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The Southwest Corridor and Economic Development in Boston's Neighborhoods

Daryl Hellman

Andrew Sum

Joseph Warren

The Southwest Corridor is a narrow strip of land running five miles from the South End of Boston through Roxbury and ending in Jamaica Plain. Twenty years ago, neighborhoods through which the Corridor passes experienced tremendous upheaval as space was cleared for the proposed construction of Interstate 95. The communities were able to stop the highway project, but not without a long and difficult struggle and the eventual support of then Governor Francis Sargent.¹ Today, the Southwest Corridor Project involves a new MBTA Orange Line relocated along the Corridor, with nine new stations at a total cost of approximately \$750 million. The relocated transportation route, which opened recently, is the first stage of an anticipated economic revitalization of the area. Because of the relocation, the land use patterns in the neighborhoods adjacent to the Corridor are expected to be altered significantly as new economic development opportunities are created.

One of the most important development opportunities is located in Parcel 18, the anchor parcel of the Southwest Corridor Project, located in Roxbury adjacent to the Ruggles Station. Within a few years, up to a million square feet of office and retail space and other complementary land uses will be developed, and several thousand permanent jobs are expected to be generated. A large number of construction jobs will be available even sooner. This article examines the extent to which development of Parcel 18 will benefit the neighborhoods surrounding the parcel. First, we present a brief history and overview of the Southwest Corridor Project with an emphasis on the history of community involvement. Second, we describe recent efforts to increase the likelihood that community residents will benefit from the economic development of Parcel 18. Third, we present the case for a focused economic development effort that emphasizes benefits to the South End and Roxbury neighborhoods surrounding the Parcel 18 area. Our argument is supported by an analysis of 1980 census data and 1985 labor force, earnings, and income data from a Boston Redevelopment Authority household survey. Finally, we examine the policy implications of our findings.

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The History of Community Involvement in the Southwest Corridor

The Southwest Corridor Project includes the design, engineering, and construction of a multimodal transportation system and the redevelopment of 120 acres of urban land. The project's transportation components include relocation of the Orange Line, one of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's (MBTA) rapid transit lines; construction of nine new rapid transit stations; reconstruction of 4.7 miles of Amtrak lines; new commuter rail track and stations; twenty-three railroad bridges; and an arterial street.

The history of this project began in 1948 when the commonwealth of Massachusetts proposed to extend Interstate 95/128 through the Southwest Corridor to downtown Boston. At the time, Massachusetts and the United States were experiencing dramatic flight by city dwellers to the suburbs following World War II. Many employment opportunities remained in the city, however, and urban highways were viewed as necessary to provide access to employment in the city and to maintain the city as the cultural and recreational center of its metropolitan area. By 1956, the federal government provided funding for I-95, and ten years later the land had been taken from hundreds of families and businesses and cleared for the proposed highway. By 1970, protests from a consortium of suburban and central city groups stopped construction of I-95. One of the state legislators who led the way to stop construction was Representative Michael S. Dukakis of Brookline.

In 1972, Governor Francis Sargent canceled all plans for a highway for the Southwest Corridor and appointed Anthony Pangaro to begin a process of community input and sign-off for future development of public parcels along the Corridor. In 1973, a team of minority activists led by Marvin Gilmore, Dee Primm, Mary Goode, and others invited several city and state officials, including Fred Salvucci, then director of transportation for the city of Boston and currently secretary of transportation and construction for the commonwealth of Massachusetts, to meet with U.S. Senator Edward Brooke and U.S. Secretary of Transportation William Coleman. As a result of that meeting, the federal funds originally assigned for highway use were transferred to the Corridor's public transit and land development project; the Southwest Corridor Project became the first of its kind in the nation.

Pangaro continued to work with community leaders during Governor Dukakis's first administration (1975–1979), structuring station area task forces, which in turn had subcommittees associated with numbered parcels of land. Parcel 18 was one subcommittee under the Ruggles Station area task force. Very little activity occurred between 1979 and 1982. With the return to office of Governor Dukakis and the election of Boston Mayor Raymond Flynn, community participation along the Corridor was reactivated.

