



RISING FROM THE ASHES

THE GREAT BOSTON FIRE OF 1872 AND RECOVERY

PG. 18



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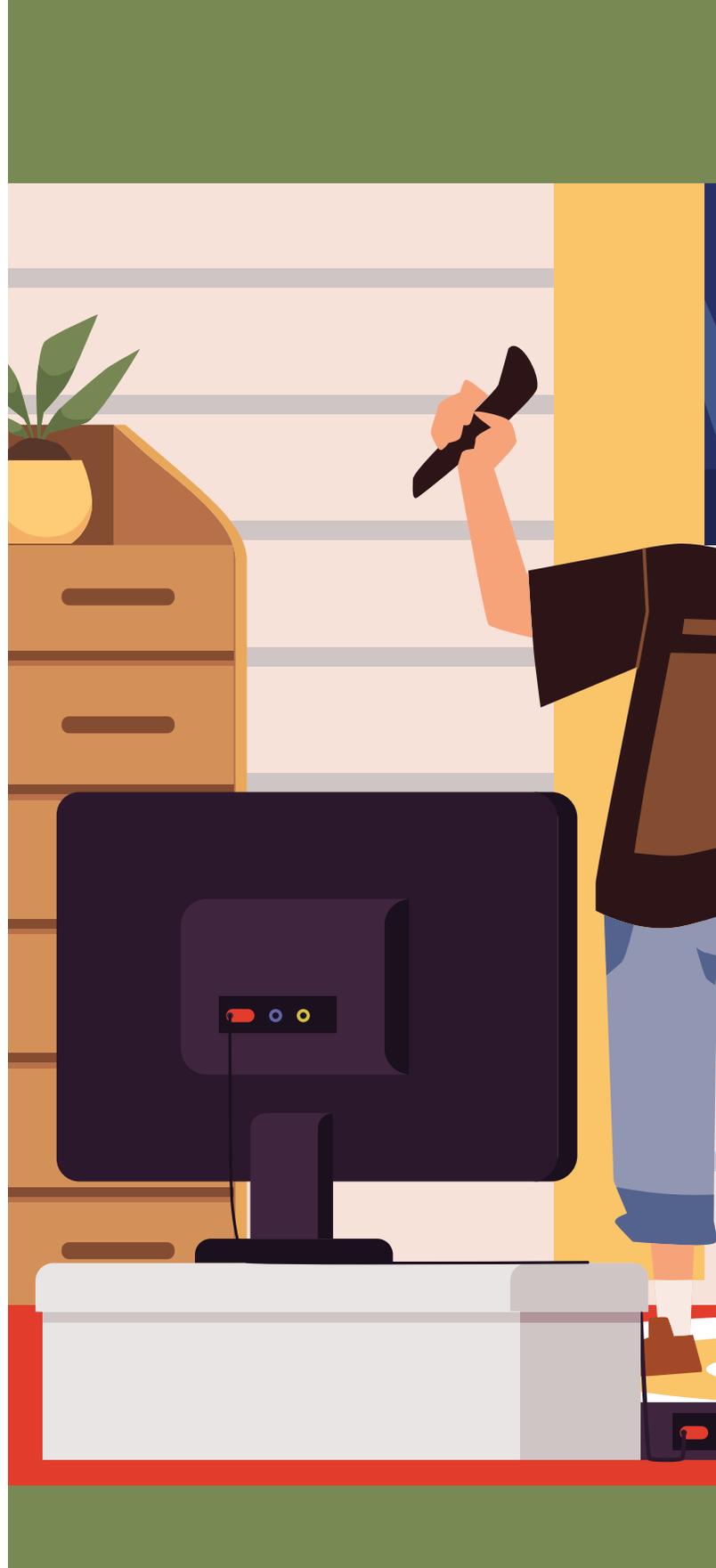
AGING IN PLACE

LIVING IN BOSTON IN OUR GOLDEN YEARS

Baby Boomers, the cohort born following World War II and continuing to the mid-1960s, are not only one of the largest generations in history, they are also living longer lives and experiencing longer retirements than those who came before them. Within ten years, all of the nation's 74 million baby boomers will be 65 or older. In Boston alone, there were over 88,000 residents aged 60+ in 2010, 14% of the city's population. This number is expected to swell to 125,000 by 2030, comprising 19% of the population. Aging baby boomers are impacting the demographic composition of Boston and communities throughout the U.S., and research suggests that migrating into or staying in downtown urban centers in retirement is emerging as their preferred option.

