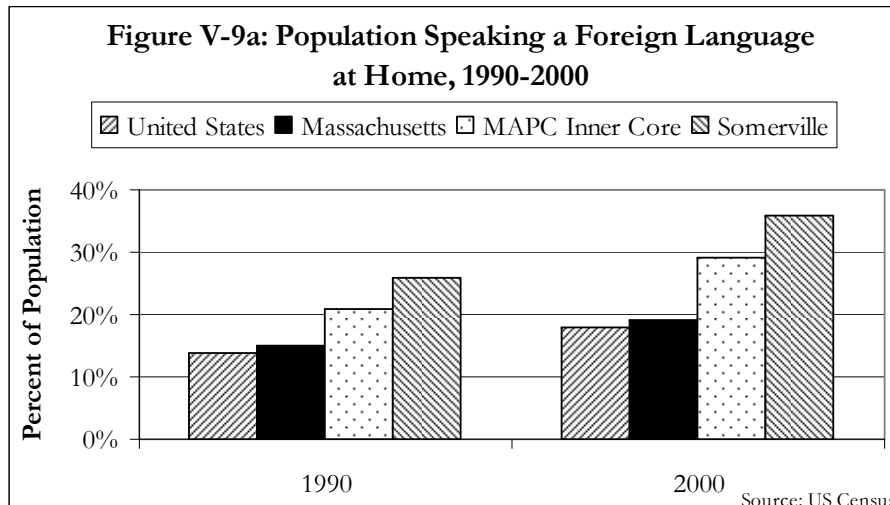
Compared to the most frequent ancestries illustrated in Figure V-7a, these groups appear to be much smaller. For example, while the 2000 Census reported approximately 1,000 more Brazilian

immigrants than Portuguese immigrants, residents reporting Portuguese ancestry outnumbered residents reporting Brazilian ancestry by roughly 2,000 individuals.

Conversely, immigration from Ireland and Italy appears to have slowed considerably in recent decades. While over 25,000 Somerville residents reported Irish or Italian ancestry in the 2000 Census, foreign-born residents from these countries represented approximately 1,500 individuals total.

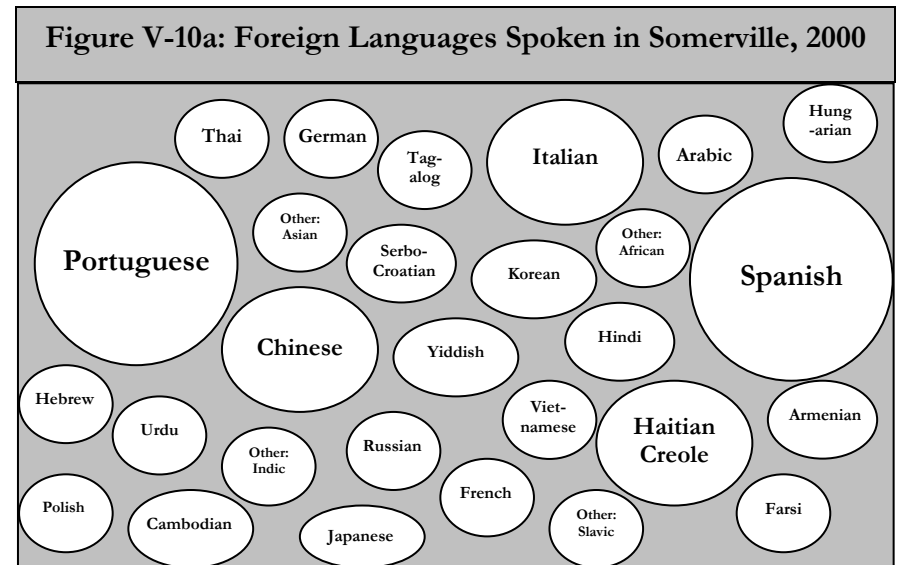
9. Somerville has a higher percentage of non-English speakers than the regional, state or national averages.

In 2000, roughly 65% of Somerville residents age 5 and older spoke English at home, while 35% (26,381 individuals) spoke a language other than English. This represents a 10% increase from 1990, when 19,004 individuals reported speaking a language other than English at home.

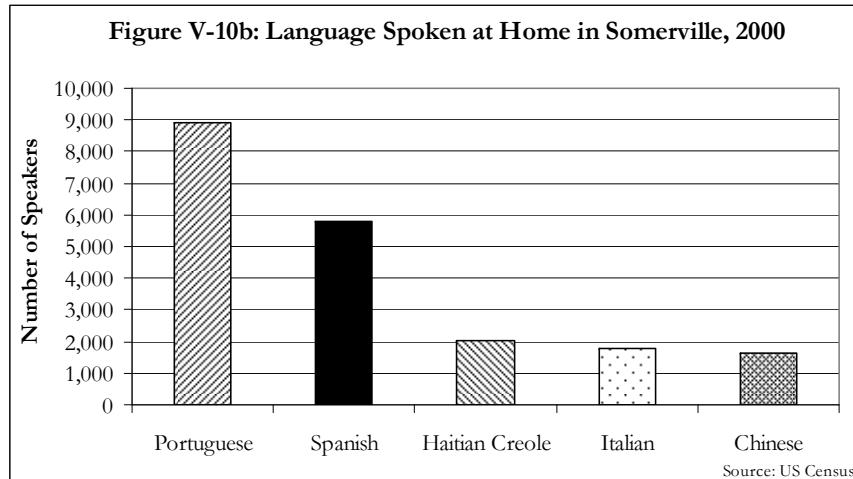


10. Somerville residents spoke at least 25 different foreign languages at home in 2000.

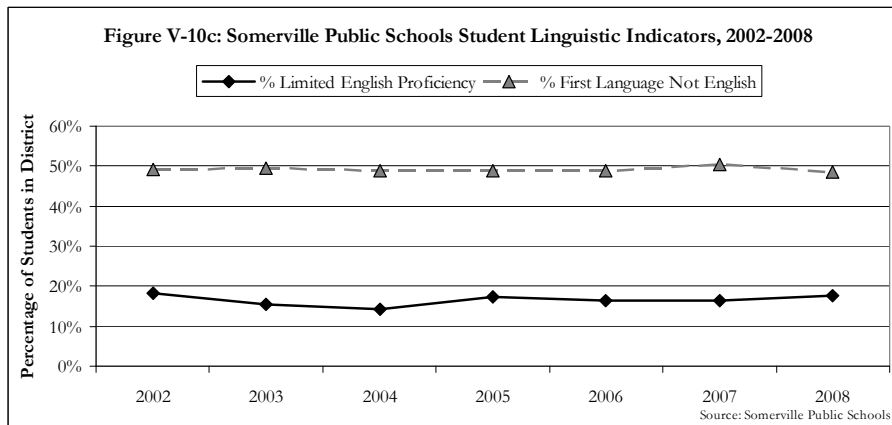
According to the 2000 Census, at least 25 languages are spoken in Somerville. Figure V-10a illustrates the languages documented by the Census.



The foreign languages most commonly spoken in Somerville are Portuguese (8,932 residents), and Spanish (5,794 residents). Smaller yet significant populations of Haitian-Creole (2,023), Italian (1,786), and Chinese (1,639) speakers are also present. City agencies and nonprofit community groups currently provide translation services into Somerville's major foreign languages.



Data recorded by the Somerville Public Schools suggests that the city's population speaking a foreign language has remained essentially constant since the 2000 Census. As illustrated in Figure V-10c, students whose first language is not English have represented roughly 49% of the district since 2002.



11. Many East Somerville neighborhoods feature populations in which more than half of all households speak a language other than English.

As shown by Map V-11a, large areas of East Somerville and Ten Hills have a majority of households that speak a foreign language at home. The single highest rate of non-English speaking households (69%) occurs in a Census Block Group south of Broadway and east of Cross Street. Union Square also has a significant concentration of households speaking a foreign language at home. More than 50% of households in the Block Group that contains Boynton Yards speak a foreign language at home, as do two Block Groups along Somerville Avenue to the west of Union Square.

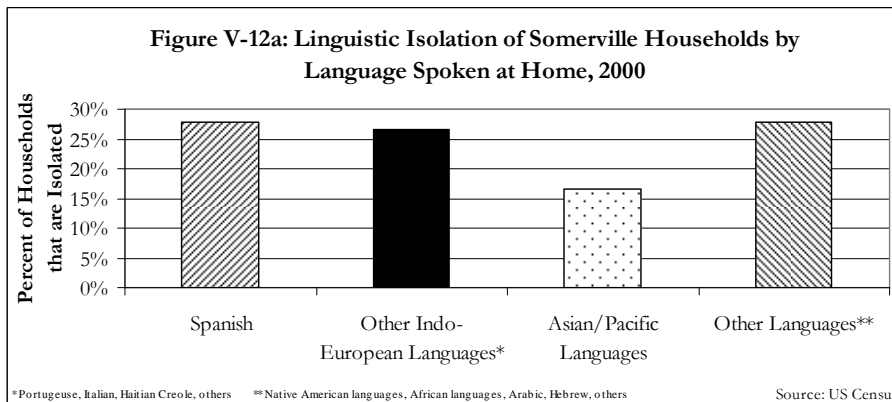
12. Somerville households that primarily speak Asian languages are less likely to be linguistically isolated than households that speak other foreign languages.

The Census Bureau describes households where all members aged 14 or older have at least some difficulty speaking English as “Linguistically Isolated”. As of the 2000 Census, more than 2,800 households in Somerville were reported as linguistically isolated. Breakdowns by specific language are generally impossible, since the Census Bureau aggregates this data by linguistic group rather than by individual language. The four linguistic groups are *Spanish, Other Indo-European Languages* (generally Portuguese, Haitian-Creole, and Italian in Somerville), *Asian/Pacific Languages* (mostly Chinese), and *Other Languages* (mostly Arabic and African languages).

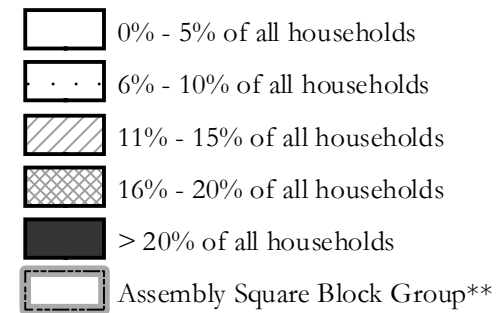
As illustrated in Figure V-12a, 28% of Somerville’s Spanish-speaking households (626 total) were reported to be linguistically isolated in 2000. A similar proportion of households speaking Other Indo-European Languages (27%, or 1,865 total) were reported as linguistically-isolated. Asian/Pacific Language-speaking households exhibited a lower rate of isolation (16%, or 234 households). Roughly 28% of households speaking Other Languages (118 total) were linguistically isolated.