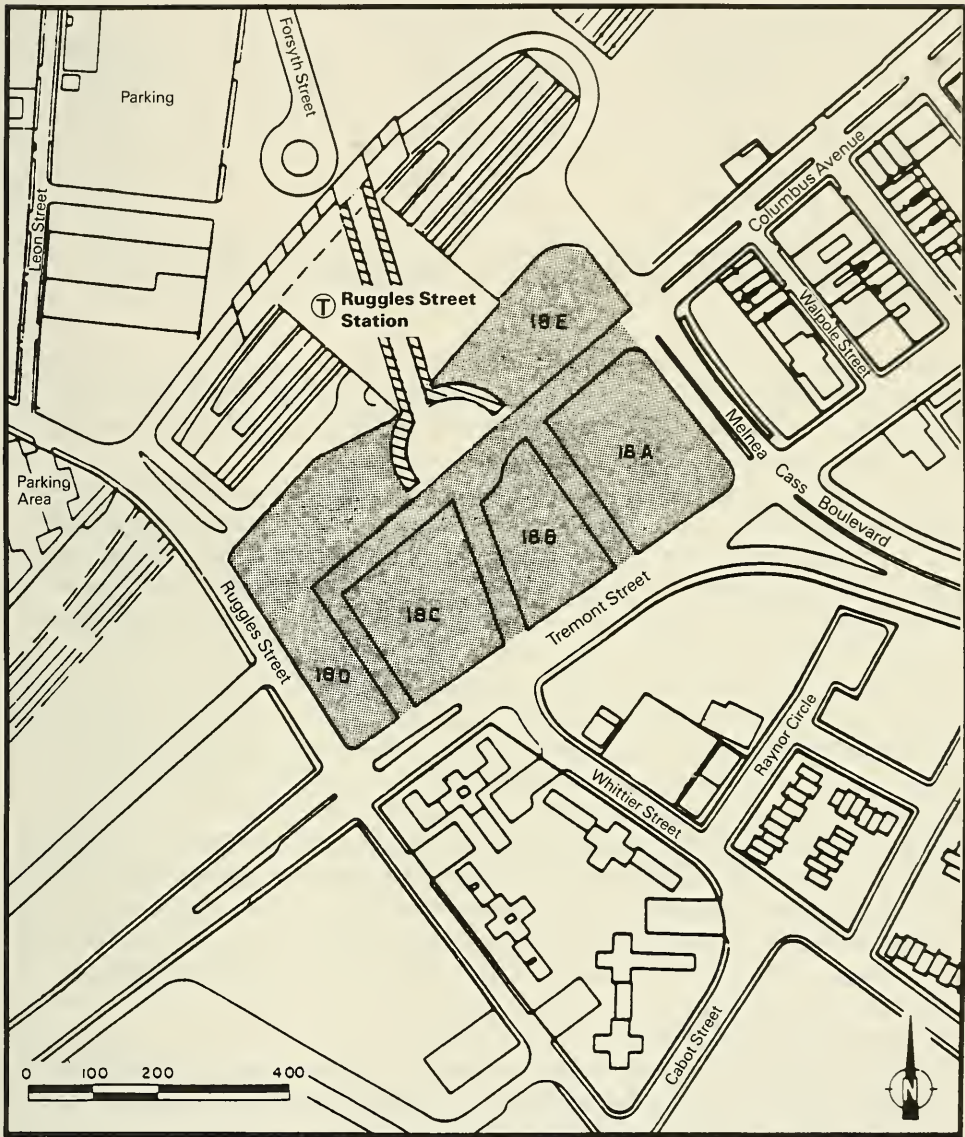
Recent Efforts to Provide Community Benefits

From 1976 to 1986, the Parcel 18+ Task Force was chaired and held together by Marvin Gilmore, president of the Community Development Corporation of Boston. Hundreds of volunteer community activists participated in efforts to stop the proposed highway and represented the interests of the low-income community through the long and arduous development process. Without the efforts of these volunteers, little or no progress for economic development would be occurring now.

Northeastern University, which borders Parcel 18, has been in partnership with the community throughout the process, but it has been most actively involved since 1974. Northeastern President Kenneth Ryder frequently represented the university at Parcel

Figure 1

Parcel 18, Building Sites and Parcelization



Source: Draft Environmental Impact Report Parcel 18 Development, Boston Redevelopment Authority, March 1989.

Table 1

**Median Incomes and Poverty
Status of Families in Parcel 18
Neighborhoods, 1979 and 1984**
(Number of Families as of March 1980 and Winter 1985)

Year	Median Income (Current Dollars)	Median Income (1984 Dollars)	Poverty Rate (%)	Poverty/ Near Poverty Rate (%) *
1979	\$10,455	\$14,940	29.7	38.4
1984	\$12,080	\$12,080	32.2	41.9

* Near poverty is defined as income less than 125 percent of the poverty line for a particular family size.

Sources: 1980 census STF public use tape for the state of Massachusetts; 1985 BRA household survey public use tape.

18+ meetings, Senior Vice President Daniel Roberts, Jr., played an integral part in supporting community interests through its most difficult times from 1975 through 1979, and, since 1979, Director of Community Affairs Joseph Warren and his staff have represented the university.

Consistent with the values articulated by Ryder, the university staff and faculty have been actively involved in the community development process and have provided leadership in planning employment, training, and child care initiatives for neighborhood residents. Equity ownership by minority business enterprises is also supported by university efforts. Since 1986, the MBTA, through the Strategic Planning Project at Northeastern, has funded technical assistance for the Parcel 18+ Task Force initiatives.

Currently, Governor Dukakis, along with Mayor Flynn and Stephen Coyle, director of the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA), are providing leadership and commitment to the successful completion of the Parcel 18 economic development project. The governor, assisted by Secretary Salvucci and Alden Raine, director of the Governor's Office of Economic Development, has provided state resources and technical assistance. Coyle's concept of parcel-to-parcel linkage allowed the project to move out of the planning stage into reality and provided the community an opportunity to join in a partnership with the public sector that is unique in the history of public-community partnerships in this country.²

While the Parcel 18 construction project has not yet broken ground, it is well on its way with the recent selection of Columbia Plaza Associates as the minority developer.