While many older adults in Boston desire to remain in the city during their later years, aging successfully requires that support systems are in place allowing them to maintain their independence. Many people also need housing options that can accommodate their physical and financial limitations. According to a 2017 report by the City of Boston, four out of ten Boston older adults live with a disability, including difficulty walking or climbing stairs (29%), or difficulty dressing, bathing, or getting around and inside the home (11%). And while nearly 90% of adults want to stay in their home as long as possible, few are aware of how to do it safely.

On one hand, Boston, with its network of neighborhoods and proximity to services, is an ideal place to live for older adults. It offers world-renowned hospitals, a robust public transportation system, beautiful parks, numerous opportunities to experience art, culture, and education, and high walkability scores. But no system is perfect, and there are still issues affecting Boston seniors — such as housing, communication, and





community support, among others — that the city has acknowledged need to be addressed. Here, we explore some of those challenges, what steps the city has taken to overcome them, how they affect housing needs, and what resources might be available for Boston residents looking to age in place.

The Age-Friendly Boston Initiative

In 2014, Boston joined the World Health Organization's (WHO) Age-Friendly City Framework, a global network of over 380 age-friendly cities and communities spanning across 37 countries. In 2015, the City went a step further in committing to becoming dementia-friendly, integrating those concepts into City staff training and the age-friendly planning process. In 2017, it came out with the "Age-Friendly Boston Action Plan," a three-year initiative addressing topics of interest with significant impact on Boston's senior residents. The Age Strong Commission — formerly the Commission on Affairs of the Elderly, the department that connects Boston's older population to resources and information about government benefits and programs, and administers and monitors grant funding to relevant nonprofit organizations — has been in charge of implementing the plan. Here are some of the domains it has identified and focused its efforts on improving:

HOUSING: *A new development checklist was created that prioritizes accessibility and inclusion.*

TRANSPORTATION: *Boston bolstered its investment in its shuttle system, made crosswalk improvements, adopted changes to parking rules, implemented traffic calming measures, and advocated against raising MBTA rates for older adults in order to maintain the RIDE and Senior CharliCard affordability and coverage.*

OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS: *97% of Bostonians live within a 10-minute walk of a park, which many find to be a real asset to life.*

Additional dedicated rest areas such as benches and public restrooms improved the experience for older residents.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH SERVICES: *The City launched "What Unites Us," a cooking series that celebrates the immigrant experience and healthy aging through*

culture and food, created an Elder Abuse Prevention Task Force, and executed information campaigns directly connecting older residents in areas with a low number of 311 calls with resources about events, cost-saving opportunities, volunteer programs, and more.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND EMPLOYMENT: *A Senior Civic Academy offered a curriculum including informative content about local government, skill-building activities, and networking with elected officials in order to involve older adults in policy-making and advocacy.*

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION: *Boston expanded Age Strong programming to include additional Memory Cafés and more fitness classes such as yogalates in underserved locations.*

RESPECT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION: *The City of Boston began front-facing City staff training and developed an “Age- & Dementia-Friendly” designation for businesses.*

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION: *Before addressing ageism, the Commission rebranded itself and the work done by the City of Boston as something that more readily resonated with constituents and their association with aging.*

The full reports detailing each domain, the action plans surrounding it, and the accomplishments three years of implementation have brought about are available on the City of Boston website. This article will focus on housing, as well as community support and social participation as they pertain to the quality of life of our older neighbors.

