

## Recommendations

The corridor presents a host of opportunities for sustainable, equitable, and economically vibrant growth. However, the corridor also faces substantial challenges. Corridor planning and advocacy is needed in order to mitigate risk of displacement and ensure that the people who live in the Corridor benefit fully from the planned jobs, housing, and other resources and opportunities that may come.

**Advocating for investments in the Orange Line infrastructure.** Orange line infrastructure **needs** to keep pace with projected ridership. One of the most urgent transportation infrastructure needs in the region is replacing 120 cars on the Orange Line that were built between 1979-1981. Improvements to system reliability and quality of service will, in turn, encourage more people to use the Orange Line.



**Maximizing large-scale land acquisition opportunities.** There are large areas of underutilized land in many station areas along the corridor, which are currently under the ownership of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), municipalities, and private landowners. Public and private developers can collaborate with the MBTA, municipalities, and the state to strategically identify and acquire optimal sites for TOD.

**Optimizing TOD scenarios along the corridor through zoning policies and financial resources.** A combination of zoning changes and financial resources are needed to support developers in seizing TOD opportunities in all station areas. There is a need for advocacy to 1) promote the adoption of zoning policies at the municipal level and 2) secure state, federal, and private financial resources that will enhance the potential for equitable TOD. This is particularly important in the North segment where some station areas have weaker markets and a land use mix that is not as diverse as those in the Central and South segments.

**Mitigating the risk of displacement.** Despite the fact that the Orange Line provides direct transit access to the educational and employment resources of the urban core in Boston, the overall poverty rate for households along the corridor is still twice the MAPC regional average. Four station areas in Boston have over 100 affordable units at risk of expiring by the end of 2015. At Ruggles and Roxbury Crossing, there is a high concentration of low-income households combined with major planned institutional development activity over the next two decades; advocacy and policies to support equitable TOD are needed to mitigate displacement in these station areas.

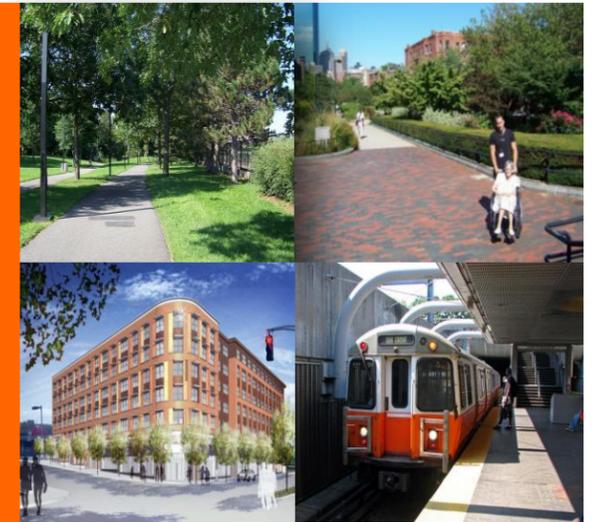
**Enhancing corridor identity through increased multimodal connections.** Advocacy is needed to increase connections between bike and pedestrian paths and open space particularly between the Community College, Sullivan Square, Wellington, Malden Center, and Oak Grove station areas and to secure the placement of Hubway bikeshare stations at every station in the corridor. Promoting multimodal connections along the entire corridor will enhance public health and it can reduce vehicle miles traveled by providing commuters with another non-vehicular mode for getting to where they need to go.



**Establishing a coalition of public and private stakeholders.** An organized coalition of stakeholders along the corridor is needed to ensure that the corridor grows and manages projected changes equitably and sustainably through advancement of these recommendations. A primary task of the coalition is to continue to brand the corridor and elevate the need for investment to maximize its potential. This coalition can also advocate for continued corridor level planning that may be multi-municipal in nature.

- Oak Grove
- Malden Center
- Wellington
- Assembly Square
- Sullivan Square
- Community College
- North Station
- Haymarket
- State
- Downtown Crossing
- Chinatown
- Tufts Medical Center
- Back Bay
- Mass. Avenue
- Ruggles
- Roxbury Crossing
- Jackson Square
- Stony Brook
- Green Street
- Forest Hills

## Orange Line Opportunity Corridor



This first-ever compilation of corridor characteristics and planned development activity informs advocacy for corridor investments and equitable transit-oriented development.



The Orange Line Opportunity Corridor Report provides a baseline understanding of the demographic, economic, transportation, and land use characteristics of the corridor; a schedule of planned and projected corridor development activity over two time horizons: 8 years and 8-15 years; highlights quality TOD projects already completed or underway in the corridor; and recommends six action items to ensure that the corridor receives the continued attention and investment that it deserves as one of the region's most heavily used and diverse transit corridors.

