GEOGRAPHIES OF INFORMATION

An Overview of Commonly-used Geographies in Information Compilation

This presentation incorporates some of the graphics and concepts included in our web site BOSTONSTUDIES.COM to describe the basic geographic boundaries used in information compilation.

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The purpose of this presentation is to provide
an overview of different geographic boundaries used in
compiling information that relate to place-related characteristics.

Some of the boundaries are predefined on a legal and/or administrative
basis to maintain a standard and unambiguous geographic reference
to localities and regions to serve a purpose.

In case of boundaries not predefined, the data user must define
the boundary using conventions to identify the custom geography
in keeping with the nature of inquiry or the field of study.

The examples shown here in terms of geography relate to Boston city.
But it is a framework applicable to any other state, city or town.

1. NATION

2. REGION

3. STATE
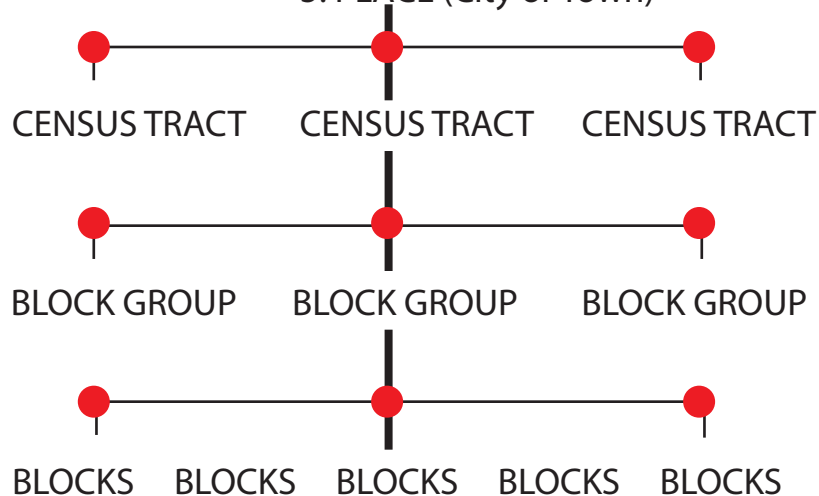
4. COUNTY

5. PLACE (City or Town)

CENSUS TRACT   CENSUS TRACT   CENSUS TRACT

BLOCK GROUP   BLOCK GROUP   BLOCK GROUP

BLOCKS   BLOCKS   BLOCKS   BLOCKS   BLOCKS

US Census Bureau is responsible for creating a hierarchy of census geographies for rhe entire country down to the street block level.
Census Geography is used not only for demographic data but also for economic census and several other subject areas.

● **Massachusetts State has
14 Counties and
351 Cities and Towns**

Counties, Cities and Towns within the State.

Number of three major census geographies of Boston city.

As of US Census 2000

● **Boston City has
157 Census Tracts
545 Block Groups
5630 Blocks**

Some of the pre-defined boundaries that are available as maps are as follows:

(Smaller fonts indicate the authoritative source)

