Health, Environment, Community
A Tour of Dorchester and Surrounding Neighborhoods for Asthma Prevention and Health Equity

Fall 2012
A Joint Report by

Harvard School of Public Health
NIEHS Center for Environmental Health

and

GreenDorchester

Revised Fall 2012

This document is a revised edition of resources, which were originally compiled for the purposes of orientation on the NIEHS meeting of Environmental Health Sciences Core Centers trolley tour, on March 28, 2012. The tour preceded a community forum on asthma and health equity in Boston’s neighborhoods held at Dorchester House Multi-Service Center. The research herein was collected from Boston Public Health Commission publications, community websites, and conversations with community members.

Cover Photo: Katy Terrell

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Introduction

We all want to breathe easily. The fact is: clean air comes to some of us more readily than others. Nowhere is this more obvious than in Boston, where respiratory and other illnesses wreak havoc among underserved neighborhoods and vulnerable populations. Asthma, a chronic respiratory condition, affects 10% of adults citywide, 11% of Boston Public High School students and 19% of African-American females. It disproportionately strikes women, children, minorities and the economically disadvantaged. It sends thousands to the hospital each year, most notably children under five. Vicious and persistent, asthma has been called “epidemic” and “crisis;” is triggered by dust, smoke, mice, mold and fine particles from diesel; and often accompanies other health problems such as obesity. It has definite socioeconomic roots and causes, and according to many indications, those roots are deepening and the problems are getting worse.

Asthma affects people walking downtown, in the North End, in Jamaica Plain. It staggers two councilors in City Hall. But more than anywhere else, it affects people right here in “the neighborhoods.” In Roxbury and North Dorchester, 16% of adults have asthma and hospitalization rates approach figures 80% higher than the citywide average. Sparse green space, old homes, poorly ventilated shops, high volumes of resident and non-resident commuters, widespread poverty and dietary disease all contribute to an atmosphere of harm. Yet health hazards are hardly all that these neighborhoods have to offer. It’s one thing to talk about Dorchester as danger zone, 6.1 square miles saturated with poor outcomes, and it’s quite another to discuss Boston’s oldest, largest neighborhood as vibrant, artistic, intellectually-rich and possessing precious gems of American history and culture. For now, the two layers seem inseparable, but we can have one without the other. Strategies that improve human health also promote neighborhood revitalization. We owe it to the neighborhood and to the thousands that live here to work towards a healthy environment and healthy future.

As the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) notes, a key tactic for fighting asthma is “creating healthy environments in homes and neighborhoods that reduce exposure to known triggers.” Fortunately for Dorchester, environmental groups and activists abound to carry on this battle. These groups include Health Resources in Action and their Boston Healthy Homes and Schools Collaborative (BHHSC) program, Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (MassCOSH), the Vietnamese American Initiative for Development (Viet-AID), and GreenDorchester—the organization I represent—among others. BHHSC has worked with Family Childcare Educators in Boston’s high-risk census tracts, teamed up with MA Affordable Housing Alliance (MAHA) to incorporate Healthy Homes strategies into MAHA’s Homeowners 201 curriculum, and collaborated with the City of Boston’s Inspectional Services Department (ISD) to require regular health inspections of rental properties. BHHSC also works with the Boston Public Schools System and Head Starts to make the learning environment healthier for children and staff. The BPHC has partnered with MassCOSH and Viet-AID to work on Safe Auto Shops and Nail Salons, respectively, educating workers about toxic chemicals and investigating ways to vent air and substitute clean products. GreenDorchester has hung air
quality banners, monitored emissions, secured bike lanes and racks, helped revamp the Ashmont subway station, and partnered in numerous additional efforts to promote healthy lifestyles and minimize pollution.

Not the least of the entities omitted above are local health centers, which serve as centers of education and advocacy in addition to being treatment facilities. Others have gone unmentioned. In the Talbot Norfolk Triangle area of Dorchester, The Boston Project Ministries has mobilized residents to develop urban greenspace. Boston Natural Areas Network has stewarded community gardens. Numerous groups are currently battling proposed transit cuts, which threaten to decrease bus and trolley service and increase automobile congestion. Local leaders, such as councilors Felix Arroyo and LaMattina, and Representative Martin Walsh, have proven strong allies in establishing just regulation and healthy governance. Academic partners advance the study of air quality issues. Let us thank NIEHS and Harvard School of Public Health for convening the Change in the Air forum and for their ongoing commitment to improve urban air quality. Finally, no one should forget the power and importance of individual residents. It is their voices that sound out, their stories that make change happen.

The single greatest threat to our airways is apathy. Quite literally, we cannot hold our breath waiting for health problems to dissipate: asthma and other respiratory illnesses demand an engaged response. Because those who live, work and play in Boston have to breathe, we all have to act. Today’s forum provides an excellent opportunity to join together in the struggle for clean air.

Joel Wool
Community Advocate
GreenDorchester
Dorchester Demographic Overview

Of Boston’s neighborhoods North and South Dorchester, Roxbury, and Mattapan have the highest percentages of minorities and low-income residents.
Dorchester is one of the most culturally diverse neighborhoods in Boston. Home to many Vietnamese, Haitian, Jamaican, Cape Verdean, Hispanic, African-American, Irish, and other populations, Dorchester as a whole has no racial majority; however, African-Americans are the most numerous residents.

Ethnic Majorities in 2000 Census Tracts
Dorchester’s many internal communities vary sharply in culture and demographic profile. Geographically, the census splits the neighborhood into "North Dorchester" and "South Dorchester," a practice that tends to hide disparities in employment, income, education, and health.

For example, Washington Street marks a clear demographic divide in Codman Square. A sweeping majority of residents west of Washington Street are people of color and have reported feeling social, cultural, and economic neglect and isolation from civic services and education. Unimproved lots can create obstacles to overcoming this isolation. On the other
hand, the East side of Washington Street has gentrified over the years and is populated with middle class, single-family homes.

On their website, the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) notes the complex makeup of neighborhood identities within the wide boundaries that define Dorchester.

The area's many close knit communities are further testament to Dorchester's unique spirit. Dorchester Avenue, the neighborhood's main artery, uniquely connects a number of Dorchester's vibrant business districts. Fields and Uphams Corners, Ashmont Station, Neponset Circle, Adams Village, and Morrissey Boulevard, to name a few, are thriving commercial anchors to a number of the area's sub-neighborhoods, which include Codman Square, Jones Hill, Meeting House Hill, Pope's Hill, Savin Hill, Harbor Point, Lower Mills, and Port Norfolk. And still others identify their sub-neighborhood by the name of nearby parish churches, illustrating the area's community oriented flavor.1

The BRA has created My Neighborhood Census Viewer, an online mapping tool powered by Esri© Geographic Information Systems that allows users to quickly and visually view census data at the level of individual census blocks and draw shapes that pool together data for any neighborhood as defined by the user.