13. While several East Somerville neighborhoods feature concentrations of households where no member speaks English well, the most dramatic pockets of linguistic isolation occur at public housing complexes in Ten Hills and West Somerville.

Spatial concentrations of linguistic isolation are shown in Map V-13a. Linguistically-isolated households represent over 20% of all households for three East Somerville Block Groups east of Cross Street. In the Ten Hills Block Group containing the Somerville Housing Authority’s Mystic View/Mystic River housing complex, nearly one out of four households was linguistically isolated. The frequency is even higher (nearly one out of three households) in the West Somerville Block Group containing the Clarendon Hill Apartments complex.



Map V-13a: Linguistically-Isolated Households* (2000)



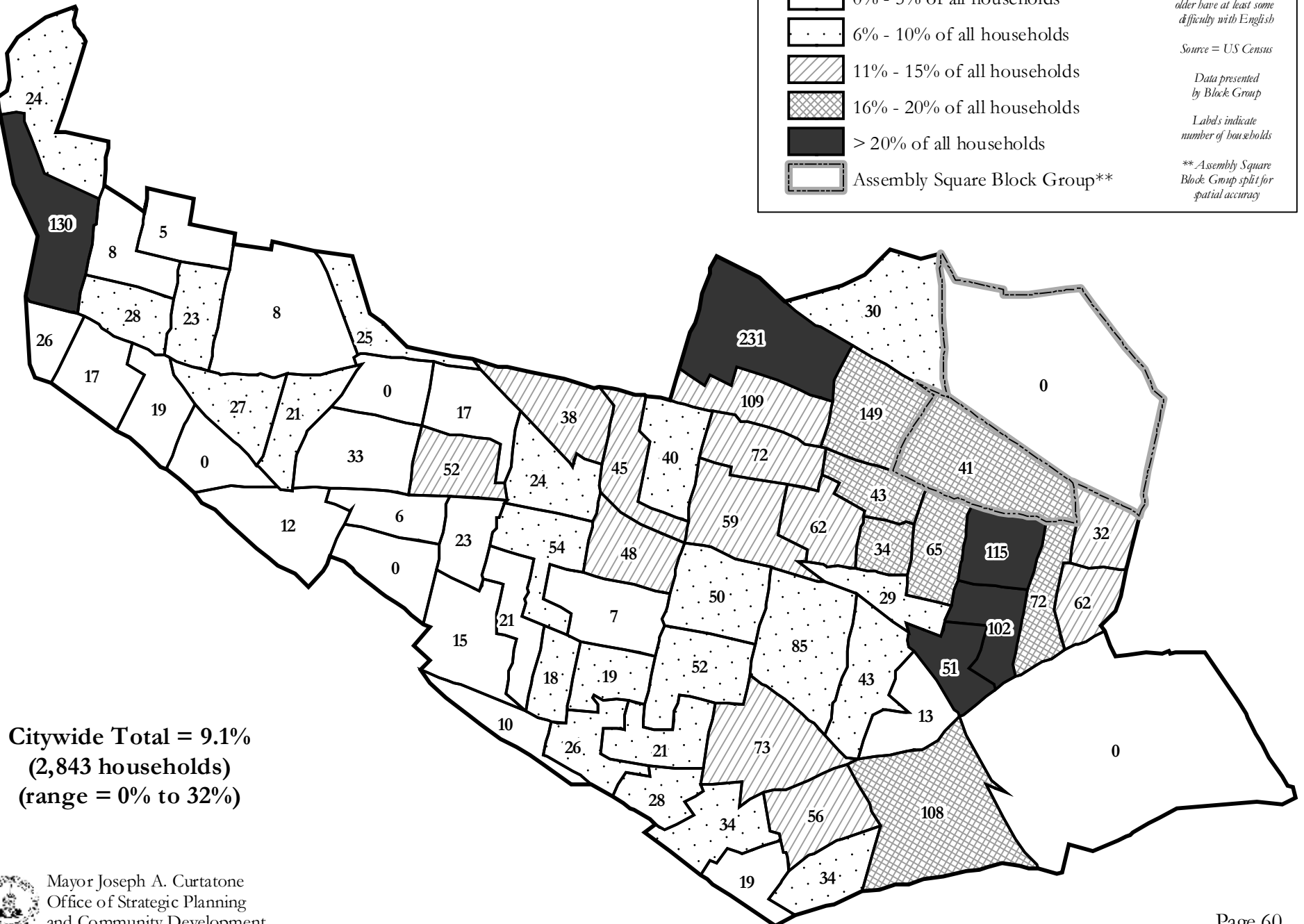
*Households in which all members 14 years and older have at least some difficulty with English

Source = US Census

Data presented by Block Group

Labels indicate number of households

**Assembly Square Block Group split for spatial accuracy



INCOME AND POVERTY

1. Consistent with trends at the national and state levels, median income levels in Somerville (per capita, household and family) have increased steadily since 1980.

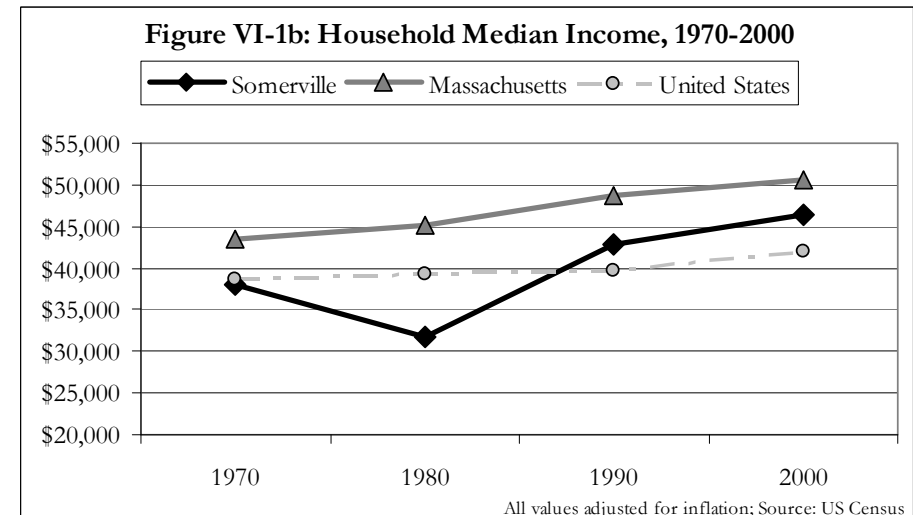
Following decreases in real income between 1970 and 1980, Somerville's inflation-adjusted median income values have increased at the per capita, household and family scales. As illustrated in Figure VI-1a, the steadiest growth occurred at the per capita level. This may be related to decreases in household and family size during the same period: for example, since one-person households and single-parent families have become more common, incomes for these households and families would reflect only a single wage-earner. See Section II of this report for a complete discussion of household and family size.

Figure VI-1a: Somerville Median Income, 1970-2000			
	Per Capita	Household	Family
1970	\$13,664	\$38,109	\$43,845
1980	\$14,095	\$31,682	\$43,818
1990	\$20,036	\$42,841	\$50,862
2000	\$23,628	\$46,315	\$51,243

Source: US Census

Figure VI-1b illustrates trends in household median income at the local, state and national scale. Somerville's sharp decrease between 1970 and 1980 may be partly attributable to out-migration of wealthier households during the 1970's, combined with the near-stagnant wages that characterized the 1970's. Between 1980 and 1990, Somerville experienced a significant increase in household

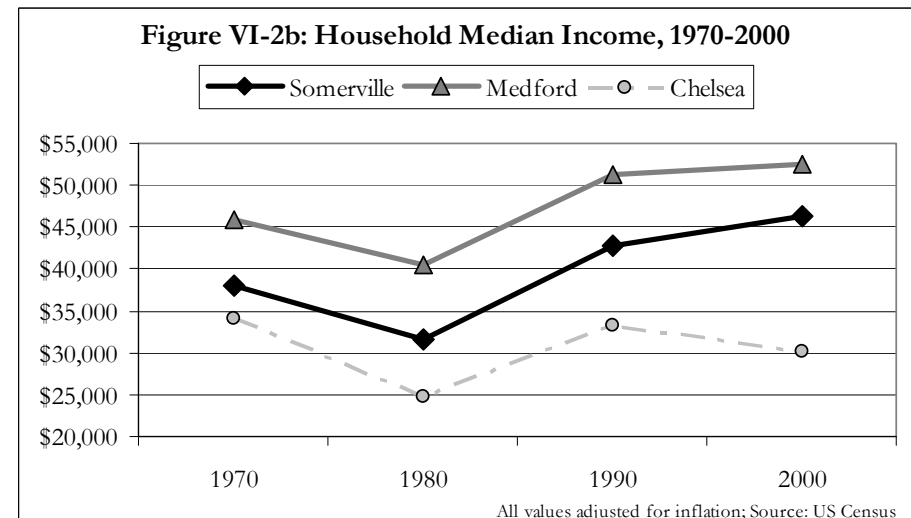
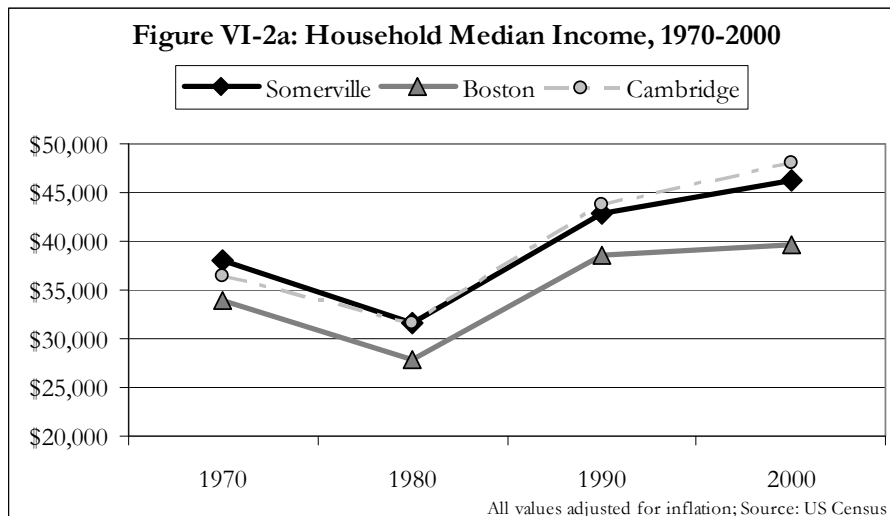
median income, while the statewide gain was more modest and the national median remained constant.