Aging in Our Homes and Neighborhoods

In 1996, the City of Boston adopted Article 80, a requirement to which all developers building ten or more unit developments must adhere. The intent was to make the development review regulations for Boston’s zoning code more consistent throughout the city and easier for developers and residents to understand. In 2019, Article 80 was revised to include language such as “aging in place,” “people of all ages and abilities,” and “age-friendly” into the checklist of items that would be considered during the review of development applications.

This revision was meant to inspire universal design principles and features allowing for aging in place, paying particular attention to the layout of kitchen and bathrooms and encouraging the development of common areas and shared spaces to reduce social isolation. New developments are now required to include these age-friendly additions so that residents are better able to age in place in their homes. For example, the suggestion for new bathrooms would have the upgrade capacity to include a grab bar so that residents don’t need to have one from the outset. Instead, they can easily and affordably add a grab bar if one is needed in the future.

Possessing a forward-looking mindset, Etta and Mark Rosen purchased and completely renovated a brownstone building over 10 years ago. “Back then we built an elevator not because we needed one at that time, but because we wanted to create a home in which we could remain for many years, even past the point when we might not be able to navigate the stairs,” Etta said. Norma Zack and her husband have lived in the same building for over 50 years and raised two children there. “People ask, when are you going to move out?” Norma said. “And we very much do not want to. We adore the

Aging in place has been shown to improve seniors’ quality of life and overall physical health. The majority of baby boomers who are relatively younger and seeking to age in place expect to spend 16 or more years in their homes, citing a household member’s health as the only reason they would move.

“

“I moved to the South End in 1978 and I’ve always loved it here. But these days I have physical limitations to consider because of my Parkinson’s. My husband passed away and I have no children, so having people I know immediately at hand and being surrounded by friends and community is great. Everything is right here and accessible; the grocery store, the dentist, the ophthalmologist. I can easily get deliveries from Shaws and CVS, and I have a management company on hand if I need help with the furnace or plumbing. It’s great to have all these people and services in the city.”

— BARBARA BAUMAN

“For many years my home was within walking distance of where I worked at the Boston Medical Center. Now I have the security and comfort of knowing there are good health services near where I live. The area I live in also has neighborhood associations every few blocks and it’s easy to befriend neighbors.”

— RICHARD PILLARD

”

neighborhood and love the street. We're city people and we really want to stay here for as long as we can, but we do have needs we didn't have 20 or 30 years ago." To offset some of those needs and still remain in their home, the couple installed a stair lift to get around their duplex condominium.

The City of Boston also worked with older adults and community partners to raise awareness about home ownership and housing-loss prevention, and created an outreach strategy for sharing tax-relief opportunities with older adults.

A BOUNTY OF RESOURCES

PROPERTY TAX RELIEF

Massachusetts Senior Circuit Breaker Tax Credit: Certain seniors who own or rent residential property in Massachusetts as their principal residence are eligible for this refundable tax credit.

Boston Senior Property Tax Work-Off: Qualified senior homeowners can work off up to \$1,500 on their property tax bill by volunteering for a City Agency.

Elderly Exemption 17D: You may be eligible for this exemption if you are 70 years old or older as of July 1 of the fiscal year.*

Elderly Exemption 41C: You may be eligible for this exemption if you are 65 years old or older as of July 1 of the fiscal year.*

*Additional elderly exemption qualification requirements are available on the Boston.gov website.

CITY PROGRAMS

Senior Home Repair: The Boston Home Center works with several neighborhood agencies to offer 0%-interest, deferred home repair loans to seniors.**

Seniors Save: The City offers seniors over the age of 60 financial and contractor help to replace failing heating systems to ensure they are ready for winter.**

Boston Water and Sewer Commission Elderly Discounts: Homeowners who are 65 years of age and older who live in a single- to four-family residential dwelling are eligible for a 30% discount on their monthly water and sewer charges.

**Contact the Tenants Development Corporation (TDC) for help with applications.

COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Ethos: A private, nonprofit organization that assists the elderly and disabled to live at home. Ethos offers a wide range of high-quality, discounted services and support delivered at home and in the community, as well as social programs and events.