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1 Boston Redevelopment Authority, *Boston’s Neighborhoods*. 
Race in North and South Dorchester

Figure 22.1 Population Estimate by Race/Ethnicity, North Dorchester, 2005-2009

Figure 27.1 Population Estimate by Race/Ethnicity*, South Dorchester, 2005-2009

*Individuals who were identified as “Other race” were not included due to insufficient sample size.

DATA SOURCE: US Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey

(Boston Public Health Commission, 2011)
Languages Spoken at Home in North and South Dorchester

**Figure 22.2 Languages Spoken at Home, North Dorchester, 2005-2009**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Percent of Population 5 Years and Over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish*</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French†</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese‡</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Spanish includes Spanish Creole
†French includes Patois, Cajun, and French Creole
‡Portuguese includes Portuguese Creole
DATA SOURCE: US Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey

**Figure 27.2 Languages Spoken at Home, South Dorchester, 2005-2009**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Percent of Population Age 5 and Older</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish*</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French†</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Spanish includes Spanish Creole
†French includes Patois, Cajun, and French Creole
DATA SOURCE: US Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey

(Boston Public Health Commission, 2011)
Types of Households in North and South Dorchester

Figure 22.3 Type of Household, North Dorchester, 2005-2009

DATA SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey

Figure 27.3 Type of Household, South Dorchester, 2005-2009

DATA SOURCE: US Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey

(Boston Public Health Commission, 2011)
Poverty Levels by Family Type in North and South Dorchester

Figure 22.4 Families with Income Below Poverty Level by Family Type, North Dorchester, 2005-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Family</th>
<th>Percent of Families Within Type of Family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Families</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female HH (Headed Household)</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female HH: Children &lt; 18</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female HH: Children &lt; 5</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Insufficient Sample Size
DATA SOURCE: US Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey

Figure 27.4 Families with Income Below Poverty Level by Family Type, South Dorchester, 2005-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Family</th>
<th>Percent of Families Within Type of Family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Families</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female HH (Headed Household)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female HH: Children &lt; 18</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female HH: Children &lt; 5</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Insufficient Sample Size
DATA SOURCE: US Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey

(Boston Public Health Commission, 2011)
Transit, Housing, and the Built Environment

Dorchester Avenue

Dorchester Avenue, known by many as “the Avenue” or “Dot Ave,” is an important thoroughfare and a major geographic, economic, and social fixture of Dorchester and the Greater Boston Area. It runs north and south through approximately the center of the neighborhood, as shown in the map below. Due to its central location, its high volume of traffic, and its multi-use nature, it is an ideal springboard for improving the built environment of Dorchester.

Dorchester Avenue
(The Dorchester Avenue Project, 2006)
The Dorchester Avenue Project

In 2006, Mayor Thomas M. Menino initiated the Dorchester Avenue Project, which “brings together the City’s resources to ensure that city departments and residents are working together to improve the quality of life and the economic well-being of the Avenue.” The project will focus specifically on improving “transportation, neighborhood businesses, neighborhood housing, and streetscapes” along the Dorchester Avenue Corridor.

The Dorchester Avenue Corridor includes businesses that employ 53.5% of Dorchester’s employed residents and 7.1% of employed residents in all of Boston. Consequently, improvements to the corridor have the potential to improve the environmental effects of the built environment for a majority of Dorchester residents, as well as many business-owners, employees, and visitors.

A primary component of the Dorchester Avenue Project is the Dorchester Avenue Transportation and Streetscape Action Plan, which will allocate $5 million of improvements in key areas of the Avenue. In December of 2007, Mayor Menino presented the proposed action plan to residents of Dorchester and South Boston.

The objectives of the action plan include creating a consistent visual palette throughout the corridor, the introduction of uniformly well-constructed concrete sidewalks, pruned and carefully placed street trees that will improve the look of the street without hiding business signage, pedestrian-friendly lighting, more thorough and driver-friendly road signage, and the

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2 John Palmieri et al., Dorchester Avenue Streetscape and Transportation Action Plan.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid. In 2005, South Boston residents requested and received permission to be added to the project.
increased presence of community art.\textsuperscript{7} Many of these objectives will help improve air quality through the planting of and care for trees and by improving pedestrian accessibility of the Avenue.

The action plan also recommends increasing bicycle accommodations along Dorchester Avenue and proposes that a bicycle specialist take on this role.\textsuperscript{8} Former US National Champion and Olympic cyclist Nicole Freedman, nicknamed the city’s official “bike czar,” fulfilled this role from 2007-2012.\textsuperscript{9} As of May 2012, the position has been moved to the mayor’s office and is currently held by interim bike coordinator Kris Carter.\textsuperscript{10}

In 2009, the Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition prepared a report for the Boston Collaborative for Food and Fitness, which incorporated the neighborhoods of Dorchester, East Boston, Jamaica Plain, Mattapan, and Roxbury.

The recommendations for Dorchester included engineered improvements for bicycles and pedestrians along some of the more complex intersections, pavement upgrades and repairs, more widespread bicycle parking, and bicycle lanes north of I-93 and/or “Share the Road” signage, commonly referred to as sharrows.\textsuperscript{11} For more information on bicycle safety and maintenance, bikers can consult the Boston Cyclist Union, an active citywide group that promotes bicycle use, safety, repair, education and accessibility.

Thanks to collaboration between the Mayor’s Office, Mass Bike, the Boston Cyclists Union and local group Dot Bike, Dorchester now enjoys significantly more bike amenities than it did in the past - including bike racks, lanes and road markings.

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{10} Boston Cyclists Union, Boston’s bike coordinator transition moves forward, 2012.
\textsuperscript{11} Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition, Bicycling in Boston’s Neighborhoods: Suitability of the Built Environment and Recommendations.
Smoke-Free Public Housing; Healthy and Sustainable Housing

In September 2012, Boston’s public housing will be smoke-free, a major step in reducing the health risks for a large number of Boston residents.

This initiative follows several years of work and collaboration among several key agencies including the Boston Housing Authority and the Boston Public Health Commission.

Although other cities such as Detroit, San Antonio, and Portland, Oregon already have smoking restrictions, Boston’s smoke-free homes effort makes Boston the largest housing authority in the country to ban smoking in public housing.