Increases in Somerville's median income between 1990 and 2000 are partly attributable to the end of rent control in the neighboring City of Cambridge, which occurred in 1994. As housing prices escalated during later part of the decade, many former Cambridge residents moved to Somerville, potentially inflating Somerville's 2000 median income. In addition, the extension of MBTA Red Line rapid transit in 1986 likely attracted higher income residents to West Somerville neighborhoods around Davis Square and Porter Square.

2. Changes in Somerville's household median income since 1970 are consistent with changes observed in neighboring cities.

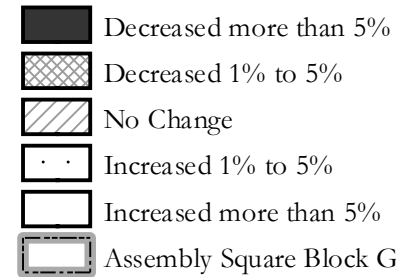
Trends in household median income since 1970 are remarkably consistent between Somerville and neighboring municipalities in the urban core. As illustrated in Figure VI-2a and VI-2b, Boston, Cambridge, Medford and Chelsea all experienced similar drops during the 1970's, and all rebounded strongly during the 1980's. Deviations occur during the 1990's, with Boston's income growth leveling off noticeably, and Chelsea experiencing a decrease in inflation-adjusted household median income.



3. Some neighborhoods in Somerville experienced decreases in inflation-adjusted household median income between 1990 and 2000.

Analysis of income changes at the Census Block Group level allows for a more complete understanding of income dynamics in Somerville. As illustrated in Map VI-3a, ten Block Groups experienced significant increases (+5% or more) in household median income during the last decade, while nine Block Groups showed decreases of 5% or more. In other words, while the city as a whole has become wealthier during the last decade, certain neighborhoods have become less wealthy. Seven of the nine largest HMI decreases were located in East Somerville, with major drops observed in the Central Hill, The States and Ten Hills neighborhoods. The largest increases occurred in Block Groups bordering Cambridge, with major increases observed in Inman Square, Davis Square and Teele Square.

Map VI-3a: Change in Household Median Income (1990-2000)

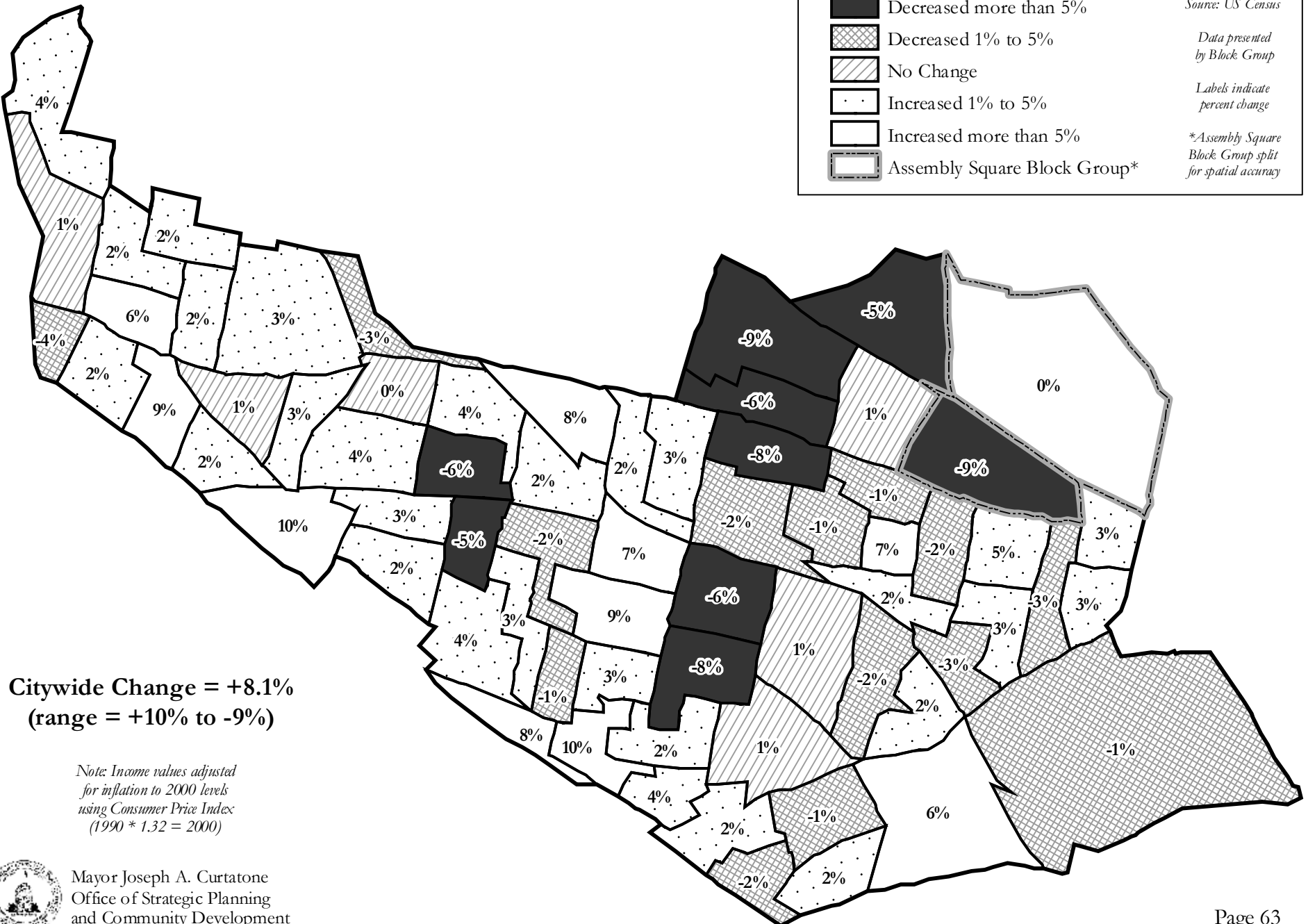


Source: US Census

Data presented
by Block Group

Labels indicate
percent change

*Assembly Square
Block Group split
for spatial accuracy



4. Compared with most neighboring communities and the state as a whole, Somerville had lower median incomes in 2000.

Somerville's current median income levels are slightly lower than the statewide averages. The greatest disparity between Somerville and Massachusetts incomes is apparent in the Family Median Income (FMI) value, where Somerville's FMI represented 83% of the statewide FMI. Per Capita and Household Median Income values were closer, with Somerville values representing 91% and 92% of the statewide median values, respectively.

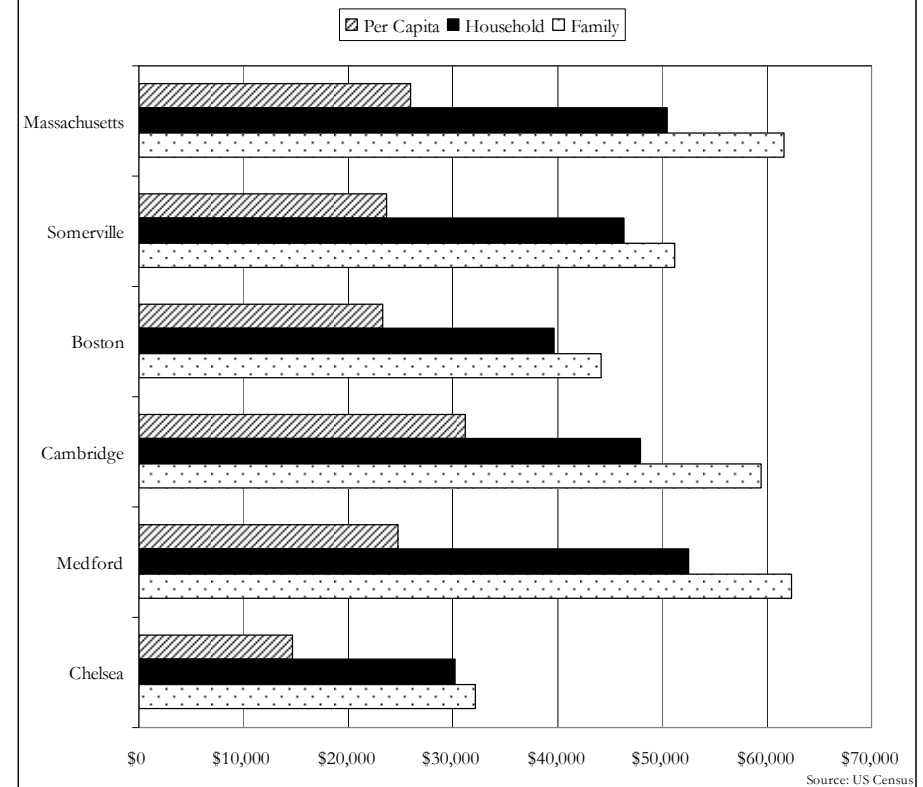
Compared with its neighbors in the metropolitan core, Somerville also tends to show lower income values. The exception is Chelsea, whose 2000 median income values were substantially lower than Somerville's. For most comparisons, gaps tend to be narrowest at the Per Capita scale, and tend to widen at the HMI and FMI scales. This pattern is likely attributable to the trend of rising Per Capita income, since small differences at the per capita scale will be compounded out in households and families, especially households with more than one wage earner.

Figure VI-4a: Median Income Comparison, 2000

	Per Capita	Household	Family
Massachusetts	\$25,952	\$50,502	\$61,664
Somerville	\$23,628	\$46,315	\$51,243
Boston	\$23,353	\$39,629	\$44,151
Cambridge	\$31,156	\$47,949	\$59,423
Medford	\$24,707	\$52,476	\$62,409
Chelsea	\$14,628	\$30,161	\$32,130

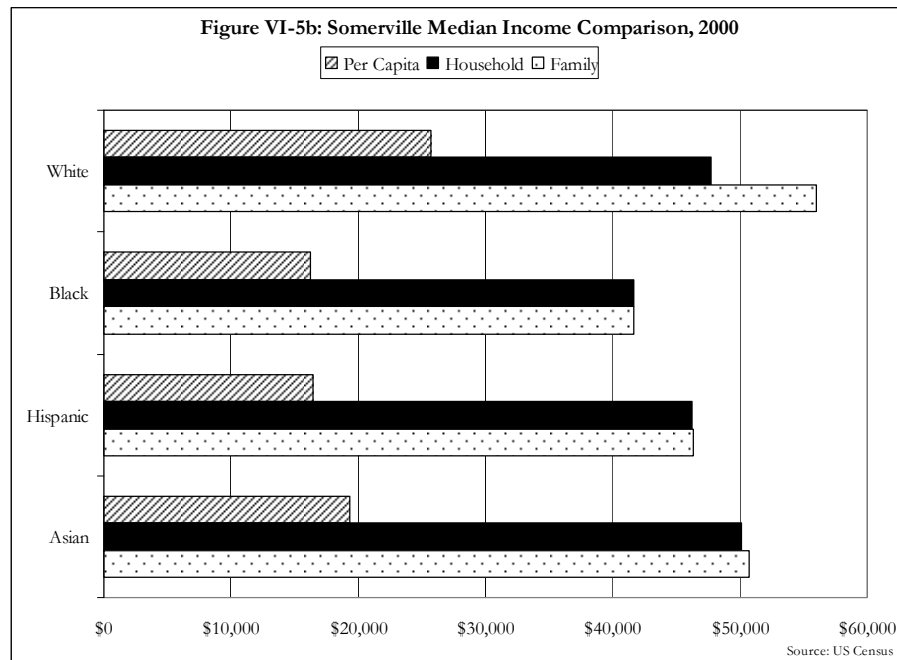
Source: US Census

Figure VI-4b: Median Income Comparison, 2000



5. Median income levels for Somerville's White and Asian residents tended to be higher than for Black and Hispanic residents.