The Need for Community Economic Development

The benefits of Boston's recent economic boom have not been enjoyed by all of Boston's neighborhoods, particularly many of the nonwhite neighborhoods that constitute the Parcel 18 area.³ (For a description of the boundaries of this area, see Appendix A.) This can be documented with family income data from the 1980 census and more recent data from the Boston Redevelopment Authority's household survey conducted throughout the city of Boston during the winter of 1985.⁴ Table 1 provides information on the median incomes and the poverty status of families in the Parcel 18 planning area in 1979 and 1984.

At the time of the 1980 census, the median income of families living in the Parcel 18 planning area was slightly below \$10,500 (in 1979 dollars). This median income was 35 percent below the median income for all families in the city (\$16,062) and 50 percent below the median income in the state (\$21,166) during that year.⁵ The incomes of many

Table 2

**Racial and Ethnic Composition of the
Population 18 Years and Older, 1985**
(Weighted Cases = 2,532)

Race	City of Boston	Parcel 18 Area
White	67.6%	4.7%
Black	22.0	84.7
Hispanic	4.3	7.6
Other	6.1	2.9

Sources: 1980 census STF public use tape for the state of Massachusetts; 1985 BRA house-
hold survey public use tape.

Table 3

**Racial and Ethnic Composition of
Family Heads, 1985**
(Weighted Cases = 726)

Race	City of Boston	Parcel 18 Area
White	61.3%	1.7%
Black	26.9	85.0
Hispanic	6.5	10.0
Other	5.3	3.3

Sources: 1980 census STF public use tape for the state of Massachusetts; 1985 BRA house-
hold survey public use tape.

families in the Parcel 18 planning area fell below the federal poverty level.⁶ During 1979, approximately 30 percent of the families in the Parcel 18 area would have been classified as poor, and 38 percent would have been classified as poor or near poor, that is, with an income less than 125 percent of the poverty line for their family size.

The estimated 1984 median income of families in the Parcel 18 planning area was \$12,080. This figure was \$2,860, or 19 percent, below the 1979 real median income (in 1984 dollars) of families in the planning area.⁷ The poverty rate of families in the planning area during 1984 was estimated to be 32 percent, and 42 percent of the families would have been classified as near poor. A comparison of the 1979 and 1984 findings on the real incomes and poverty status of families in the Parcel 18 planning area reveals that the growth of jobs in the Boston economy during the period and the declines in unemployment in the city between 1982 and 1984 did not appear to have any appreciable effect on the economic well-being of these families. Real median incomes actually appear to have declined, and the family poverty rate in 1984 was slightly higher than it was at the outset of the decade. These findings are in accord with those for all families in the city of Boston between 1979 and 1984.⁸ The poverty rate among city families is estimated to have increased from 16.7 percent in 1979 to 19–21 percent in 1984, and the real median income of city families appears to have fallen by 8 percent over this period.⁹

Table 4

**Sex Composition of the Population
18 Years and Older, 1985**

(Weighted Cases = 2,551)

Sex	City of Boston	Parcel 18 Area
Male	45.9%	38.1 %
Female	54.1	61.9

Sources: 1980 census STF public use tape for the state of Massachusetts; 1985 BRA household survey public use tape.

Table 5

**Sex Composition of Family Heads
18 Years and Older, 1985**

(Weighted Cases = 732)

Sex	City of Boston	Parcel 18 Area
Male	66.5%	42.6%
Female	33.5	57.4

Sources: 1980 census STF public use tape for the state of Massachusetts; 1985 BRA household survey public use tape.

Given the economic difficulties encountered by many families in the Parcel 18 area, focusing efforts on improving job opportunities, real incomes, and other community benefits appears to be sound social policy. The next section of the article presents information relevant to efforts to promote economic development and job opportunities for residents of the Parcel 18 area. Our analysis focuses on respondents who were eighteen years or older at the time of the spring 1985 BRA survey. Data from that survey were used to generate information on race, sex, age, and educational attainment, labor force and employment status, and earnings, incomes, and poverty status. Key findings are summarized for all persons in the city of Boston and for individuals in the Parcel 18 planning area at the time of the 1985 survey.

Socioeconomic Data: Race, Sex, Age, and Educational Attainment

Tables 2–9 summarize basic information on the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the adult population (eighteen years and older) in the Parcel 18 area and, for comparison, in the city of Boston as a whole.¹⁰ The tables are paired, with data in the first of a pair for the adult civilian noninstitutional population and in the second for heads of families. The data are based on a sample, not on a complete count of the population. As the sample size decreases, the estimates tend to have a higher sampling error.

Tables 2 and 3 provide data on the racial and ethnic composition of the adult populations of the Parcel 18 planning area and the city of Boston. The Parcel 18 area contains a large concentration of the city's black population. While only 22 percent of adults in Boston during 1985 were black, almost 85 percent of adults in the Parcel 18 area were black. An additional 8 percent of the population in the Parcel 18 area were Hispanic, compared with

only 4 percent for Boston as a whole. Thus, the adult population of the Parcel 18 area is more than 92 percent black and Hispanic. This percentage increases to 95 percent if analysis is restricted to family heads (Table 3). Less than 2 percent of all family heads in the Parcel 18 area are white, compared with more than 61 percent for the city of Boston.