The smoke-free regulations are intended to “eliminate the health risks caused by indoor exposure” for the 25,000 people in Boston who reside in public housing.12

The Boston Public Health Commission created a smoke-free homes registry, which Mayor Thomas Menino brought to life through an official launch in October of 2011. Landlords and tenants who are seeking smoke-free public housing can utilize this registry at www.bostonsmokefreehomes.org.13

One of the key partners involved in this effort has been the Boston Healthy Homes and Schools Collaborative (BHHSC). This Collaborative advocates for policy changes and construction standards required for energy efficient, lead-free, non-toxic housing.14 In schools, it helps strengthen parent leadership and collaborates with Boston Public Schools and Boston Public Health Commission to ensure healthy school environments.15

BHHSC also trains Family Childcare Educators to bring Healthy Homes resources and education to Boston’s “high-risk” census tracts. Over 800 of these Educators providing in-home child care to Boston children, who are mostly under four years of age.16 Simultaneously, BHHSC is working with the Massachusetts Affordable Housing Alliance (MAHA) to strengthen their Homeowners 201 curriculum to include Healthy Homes strategies.17

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13 Ibid.
14 http://bhhsc.org/our-initiatives/healthy-homes/green-and-healthy-housing.html
15 Boston Healthy Homes and Schools Collaborative, bhhsc.org.
16 Davida Andelman, personal communication.
17 Ibid.
BHHSC is involved with a project of the City of Boston Inspectional Services Department that aims to revamp its Rental Re-Inspection Ordinance. The improved Ordinance will require all rental properties in Boston to register with the City and undergo an inspection every two to three years to ensure the units remain healthy and safe for their tenants.18

Viet-AID and MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning (DUSP) Study

Viet-AID is a Vietnamese-led Community Development Corporation working to develop a vibrant Fields Corner sub-community by increasing the affordable housing stock, promoting civic engagement, providing technical assistance for small businesses, and providing child care services. In 2012, Viet-AID has been working with graduate students in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning (DUSP) at MIT to research areas for improving sustainability and equity in existing and new housing near Fields Corner and to understand the role for Viet-AID in the affordable, green housing market. In May the students reported that Viet-AID is uniquely positioned to instigate sustainable development in the Fields Corner neighborhood of Dorchester. Viet-AID is already incorporating "sustainability" into their work by pursuing energy efficient housing, "Green and Clean" certification for nail salons, by partnering with numerous community groups and city agencies and through housing many community efforts at their Charles Street headquarters. They also provide business assistance, tenant advocacy, and educational and social services, such as high-quality after-school programming. The report suggests that Viet-AID could expand these efforts by enhancing current housing stock via weatherization retrofits, educating landlords about indoor air quality and Healthy Homes, serving as an advocate for community-conscious Complete Streets development, and continuing to engage residents, especially low-income persons and communities of color. Furthermore, improvement to the Fields Corner subway station's physical and aesthetic connections to the commercial core and additional urban greenspace along highly trafficked roads could bring to residents a substantial increase in neighborhood value and sense of communal wellbeing.19

18 Ibid.
19 Massachusetts Institute of Technology Department of Urban Studies and Planning, At the Crossroads: A Plan for Sustainability in Fields Corner, 2012.
Open Spaces by Neighborhood

Much of South Dorchester and nearly all of North Dorchester lack open spaces, especially when compared to other parts of Boston, including Hyde Park, Jamaica Park, Roslindale, and West Roxbury. Therefore, increasing green spaces at the level of individual blocks and streets would increase the opportunities for residents to spend time outdoors near their homes. Franklin Park, located near Dorchester, is a major resource that draws many inner-city families on weekends and is a popular spot for school field trips.

(Boston Parks and Recreation Department, 2011)
However, many of the smaller green spaces and vacant lots remain dilapidated. Thus, there is an opportunity to bring about a major improvement to the recreational opportunities for residents by focusing on revitalizing these existing undeveloped areas. Community groups such as Talbot Norfolk Triangle Neighbors United and Nuestra Community Development Corporation have taken note and are working to develop gardens and parks. The Department of Neighborhood Development (DND) is the City’s sector that oversees property development and management and works to convert these lots into public amenities or commercial and housing units.

Community Assets by Neighborhood

(John Shea, Boston Public Health Commission, 2011)
Despite this lack of open spaces, both North and South Dorchester have more overall community resources than many other Boston neighborhoods; however, the presence of many community organizations may indicate the real and/or perceived need for more community support in these neighborhoods. Clearly, there is a great deal of energy and activism within the communities of Dorchester. Yet, gaps in communication, duplicative efforts, and resource challenges tend to undermine many of these attempts to assist "hard-to-reach, hard-to-serve" residents. Minority and non-English speaking populations, who may receive much of their local information through non-traditional channels, are particularly subject to informational gaps or barriers.

In Dorchester, crucial services are provided to immigrant and "ethnic" groups by organizations such as Association of Haitian Women in Boston (AFAB), CVC Unido, Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers (MAPS), Mujeres Unidas en Acción, Viet-AID and Vietnamese American Civic Association (VACA). The city’s Office of New Bostonians (ONB) also provides an essential role in reaching these populations.

In November 2011, Mayor Thomas Menino created Neighborhood Response Teams (NRTs) to coordinate the activities of government agencies and community organizations in addressing "problem properties," and publicize human and youth services. The NRTs brought together many municipal departments with residents and community groups and focused on three areas in and near Dorchester: Codman Square, Four Corners and Mattapan. This level of interdepartmental and cross-sector coordination has the potential for meeting community needs with unprecedented proficiency.

**Rental Re-inspection Program**

The City of Boston Inspectional Services is in the process of revamping a rental inspection program, which has lost momentum but moved to a faster track in the spring of 2012. The program was based on a similar program in Burlington Vermont, which intervened in the quality of rental housing. In the next few months, Bryan Glascock, who has recently taken over as commissioner of the Environment Department, will be revisiting this project and making changes that ensure its effectiveness. Currently the program is voluntary and excludes properties under four units. The improved ordinance will require property owners to bring units into compliance with the State Sanitary Code, positively impacting 162,000 homes from a healthy homes perspective. The ordinance would require all properties to register with the city and undergo a certification process every two to three years, likely costing between $75 and $150. Landlord and stakeholder meetings are underway.21

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Asthma, a Growing Public Concern

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have shown that asthma is on the rise all across the United States for all age, sex, and racial groups. This increase lowers our school attendance rates and our productivity, and elevates healthcare costs, not to mention the fact that asthma requires more and more of our loved ones to struggle with a potentially life-threatening illness each year.

New England has some of the highest regional asthma prevalence rates in the United States. In 2008, the highest adult self-reported prevalence states were New Hampshire at a rate of 10.4% and Rhode Island at 10.6%, much higher than the national average of 7.7%.22 Massachusetts is among these high prevalence states, with 9.9% of adults and 10.3% of children having current asthma in 2007.23

The situation is worse still in Boston, where rates of pediatric asthma and asthma-related deaths are much higher than the statewide average. By looking even closer at Boston’s neighborhoods and demographic groups, sharp disparities are apparent at the local level. In North Dorchester nearly 1 in 5 adults had asthma (17%) between 2008 and 2010.24 In 2009, the asthma hospitalization rate for 3-5-year-olds in Boston was four times greater in black children than in white children.25

The role of the environment in determining health is especially noticeable among Boston’s various geographic and demographic groups. Asthma is clearly a major concern across all communities in Boston; however Roxbury and North Dorchester are noticeable hotspots.