In 2000, Somerville's median income levels exhibited notable discrepancies by race and ethnicity. As illustrated in Figure VI-5a, median incomes for blacks and Hispanics lagged behind median incomes for whites and Asians at the per capita, household and family levels. These discrepancies are consistent with state and national figures for 2000.

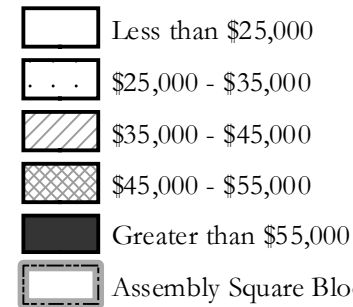


6. In 2000, household median income values tended to be higher in West Somerville than in East Somerville.

Map VI-6a clearly illustrates an arc of high-income neighborhoods running from Alewife Brook Parkway southeast to Inman Square. The single highest household median income value (\$68,000) is found in a Census Block Group along the Cambridge border, just north of Porter Square, while the second-highest HMI value (\$67,773) is for a Block Group just south of Ball Square, between Willow Avenue and Cedar Street.

The lowest value was observed for the Cobble Hill/Inner Belt Block Group, where a small population and a large senior housing complex result in an HMI of \$14,022. Another Block Group with a particularly low HMI value is located between Union Square and Gilman Square. This Block Group also features large senior housing complexes that contribute to its low HMI value (\$21,786).

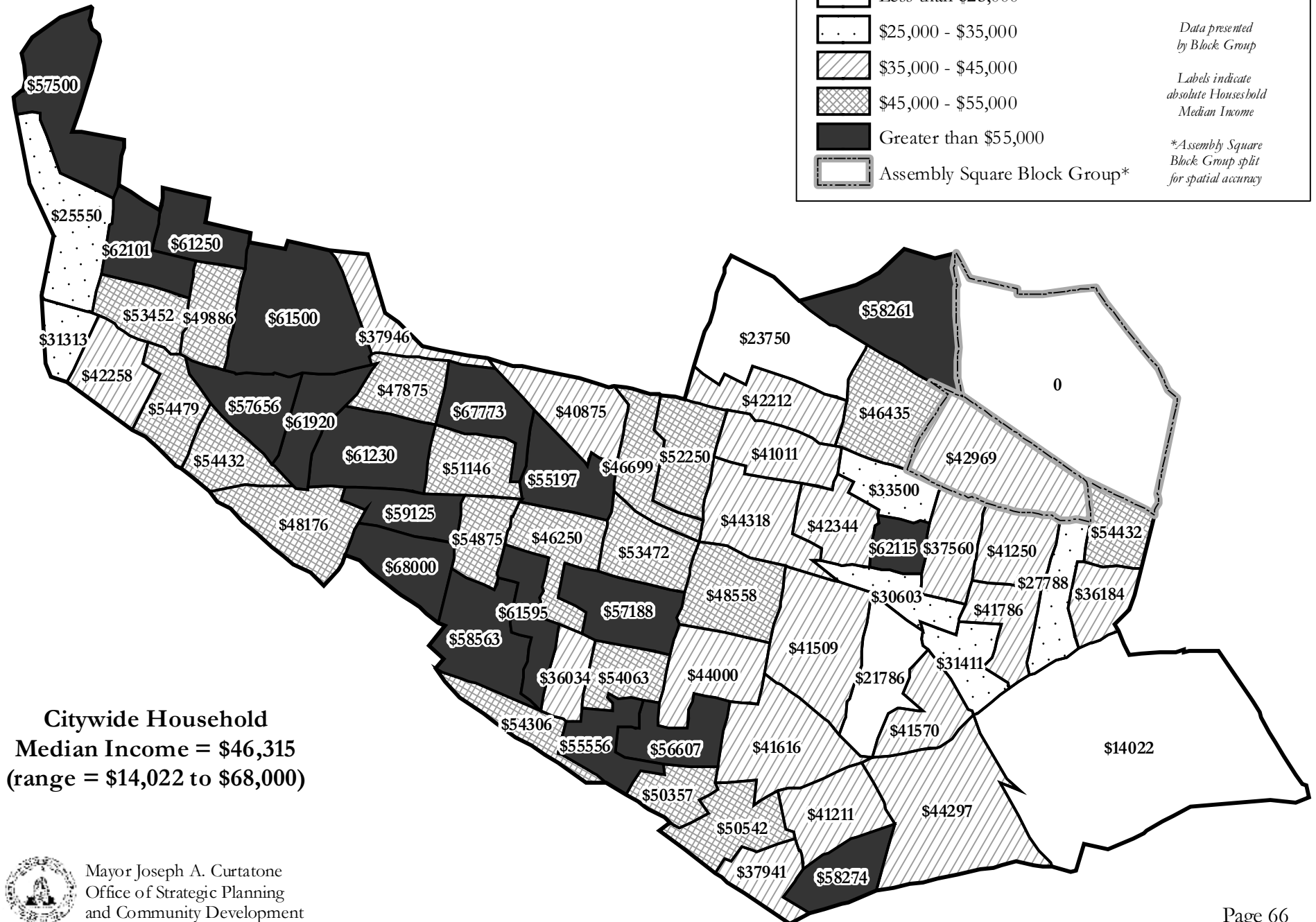
Map VI-6a: Household Median Income (2000)



Source: US Census
 Data presented
 by Block Group

Labels indicate
 absolute Household
 Median Income

*Assembly Square
 Block Group split
 for spatial accuracy



6. Somerville's poverty rates over the last three decades have generally exhibited minor fluctuations. Somerville's poverty rate tends to be higher than the Massachusetts average, but lower than the national average.

The US Census Bureau calculates poverty status for individuals and for families, based on annual income. The poverty levels used in the 2000 federal census take an individual's age into account: individuals below age 65 have a poverty level of \$8,959, while individuals aged 65 and older have a poverty level of \$8,259. Family poverty levels also use annual income, but take family size into account. The poverty levels used in the 2000 Census range from \$10,409 (family of two, householder over 65 years old) to \$33,291 (family of nine or more).

It should be noted that the poverty level is a federal calculation and regional and state variations in the cost of living are not taken into account. The cost of living in Somerville is higher than the national average, so individuals' buying power is less than in other parts of the country. Thus the poverty rates recorded by the Census Bureau (see Figure VI-6a) are not truly reflective of the number of Somerville residents struggling to get by.

Although Somerville's individual poverty rate increased sharply between 1970 and 1980, it remained fairly consistent between 1980 and 2000. As illustrated in Figure VI-6b, the state and national poverty rates tended to increase between 1970 and 1990, and decrease between 1990 and 2000.

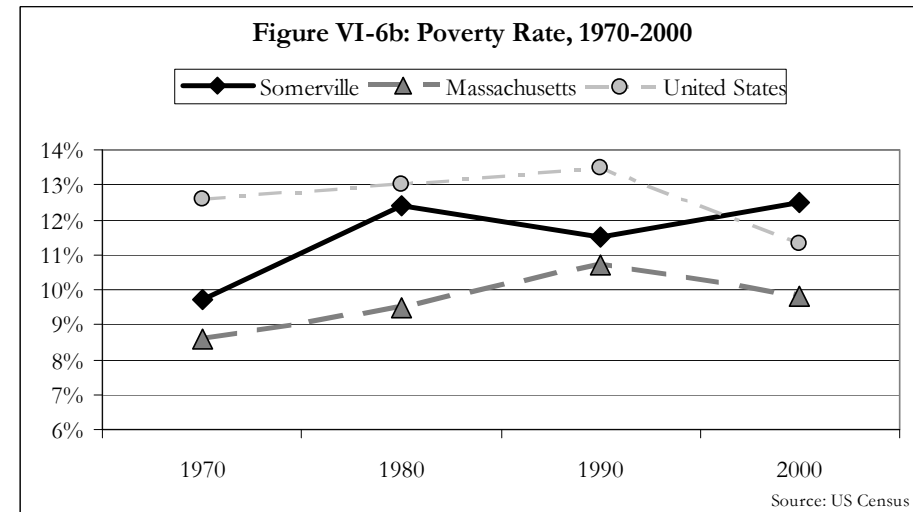


Figure VI-6a: Somerville Poverty Rate, 1970-2000

	Individuals Below Poverty Level	Percent of Individuals	Families Below Poverty Level	Percent of Families
1970	8,516	9.7%	1,661	7.5%
1980	9,345	12.4%	1,729	9.6%
1990	8,492	11.5%	1,221	7.6%
2000	9,395	12.5%	1,254	8.4%

Source: US Census

7. Somerville's poverty rates in 2000 tended to be comparable to the metropolitan region. Among neighboring cities, Cambridge was the most similar to Somerville in terms of poverty rate.

The 2000 US Census reports that nearly 9,400 Somerville residents had incomes below the poverty level (12.5% of the total population). Roughly 1,250 families reported incomes below the poverty level (8.4% of all families).

As illustrated in Figure VI-7a, Somerville's poverty rates for individuals and for families are comparable to the metropolitan core region, and to the neighboring city of Cambridge. Poverty rates for Massachusetts and for the city of Medford were significantly lower than Somerville's poverty rate; in fact, Medford's poverty rate in 2000 was approximately half of Somerville's. On the other hand, Boston and Chelsea had significantly higher poverty rates, with Chelsea's poverty rate in 2000 doubling Somerville's.