1. Congressional Districts

State Legislature or Redistricting Commision

2. Postal ZIP Codes

US Postal Service

3. Census Tracts and related geographies

US Census Bureau

4. School Administrative Divisions

City's School Department

5. Community Service Area

Community Development Corporation

6. Trade Area for Shopping Mall

Business Association/Owner

7. Neighborhoods & Local Planning Districts

City's Planning Department or Planning Board

1. NATION

    2. REGION
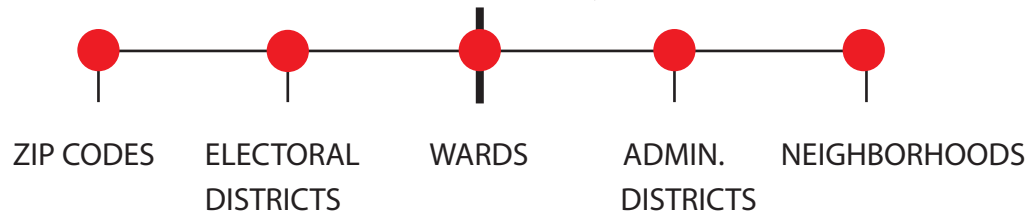
        3. STATE

           4. COUNTY

               5. PLACE (City or Town)

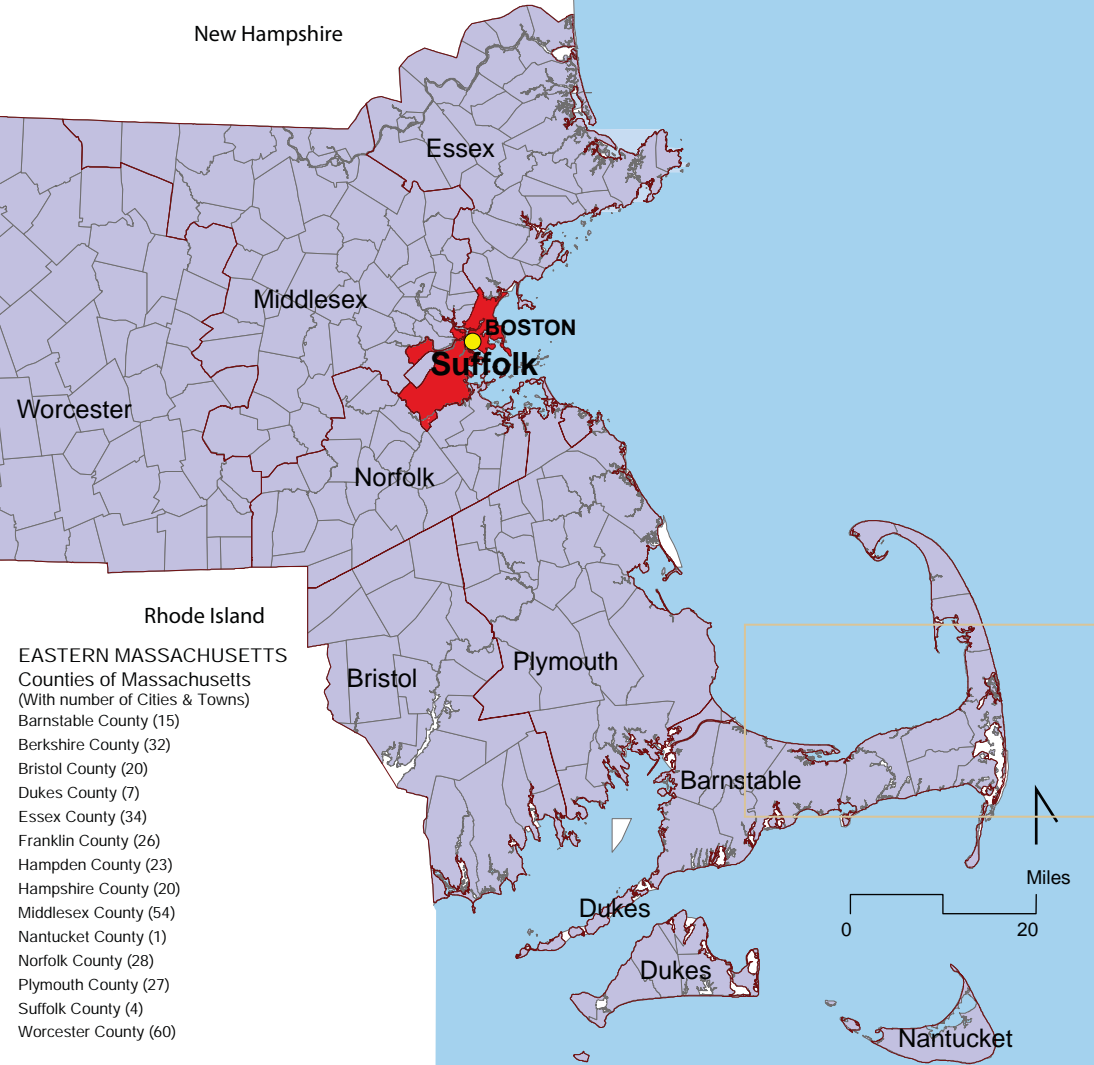| ZIP CODES | ELECTORAL DISTRICTS | WARDS | ADMIN. DISTRICTS | NEIGHBORHOODS |

Within A City Or Town Some Of Commonly-used Boundaries For Business, Political, Community Development And Administrative Functions