In 2010, North Dorchester required the most emergency medical service dispatches (for all causes), totaling 16,747 clinical incidents. North Dorchester and Roxbury combined were responsible for nearly 1/3 of all of Boston’s EMS clinical incidents that year (29%) and again in 2011 (30%). Respiratory incidents were consistently the fifth most common cause for these services across all neighborhoods in Boston.26

Of the major service changes in 2011, EMS has increased accommodations for asthmatics by creating a program to keep track of patients aged 9-24 who were transported more than twice within a six month period. The program helps connect these patients with referral services.27 Data from 2004-2006 show that “Asthma and Bronchitis” was the leading cause for hospitalizations in 1-9 year old children in Dorchester.

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22 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2008 Adult Asthma Data: Prevalence Tables and Maps. Adult Self-Reported Current Asthma Prevalence Rate (Percent) and Prevalence (Number) by State or Territory.
23 Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Burden of Asthma in Massachusetts.
26 Boston Emergency Medical Services, Vital Statistics.
27 Ibid.
Asthma does not always develop during childhood, but manifests at any age. Irritants such as pet dander, mold and pests, as well as industrial chemicals such as solvents, aerosols, and perfumes can not only exacerbate a person’s existing asthma and trigger an increased number of attacks, but these irritants can also sensitize a person, making him or her more prone to developing asthma at all.

Of Massachusetts adults ever diagnosed with asthma, nearly half (48.9%) were diagnosed as adults. About 1/3 of all Massachusetts adults with lifetime or current asthma reported that their asthma was previously or currently caused or worsened by their jobs.
Pediatric Asthma Surveillance reports of the 2006-2007 academic year showed a wide range of child asthma prevalence across different communities in Massachusetts. The statewide average was 10.8%, but at the individual community level, the rates ranged from 0% in Hawley and New Ashford to 43.07% in West Brookfield. At 14.14% Boston had a rate that was higher than the state average and that difference between the rates was statistically significant.

In West Brookfield, roughly two out of every five children in grades K-8 suffered from asthma in their lifetime.

These disparities emphasize the important role of a child’s environment on respiratory health in Massachusetts.
Asthma-related Deaths Higher in Boston

Of the average annual 378 deaths from asthma in Massachusetts, the Boston/Chelsea/Revere/Winthrop area (labeled 19 above) averaged 57 deaths annually.
Socio-Economic Factors

The Effect of Socioeconomic Status for MA adults
(Massachusetts Department of Public Health, *Burden of Asthma in Massachusetts*, 2009)

The Effect of Self or Adult Respondent’s Education Level on Asthma in MA Distribution of Massachusetts Work-Related Asthma Cases (1993-2006)
(Massachusetts Department of Public Health, *Burden of Asthma in Massachusetts*, 2009)
In the Massachusetts Department of Health SENSOR study, a combined 35.1% of work-related asthma cases were attributed to hospitals and educational services. Manufacturing jobs accounted for about a quarter of all cases.

Interpreting this table should be done with caution. In the study, women and white-collar workers were more likely to respond to the survey and are thus over-represented. It is important to note that this distribution describes where the most cases are, but not the percentage of workers impacted by asthma within each sector. In other words, the distribution will reflect the number of jobs available in each sector. (E.g., more jobs are likely available in healthcare services than in traffic regulation.)
Outdoor Air Quality

The outdoor air quality information for Dorchester is not as complete as the asthma information, both in terms of research and community projects. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection collects data from 40 stations across 25 towns and cities across the state of Massachusetts. Ambient air quality in the state is determined by levels of sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, ozone, particulate matter and lead at these fixed-site stations. Clearly, there is not currently a practical mechanism for collecting comprehensive widespread data at the neighborhood or sub-community levels. So unfortunately, there is a gap. No stationary monitors exist in Dorchester, the closest two being in Roxbury and in Fenway at Kenmore Square. Dorchester undeniably has high frequency automobile, commercial truck, and diesel bus traffic and many narrow, congested streets, which likely contribute to poor air quality in Dorchester.30

A couple of small-scale pilot projects have been carried out in Dorchester to measure particles from I-93 and Dorchester Avenue. The CAFEH and CHANGE studies contributing to Dorchester-specific knowledge of air quality at the level of selected individual streets. First, Community Assessment of Freeway Exposure and Health (CAFEH) is a Tufts University study funded by a $2.5M NIH grant that “combines community and academic resources to advance scientific understanding of the health risks of highway pollution.” The study conducts air quality measurements near major highways in Dorchester as well as Somerville, South Boston, and Chinatown. The CAFEH project aims to use the data to inform policymakers and promote environmental justice across the city. Tufts students have developed a short film about the project called Highway to Health.31 CHANGE (Consulting for Health, Air, Nature & Greener Environment) is a project of the Dorchester Environmental Health Coalition that has been monitoring ultrafine particle concentrations along Dorchester Avenue with the goals of determining potential hotspots, assessing the effects of the Dorchester Avenue Transportation Improvement Project via looking at particle levels before and after the rezoning and other forthcoming traffic-related changes along Dorchester Avenue, and investigating the impact of proximal green spaces on air quality.32 Dorchester Avenue is a long stretch with high traffic volume as well as homes, schools, and civic landmarks. The results of

30 Dorchester Environmental Health Coalition, The Dorchester Environmental Profile.
31 Community Assessment of Freeway Exposure and Health, Welcome to CAFEH.
this study will be used to inform future construction projects and other strategies to improve the air in Dorchester. Analysis, follow-up, and recommendations are forthcoming.\textsuperscript{33}

These projects are only a start to understanding the extent of health inequities due to exposure to polluted outdoor air.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{locations_map.png}
\caption{Locations Monitored for Ultrafine Particles along Dorchester Avenue in Phase One of CHANGE Project (Dorchester Environmental Health Coalition, 2010)}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{33} Dorchester Environmental Health Coalition, \textit{Air Quality Testing | Dorchester Avenue}. 
Urban Development and Environmental Justice Sites

This portion of the book was designed for the trolley tour with NIEHS and community organizers in March 2012 prior to the Community Forum at Dorchester House Multi-Service Center. The tour took us past a number of the following development projects and community initiatives across Boston.