This project was envisioned by the Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations and undertaken with technical assistance provided by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). The following municipalities and community development corporations supplied data for the report:

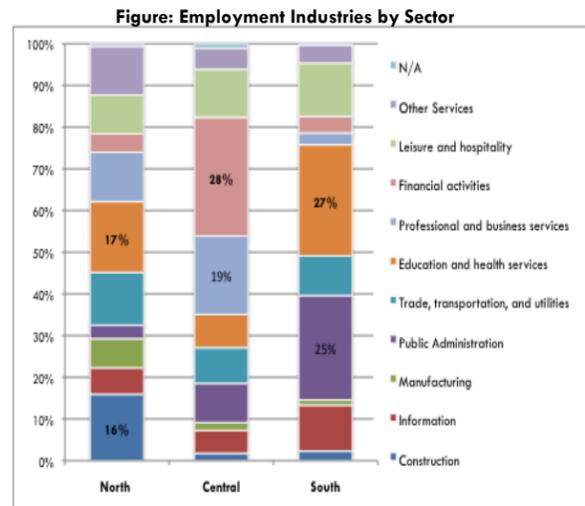
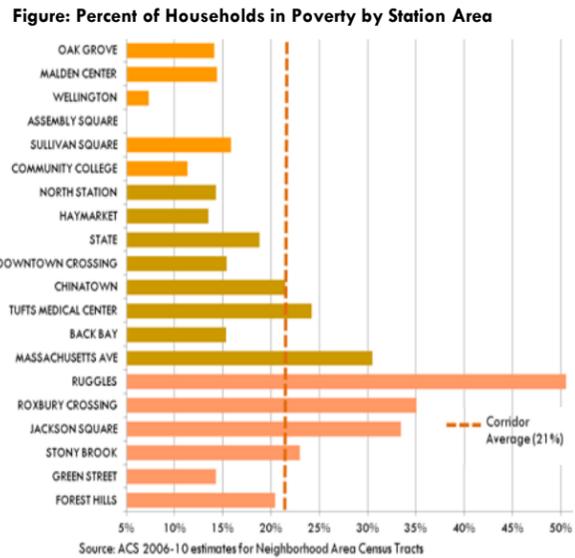
City of Boston  
City of Malden  
City of Medford  
City of Melrose  
City of Somerville

Asian Community Development Corporation  
The Community Builders  
Jamaica Plain Community Development Corporation  
Madison Park Community Development Corporation  
Somerville Community Development Corporation  
TRI-City Community Action Program (TRI-CAP)  
Urban Edge Community Development Corporation

# Characteristics of the Orange Line Corridor

Approximately 20 percent of households in the corridor are in poverty.

Approximately 709,900 residents reside within a half mile of an Orange Line station, representing 23 percent of the region's population and 28 percent of its households. The Corridor is also racially diverse; 42 percent of those who live within a half-mile of the stations along the corridor are persons of color. **Approximately 20 percent of households in the corridor are in poverty—twice the MAPC regional average—and five station areas have very high populations of color and households in poverty.** Unfortunately, these residents are also at risk of residential displacement as the corridor is revitalized, due to rising rents or expiration of affordability restrictions.

