

ACTES

New Urban Trends

International Seminar Boston

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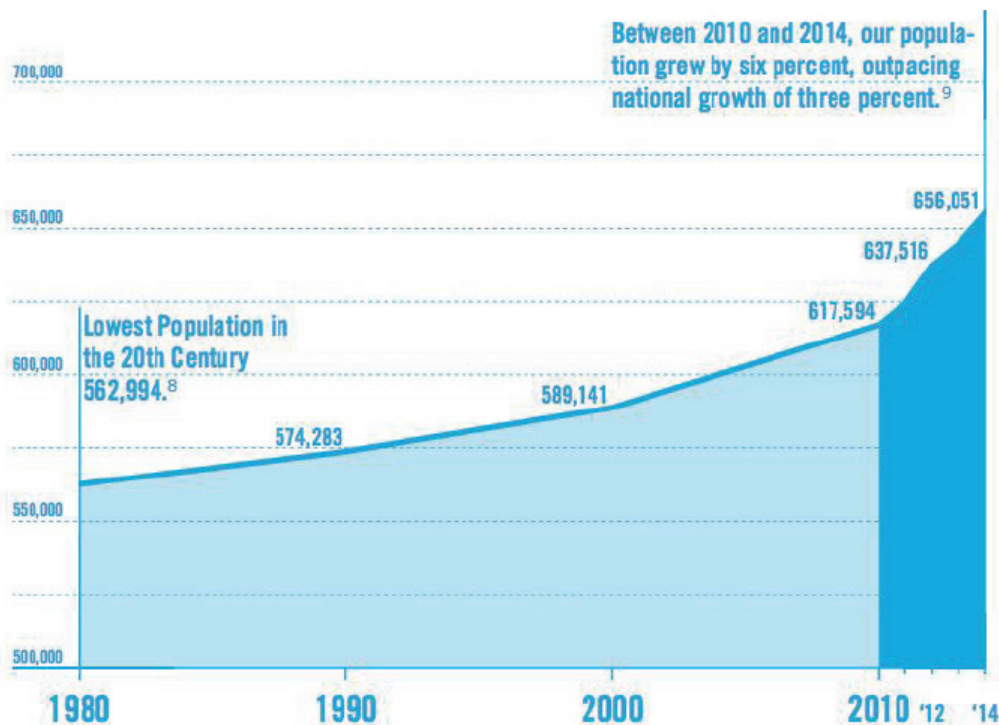
LA FABRIQUE
DE LA
CITÉ

GoBoston 2030



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We are at an amazing moment in Boston's history. Mayor Walsh, as a new Mayor, wants to figure out a way to design and plan for the growth of the city, and wrestle with the challenges that we are facing. The part of that which I am tasked with, as Nathalie mentioned, is thinking about how people move and how people will move in the future. We have three points of departure, which at this point you are probably pretty familiar with. The first is astronomical growth. There is an incredible growth rate in the city of Boston right now. Between 1980 and 2010, we grew by about 55 000 people, and then in the last 5 6 years, we have grown by roughly 40 000 more. There is an accelerating growth base happening in the city of Boston, and we want to figure out a way to ensure we are unlocking that growth.



The second point of departure is one around equity. As you guys have probably heard, at the beginning of this year, the Brookings Institute, a think tank in the United States, ranked the city as number one in income inequality. This is a very important issue for us to wrestle with. Our 95th percentile earners, the people who earn at the 95th percentile, are making around USD 266 000 a year. Our 20th percentile earners are making around USD 14 000 a year. Our 95th percentile earners are making about 17 times as much as our 20th percentile earners. We are trying to wrestle with how we make sure that Boston remains a home for everyone, where there is a tremendous amount of both equity and economic mobility.

Then the third thing which we are wrestling with is climate resiliency. You guys just talked to Chris Busch and you are familiar

with the fact that we are a coastal city, and one that wants to be a national and international leader. This is in both reducing carbon emissions and being more resilient. It is those three things, economic growth, equity and resiliency, that form the charge of Go Boston 2030.



Similar to some of the things that were just mentioned, we have been hitting the streets for about the last year and a half. We asked the residents first, 'What are your dreams for transportation? What are the things that you most want us to accomplish by 2030?' We got about 5 000 people to weigh in on those dreams. We had them fill out cards, which helped us to reduce to a core set of nine goals, goals like resiliency, accessibility, reliability and safety'. We wanted to figure out how we solve these problems for now and certainly 2030.