Boston Complete Streets, Downtown

The Complete Streets program is project of the Boston Transportation Department that works to improve the streets of Boston both as “as great public spaces and sustainable transportation networks.” The three components of a complete street design are:

- Multimodal – ensuring that roads are not dominated by cars, but are friendly to pedestrians, people with disabilities, cyclists, and public transit users
- Green – reducing energy use, incorporating landscape elements such as trees, rain gardens, bio-swales, and permeable surfaces to reduce pollution and runoff
- Smart – improving efficiency and convenience via technology improvements (for example: intelligent traffic signals, smart meters, electric car charging, car and bike sharing, navigation and social network tools)

(Boston Complete Streets, 2010)

The Complete Streets program has many ongoing projects in various stages across the City of Boston. A few of these projects are highlighted here:

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i. Current Plan for Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

(Boston Complete Streets, 2010)

ii. Plans for Broad Street, Cross Roads Initiative, currently in construction

The streets of Boston’s financial district are winding and lined with tall buildings, making them difficult to navigate on foot. The sidewalks are quite minimal, narrow and lacking trees and often crosswalks.

(Boston Complete Streets, 2010)

This initiative will create a more pedestrian- and biker-friendly connection between the Fanueil Hall/Quincy Market, Government Center, and State Street to the new Rose Kennedy Greenway along the harbor.
The plan includes wider sidewalks, improved street lighting, handicap accessibility, a passive irrigation system, structural soil, and new benches and seating.

iii. Boylston Street – Future Design

Boylston Street, which is located near Fenway Park and is within walking distance from the Harvard School of Public Health, has traditionally been dominated by automobiles and auto-oriented uses such as fast food restaurants, motels and gas stations. Redevelopment efforts have recently focused on incorporating a mixture of street level (slow food) restaurants and upper story housing and offices. Complete Streets sees this transition as an opportunity to
widen sidewalks, create barriers of trees and other plants between pedestrians and cars, and add bike lanes.35

**Boston Waterfront (Atlantic Wharf), Downtown**

The Boston Harbor Waterfront is one of the up and coming areas of the city recently dubbed the Seaport Innovation District. This Innovation District is becoming a center for high-end businesses and creativity, especially in healthcare, finance, technology, education, research, and consulting. This expansion also sets an example for sustainable design in Boston. In 2007, Boston Properties purchased the historic Russia Wharf 3-building complex dating from 1784. The newly redesigned 854,000 square-foot Atlantic Wharf building brings chic lofts, offices, and retail space to the waterfront area while relying on efficient building design. The complex features green roofing, reduced electrical and water consumption, use of recycled materials, and water capture systems. The Atlantic Wharf building holds a LEED Gold pre-certification from the US Green Building Council. Another important focus for this district has been upgrading transportation infrastructures while simultaneously promoting economic growth.36

**Healthy Public Housing Initiative (HPHI), South Boston and Dorchester**

The Healthy Public Housing Initiative was a community-university collaboration between Tenant Task Forces at the West Broadway and Franklin Hill developments, the Committee for Boston Public Housing, the Boston Housing Authority, the Boston Public Health Commission, the Schools of Public Health at Boston and Harvard Universities and Tufts University School of Medicine. The Schools of Public Health led environmental health surveys and lung function testing (HSPH researcher John Spengler and Tufts' Doug Brugge). The program was funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Healthy Homes Initiative and from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation in the early 2000s.

Program Goals:

- to empower public housing residents to lead education and advocacy efforts and gather information about their housing conditions
- to implement cost effective improvements and maintenances in apartment buildings
- to document changes in resident health and empowerment as a result of improvements
- to distribute the results among health and housing policy makers

In addition, the HPHI took the novel approach of having residents play a significant role in the health study. Twelve residents living in the Franklin Hill, West Broadway and Washington Beech public housing developments in 2003 were trained in asthma prevention through an extensive training program focused on education, research, and advocacy. These residents worked with families in their apartment complexes to document the health status of children with asthma

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35 Ibid.

and to make environmental changes, such as providing new air filters, mattresses, heavy cleaning, and integrated pest management.37

The Franklin Hill Apartments, a healthy environment outside and in. This apartment complex is located directly off of Blue Hill Avenue, one of the Dorchester’s busy streets, notorious for congested traffic as well as crime; yet this complex is self-buffering by its own design, an alcove of green space, good lighting, and recreation areas.

**Quincy Street Corridor and Woodledge/Morrant Bay Apartments, Dorchester**

In 2011, the City of Boston was among five cities (also New Orleans, Seattle, San Francisco, and Chicago) to receive a prestigious federal Choice Neighborhoods Grant. Boston’s Housing and Urban Development (known as HUB) was awarded $20.5M to revamp a distressed area known as the Quincy Street Corridor in Dorchester.

The goal of the grant is to implement comprehensive improvements to transportation, social services, schools, public assets, and access to jobs that will help transform neighborhoods struggling with poverty and crime into sustainable mixed-income areas with access to high quality public works.38

$12.3M of the grant will go toward renovating the eleven Woodledge/Morrant Bay Apartment buildings scattered around Quincy Street and constructing seven new buildings. The rest of the grant will go towards, parks, community gardens, roads, job training, and educational and community programming. The homes will be made to allow for larger families and the complex will include a business center and job-placement office.

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The renewed housing development will be called Quincy Heights. Reoccupation will begin in the spring of 2013.39

**Mass Audubon Society - Boston Nature Center, Mattapan**

Located within one of the densest residential neighborhoods in the Boston with more than 230,000 residents and over 40 schools within a two-mile radius, the Boston Nature Center is an oasis of peaceful open space. The Center provides a sanctuary for city families as well as many species of wildlife. Year-round families come to learn about nature, picnic, or play in the “Nature Nook.” The Center contains a wildlife preserve with 2 miles of trails and natural wetlands, which attract migratory birds. The Nature Center is part of the larger Franklin Park, which also houses a zoo, a golf course, picnic and recreation areas, and trails.

![Boston Nature Center](image1.jpg)

The George Robert White Conservation Center is perhaps the most unique feature of the Nature Center. This community center was designed to minimize environmental impacts. The Nature Center consumes 30% less energy than a conventional building, due to photovoltaic roof shingles, solar thermal panels, geo-thermal heating and cooling pumps, furniture and carpeting made from recycled material.

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39 Irons, M.E., “A boost for a blighted neighborhood.”
Boston Hope Properties, Dorchester

The Boston Hope Properties are a Brownfields remediation success. The properties were acquired by the city in the 1990s, and the US EPA completed the site assessment for contamination in 2001. A non-profit organization called Boston Aging Concerns/Young and Old United Inc. purchased the properties and redeveloped them using $8.5M of public and private funding to create intergenerational housing and a community center for seniors and foster children. The new construction consists of 41 homes across several streets in the Franklin Field section of Dorchester.  