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New Hampshire

Essex

Middlesex

BOSTON
Suffolk

Worcester

Norfolk

Rhode Island

Bristol

Plymouth

EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS
Counties of Massachusetts
(With number of Cities & Towns)
Barnstable County (15)
Berkshire County (32)
Bristol County (20)
Dukes County (7)
Essex County (34)
Franklin County (26)
Hampden County (23)
Hampshire County (20)
Middlesex County (54)
Nantucket County (1)
Norfolk County (28)
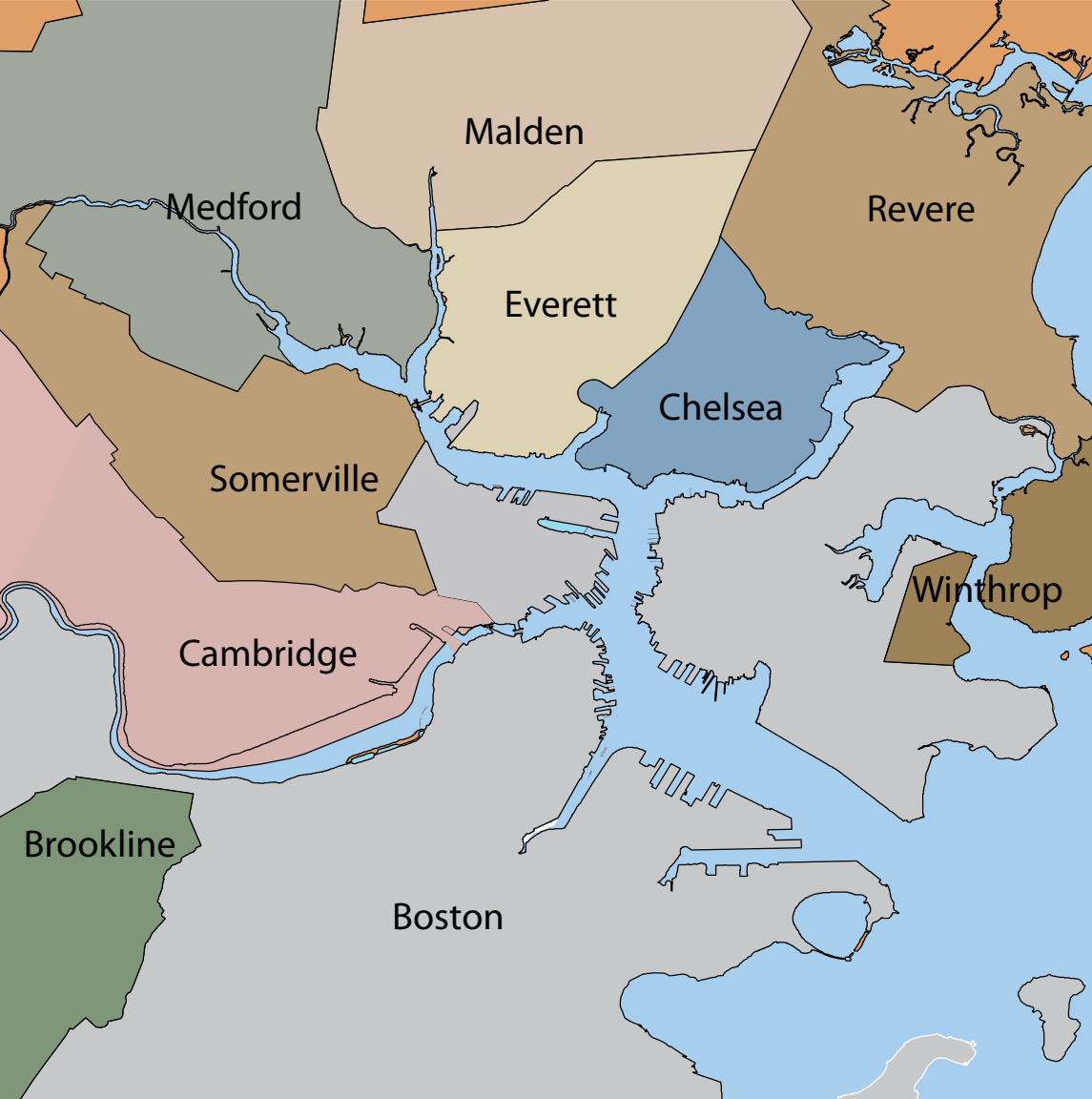Plymouth County (27)
Suffolk County (4)
Worcester County (60)

Barnstable

Dukes

Dukes

Nantucket

Miles

0   20

The four Cities and Towns of **Suffolk County**:
Boston
Chelsea
Revere
Winthrop

Revere

Chelsea

Somerville

Cambridge

Watertown

Winthrop

Newton

Brookline

Boston

Quincy

Milton

Miles

0   2

COUNTY AS A GEOGRAPHY

(Comprised of Boston, Chelsea Revere and Winthrop)

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BOUNDARIES OF CITIES AND TOWNS
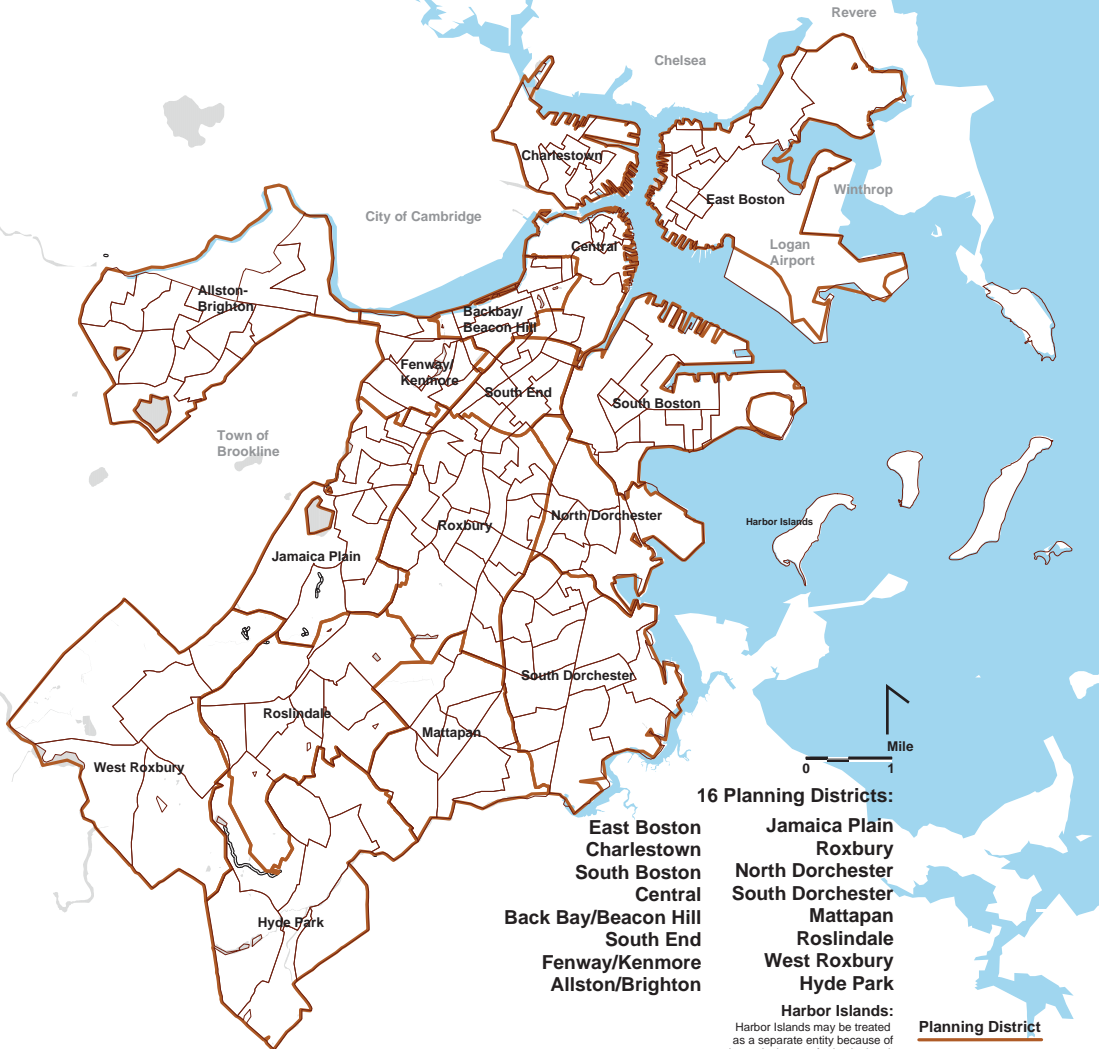
Selected Cities and Towns in the core of Massachusetts