Beacon Hill Village: A member-led community of adults aged 50 and older who connect with and care for one another through an array of support services, social and wellness programs, cultural and educational activities, and excursions. Unlike what its name might suggest, Beacon Hill Village includes members who live in the South End. It also offers a discounted membership fee to people of low-to-moderate income.

The top factors influencing neighborhood choice among younger baby boomers looking to age in place are the quality and design of the neighborhood, proximity of friends and family, the convenience of shopping, overall affordability, and walkability.

Sources: 2021 National Association of Realtors "Buyer and Seller Generational Trends" Report, City of Boston "Age-Friendly Boston Initiative" Report, Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs, City of Boston Age Strong Commission

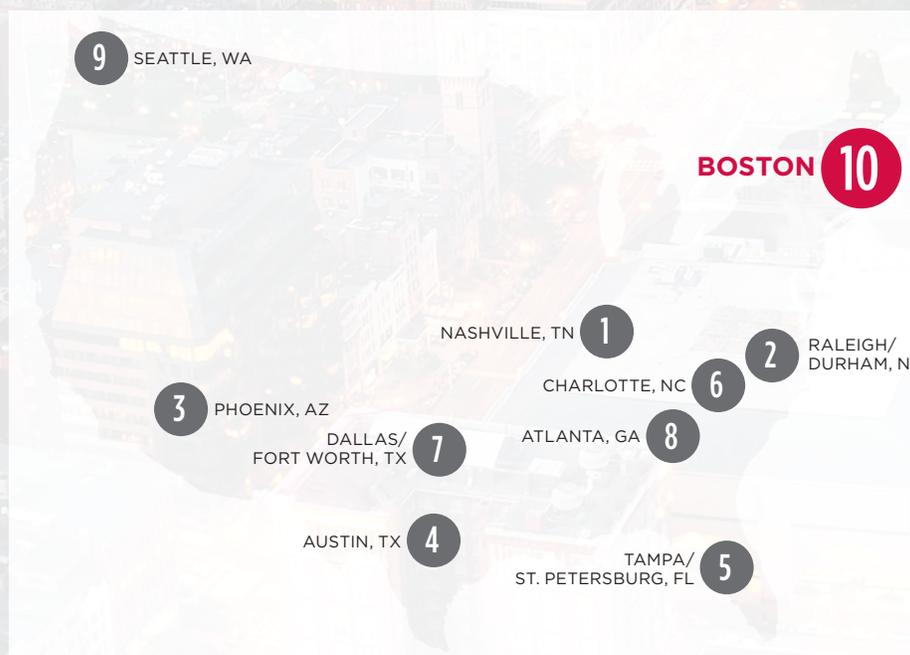
BOSTON AMONG TOP 10 MARKETS ON OVERALL REAL ESTATE PROSPECTS LIST

EMERGING 2022 REAL ESTATE TRENDS

The time since the pandemic hit in March 2020 has been full of unprecedented challenges and enormous, rapid shifts in the property sector. However, the recent Emerging Trends in Real Estate report by PricewaterhouseCoopers underlined the surprising ability of the economy and of property markets in general to bounce back from recent events. According to the report, this show of resiliency inspired investor confidence in the industry's ability to adapt to changing market conditions and future unknown risks. Boston is a prime example of this, firmly in the top 10 markets to watch in 2022 in terms of overall real estate prospects.

A large or coastal metro area has not topped the overall real estate prospects section since Seattle in 2018. Boston, Los Angeles, Manhattan, Oakland, San Francisco, San Jose, Seattle, and Washington, D.C. used to dominate the Emerging Trends "Markets to Watch" lists. But these gateway cities have been sliding down the ranks for a decade now, accounting for fewer and fewer of the top markets. Ratings for traditional investor

OVERALL REAL ESTATE PROSPECTS FOR 2022



favorites such as San Francisco and Manhattan have fallen steeply. Almost all the new top rated markets are located in faster-growing southern and western regions away from the coasts. Boston was the only one of the eight gateway cities to place among the top 20 Emerging Trends investor markets in 2020. It was only this year that the total climbed up to three.