Codman Square Winter Farmer’s Market, Dorchester

A new Farmer’s Market in Dorchester just finished a first and vastly popular winter season. The market was Boston’s first

ever winter market and the impressive turnout demonstrated the high demand for fresh, local food in Dorchester. The winter market was open Sundays in the Great Hall of the Codman Square Health Center January 8 – March 25, 2012. Its grand opening made a splash in the local papers and blogs across the city for being completely sold out before the end of the event. One of the special characteristics of this market is that buyers who qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) can pay using their EBT cards (electronic benefits transfer) as well as with Boston Bounty Bucks. The Boston Bounty Bucks program matches up to $10 worth of SNAP assistance, doubling buying power. This initiative provides increased access to healthy, local foods while also strengthening Massachusetts’s farming economy. The Codman Square Market is now one of over 20 farmers’ markets in Boston to accept Bounty Bucks.

**Peabody Square, Dorchester**

Peabody Square is a main intersection of three streets—Dorchester Avenue, Ashmont Street, and Talbot Avenue. The intersection is only steps away from the newly renovated intermodal Ashmont train station, at the end of one branch of the red line in Dorchester. The Boston Transportation Department’s Complete Streets program has implemented improvements to help traffic flow, increase pedestrian safety and bike lane connections, and recapture storm water. The Massachusetts Department of Transportation helped with “street realignment” construction. This project adopted guidelines for storm water management from a pilot project conducted by the Charles River Watershed Association to assess the recharge benefits of rain gardens and permeable surfaces using GIS mapping tools.

Changes to this intersection have enhanced neighborhood identity by establishing a single focal point, the historic clock tower in the middle of the intersection. Increased greenery, added bike racks and an expanded plaza have added to the vibrant commercial activity that is returning to this area.41

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41 Boston Transportation Department, Project Index.
Before:

After:

Peabody Square Before and After
(Boston Transportation Department, 2010)
**Dorchester Avenue Zoning Update, Dorchester**

This project is an ongoing effort to amend the zoning code along Dorchester Avenue – a major thoroughfare running the length of North and South Dorchester. The update will address the fact that this entire avenue has historically been treated as its own single neighborhood in the code. The changes will allow Dorchester Avenue to become a more beautiful, functioning street with improved traffic flow, local business and residential development, and more comfortable pedestrian- and handicap-friendly sidewalks.

**Fairmont/Indigo Line, Multiple Neighborhoods**

This project is a large-scale effort to improve the Fairmont/Indigo "Commuter Rail" train line and encourage transit-oriented economic development in the neighborhoods through which this line runs. The project is currently in the planning stage and many public meetings are in motion. The Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation secured state and private funding in 2007 and 2008 and the projected completion date range is 2013-2014. Currently, the plan is to build four new stations in Mattapan, Dorchester, and Roxbury/South Boston, which will connect about 190,000 residents to downtown. In addition to providing this “transit equity” along a nine-mile stretch of the Fairmont line, the initiative includes plans to develop affordable housing and increased open spaces. The DBEDC estimates that this new “green corridor” will have over 1500 new and preserved housing units, 780,000 square feet of new commercial space, and bring potentially 1,365 jobs. The Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) will invest $130M into this project.42

![Current Construction to the Fairmont/Indigo Rail](Katy Terrell, COEC, 2012)

42 Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation, www.dbec.org,
The Talbot-Norfolk Triangle is an area of 13 streets in Dorchester, located next to the Fairmont-Indigo commuter rail. Since 1998, the community within this triangle has been driving an effort to transform its vacant properties into open spaces. Prior to 2009, the Talbot-Norfolk Triangle had only one single green space – a neglected cemetery that had become a site of illegal activity. Elmhurst Park opened in 2009 after a decade of conversation and hard work. The mid to late 2000s also saw youth-led projects, surveys, mapping of green spaces and building projects, and public discussions.

The Triangle is now expecting to be impacted by the “transit-oriented development” with the changes to the Fairmont-Indigo train line, including a 25% increase in housing and the corresponding addition of automobile and foot traffic. This community continues to be proactive through this process in engaging with the city authorities and involving residents to shape the look of the neighborhood and meet the local needs.43

After much dialogue and planning within the community, the Talbot-Norfolk Triangle community is preparing to create a Children’s community garden, plant fruit trees, start a rooftop gardening program, and create a terraced outdoor cafe.44 On January 18, 2012, community members from Dorchester met at the Great Hall in Codman Square to discuss reuse of vacant lots. People expressed a desire for increased green space and emphasized not building any more large building in Dorchester.

Some other ideas were to construct a teen center, a skate park, and additional parking lots as a way to reduce congestion. The Department of Neighborhood Development (DND) has an application process for submitting proposal, bids, and expression of interest concerning the development of 12 empty lots.45

43 Talbot-Norfolk Triangle Neighbors United, Talbot-Norfolk Triangle ~ Greenspace Master Plan.
44 Ibid.
45 Rosso, P.D. “Dorchester discusses ideas for vacant city lots.”
These images show an abandoned auto shop and vacant lot, which has problems with illegal dumping. A bus stop (not shown) is located directly in front of the lot. Illegal curbside auto body repairs are a common source of pollution and spills in Dorchester.

(Katy Terrell, COEC, 2012)
Community Activism

Spotlights on Selected Community Groups and Resources In and Around Dorchester

Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE),
ACE is a Roxbury-based environmental justice organization with a mission to “build the power of communities of color and low income communities… to eradicate environmental racism and classism, create healthy, sustainable communities, and achieve environmental justice” in Massachusetts. This group has established an air monitoring station in Dudley Square of Roxbury and performed a cleanup of asbestos- and lead-contaminated soil in Roxbury.46

BOLD (Breath of Life Dorchester) Teens
BOLD Teens are a group of youth leaders [ages 14-18] “focused on environmental and social justice by addressing the health, and safety concerns of our community.” They have a strong history of anti-tobacco activism, and they won the Youth Advocate of the Year Award from the National Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids in 2001, 2003, 2005, and 2009, and the Community Leadership Award from the EPA in 2009.47

Boston Centers for Youth and Families (BCYF)
BCYF has 35 locations throughout Boston that “offer a range of affordable programs including preschool, school-aged & adult education, family literacy, youth employment, violence prevention & intervention, senior activities, recreation and enrichment.” BCYF’s Leahy-Holloran Community Center kindly hosted an HSPH-NIEHS Clean Air Fair, which highlighted ways to improve individual health related to air quality and other environmental factors.48

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Boston Healthy Homes and Schools Collaborative (BHHSC)
A Fall 2010 merger of the Lead Action Collaborative and the Boston Urban Asthma Coalition, the mission of BHHSC is “to promote healthy homes, schools, and childcare centers in Boston, and enhance the well-being of individuals who learn, live, and work in them.” Among their many initiatives is their Green and Healthy Housing, which “aims to increase access to affordable housing in Boston that promotes health and—to a lesser extent—environmental sustainability.”