Data in Tables 4 and 5 indicate the breakdown by sex of the adult population. While women in the city of Boston outnumber males by roughly 54 to 46 percent, this difference is far more extreme in Parcel 18, where females represent more than 62 percent of the adult population. Part of the difference probably results from an undercount of young black men, a phenomenon that traditionally plagues household surveys in poverty neighborhoods of central cities. The differences between the city and the Parcel 18 planning area become more acute when family heads are considered (Table 5). Among heads of families in Boston, males outnumber females by 2 to 1 (66.5 percent versus 33.5 percent). In the Parcel 18 area, however, the majority of families (57 percent) are headed by females, with male spouses absent from the homes. This finding points to the need for family support services, particularly child care availability and affordability, that can improve residents' opportunities to participate in the economic development of Parcel 18. Because of its importance, the issue of child care is addressed more fully in a separate report prepared by the Strategic Planning Project.¹¹

Tables 6 and 7 summarize the age composition of the adult population. Parcel 18's adult population is somewhat older than that of the city of Boston. A smaller percentage of the Parcel 18 population is in the young working age group (eighteen to thirty-four). The city of Boston as a whole has become home to a growing number of young, unmarried individ-

Table 6

**Age Composition of the Population
18 Years and Older, 1985**

(Weighted Cases = 2,553)

Age	City of Boston	Parcel 18 Area
18-34	51.2%	42.0%
35-64	35.4	43.7
65 +	13.5	14.3

Sources: 1980 census STF public use tape for the state of Massachusetts; 1985 BRA household survey public use tape.

Table 7

**Age Composition of Family Heads
18 Years and Older, 1985**

(Weighted Cases = 733)

Age	City of Boston	Parcel 18 Area
18-34	30.8%	32.3%
35-64	55.7	56.4
65 +	13.5	11.3

Sources: 1980 census STF public use tape for the state of Massachusetts; 1985 BRA household survey public use tape.

Table 8

**Educational Attainment of the
Population 18 Years and Older, 1985**
(Weighted Cases = 2,523)

Years of Education Completed	City of Boston	Parcel 18 Area
0-11	20.7%	41.5%
12 or GED	32.5	34.1
13-15	20.6	16.6
16+	26.1	8.0

Sources: 1980 census STF public use tape for the state of Massachusetts; 1985 BRA household survey public use tape.

Table 9

**Educational Attainment of Family Heads
18 Years and Older, 1985**
(Weighted Cases = 723)

Years of Education Completed	City of Boston	Parcel 18 Area
0-11	25.7%	38.3%
12 or GED	36.3	41.7
13-15	17.1	15.0
16+	20.9	5.0

Sources: 1980 census STF public use tape for the state of Massachusetts; 1985 BRA household survey public use tape.

uals, many of whom are college educated and have recently migrated to the city.¹² A majority of the city's adult population is under thirty-five years of age, while only 42 percent of the adult population in the Parcel 18 area falls into this group. Approximately four of every nine adults in Parcel 18 are in the thirty-five to sixty-four age category, while only 35 percent of the adults in the entire city fall in this age group.

While Parcel 18's adult population is somewhat older than that in the rest of the city, the age composition of family heads in the two areas is quite similar. A slightly higher percentage of Parcel 18 family heads is younger (eighteen to thirty-four) and fewer households are headed by elderly persons (sixty-five and over). Only one of nine families in the Parcel 18 area is headed by an individual sixty-five years of age or older.

Tables 8 and 9 describe the educational attainment of the adult population of Boston and the Parcel 18 area. Given the accelerated shift to a services-oriented economy in the past decade, with its more intensive use of college-educated workers, formal educational attainment has become a more important determinant of success in the labor markets of the city. Young adults with some postsecondary schooling, especially those with college degrees, have improved their economic position most during the 1980s, while high school dropouts have fared relatively poorly.¹³ The formal educational attainment of Parcel 18

residents, as measured by years of schooling completed, is significantly below the city average. Nearly 42 percent of the adult population in Parcel 18 lack a high school diploma or a general equivalency diploma (GED). The dropout problem among young adults city-wide is only half as large (20.7 percent). The educational deficits of Parcel 18 residents have obvious implications for job access and point to the need for literacy/GED training to prepare residents for the white-collar positions likely to be generated by the economic development of Parcel 18. Almost 47 percent of the Boston adult population have some schooling beyond high school (thirteen or more years), compared with 25 percent in Parcel 18. College graduates are three times more prevalent in the city's adult population than they are in the Parcel 18 planning area (26 percent versus 8 percent).

When analysis is restricted to family heads, the pattern of differences in educational attainment between the city and Parcel 18 is similar to the pattern for all adults. Nearly four of every ten family heads in Parcel 18 lack a high school diploma or GED, and only one of five has completed some schooling beyond high school. Family heads with a four-year college degree are four times more prevalent in the city than in Parcel 18 (21 percent versus 5 percent).