One of the most frequently used geographies is the ward, there are 22 of them, further subdivided into precincts.

1 - East Boston
2 - Charlestown
3 - Downtown, North & West Ends, Chinatown
4 - Prudential, East Fens, Medical Area
5 - Back Bay, Beacon Hill, West Fens
6 - South Boston, Broadway, Marine Park
7 - South Boston, Old Colony, Andrew sq.
8 - South End, Cathedral, Orchard Park
9 - South End, Ruggles St
10 - Mission Hill, Heath Street
11 - Roxbury, Egleston, Forest Hills

12 - Warren, Humboldt, Franklin Park
13 - Savin Hill, Columbia, Howard
14 - Franklin, Mt. Bowdoin, Boston State
15 - Meetinghouse Hill, Adams St
16 - Ashmont, Neponset, Pt. Norfolk
17 - Codman Sq., Lower Mills
18 - Hyde Park, Mattapan
19 - Jamaica Pond, Arboretum
20 - West Roxbury, Roslindale
21 - Brighton, Commonwealth
22 - Allston, Brighton, Oak Sq.

NEIGHBORHOOD GEOGRAPHY OF BOSTON

(16 major neighborhoods, with boundaries pre-defined by Boston Redevelopment Authority)

16 Planning Districts:

East Boston
Charlestown
South Boston
Central
Back Bay/Beacon Hill
South End
Fenway/Kenmore
Allston/Brighton

Jamaica Plain
Roxbury
North Dorchester
South Dorchester
Mattapan
Roslindale
West Roxbury
Hyde Park