BOSTON: A KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION CENTER

The report's Knowledge and Innovation Centers grouping of market centers serves as the focus of intellectual capital in the economy, whether in social media (San Francisco), finance (Manhattan), biosciences (Boston), or think tanks (Washington D.C.). With the most educated workforces in the country, these innovation centers are by far the most productive, with per capita GDP more than twice that of any other Emerging Trends subgroup. Between lofty asset prices and pandemic-fueled out-migration from dense, expensive central business district markets, investor appeal has waned in recent years. However, naysayers might have been too quick to pronounce the demise of these markets, which are already staging rapid recoveries as the economy reopens.

Notably, Boston remains among the 20 top-rated markets. It has leveraged its region's world-class concentration of higher education to become a world leader in life sciences. Most of the development is in the Seaport district, augmenting a major cluster across the Charles River in Cambridge.

BOSTON LOCAL MARKET PERSPECTIVE

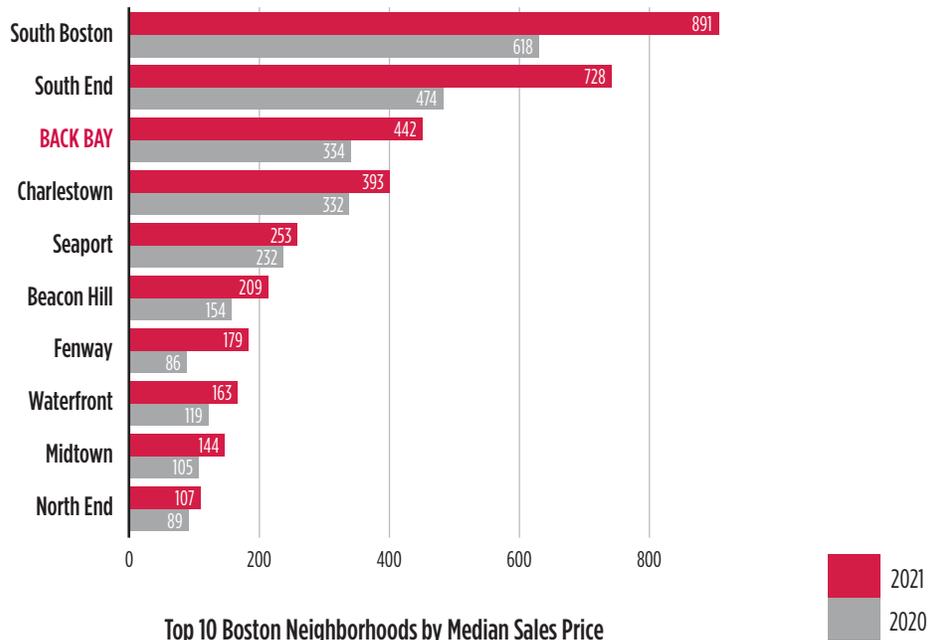
VERY STRONG	✓ INVESTOR DEMAND
VERY STRONG	✓ AVAILABILITY OF DEBT AND EQUITY CAPITAL
STRONG	✓ DEVELOPMENT/REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES
STRONG	✓ LOCAL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INVESTMENT
STRONG	✓ LOCAL ECONOMY