Altogether, the socioeconomic data for Parcel 18 describe an area of the city that is predominantly minority, with blacks accounting for five of every six adult residents and with an above-average concentration of female-headed families. Parcel 18's adult population is somewhat older than that in the rest of the city, and the educational attainment of residents is considerably lower. The Parcel 18 area in the aggregate has not yet benefited substantially from the economic growth experienced by other parts of Boston. It is also unlikely to benefit without considerable public and private investments in both new business firms and the human capital of the existing resident population. The labor force participation, employment, and earnings data in the next section confirm this conclusion.

Labor Force Participation and Unemployment Problems of Parcel 18 Residents

Tables 10 and 11 present data on participation in the civilian labor force and on unemployment rates at the time of the 1985 BRA survey. Comparisons are made between the entire adult population and family heads in the city of Boston and Parcel 18. The percentage of the adult population participating in the labor force (either working or actively looking for work) is smaller in Parcel 18 than in the city overall (63 percent versus 67 percent). The unemployment rate among Parcel 18 adults (11.2 percent) is more than twice that in the city (4.9 percent). The relatively high unemployment rate among adults in Parcel 18 may help explain the somewhat lower labor force participation rate. Higher unemployment can discourage adults, particularly those with limited formal schooling and work experience, from actively seeking work.¹⁴

The comparative labor force and unemployment position of Parcel 18 residents improves somewhat when only family heads are considered (Table 11). The labor force participation rate of family heads in both the city and Parcel 18 is higher than that of all adults. The difference is particularly striking in Parcel 18, where the labor force participation rate among family heads exceeds that for family heads in Boston. The unemployment rate of Parcel 18 adult family heads substantially exceeds the unemployment rate for all family heads in the city of Boston (9.8 percent versus 5.7 percent). Nearly one of every ten family heads in Parcel 18 who were in the labor force at the time of the 1985 BRA survey experienced an unemployment problem. Given that unemployment rates of

Table 10

Percent of Persons 18 Years and Older in the Civilian Labor Force and Percent of the Labor Force Unemployed at the Time of the 1985 BRA Survey

(Weighted Cases = 2,506)

	City of Boston	Parcel 18 Area
Percent in the civilian labor force	67.4	62.9
Unemployment rate (%)	4.9	11.2

Sources: 1980 census STF public use tape for the state of Massachusetts; 1985 BRA household survey public use tape.

Table 11

Percent of Family Heads 18 Years and Older in the Labor Force and Percent of the Labor Force Unemployed at the Time of the 1985 BRA Survey

(Weighted Cases = 715)

	City of Boston	Parcel 18 Area
Percent in the labor force	68.7	73.2
Unemployment rate (%)	5.7	9.8

Sources: 1980 census STF public use tape for the state of Massachusetts; 1985 BRA household survey public use tape.

family heads tend to vary inversely with years of schooling, such a pattern is not surprising. Family heads with limited formal schooling are more likely to experience unemployment problems, holding all other background factors constant.

Earnings, Incomes, and Poverty Rates

Data on the labor force behavior and unemployment status of Parcel 18 residents do not indicate by themselves how well residents and their families are faring economically. Being employed increases the likelihood of escaping poverty, but it does not guarantee it.¹⁵ Approximately 30 percent of the heads of poor families in Massachusetts have been employed at some time in recent years.¹⁶

Tables 12–15 contain data on the 1984 incomes from wages and salaries for residents of Boston and of Parcel 18. Other sources of income, including property income, unemployment compensation, public assistance payments, and Social Security benefits, are excluded from the data. Thus, the figures give a measure of the ability of residents to support themselves from earnings in the labor market.

More than one-third of all adults in Parcel 18 reported no wage and salary income during calendar year 1984 (Table 12). Approximately another third earned up to \$10,000.

Table 12

**Percent Distribution of the Population
18 Years and Older by 1984 Annual Wage
and Salary Incomes of All Persons**
(Weighted Cases = 2,309)

Income Range	City of Boston	Parcel 18 Area
\$0	29.8	34.1
\$1–6,999	20.7	22.4
\$7,000–9,999	7.3	8.8
\$10,000–14,999	11.9	15.3
\$15,000–19,999	10.4	8.8
\$20,000–24,999	7.4	6.5
\$25,000+	12.4	4.1

Sources: 1980 census STF public use tape for the state of Massachusetts; 1985 BRA house-
hold survey public use tape.

Table 13

**Estimated 1984 Median Wage and Salary
Incomes of Boston Residents
18 Years and Older, by Earnings Status**
(Weighted Cases = 2,309)

	City of Boston	Parcel 18 Area
All persons	\$ 6,820	\$ 5,000
Persons with some earnings	\$12,950	\$10,500

Sources: 1980 census STF public use tape for the state of Massachusetts; 1985 BRA house-
hold survey public use tape.

Only one of ten Parcel 18 residents reported earnings of \$20,000 or more. The median earnings for all adults in Parcel 18 were only \$5,000. If we consider only residents with some positive earnings during 1984, the median earnings more than double to \$10,500. Both medians are approximately 25 percent below those in the city of Boston (see Table 13).