We then went back to the public and said, 'You said you wanted a more reliable transportation system. What are the things we can specifically do in our city that can deliver that?' We got about 3 700 people to weigh in on that effort, with 3 700 specific ideas on how we can make Boston better. We consolidated those into 48 specific projects, which the public is voting on right now. We had an event two days ago as part of that process and the voting is continuing until 17 June. It will guide what it is that we are going to be investing in.



Part of the process that we are going through with Go Boston to plan the future is about figuring out how to engage the public. However, some of the comments that were just raised are also about how we work inside the building. As a companion piece to this, one of several, our transportation department has been doing something called Share Your Trip with BTS. This is Share Your Trip with the Boston Transportation Department.

This is where city transportation officials are actually commuting with other people, residents of the city of Boston or around Boston, using modes that they do not typically take. If you drive to work, maybe you are biking that day, and if you bike to work, maybe you are on a bus. If you have never taken a private corporate shuttle, perhaps that is the way that you are going to work that day. This is with the intent that out of all this effort, we need to find new ways of moving around. All of us within city government need to have a full understanding of the challenges, opportunities, needs, and wants of our residents.

This is in a way, in addition to public outreach and public voting, that we are trying to get centred on what our residents are most interested in. What is definitely emerging from this plan, though, is a need to shift the modes in the city of Boston. In Boston this morning, roughly 40% of our residents drove to work. As we grow, as we wrestle with climate change and as we try to improve equity, 40% is unsustainable.

Mode for Bostonian Commutes	Today*	2030 Aspirational	Mode for Commutes into Boston from the MAPC Region**	Today*	2030 Aspirational
Public Transit	33%	Up by a third	Public Transit	39.6% (9.8% Commuter Rail)	Up by a third
Walk	14.5%	Up by almost a half	Walk	1.5%	Doubles
Bike	1.9%	Increases fourfold	Bike	1.1%	Increases fourfold
Carpool	5.4%	Declines marginally	Carpool	7.7%	Increase by half
Drive Alone	40.6%	Down by half	Drive Alone	49.5%	Down by half
Other/Work from Home	4.5%	Slight increase in Work from Home	Other/Work from Home	0.5%	Slight increase in other modes (taxi, motorcycle, etc.)

* ACS 5-year data 2010 and 2013
 ** Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) 101 cities and towns

We need to figure out ways of getting people to take transit, to ride bikes, and to walk to work. As I am sure Sarah talked about, a lot of that is about how we develop a land use plan that emphasises things like transit oriented development. This is coming out of our work as a big challenge for us, regarding how we cut the number of people who drive alone by half by 2030. We must boost the number of transit riders and the number of people who feel comfortable riding their bike to work.

I am going to talk about the four big approaches, the thematic approaches. We are calling them the four futures. These are not meant to be distinct, separate, and competing futures; these are much more like components of the vision. Those four futures for our city are about going local, going cross town, going regional, and going tech. Going local is the first one, and going local is about investing in what I personally think is one of Boston's two real competitive advantages. This is our incredibly liveable neighbourhoods. We know that one of the best things we can do to help move people around the city is simply make trips shorter and more pleasant. We must make sure there are things like walk to business, parks, and schools; that on street environment for pedestrians and cyclists in particular is incredibly attractive.

One of the challenges that we are facing though in going local and one of the focuses that we have started on already is making our streets safer. Like many cities across the world, and following the lead of several cities in Europe, we have launched a Vision Zero campaign. This is an effort to eliminate roadway fatalities and serious injuries on our streets. To date in Boston, we have had seven pedestrians this year who were hit by a car and died.



The pedestrian experience is the most basic and fundamental thing that one can have in a city and perhaps one of the most vital things one can have in a city. It is incredibly urgent for us in our city to make sure that the pedestrian experience is one that is safe for everyone. We are working right now, by looking at data largely from our police departments, hospitals, and emergency services personnel, on which quarters in the city most need our first interventions. We have prioritised two and we have put money in this year's budget to figure out how we actually make streets in those particular areas safer.

The second future is one called Go Crosstown. This is an image of the city of Boston, and I have highlighted those parts of our city that are within a five minute walk of a rail line and those within a ten minute walk. I have also highlighted those places which are within a five minute walk of a bus route and those which are a ten minute walk from a key bus route. There are some terrific hubs and spokes and parts of the downtown are actually incredibly well served by transit. However, there are some huge areas of our city, particularly those areas of our city that have the lowest average household income, that are really poorly under served by our current mass transit system.

