

2004-2025 Boston Region MPO Regional Transportation Plan Profile of Community of Concern

Chinatown

Background

The Boston neighborhood of Chinatown that comprises the Environmental Justice Community of Concern encompasses traffic analysis zones (TAZs) 37, 40, 41, 42. Two major highways bound Chinatown, I-90 to the south and I-93 to the east. About 7,000 people live in this neighborhood, 68% of whom are minorities. The median income within the individual traffic analysis zones range from \$9,071 to \$18,359. The population in these TAZs is shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Population Characteristics by TAZ

TAZ	Population	Minority	Minority %	Median Income	Regional %
37	1,435	426	26.69%	\$17,220	30.86%
40	941	208	22.10%	\$9,071	16.26%
41	2,233	1,851	82.89%	\$18,359	32.90%
42	2,248	2,166	96.35%	\$14,050	25.18%

Existing Transportation

Chinatown is served by the Red, Orange and Green rapid transit lines. Access to the rapid transit system can be made at the South Station (Red), Park St. (Green and Red), Downtown Crossing (Red and Orange), Chinatown (Orange), New England Medical Center (Orange) and Boylston (Green). Boylston station is the only station that is not accessible to all persons. The roundtrip fare within the rapid transit system is \$2.00.

South Station is the terminus for all commuter rail lines south of the Charles River: the Worcester, Needham, Franklin, Attleboro/Stoughton, Fairmount, Middleborough/Lakeville and Plymouth/Kingston. Commuter rail fares range from \$4.00 to \$11.50 roundtrip depending on the destination.

The Silver Line connects Boylston, Chinatown and New England Medical Center stations to Dudley Square. Bus system fare (including the Silver line) is \$1.50 roundtrip.

Several Bus lines serve the Chinatown community:

- 3/6 Boston Marine Industrial Park
- 7 City Point, Otis and Summer Streets
- 11 City Point Bayview route
- 448/449 Wonderland, Lynn, Marblehead
- 459 North Beverly and Salem Depot
- 500 Express Bus to Riverside
- 501 Express Bus to Brighton Center
- 504 Express Bus to Watertown Square and Copley Square

505 Express Bus to Waltham
553/554 Roberts, Waltham and Newton Corner
556/558 Waltham Highlands via Newton Corner

Intercity bus and train service is available at South Station. Additional bus service is provided from Chinatown to New York by Fung Wah Transport Vans, Travel Pack, and Sunshine Travel.

Demographics

According to the 2000 Census, approximately 28% of the households located within these TAZs own one or more vehicles, while the journey-to-work mode split for automobiles is 24%. Within the area of Chinatown, approximately 3,603 people 16 years of age or older are currently in the workforce or actively seeking employment, while 2,660 are either retired, unable to work, or are chronically unemployed and have ceased seeking employment. Based upon these variables, the unemployment rate as reflected in the 2000 Census ranges from 6.8% to 36.5% in these TAZs in Chinatown. The attached profile(s) by TAZ show further demographic information.

Additional Information

The transportation needs of this community include easy access to transit and highways, Orange Line extension and outreach in local languages. Many residents are Asian immigrants with good manufacturing skills. Because of this, the community has a significant number of workers reverse commuting to the suburbs to skilled manufacturing jobs. In many cases these workers use a “shadow” private transit network operated by employers. The creation of an employer-managed Chinatown TMA is suggested by some community members.

Chinatown is located at the hub of many regional transportation facilities. The I-90 and I-93 intersection defines the southern and eastern borders of Chinatown; South Station is to the east of Chinatown. This neighborhood has endured 10 years of Central Artery/Tunnel construction during which congestion and environmental impacts such as air and noise pollution were very high. Mitigation of the environmental impacts of these facilities is important to the community. An important component of that is the community's active role in determining the future land uses of new development sites created by the Central Artery development.

Community connections to highways are important due to the reverse commuting to car dependent employment centers. Long-term solutions include more comprehensive suburban transit options including the North-South rail link. Currently, a large segment of the Chinatown population uses the Red Line to travel between Boston and Quincy.