The major difference between the distributions of earnings of adults in Parcel 18 and in Boston is related to the far lower share of Parcel 18 residents with earnings of \$20,000 or more. In Boston, approximately one of five adults earned \$20,000 or more during 1984; however, only one of ten adults in Parcel 18 was able to do so. Most city residents achieving these higher earnings were college graduates. The sharply lower share of Parcel 18 residents with some postsecondary schooling is a major factor limiting their earnings potential. Linkage monies made available to the community by developers of Parcel 18 might be used to support postsecondary education and training for higher-level administrative support, technical, and management positions that are likely to be generated by firms locating in the Parcel 18 area.

As expected, family heads in Parcel 18 were more likely than all adults to earn an income from wages and salaries and to experience higher median earnings when they did work (Tables 14 and 15). Still, nearly three of ten family heads in Parcel 18 reported no wage and salary earnings during 1984, and another 25 percent earned less than \$7,000. The median wage and salary income of all family heads (including those with no earnings)

Table 14

**Percent Distribution of Family Heads by
1984 Annual Wage and Salary Incomes**

(Weighted Cases = 662)

Income Range	City of Boston	Parcel 18 Area
\$0	29.7	29.0
\$1–6,999	13.9	24.2
\$7,000–9,999	7.6	8.1
\$10,000–14,999	10.3	22.6
\$15,000–19,999	10.9	6.5
\$20,000–24,999	9.5	6.5
\$25,000 +	18.1	3.1

Sources: 1980 census STF public use tape for the state of Massachusetts; 1985 BRA household survey public use tape.

Table 15

**Estimated 1984 Median Wage and Salary
Incomes of Boston Family Heads,
by Earnings Status**

(Weighted Cases = 662)

	City of Boston	Parcel 18 Area
All family heads	\$ 9,531	\$ 7,333
Family heads with some earnings	\$15,902	\$11,250

Sources: 1980 census STF public use tape for the state of Massachusetts; 1985 BRA household survey public use tape.

was only \$7,333, while family heads with some earnings achieved median earnings of \$11,250. This last median earnings figure was 30 percent below the median wage and salary earnings of all family heads in the city during 1984.¹⁷

Given the high percentage (29 percent) of Parcel 18 family heads reporting no earnings during 1984, the relatively low median earnings of family heads with an income, and the high proportion of families headed by a woman, we would expect many families in Parcel 18 to experience severe income inadequacy. To examine this issue we have analyzed family income data generated by the BRA household survey.

Table 16 presents data on total incomes of families in the city of Boston and the Parcel 18 planning area. The table indicates the percentage of families receiving various amounts of income during 1984, including all forms of property income and public assistance payments.

During 1984, nearly 36 percent of Parcel 18 families reported a total income under \$7,000, and 61 percent had an income under \$15,000. The estimated median income for all Parcel 18 families was slightly under \$12,000, well below the \$21,000 median for all families in the city. Clearly, the typical Parcel 18 family is substantially disadvantaged compared with the typical city family, achieving a median income of only 38 percent of the median income of all families in the state during that year.¹⁸

To determine how well Parcel 18 families succeeded in escaping problems of poverty and near poverty, we converted the family income data into their poverty level equivalents using the federal government's definitions of poverty income threshold. (See Appendix B

Table 16

**Percent Distribution of Families
by 1984 Total Annual Income**
(Weighted Cases = 621)

Income Range	City of Boston	Parcel 18 Area
\$0-6,999	18.1	35.8
\$7,000-9,999	7.5	7.2
\$10,000-14,999	13.0	17.8
\$15,000-19,999	9.1	7.1
\$20,000-24,999	10.0	10.7
\$25,000 +	42.4	21.5
Estimated median	\$21,000	\$11,950

Sources: 1980 census STF public use tape for the state of Massachusetts; 1985 BRA household survey public use tape.

Table 17

**Percent Distribution of Families
by Poverty Status, 1984**
(Weighted Cases = 621)

Poverty Status*	City of Boston	Parcel 18 Area
Neither poor nor near poor	75.9	59.0
Near poor	5.1	9.0
Poor	19.0	32.0

* See Appendix B for definitions of poverty status.

Sources: 1980 census STF public use tape for the state of Massachusetts; 1985 BRA household survey public use tape.

for a review of our methodology.) Table 17 provides data on the poverty and near poverty status of families in the city of Boston and Parcel 18 during 1984. As all of the preceding socioeconomic, labor force, earnings, and income data would suggest, a larger percentage of Parcel 18 families are in poverty than in the city as a whole (32 percent versus 19 percent). In Parcel 18, 41 percent of the families are poor or near poor. The comparable figure for the city overall was 24 percent. Statewide, approximately only 7 percent of all families were poor during 1984. Thus, the family poverty rate in Parcel 18 was more than 4.5 times higher than that for the state as a whole. The state's family poverty problem has become more concentrated in central city neighborhoods, including many of the census tracts in the Parcel 18 planning area.¹⁹

Conclusion

Our review of empirical findings on the employment, earnings, and incomes of Parcel 18 adult residents and their families in the 1980s indicates dramatically that adults and families in the area are at a severe absolute and relative economic disadvantage. Poverty is far more prevalent, annual incomes and earnings are substantially lower, and unemployment rates are sharply higher than for the city as a whole. The comparisons become far bleaker when Parcel 18 figures are compared with statewide averages. It is clearly desirable that

the city and the state, in partnership with community leaders and representatives, improve the likelihood that future financial benefits of Boston's economic revival reach this part of the city.