Harbor Islands:
Harbor Islands may be treated as a separate entity because of its exclusive use for institutional facilities for a few hundred people.
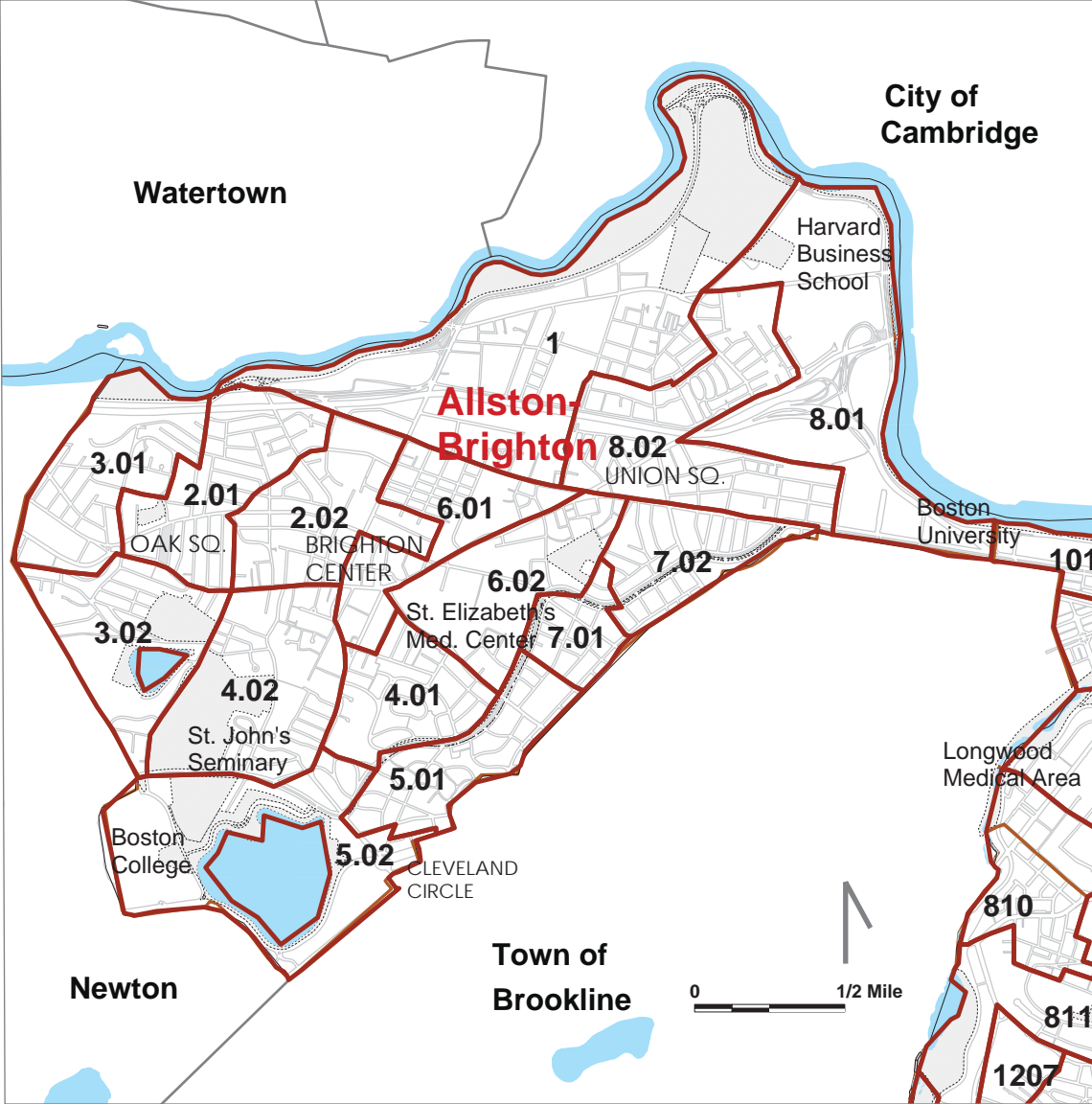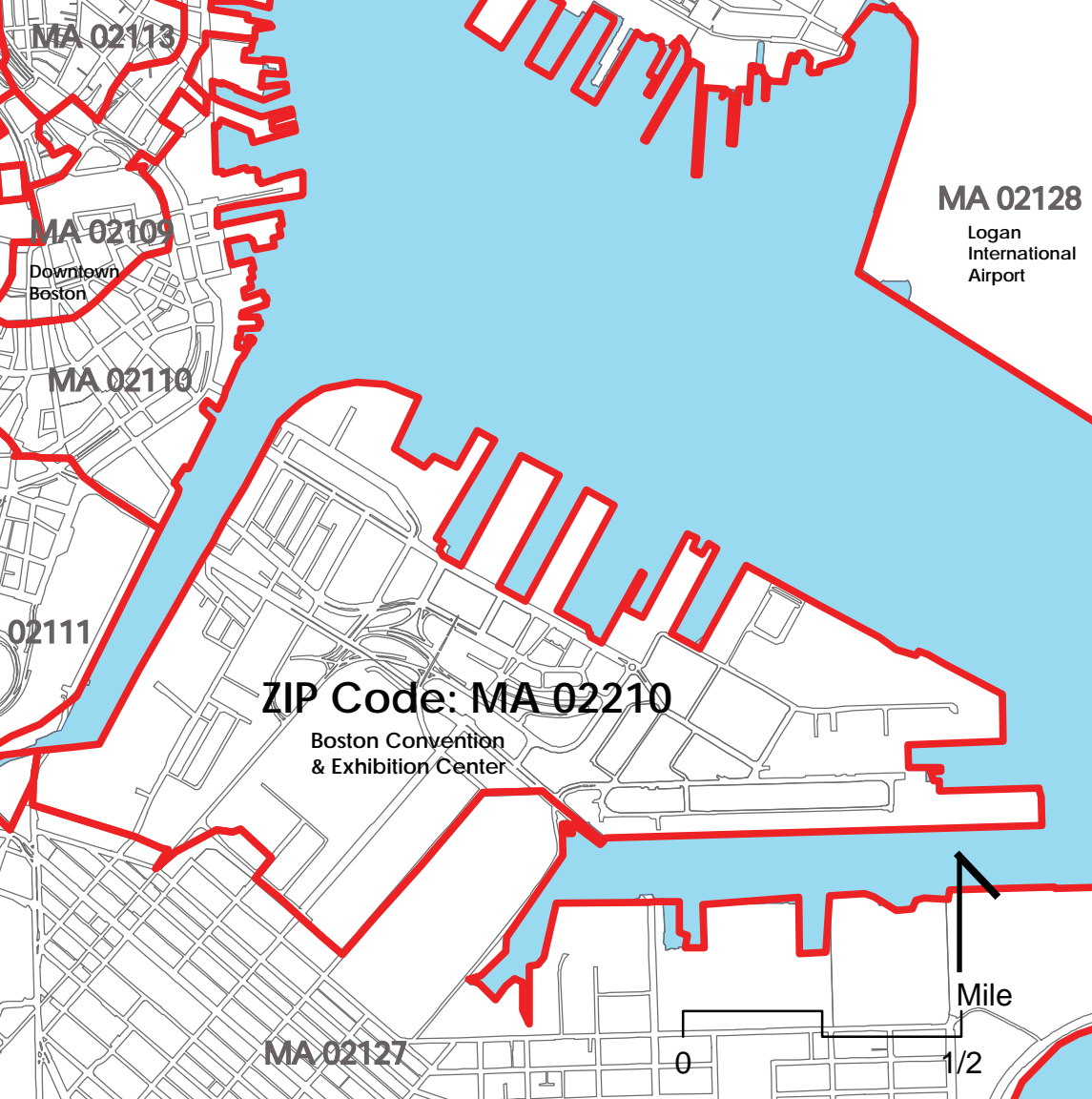
Planning District
Census Tract