Figure VI-7a: Poverty Comparison, 2000

	Individuals Below Poverty Level	Percent of Individuals	Families Below Poverty Level	Percent of Families
Massachusetts	573,421	9.3%	105,619	6.7%
MAPC Inner Core	201,752	12.4%	33,317	9.3%
Somerville	9,395	12.5%	1,254	8.4%
Boston	109,128	19.5%	17,892	15.3%
Cambridge	11,295	12.9%	1,562	8.7%
Medford	3,418	6.4%	555	4.1%
Chelsea	7,921	23.3%	1,582	20.6%

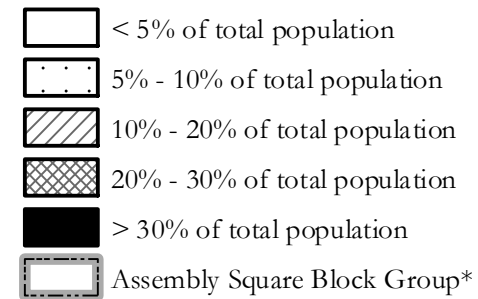
Source: US Census

8. Concentrations of poverty were recorded in seven East Somerville Block Groups and three West Somerville Block Groups.

According to the 2000 Census, the highest poverty rate for a Somerville Block Group occurred around the Clarendon Hill Apartments complex at North Street and Powder House Boulevard, where 37% of the population (350 individuals) had incomes below the poverty level. As illustrated in Map VI-8a, two West Somerville Block Groups abutting Tufts University also had unusually high poverty rates (between 20% and 30% of the total population). It is possible that the high frequency of students has skewed the income and poverty data for these neighborhoods.

Poverty rates between 20% and 30% were more common in East Somerville. Three Block Groups between Gilman Square and Union Square abutting the McGrath Highway exhibited high rates of poverty. In Winter Hill/Ten Hills, three Block Groups around Broadway/Mystic Avenue/Temple Street had poverty rates between 20% and 30%. The Census Block Group that includes the Inner Belt and the Cobble Hill neighborhood is also a high poverty area, although the data is skewed by the Block Group's small total population combined with the presence of the large age- and income-restricted Cobble Hill apartment complex.

Map VI-8a: Individuals Below Poverty Level (2000)

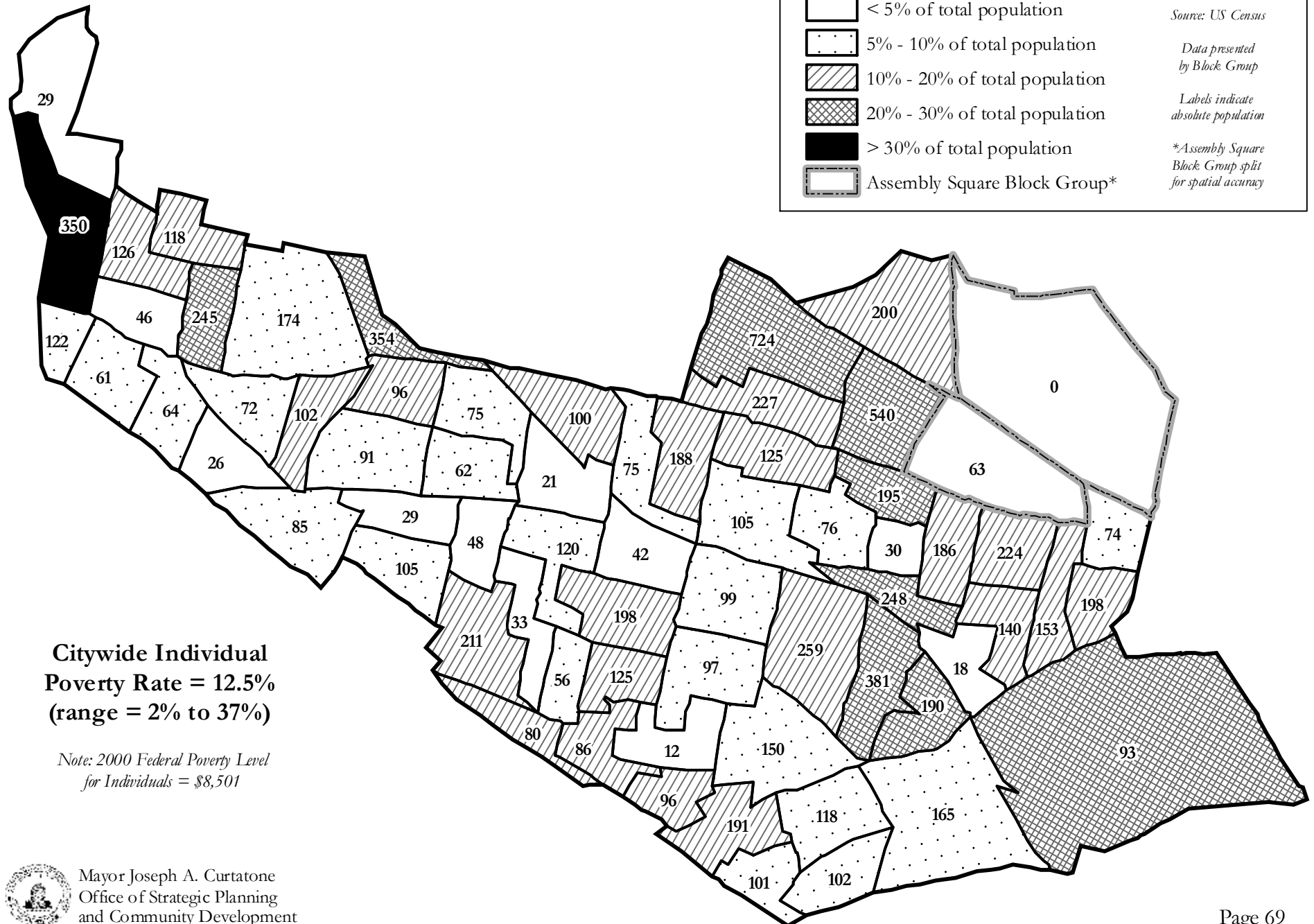


Source: US Census

*Data presented
by Block Group*

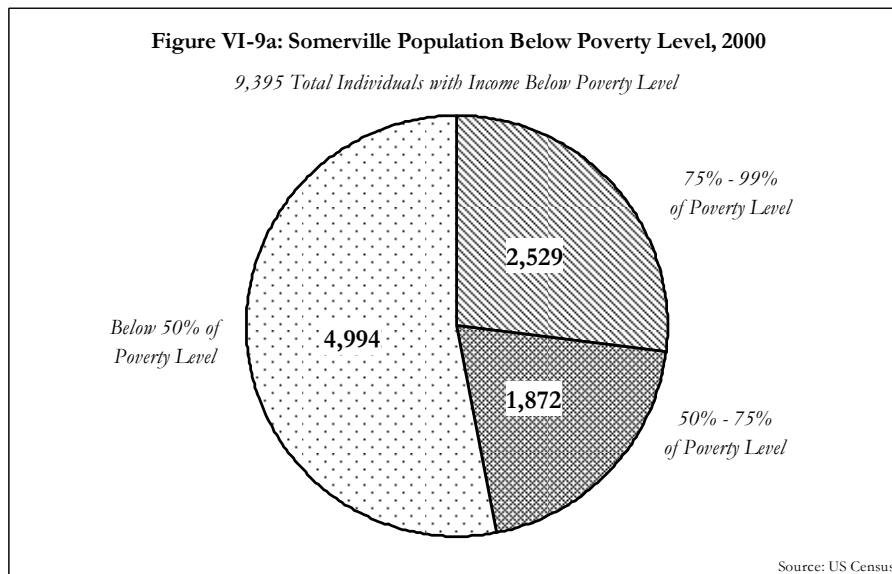
*Labels indicate
absolute population*

**Assembly Square
Block Group split
for spatial accuracy*



9. In 2000, nearly 5,000 Somerville residents had incomes below 50% of the poverty level.

To allow more fine-grained analysis of low income populations, the Census Bureau provides breakdowns of income as a percentage of the poverty level. Somerville's population included 9,395 individuals below the poverty level in 2000. Of this group, nearly 5,000 reported incomes below 50% of the poverty level (Figure VI-9a). Although the data do not break this group down by age or family size, it can generally be assumed that these residents had annual incomes below approximately \$5,000.



10. During the 1990's, the number of Somerville households receiving public assistance income decreased dramatically.

Public assistance income awards were reduced across the state during the last decade, in response to the 1996 federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act. In 1990, over 2,200 Somerville households received public assistance income. By 2000, that number had dropped to just over 700 (a 69% decrease). As illustrated in Figure VI-10a, Somerville experienced a larger percentage decrease than the state, region, or neighboring cities did.

Figure VI-10a: Households with Public Assistance Income, 1990-2000			
	1990	2000	Percent Change
Massachusetts	173,902	70,183	-59.6%
MAPC Inner Core	54,115	19,896	-63.2%
Somerville	2,260	705	-68.8%
Boston	27,213	9,766	-64.1%
Cambridge	2,530	932	-63.2%
Medford	1,254	366	-70.8%
Chelsea	2,166	864	-60.1%

Source: US Census

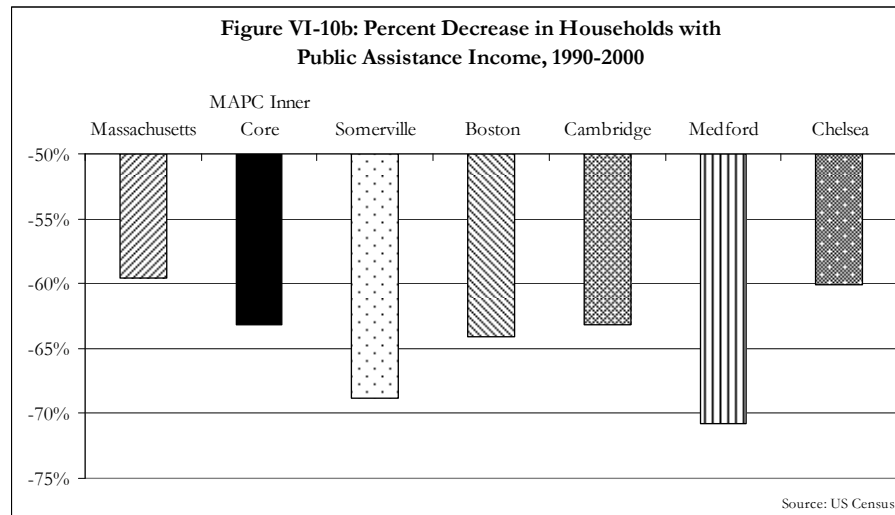


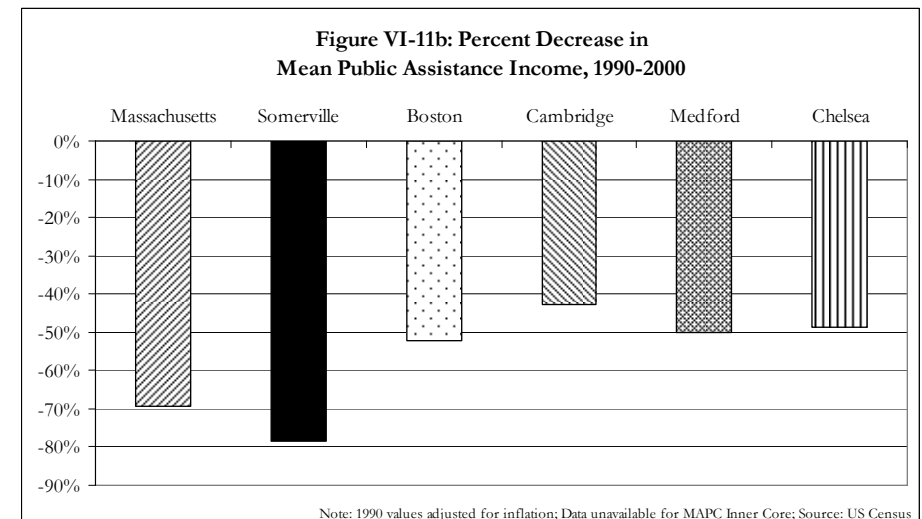
Figure VI-11a: Mean Public Assistance Income, 1990-2000