Boston Natural Areas Network (BNAN)
BNAN “works to preserve, expand and improve urban open space through community organizing, acquisition, ownership, programming, development and management of special kinds of urban land: community gardens, urban wilds, and greenways.” Their current long-term projects include the East Boston Greenway and the Neponset River Greenway, which will connect multiple tracts of existing land, including urban wilds and parks, into expansive networks with pedestrian/bike trails.

The Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC)
The mission of the BPHC “is to protect, promote, and preserve the health and well-being of all Boston residents, particularly the most vulnerable” (Boston Public Health Commission). The Environmental Health Division oversees the Environmental Hazards Program, Biological Laboratories and Laboratory Safety, and the Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (Boston Public Health Commission). Included in these programs is the Safe Nail Salons Project, which aims “to protect workers and the public from exposure to hazardous chemicals and air pollution in nail salons” (Boston Public Health Commission). The Healthy Homes and Community Supports Division oversees the Boston Tobacco Prevention and Control Program, Asthma Prevention and Control, Healthy Homes, including Breathe Easy at Home, and Injury Prevention (Boston Public Health Commission). The BPHC’s extensive asthma initiatives range from home visiting programs for environmental health evaluations to Kids With Asthma Can Swim, available from certain community centers in Boston.

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Boston REACH Coalition
The Boston REACH Coalition “has earned an outstanding reputation in the local and public health community for its work in raising awareness of racial and ethnic health disparities, educating the public about health issues that affect the Black community in Boston, and for its credible partnerships with community members, policymakers, faith-based leaders, and academic institutions.” Having received new funding, the Coalition is expanding its scope to address a variety of health issues, including environmental health.52

Dorchester Community Food Cooperative
The Dorchester Community Food Cooperative (DCFC) is an organization in the process of creating a full-service, cooperatively owned grocery store in the community of Dorchester. As stage one of its comprehensive effort to enhance neighborhood food access, the co-op founded the Dorchester Winter Farmers’ Market, which opened for its first season January 8 – March 25, 2012 at the Codman Square Great Hall. The Dorchester Winter Farmers’ Market accepts SNAP/EBT and Boston Bounty Bucks - and was the only winter market to do so.53 The Co-op received a Sustainable Business Leadership Award from the City of Boston in April 2012 for its work.

During the summer of 2012, the DCFC will run a “Community Supported Café” in the Bowdoin Geneva neighborhood of Dorchester. The Café will be a series of six Friday evening dinners that will provide a nutritious “night out” for community residents, complete with a healthy meal, cooking demonstrations, and family entertainment. This series of 6 dinners is a pilot project to test the Community Supported Café model for the future co-op.

**DotBike**

DotBike, a project of GreenDorchester, is “a group of bike riders who live, work, play and/or learn in Dorchester” and who “support more bike accommodation in our community.” Cyclists can visit their website for maps of recommended bike routes, participate in advocacy efforts, such as completing the Neponset Greenway, and learn about upcoming rides.54

**DotWell**

DotWell is an organization that encompasses the community and public health services provided by Dorchester House Multi-Service Center, the site of the community forum, and Codman Square Health Center. Dorchester House Multi-Service Center provides a range of clinical, public health, and community services. In collaboration with BPHC, they provide Kids With Asthma Can Swim, which offers free swimming lessons and asthma-management training for 8-12 year olds diagnosed with asthma. Some public health programs and facilities include various support groups, a gymnasium and swimming pool, cooking and healthy eating classes, a food pantry, and HIV/AIDS services. Codman Square Health Center also provides a range of clinical, public health, and community services on subjects ranging from diabetes to financial health—their mission is “to serve as a resource for improving the physical, mental and social well-being of the community.” In their clinics, they see “over 20,000 patients each year, 87% of whom live below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.”55 In collaboration with Social Capital Inc. (SCI), DotWell also maintains mydorchester.org, a website that aims to “connect people and resources in and around Dorchester, MA to improve community wellness through civic engagement and information exchange” Dorchester residents can visit mydorchester.org to learn about everything from community resources to upcoming financial services to volunteer opportunities.56

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Swimming Pool at Dorchester House Multi-Service Center
(Lauren Ames, DotWell)

Dudley Greenhouse, Jointly Run by DSNI and The Food Project
(Danielle, The Food Project)
Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, Inc. (DSNI)

DSNI “is a nonprofit community-based planning and organizing entity rooted in the Roxbury/North Dorchester neighborhoods of Boston.” In 1984, Dudley residents, facing arson, disinvestment, neglect, and redlining, founded DSNI in an effort to protect and revive their neighborhood. Today, DSNI boasts over 3,000 residents, businesses, nonprofits, and religious institutions, and it “is the only community-based nonprofit in the country which has been granted eminent domain authority over abandoned land within its boundaries.”

Green Streets Initiative

The Green Streets Initiative is a “nonprofit organization dedicated to celebrating and promoting the use of sustainable, active transportation in the Boston region and beyond.” They promote healthy, green modes of transportation through their Walk/Ride Days, when people are encouraged to walk, bike, and take public transportation to work on the last Friday of every month.

GreenDorchester

GreenDorchester, formerly known as the Dorchester Environmental Health Coalition (DEHC), seeks “to tackle urban environmental health and equity through education and organizing, literally from the ground up, with the goal of improving Dorchester’s outdoor environment and therefore the health of anyone who lives, works, plays and learns anywhere in Dorchester, MA.” Some of GreenDorchester’s accomplishments include the “seeding” of Dot Bike and the Dorchester Community Food Co-op (see entries), the creation of an air quality banner notification program, co-founding the Ashmont/Peabody Square Farmers’ Market, supporting the construction of the Elmhurst Children’s Playground on previously vacant lots.