One of the things we are focusing on in this plan is how we actually improve the connection between areas that are under served by transit with our fastest growing job centres. This is both downtown and outside of it. For that, we know that we cannot simply expand rail. Our principal transit partner, as you guys know, is the MBTA. The MBTA is a great partner, but it is facing a significant capital backlog of USD 7.3 billion to get to a state of good repair.

We need to be looking at things other than the expansion of rail alone as a way of getting people across town. One of the things we are prioritising is learning how to make the bus experience better. Again, we are learning from partners, usually outside of the United States, who have invested in things like bus rapid transit. We are figuring out ways of creating dedicated lands on our street and better signals across our city. These are things that make the bus experience a bit better for residents.

We are also expanding car share. As you guys probably know, car share is one of those things which for many residents has an incredible impact on both accessibility and quality of life. There has been some research out of the University of California Berkeley from a professor named Susan Shaheen. She has shown that for every car share vehicle you put on the street, in

general you are lowering the cost of mobility for people in that area. You are reducing the number of cars that are personally owned by 7 13 cars. That is 7 13 households or individuals who are making the decision either not to buy a car or to sell a car they have, all because there was a car share vehicle. We are improving our bike infrastructure as well, to connect some of these areas that are currently disconnected.



The third strategy is one that is called Go Regional. I love the city of Boston and I live in the city of Boston. The city of Boston, as you may know, is actually a lot smaller than the urban region around it. A lot of people say they are from Boston and are not actually living in Boston proper. Only about 15% or 14.7% of the population of the region is actually people that live in Boston. The success of our city is deeply tied to the success of our immediate neighbours, and yet our transportation infrastructure does not support this as well.

One of the things that we are working on, and I imagine David Luberoff might have talked about this yesterday, is figuring out better ways of working with our partners. In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in our state, there are 351 separate cities and towns. In general, that means 351 separate groups are thinking about transportation. One of the things that we have been doing with a couple of our neighbours, with Brookline, Cambridge, and Somerville, is building up those muscles of collaboration and of running programmes together. There is a bike share programme, and these are successful everywhere. Our bike share programme is run by these four municipalities together as a common system. For us, it is the first way we can think about delivering services in a regional way that does not require significant capital costs.



The fourth future that we are looking at is Go Tech. There is a quote from a study from the Boston Consulting Group, on autonomous vehicles or self driving cars. I love this quote for a number of reasons. The survey was an international survey and it said, 'What is the top benefit of self driving cars?' The top benefit is that it will drop me off, find a parking space, and park on its own. I look at this quote and I think it means two really important things. The first is that the worst part of driving is parking. People want us to solve a parking problem, and that is something we hear loud and clear.

The second thing is that none of us really know. The public does not know and we in government honestly do not know what self driving vehicles will actually mean for the city. One of the things we are interested in in Boston is exploring how we partner with people that are disrupting transportation right now, largely through new technology and new business models. This means that we can shape that disruption around the goals that our residents are most interested in.

Self driving vehicles in particular, and Jascha may have touched on this yesterday, are something which may be incredibly supportive of cities, and certainly they could address crashes on our streets. However, in other ways, this could actually potentially cause greater congestion and greater emissions. It is something where we need to be very closely partnered with the disruptors on to make sure that it is working in a way that works for our residents.



More specifically and more near-term, though, we have been thinking about how you use data simply to experiment in day to day operations. This is through partnerships with people like the Department of Innovation and Technology and Jascha's team. We are working with Jascha's group and Nigel's group. As they might have told you, we have pulled a bunch of data from the travel navigation app Waze and used it to see how we could optimise our enforcement of double parking rules in city streets.

Are there ways in which we could identify hotspots for double-parking, and if we did reduce double parking, could we actually improve safety and traffic flow on those streets? It turned out to be terrific value in the very near term. This is regarding how we can use privately generated data, data from people's smartphones to inform a public service around an issue that we know a lot of residents care about.

The fourth future, Go Tech, rounds out the four futures we have. I would say to wrap up that across all of them, the real work inside of government is not necessarily specific to one of those four futures. It is simply about how we work as an entity and as an agency. These three principles are the ways in which we are most focused right now. It is about how to think of designing for people, not simply for vehicles, but how we look at what residents most want, so we are able to provide for that. There is how we use data to drive our decisions, whether it is enforcing double parking rules or identifying key quarters to focus on with Vision Zero. There is also how we engage partners. These may be our public, in identifying what we should be investing in for 2030, or our municipal partners outside the city of Boston to deliver services like Hubway.



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