	1990	2000	Percent Change
Massachusetts	\$8,209	\$3,894	-69.4%
MAPC Inner Core	N/A	N/A	N/A
Somerville	\$7,628	\$3,095	-78.4%
Boston	\$6,480	\$3,917	-52.2%
Cambridge	\$5,797	\$3,922	-42.7%
Medford	\$6,262	\$3,883	-50.2%
Chelsea	\$6,772	\$4,274	-48.7%

Note: 1990 values adjusted for inflation. Source: US Census

11. Public assistance income awards for Somerville households also decreased dramatically in size during the last decade.

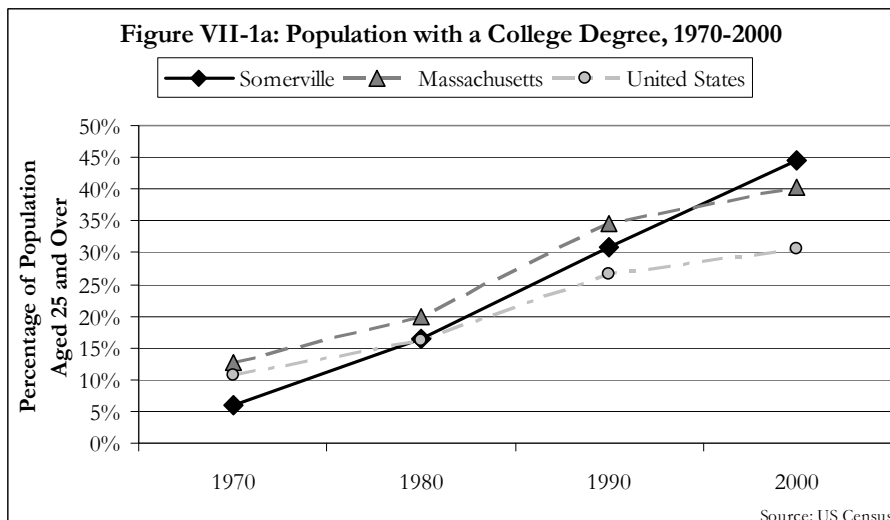
Not only were public income assistance awards less frequent in 2000, but they were significantly smaller than the average 1990 amount. As illustrated in Figure VI-11a, those Somerville households that did receive assistance in 2000 received an average of \$3,095, 46% less than the mean inflation adjusted figure for 1990 (\$7,628). Again, Somerville experienced a larger percentage decrease than its neighbors, the region or the state did (Figure VI-11b).



EDUCATION

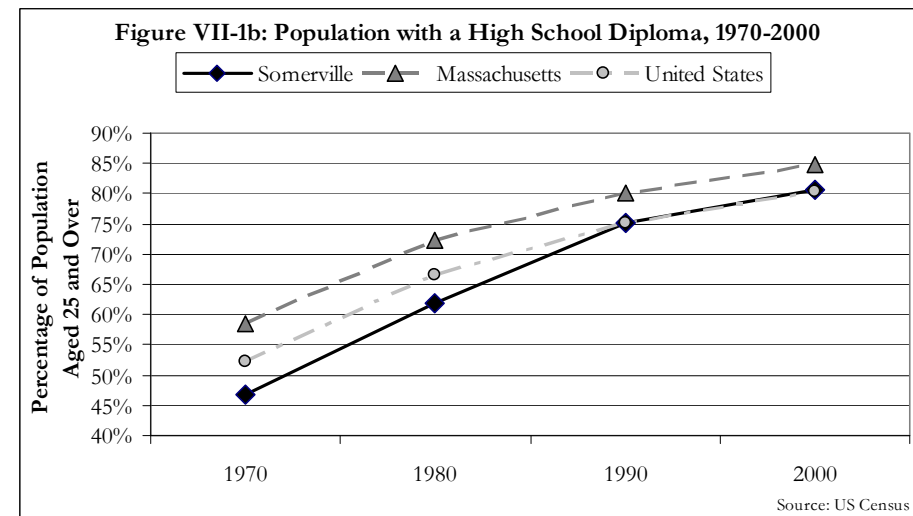
1. Somerville's educational attainment has increased substantially during the last four decades, closely tracking trends at the state and national levels.

Since 1970, major improvements in the education level of the population have occurred at the national, state and local levels. According to the US Census, Over 40% of Somerville's adult population held a college degree in 2000, compared with only 6% of the population in 1970. As illustrated in Figure VII-1a, the growth in Somerville's college-educated population has outpaced growth for Massachusetts or for the United States during that period, particularly during the 1990's.



Trends in the percentage of high school graduates are similar, although as illustrated in Figure VII-1b, Somerville's increase between 1990 and 2000 remains consistent with the state and

national growth during that decade. In 2000, the percentage of Somerville adults with a high school education was nearly identical to the U.S. rate.



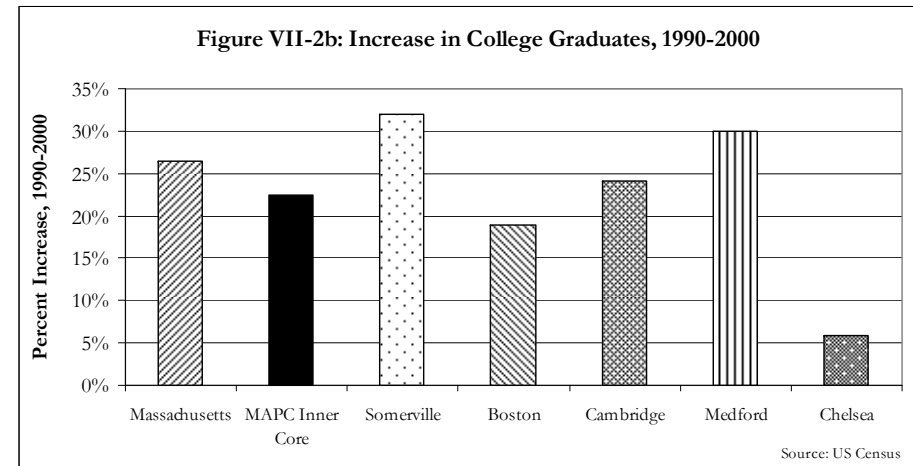
2. Somerville's college-educated population increased by more than 30% during the last decade, while high school graduates increased 11%. Similar increases can be seen across the state, and to a lesser extent within the MAPC Inner Core region.

Gains in percentage of college-educated residents (persons aged 25 and older having completed Associate's, Bachelor's, or graduate/professional degrees) were observed at the local, regional and state levels between 1990 and 2000. Somerville's increase of 31.6% (+5,741 individuals) was greater than the increases observed at the regional and state levels for the same period (Figure VII-2a).

Figure VII-2a: Increase in College Graduates, 1990-2000			
	1990	2000	Percent Change
Massachusetts	1,366,113	1,726,558	+26.4%
MAPC Inner Core	393,896	482,147	+22.4%
Somerville	18,159	23,900	+31.6%
Boston	128,337	152,568	+18.9%
Cambridge	36,658	45,477	+24.1%
Medford	11,546	15,009	+30.0%
Chelsea	3,100	3,283	+5.9%

Source: US Census

Somerville's growth in its college-educated population was also greater than in neighboring cities. As illustrated in Figure VII-2b, Medford experienced the closest growth rate between 1990 and 2000 (+30%, or +3,463 individuals). Growth rates for Cambridge and Boston were significantly lower, and Chelsea's college-educated population increased a mere 6% (+183 individuals) during the 1990's. Current data is insufficient to determine how much of this increase is attributable to in-migration of college-educated persons, as opposed to improved educational attainment of existing residents.

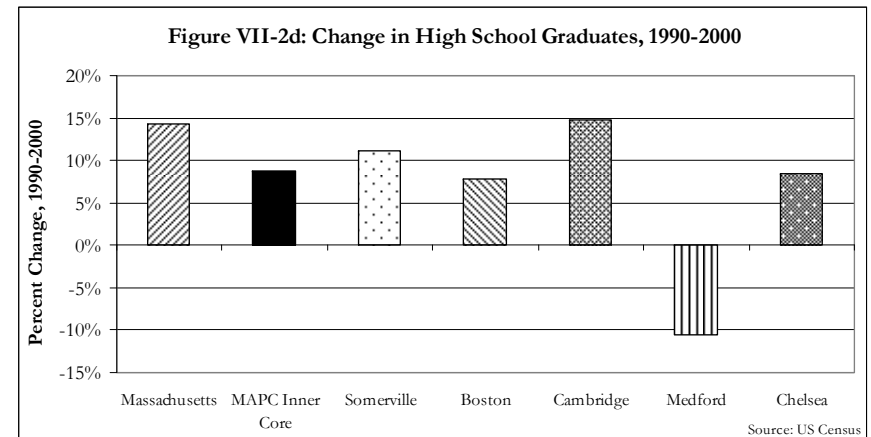


Gains in percentage of high-school educated residents were observed at the local, regional and state levels. Somerville's gain of 11.2% (+4,360 individuals) represented a higher percentage increase than the regional average (+8.7%), but a smaller increase than the state average (+14.3%). As illustrated in Figure VII-2c, Boston and Chelsea's increases were comparable to the region, while the increase for Cambridge was more comparable to the state as a whole.