MA 02113

NEIGHBORHOOD GEOGRAPHY IN TERMS OF CENSUS TRACTS

Composition of Allston-Brighton neighborhood (also a Planning District) in terms of Census Tracts.

ZIP Code: MA 02210

Boston Convention & Exhibition Center

MA 02113

MA 02109
Downtown Boston

MA 02110

02111

MA 02127

MA 02128
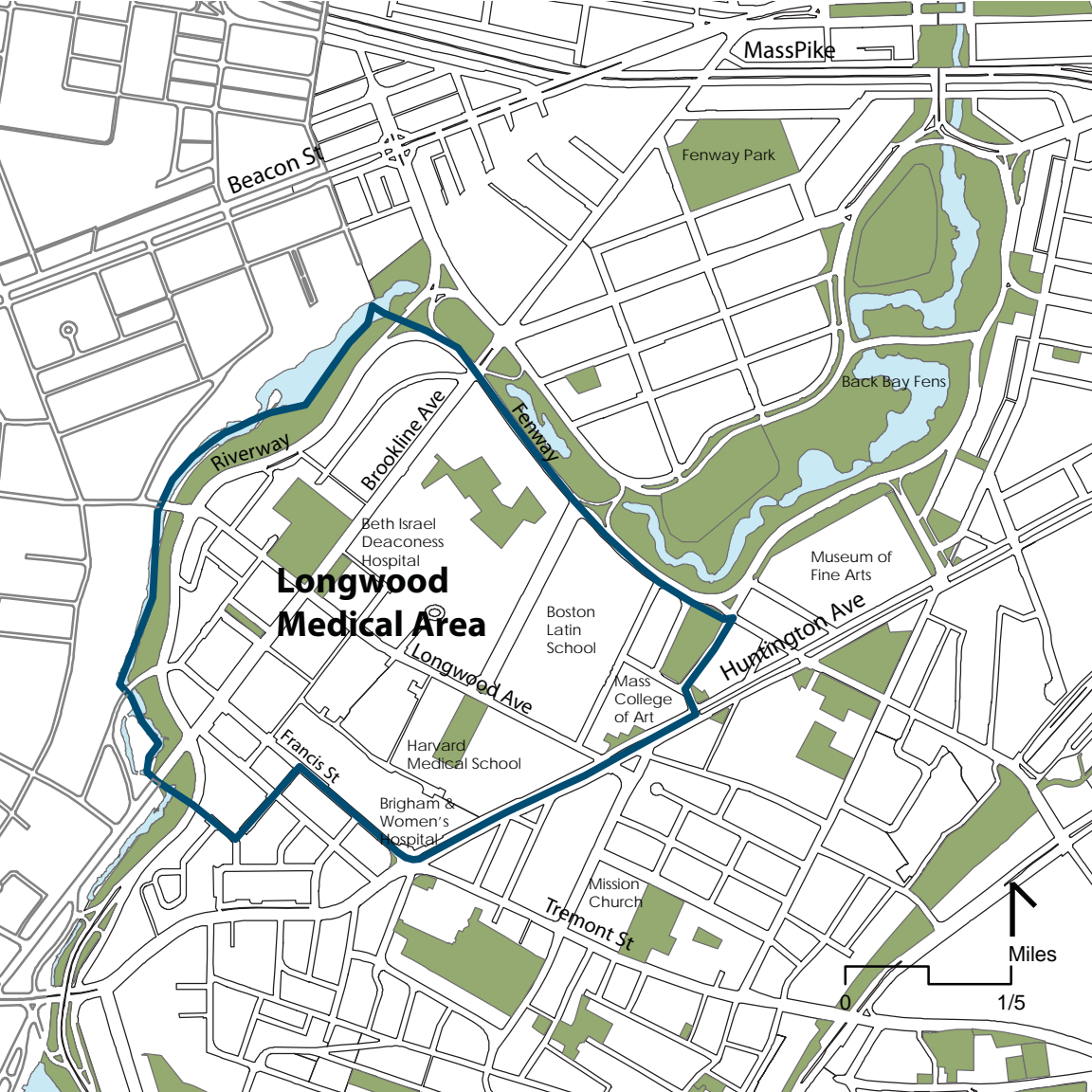Logan International Airport

Mile
0   1/2

ZIP CODE GEOGRAPHY

(Example of Seaport Area in South Boston)

ZIP Codes are the most data rich geographic frames for the country and at many other lower levels.