Children Playing at Elmhurst Children’s Playground (John Tlumacki, Boston Globe, 2009)

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Health Resources in Action (HRiA)

HRiA has a mission “to help people to live healthier lives and build healthy communities through policy, research, prevention, and health promotion.” Among the many resources on their website are a number of asthma reports, including *Living with Asthma in New England*, published in 2010, which details the current state of asthma in the region and recommendations for improvements. 60 HRiA also manages the Greater Boston Regional Center for Healthy Communities, which is funded by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and works to prevent and reduce substance abuse in the community. 61

Healthworks Community Fitness

Healthworks is a local chain of high-end fitness centers for women, which operates two of these full-service fitness centers on a non-profit basis in Dorchester, staffing them with its own employees and volunteers. The purpose of these centers is to overcome fitness and exercise disparities and provide health and fitness education tools for women and kids. The St. Mary’s branch (Cushing Avenue), which opened in 2002, and the Codman Square branch, which opened in 2009, have together provided free facilities and classes to thousands of women and children, including homeless women and teens. Healthworks Community Fitness offers workshops specifically for children, which teaches them to take care of their own bodies and hopes to send the kids off as ambassadors for healthy lifestyles. These centers also provide free evening on-site day care, which makes it easier for single mothers with young children to utilize this resource. 62

Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (MassCOSH)

MassCOSH is a nonprofit organization that “brings together workers and allies to organize and advocate for safe, secure jobs and healthy communities throughout eastern Massachusetts.” Their core initiatives include Teens Lead at Work, Union Education and Organizing, MassCOSH Workers’ Center, Legal Access Initiative, and Labor Environmental Health Initiative, which joins forces between labor and environmental groups to improve workplace safety. 63

Parks and Recreation Department (City of Boston)

The Parks and Recreation Department “provides residents and visitors with clean, green, safe, and accessible open space in more than 2,200 acres of park land throughout the city.” Last year, in March 2011, the Parks and Recreation Department adopted Sustainable Design Guidelines, which Department officials will use to evaluate both current and future projects. 64

64 City of Boston, www.cityofboston.gov.
Revision Urban Farm
The ReVision Urban Farm, located in central Dorchester in an area known as Franklin Field, is a farming co-operative that works simultaneously to address homelessness and access to freshly grown local produce in the city. The Urban Farm works with ReVision Family Home, a shelter for homeless women and children, and teaches the women to grow and prepare sustainable, nutritious meals while also providing them with free produce for their families. The women have the opportunity to be employed as interns, thus gaining job skills and experience, and they can serve as mentors for youth visiting the farm. The program has purchased and transformed three abandoned properties into a viable growing plot and sustains their initiatives by selling Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares to the community and running a farm stand.65

Sustainability Guild International
Sustainability Guild International is a Dorchester-based social enterprise dedicated to transforming disadvantaged urban communities into living labs of sustainability and innovation. Their "Sustainable Metroscape" strategy explores the role of sustainable design and the redevelopment of underutilized lots for catalyzing community engagement, social enterprise creation, and the reanimation and community-based stewardship of public space. From June - September 2012, the Guild will conduct a **100 for 100 Innovation Challenge**, where 100 or more inner city residents engage in creating 100 instances of urban sustainability innovation. Some of these innovations include Living Walls, Green Buildings, "Upcycled" Products, Clean Energy and a Community-Supported Café (in partnership with numerous community groups).

WalkBoston
WalkBoston is a nonprofit organization with a mission “to create and preserve safe walking environments that build vital communities.” Their projects, which strive to make walking a fundamental part of transportation planning in Boston and beyond, include STEPS to Good Health to promote walking in Dorchester and other neighborhoods, and programs that make streets more pedestrian friendly by guiding street design and increasing walk times.66

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65 Victory Programs Revision Urban Farms, http://www.vpi.org/Farm/.
Additional Community Groups and Resources

Clinics and Health Services

Bowdoin Street Health Center, Dorchester
http://www.bidmc.org/CentersandDepartments/Departments/CommunityHealthCenters/BowdoinStreetHealthCenter.aspx/

Center for Community Health, Education, and Research, Dorchester
http://www.ccher.org/

The Family Van, Multiple Locations
http://www.familyvan.org/

Geiger Gibson Community Health Center, Dorchester

Harvard Street Neighborhood Health Center, Dorchester
http://www.harvardstreet.org/

Upham’s Corner Health Center, Dorchester
http://www.uphamscornerhealthctr.com/

Commercial Revitalization

Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets, Dorchester
http://www.bowdoin-geneva.org/

Fields Corner Main Street
http://fieldscorner.org/

Four Corners Main Street, Dorchester
http://fourcornersms.org/

Greater Grove Hall Main Streets
http://www.greatergrovehall.org/

St. Mark’s Area Main Street
http://www.smams.org/
Community Centers and Programs

The Boston Project Ministries, Dorchester
http://www.tbpm.org/

Boys and Girls Clubs of Dorchester
http://www.bgcdorchester.org/

Brookview House, Dorchester
http://www.brookviewhouse.org/

The Caribbean Foundation of Boston, Dorchester
http://www.caribbeanfoundationofboston.org/

College Bound Dorchester
http://www.fdnh.org/

Dorchester Community Resource Center
http://www.talkreadplay.org/?q=content/dorchester-community-resource-center/

The Paraclete Foundation, South Boston
http://www.paraclete.org/

Project Hope, Dorchester
http://www.prohope.org/

Project RIGHT
http://www.projectright.org/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1

YMCA Dorchester
http://ymcaboston.org/dorchester
Community Development Corporations in Dorchester

Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation  
http://www.csndc.com/

Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation  
http://www.dbedc.org/

Fields Corner CDC  
http://www.fieldscornercdc.org/

Nuestra Communidad Development Corporation  
http://www.nuestracdc.org/

Urban Edge  
http://www.urbanedge.org/

Viet-AID  
http://www.vietaid.org/

Open Spaces

Boston Park Advocates, Roxbury  
http://www.bostonparks.org/

Dorchester Park Association, Dorchester  
http://www.dotpark.info/

Sustainable Food

The Boston Tree Party, Multiple Locations  
http://www.bostontreeparty.org/

The Food Project, Multiple Locations  
http://thefoodproject.org/

Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition, Mattapan  
http://mattapanfoodandfitness.org/

Daffodils in Dorchester Park planted by Dorchester Park Association and Cedar Grove Gardens  
(Dorchester Park Association, 2011)

Freshly Washed Local Tomatoes  
(The Food Project, 2007)
Women and Minority Programming

Association of Haitian Women in Boston, Dorchester
http://www.afab-kafanm.org/

Cape Verdean Community (CVC) UNIDO
http://www.cvcunido.org/

Greater Boston Nazarene Compassionate Center, Mattapan
http://www.gbncc.org/

Haitian Multi-Service Center, Dorchester
http://www.ccab.org/hmsc.html/

Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers, Multiple Locations
http://www.maps-inc.org/

Mujeres Unidas Avanzando
http://www.muaboston.org/

St. Mary’s Center for Women and Children, Dorchester
http://www.stmaryscenterma.org/

Viet-AID, Dorchester
http://www.vietaid.org/

Vovinam (Vietnamese Martial Arts Form)
(Viet-AID Community Center, 2011)
References

Demographics


Transit, Housing, & Built Environment


**Asthma**


**Outdoor Air Quality**


**Urban Development and Environmental Justice Sites**


Community Group Spotlights


Community Assessment of Freeway Exposure and Health. (n.d.). Welcome to CAFEH. Retrieved from Community Assessment of Freeway Exposure and Health: http://sites.tufts.edu/cafeh/