Figure VII-2c: Change in High School Graduates, 1990-2000			
	1990	2000	Percent Change
Massachusetts	3,169,566	3,622,182	+14.3%
MAPC Inner Core	845,774	919,106	+8.7%
Somerville	38,925	43,285	+11.2%
Boston	276,833	297,945	+7.6%
Cambridge	53,540	59,375	+10.9%
Medford	13,995	12,524	-10.5%
Chelsea	5,987	6,497	+8.5%

Source: US Census

The only exception to this trend among Somerville's neighboring cities was Medford. As illustrated in Figure VII-2d, Medford had roughly 10% fewer high school graduates in 2000 than in 1990. This decrease is likely reflective of Medford's overall population loss for that period, where total population decreased by roughly 1,700 persons between 1990 and 2000. The Census data do not indicate how much of these changes are attributable to in-migration or out-migration of high school-educated persons, as opposed to improved educational attainment of existing residents.



Despite recent gains in educational attainment, one out of five Somerville residents does not have a high school education. Somerville experienced a 19% drop in the number of residents who have not graduated high school between 1990 and 2000. As illustrated in Figure VII-2e, this change is more significant than changes for the region and the state as a whole, yet less than changes for Cambridge and Medford.

Figure VII-2e: Adult Residents Without a High School Diploma, 1990-2000			
	1990	2000	Percent Change
Massachusetts	792,657	651,093	-17.9%
MAPC Inner Core	214,006	185,519	-13.3%
Somerville	12,851	10,408	-19.0%
Boston	88,875	79,629	-10.4%
Cambridge	9,931	6,940	-30.1%
Medford	8,316	5,742	-30.9%
Chelsea	6,579	8,753	+33.0%

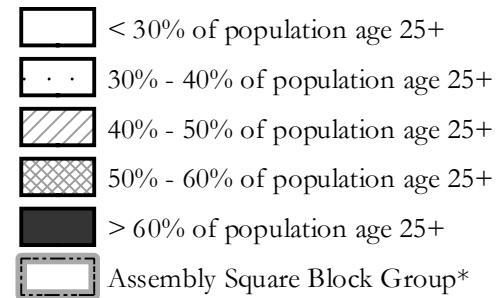
Source: US Census

3. In 2000, the percentage of adult residents with a college degree in East Somerville was dramatically lower than the citywide average.

While 44.5% of adult residents citywide had completed college, Map VII-3a shows that several neighborhoods have much lower percentages of college-educated residents. The major concentration of Block Groups where college-educated residents make up less than 25% of the adult population occurs in East Somerville. Additional neighborhoods with lower than average rates of college graduates include Union Square, Winter Hill/Magoun Square, and Alewife Brook Parkway/Clarendon Hill.

The areas of Somerville that feature low percentages of college-educated residents tend to also feature high rates of minority residents, foreign-born residents, non-English speaking residents and low-income residents.

Map VII-3a: Population with a College Degree (2000)

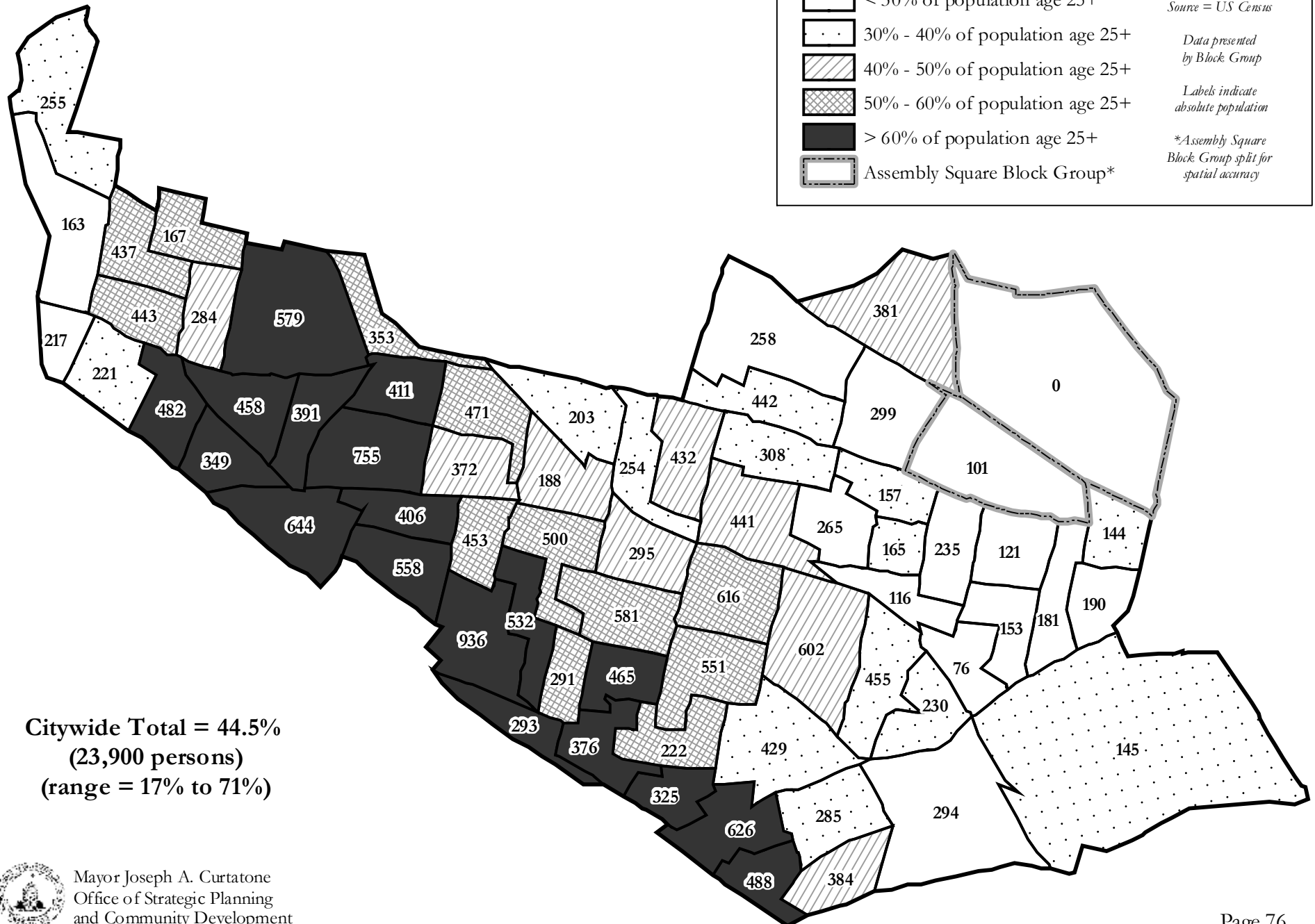


Source = US Census

Data presented
by Block Group

Labels indicate
absolute population

*Assembly Square
Block Group split for
spatial accuracy

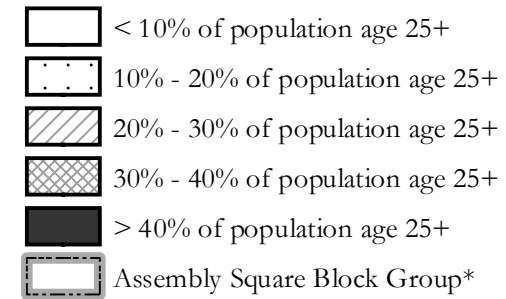


4. In 2000, the percentage of adult residents without a high school diploma was significantly higher in East Somerville than the citywide average.

According to the US Census, 19.4% of Somerville residents aged 25 and older (10,408 individuals) did not have a high school diploma. Twenty-five Census Block Groups had rates higher than the citywide average; all but two of these Block Groups were located in East Somerville, as shown in Map 4. Areas with the highest concentrations of adults without a high school diploma (>30% of residents aged 25 or older) include the Ten Hills neighborhoods south of Mystic Avenue, neighborhoods along East Broadway, areas around Gilman Square, and the Brickbottom/Inner Belt neighborhoods.

Elevated rates of adults who have not completed high school (20%-30%) are also more common in East Somerville. A strong correlation is present between low education rates and higher percentages of foreign-born residents for Somerville's Census Block Groups.

Map VII-4a: Population Without a High School Diploma (2000)