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE ZONES

Chelsea

Charlestown

City of Cambridge

Central

East Boston

Winthrop

Allston-Brighton

Backbay/Beacon Hill

Fenway/Kenmore

South End

NORTH ZONE

South Boston

Town of Brookline

Harbor Islands

Roxbury

North Dorchester

Jamaica Plain

EAST ZONE

Roslindale

South Dorchester

WEST ZONE

West Roxbury
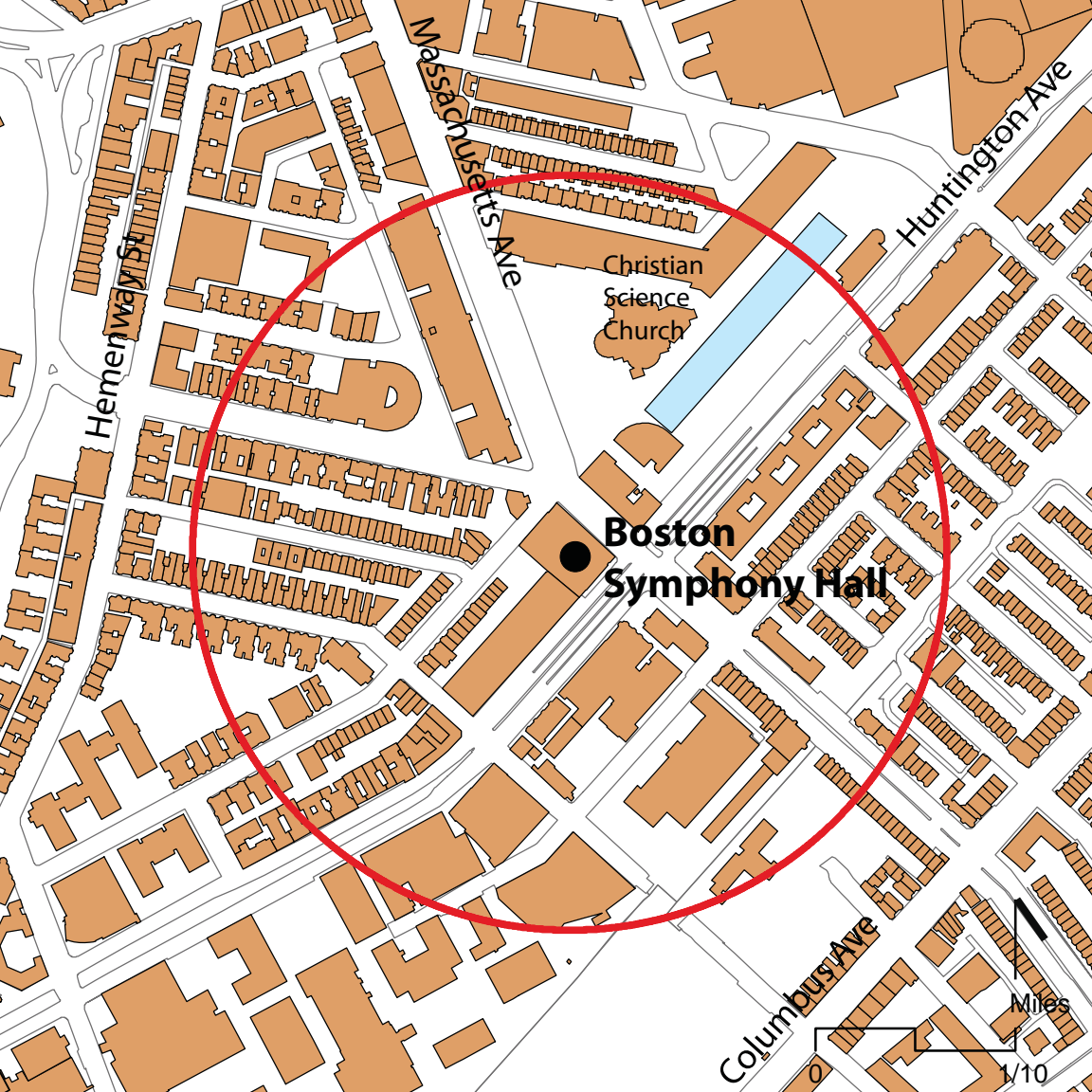
Mattapan

Hyde Park

1 Mile

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GEOGRAPHY OF SPECIAL DISTRICTS

AN EXAMPLE OF HEALTH CARE DISTRICT

These districts may be well-known and referred to in discussions and documents but requires clearly defined boundaries to compile information.

Map labels: MassPike, Fenway Park, Back Bay Fens, Beacon St, Riverway, Brookline Ave, Fenway, Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital, **Longwood Medical Area**, Boston Latin School, Museum of Fine Arts, Huntington Ave, Longwood Ave, Mass College of Art, Francis St, Harvard Medical School, Brigham & Women's Hospital, Mission Church, Tremont St

Miles
0   1/5

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Boston Symphony Hall

Christian Science Church

GEOGRAPHY OF RADIAL AREA

One example is the convention to determine students living within mandated walking distance to an elementary school, or to estimate passengers within a convenient distance to a T station or to monitor traffic and noise around Symphony Hall.