Our review of the demographic and socioeconomic backgrounds of Parcel 18 residents also revealed that this objective may not be very easy to accomplish in the absence of coordinated public and private actions to boost the educational competency and job preparedness of many unemployed, underemployed, and disadvantaged residents. A somewhat older, less educated adult population lives in the Parcel 18 area than in the city. As a result, specific programs to educate, train, and match Parcel 18 residents to developing job opportunities will be critical to the success of development efforts. Given the predominance of female-headed families with young children in the Parcel 18 area, adequate provision of child care and family support services is vitally important to increase employment and income opportunities for area residents.

The planning activities undertaken by the Parcel 18+ Task Force to provide specific guidelines for employment, training, and support services related to Parcel 18 development, combined with linkage monies generated by developers, have the potential for substantially improving the community's economic and social benefits from future development. To be successful, however, the planning activities must include not only guidelines and program initiatives but also coordination among the various public and private agencies and community groups. Within this mix, community participation remains a critical component for success. 🐼

Appendix A

Definition of the Parcel 18 Planning Area

The Parcel 18 planning area is defined to coincide with the geographic boundaries of twenty specific census tracts. These tracts are located largely in the BRA Neighborhood Planning Districts of the South End and Roxbury. The Parcel 18 area was defined somewhat broadly to ensure a sufficient number of observations from the 1985 BRA household survey, which did not sample from all tracts in the city. More geographically restrictive definitions of the Parcel 18 area proved unsatisfactory.

The numbers of the specific census tracts included in the Parcel 18 area are the following: 708, 709, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821.

Appendix B

**Methodology Used to Generate Estimates of
Poverty Among Families in the City of Boston and the
Parcel 18 Planning Area**

Our estimates of poverty among families in the city of Boston during 1984 were based as closely as possible on the federal government's definition of poverty. The BRA household survey did not ask families to provide exact dollar estimates of their total income in the preceding calendar year. Instead, families' reported incomes were classified into one of twenty income categories, whose values are presented in Table B-1. The lowest income category (category 1) contained those families with a reported total income under \$2,000, and the highest income category (category 20) contained those families with an income over \$50,000. Those not willing to report an income were assigned a missing value code of 99. Of the 744 families for whom interviews were completed, family income data were not available for 114, or 15.3 percent of all families interviewed.

The poverty income thresholds of the federal government are defined in specific absolute dollar terms rather than in a range. To determine the poverty status of a family, we matched the BRA income categories with the federal government's poverty thresholds. Our assigned matches are summarized in Table B-2. In most instances, the matches are quite close. To avoid biasing the findings in any one direction, we allowed the maximum BRA income category to fall slightly below the poverty threshold for some family sizes and slightly above the poverty threshold for other family sizes. For example, the poverty threshold for a family of two was \$6,762. Our definition of poverty for families of two consists of all families that reported incomes below \$7,000. The poverty threshold for a family of four was \$10,609. Our definition of poverty for families containing four persons includes all such families reporting an income less than \$10,000. A careful examination of the remaining matches will reveal that they are in close accord with each other.

Table B-1

**BRA Family Income Categories Used to Record
Respondents' Estimated Family Incomes**

Family Income Category	Income Range
1	Under \$2,000
2	\$ 2,000–2,999
3	3,000–3,999
4	4,000–4,999
5	5,000–5,999
6	6,000–6,999
7	7,000–7,999
8	8,000–8,999
9	9,000–9,999
10	10,000–12,499
11	12,500–14,999
12	15,000–17,499
13	17,500–19,999
14	20,000–24,999
15	25,000–29,999
16	30,000–34,999
17	35,000–39,999
18	40,000–44,999
19	45,000–49,999
20	50,000 +
99	Not reported

Table B-2

**BRA Family Income Categories Used to Determine the Poverty
Status of Families in Boston, Spring 1985**

Size of Family	BRA Income Categories	Federal Government Poverty Threshold
2 persons	\$0-699	\$ 6,762
3 persons	0-899	8,277
4 persons	0-999	10,609
5 persons	0-12,499	12,566
6 persons	0-14,999	14,207
7 persons	0-14,999	16,096
8 persons	0-17,499	17,961
9 or more persons	0-19,999	21,247