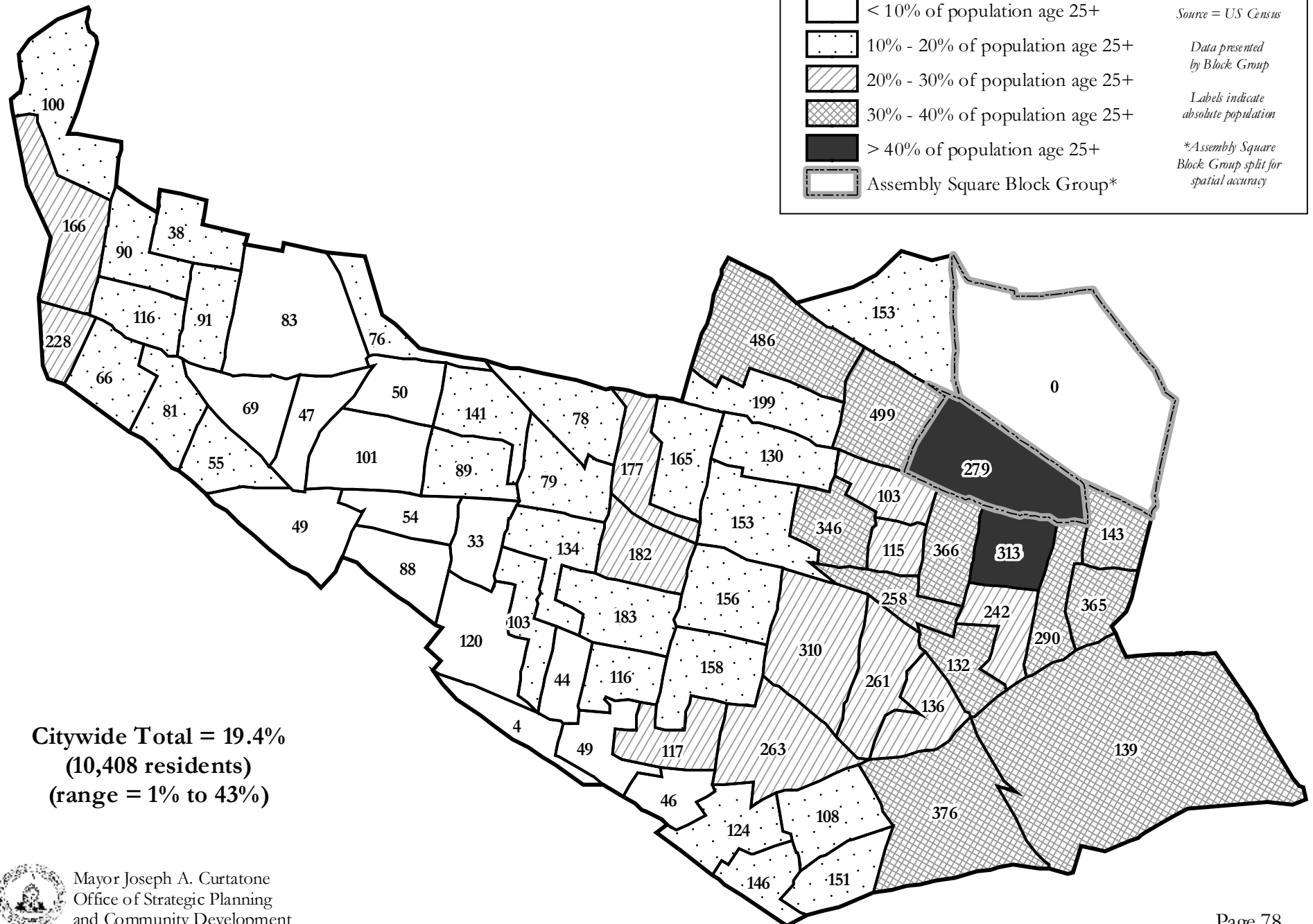


Source = US Census

Data presented by Block Group

Labels indicate absolute population

*Assembly Square Block Group split for spatial accuracy



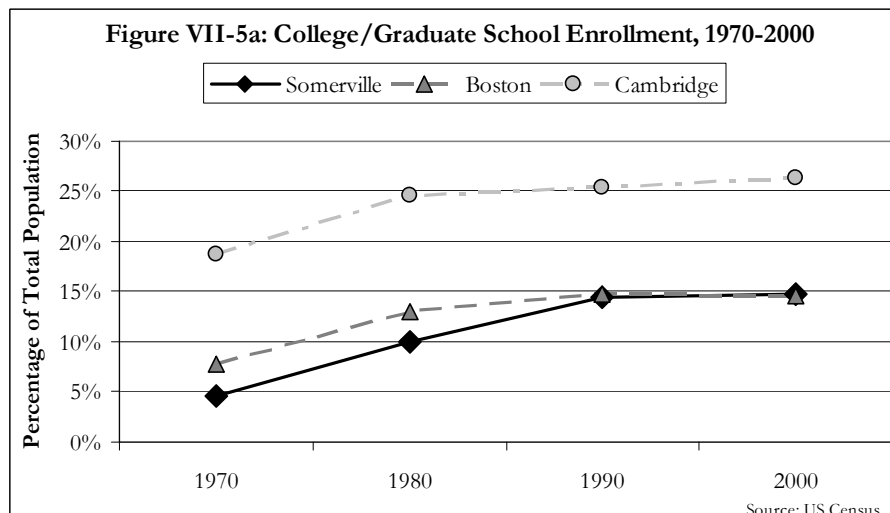
Citywide Total = 19.4%
(10,408 residents)
(range = 1% to 43%)



Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone
 Office of Strategic Planning
 and Community Development

5. During the last three decades, Somerville's population of college and graduate students has increased at roughly the same rate as neighboring cities Boston and Cambridge. Increases in the student population leveled off noticeably during the 1990's.

According to the US Census, roughly 5% of Somerville's total population was enrolled in college or graduate school in 1970. By 2000, that figure had increased to roughly 15% of the city's population. As illustrated in Figure VII-5a, Somerville's student population growth closely mirrors changes in Boston and Cambridge, two neighboring cities known for their large student populations.



Despite the leveling off illustrated in Figure VII-5a, Somerville's student population increased by roughly 500 students (+4%) between 1990 and 2000. Both Boston and Cambridge gained over 1,000 students during that period, while the number of college and graduate students in the regional and state populations actually decreased.

Clearly, the proximity of colleges and universities such as Tufts, Lesley, Harvard and MIT serves to insulate Somerville and its neighbors from the regional and statewide drops in college enrollment. Local universities have proposed to increase enrollment due to the recent economic downturn, indicating that Somerville's student population may increase again in the near future.

Figure VII-5b: Population Enrolled in College or Graduate School, 1990-2000			
	1990	2000	Percent Change
Massachusetts	536,563	473,403	-11.8%
MAPC Inner Core	197,670	192,606	-2.6%
Somerville	10,991	11,452	+4.2%
Boston	84,831	85,847	+1.2%
Cambridge	24,364	26,613	+9.2%
Medford	5,774	5,703	-1.2%
Chelsea	1,538	1,737	+12.9%

Source: US Census

College and graduate students represented roughly 15% of Somerville's total population in 2000. As illustrated in Figure VII-5c, Somerville's percentage is twice the statewide average, and noticeably greater than the average for the metropolitan core. Boston had a comparable rate (14.5%), while Cambridge exhibited by far the highest percentage of students (26%). Medford and Chelsea had significantly smaller student populations in 2000 (10% and 5%, respectively).

Figure VII-5c: Percent of Population Enrolled in College or Graduate School, 1990-2000			
	Enrolled	Total Population	Percent Enrolled
Massachusetts	473,403	6,349,097	7.5%
MAPC Inner Core	192,606	1,628,008	11.8%
Somerville	11,452	77,478	14.8%
Boston	85,847	592,347	14.5%
Cambridge	26,613	101,650	26.3%
Medford	5,703	55,765	10.2%
Chelsea	1,737	35,080	5.0%

Source: US Census

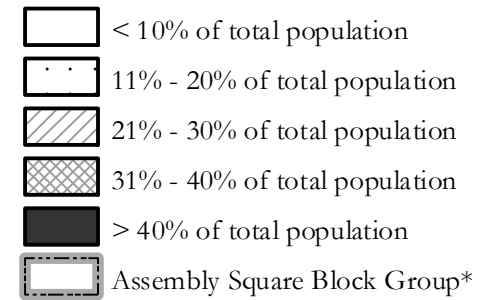
6. In 2000, nearly 15% of Somerville residents were enrolled in a college or graduate degree program; West Somerville tended to have higher percentages of enrolled residents than East Somerville did.

According to Census Block Group data, West Somerville neighborhoods generally had higher percentages of their populations enrolled in college or graduate degree programs than did other parts of the city (see Map VII-6a). Major concentrations of students (greater than 25% of total Block Group population) were visible around the Tufts campus, in Porter Square/Spring Hill, and at Inman Square. Most Block Groups in East Somerville, Union Square and Winter Hill showed enrollment rates of less than 10%.

Trends in the student population have significant implications for economic development, affordable housing and sense of community in Somerville. Housing affordability can be impacted by student populations, since students may be able to afford higher rents than existing low- and moderate-income residents can.

The student population also represents an economic development opportunity, for two main reasons. First, employers often locate their operations based on the availability of an educated labor pool. Secondly, students and recent graduates are potential entrepreneurs and innovators who can create the next generation of small businesses in Somerville.

Map VII-6a: College/University Enrollment (2000)

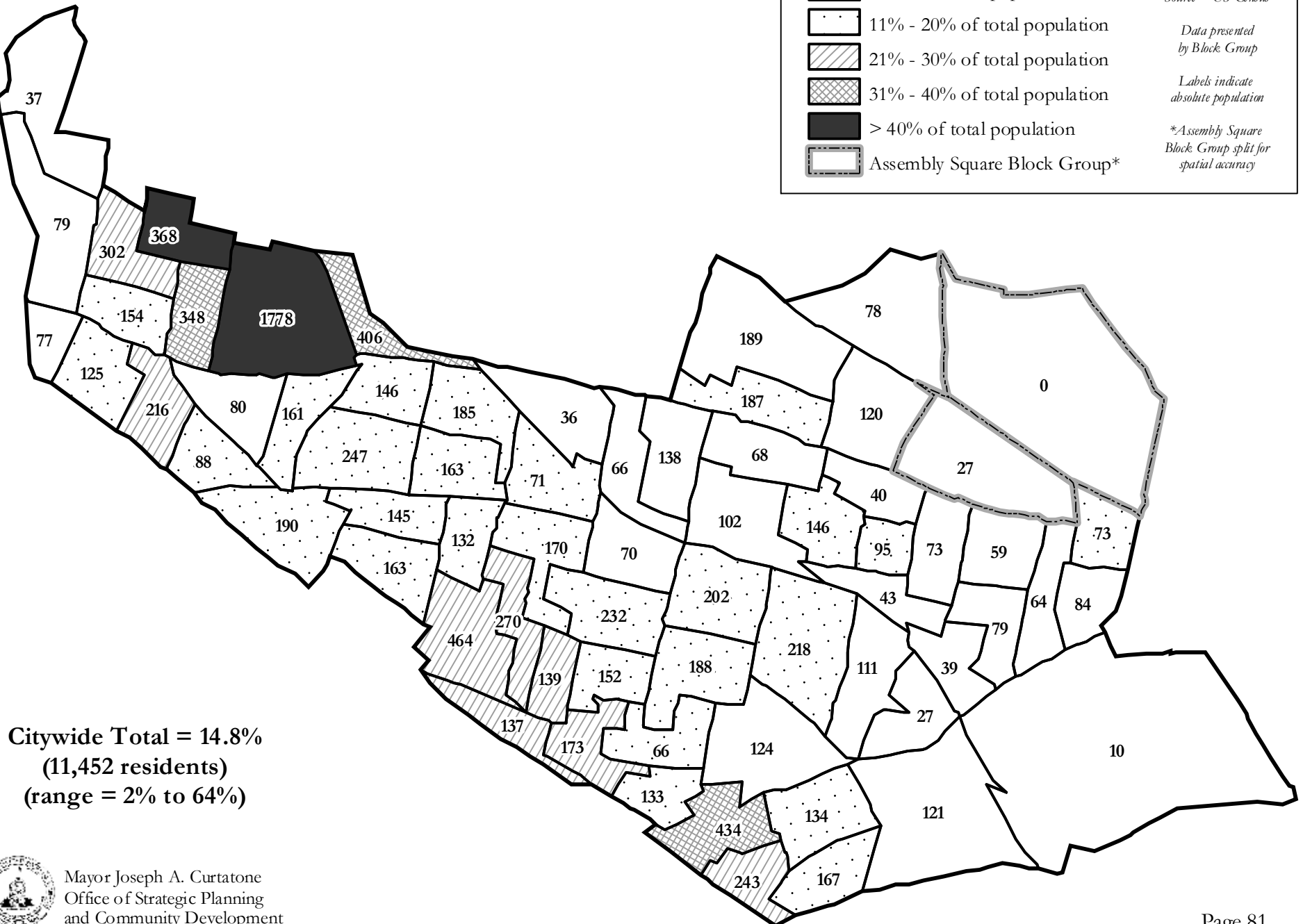


Source = US Census

Data presented
by Block Group

Labels indicate
absolute population

*Assembly Square
Block Group split for
spatial accuracy



Citywide Total = 14.8%
 (11,452 residents)
 (range = 2% to 64%)



Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone
 Office of Strategic Planning
 and Community Development