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USER-DEFINED GEOGRAPHIES

This may be an area described by residents as high-traffic area, or by an NGO as its service area, or by business owner as the trade area.

The area around Fenway Park is drawn to identify locations where on-street parking has been a major issue.
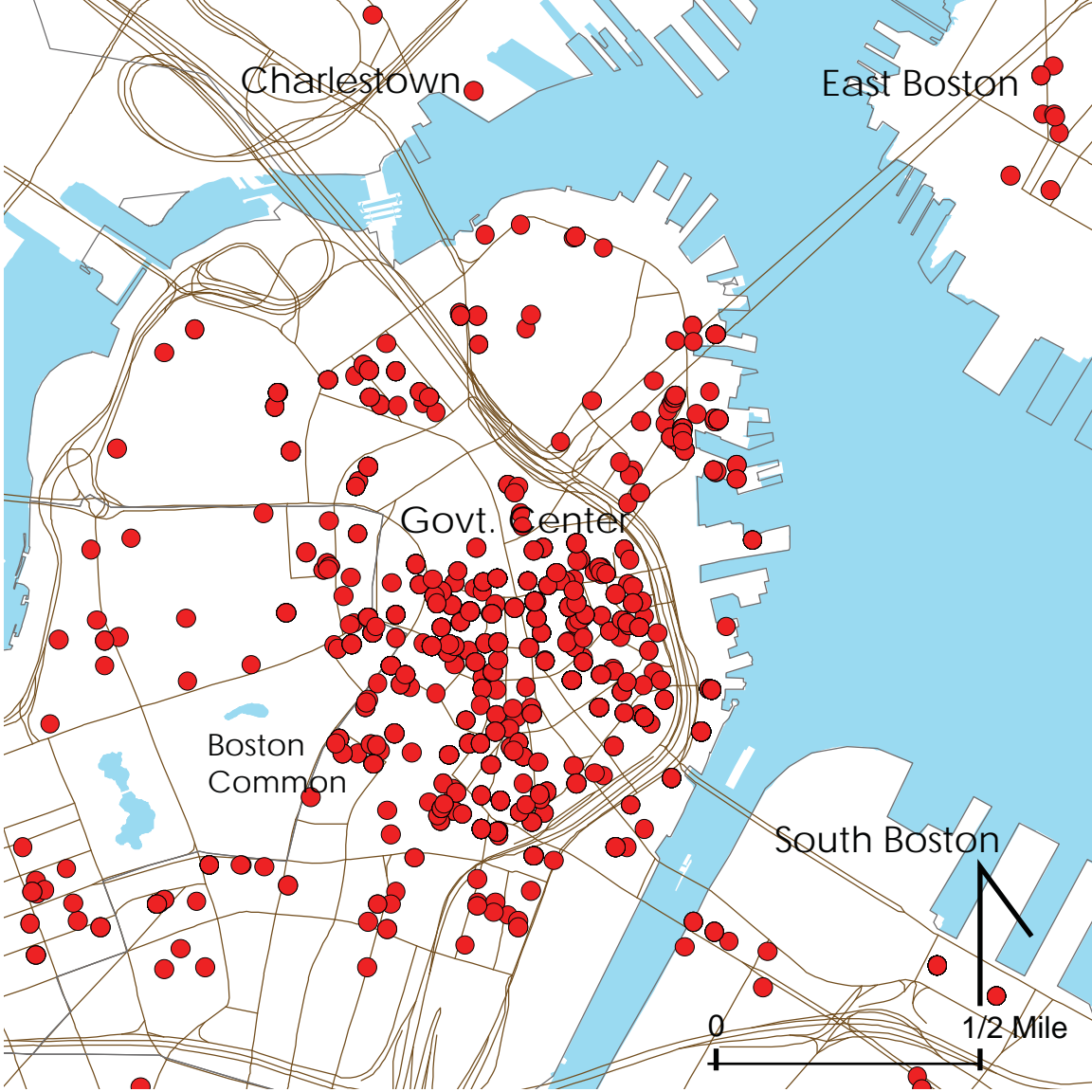
Drive Time Polygons
The colored rings represent distances to reach Newmarket Sq. at Selected drive times of 2 minutes and 5 minutes for specified traffic conditions.
Note: Changing the traffic conditions will change the polygon.

Chelsea

Somerville

Cambridge

Brookline

○ New Market Sq

BOSTON

Milton

Miles

0   2

GEOGRAPHY DETERMINED BY DRIVE TIME

Potential Customers, Number of Elderly Patients, or Students estimated to be within the reach of an Address Location as specified by Drive Time ranges

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POINT
LOCATIONS OF
INFORMATION

Asian Restaurants,
T Stops,
Health Centers,
ATM locations, etc.)

● Restaurants

Charlestown

East Boston

Govt. Center

Boston
Common

South Boston

0   1/2 Mile

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In compiling information or making a request, two important questions must be answered by the user.

a. What is the geography?

In case of areas with custom geographies, you must describe the boundaries or even draw a sketch of the area.

b. What is the list of information items?
Use our data catalogs on BOSTONSTUDIES.COM and write down the information items.

END