Notes

1. For a review of highway development debates in the state during the early 1970s, see Martha Wagner Weinberg, "The Department of Public Works," in *Managing the State* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1977).
2. For a brief overview of the developments leading to the city's parcel-to-parcel linkage program and its application to the Parcel 18 project, see Fred Martin, "Cashing in on the Beantown Boom," *Black Enterprise* (February 1988): 143–48.
3. For purposes of our analysis, the Parcel 18 planning area was defined in accordance with geographic boundaries of a number of specific census tracts. A listing of these tracts appears in Appendix A. These tracts are located largely in the BRA Neighborhood Planning Districts of the South End and Roxbury.
4. The 1985 household survey was conducted by the Center for Survey Research of the University of Massachusetts at Boston; it involved interviews with a representative sample of more than 1,400 households throughout the city. For a review of the specific nature of the questions contained on the BRA survey questionnaire, see Center for Survey Research, University of Massachusetts at Boston, *Boston Neighborhoods, March–April 1985* (1985). An overview of the design features of the survey can be found in Margaret O'Brien, "Demographic Trends in Boston: Some Implications for Municipal Services," *New England Journal of Public Policy* 2, no. 2 (Summer/Fall 1986): 75–90, and Sara Wermiel, *Boston's Poor, 1984* (Boston: Boston Redevelopment Authority, Policy Development and Research Department, April 1987).
5. The 1980 estimates are based on census long-form questionnaires completed by approximately one of six families living in census tracts making up the Parcel 18 planning area. Nearly 2,000 families in the planning area would have completed such questionnaires. In contrast, only 740 families in the entire city were interviewed during the 1985 BRA survey, including fewer than 100 families in the Parcel 18 area. Given the substantially smaller sample size for the 1985 survey, the estimates of family income and poverty rates for this year have a much greater sampling error associated with them. For a review of the contents of the long-form questionnaire, see U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Public Use Microdata Samples: Technical Documentation* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982).
6. The federal poverty thresholds vary by size of family. The 1979 weighted poverty income threshold for a family of two was \$4,723, and for a family of four \$7,412. See U.S. Bureau of the Census, *General Social and Economic Characteristics: Massachusetts*, PC80-1-C23, (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982), B-22–B-23.
7. The consumer price index for all urban consumers (CPI-U) for the Boston metropolitan area was used to convert 1979 money incomes into their 1984 dollar equivalents. Between 1979 and 1984, the CPI-U rose by nearly 43 percent in the Boston Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA). U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Boston Region, "The Consumer Price Index for the Boston Area," unpublished information sheet, 1987.
8. For a fairly comprehensive review of family poverty developments in the city and state during the first half of the 1980s, see Andrew Sum, Paul Harrington, Neal Fogg, and William Goedicke, *Family Poverty in the New Boston Economy*, report prepared for the Massachusetts Executive Office of Economic Affairs, Boston, 1987.
9. For a review of household and family income developments in the city of Boston over this period, see Margaret O'Brien, "Demographic Trends in Boston."
10. It should be noted that the BRA household survey did not include interviews with residents of institutions (correctional institutions, nursing homes, and hospitals) or with students living in college dormitories. Thus, the civilian noninstitutional population estimates exclude dormitory residents.

11. See Andrew Sum and Daryl Hellman, *Employment Rates, Child Care Arrangements, and Job Desires of Mothers with Children Under 14 Years of Age, City of Boston and Parcel 18 Area, Spring 1985*, Strategic Planning Project, Northeastern University, April 1987.
12. For a review of the growing importance of these migrants, their demographic composition, and their views on life in Boston, see Jonathan Kaufman, "The Return of the American City," *Boston Sunday Globe*, 24 January 1988, 1, 22–23; Peter J. Howe, "New Newcomers Give Less of Themselves," *Boston Globe*, 26 January 1988, 1, 14–15; and Irene Sege, "Newcomers to Boston Like Quality of Life, Fear Quality of Schools," *Boston Globe*, 3 January 1988, 1, 32.
13. See Andrew Sum and Neal Fogg, *Formal Educational Attainment and the Employment, Earnings, and Poverty Experiences of Young Adults in the New Boston Economy*, paper prepared for the ABCD Conference on Access and Excellence, Boston, 1987.
14. In the jargon of labor market economists, the discouraged are those persons who would like to be working at the present time but are not actively seeking work because they believe either that no jobs are available or that they would not be hired because of their age, limited schooling, or experience. Adult women and young adults (age eighteen to twenty-four) of both sexes dominate the ranks of discouraged workers throughout the nation. For a review of the evidence on this issue, see T. Aldrich Finegan, *The Measurement, Behavior, and Classification of Discouraged Workers*, National Commission on Employment and Unemployment Statistics, Background Paper No. 12 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, June 1978).
15. The number of working poor in the United States during the 1980s has increased sharply. During 1985, there were 9.1 million working poor in the United States. See Sar A. Levitan and Isaac Shapiro, *Working but Poor: America's Contradiction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).
16. At mid-decade, 25 percent of all poor family heads in Massachusetts were employed, as were nearly 30 percent of all poor family heads in the city of Boston. See Andrew Sum, Paul Harrington, Neal Fogg, and William Goedicke, *Family Poverty in the New Boston Economy*, 6–7.
17. The estimated median wage and salary income of all family heads in the city is probably biased downward as a result of a higher rate of nonreporting by family heads in the more affluent neighborhoods of the city. Only 2 percent of the family heads in the Parcel 18 planning area were unwilling to identify the level of their wage and salary earnings during 1984. In contrast, 10 percent of all family heads in the city failed to identify their wage and salary earnings.
18. See Andrew Sum, Paul Harrington, and Neal Fogg, "The Welfare Impact of Full Employment: Massachusetts in the 1980s," *Thrust: The Journal for Employment and Training Professionals* 1 and 2 (1986): 23–48.
19. Similar development appears to have occurred in many large central cities throughout the nation during the past fifteen years. See James Julius Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