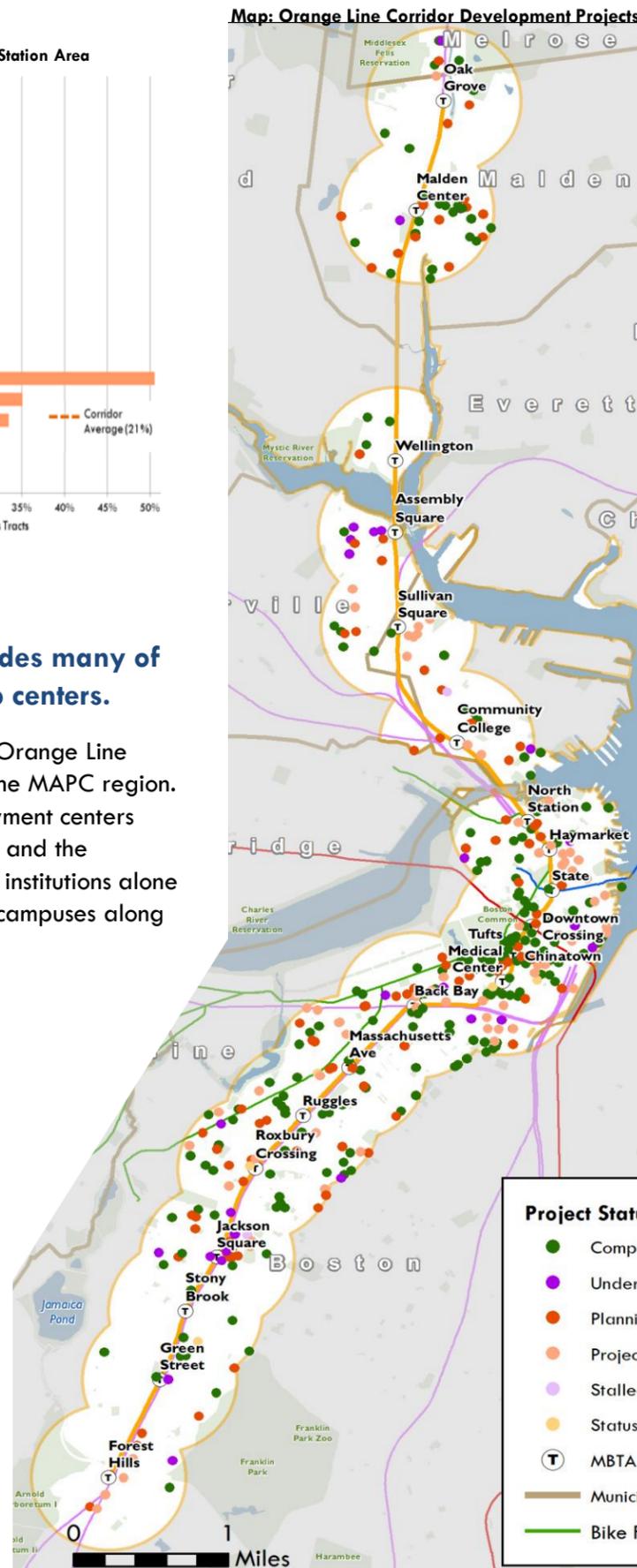


The Orange Line Corridor includes many of the region's most important job centers.

There are nearly 300,000 jobs near Orange Line Stations— 16 percent of total jobs in the MAPC region. The Orange Line serves major employment centers including Downtown Boston, Back Bay, and the Longwood Medical Area. Educational institutions alone employ over 4,000 individuals in the campuses along the Orange Line.

Corridor residents and workers benefit from the corridor's transit service, pedestrian connections, and bike paths.

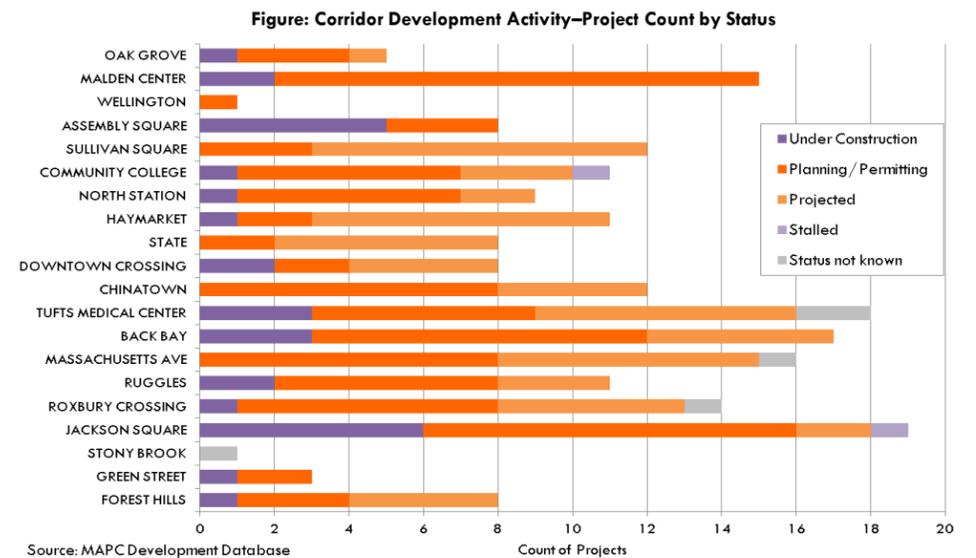
Nearly one third of workers living in the Corridor commute by public transit, rising to nearly 50 percent at the north and south ends of the corridor. Most stations are also surrounded by a variety of destinations—all but three are rated as "Very Walkable" or "Walker's Paradise" by Walk Score. Households in the corridor also drive substantially less than their counterparts elsewhere in the region—27 miles per household per day in the corridor versus 49 miles per household per day region-wide. The corridor is also home to paths, most notably the Southwest Corridor Park, a 4.7-mile linear park that runs parallel to the train through four diverse Boston neighborhoods, and the Northern Strand Trail, a.k.a. Bike to the Sea Trail, which uses nine miles of abandoned rail lines and stretches through six municipalities. Both paths/trails were built on years of advocacy by bike, trail, and open space advocates.



# Projected Development and Corridor Opportunities

The Corridor is poised to experience a major wave of development over the next two decades.

Based on information about specific development proposals and municipal planning initiatives, MAPC estimates that the corridor is likely to see 7,300 new housing units and 21,000 new jobs by 2020. Between 2020 and 2035, projected development might create more than 15,000 new housing units and 53,000 new jobs. Development opportunities range from large-scale "transformative" redevelopment of underutilized station areas (e.g., Sullivan Square, Forest Hills) to downtown high-rises and parcel-level infill development in neighborhoods all along the corridor. This new development will create important housing and employment opportunities for residents and will generate millions of dollars of tax revenue.



New investments are needed to support the corridor's vitality and enable future development.

Not only are all of the Orange Line trains past their useful life and in need of replacement, but additional capacity is needed to support the ridership likely to result from future development. MAPC estimates that new development could add 2,900 new Orange Line Commuters by 2020, and as many as 8,000 new commuters in the following 15 years. This new ridership is almost guaranteed to push ridership past the "service standard capacity," especially if increasing numbers of out-of-service vehicles reduce the capacity of the line. Investments of at least \$1 billion are needed to replace the rolling stock and increase capacity. Furthermore, improvements to pedestrian and bicycle connections are needed, especially at the northern end of the corridor, to provide more continuity along the transit line.