Source: "Emerging Trends in Real Estate 2022" PricewaterhouseCoopers Survey

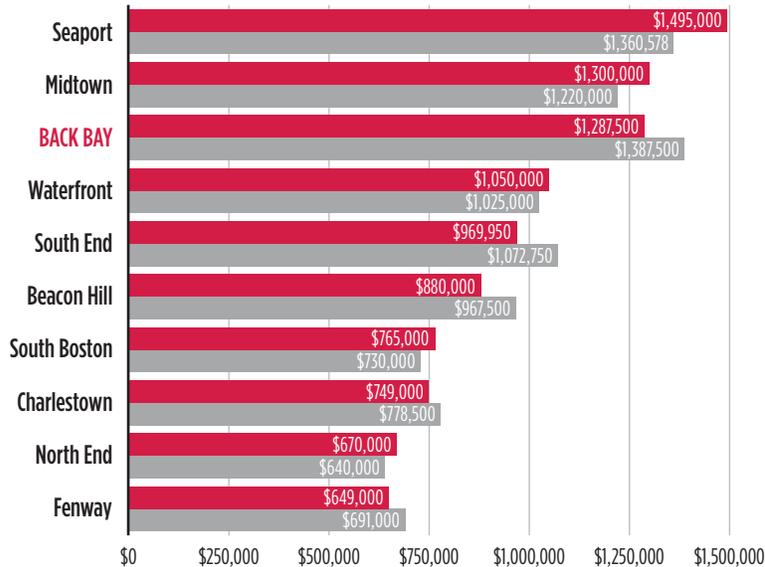
BOSTON'S TOP 10 NEIGHBORHOODS IN 2021

While median sales prices dipped or remained steady for many of Boston's hottest neighborhoods in 2021 compared to 2020, the number of sales in those same areas shot up across the board. In Back Bay the number of sales increased by over 30% year over year.

Top 10 Boston Neighborhoods by Number of Sales

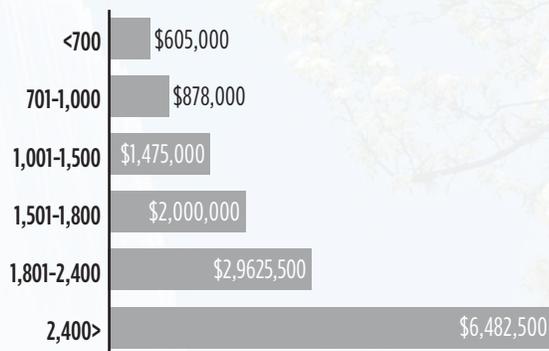


Top 10 Boston Neighborhoods by Median Sales Price

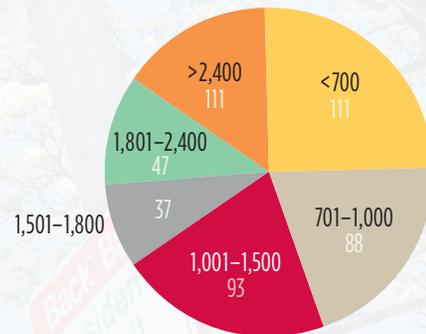


FOCUS ON BACK BAY IN 2021

Back Bay Median Sales Price by Square Footage



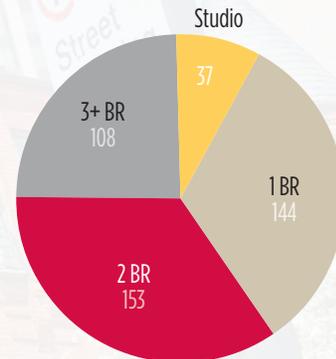
Back Bay Number of Sales by Square Footage



Back Bay Median Sales Price by Number of Bedrooms



Back Bay Number of Sales by Number of Bedrooms



20 MOST EXPENSIVE BACK BAY SALES IN 2021

	ADDRESS	SALE PRICE	PRICE /SF	TYPE
1	The Mandarin @ 776 Boylston Street PH2-A, PH1-E	\$27,250,000	\$4,081	CONDOMINIUM
2	29 Commonwealth Avenue PH	\$21,750,000	\$3,600	CONDOMINIUM
3	The Mandarin @ 776 Boylston Street PH2-E	\$21,500,000	\$3,148	CONDOMINIUM
4	The Carlton House @ 2 Commonwealth Avenue PH-2, 16-E	\$15,000,000	\$4,172	CONDOMINIUM
5	35 Commonwealth Avenue #3	\$14,500,000	\$2,726	CONDOMINIUM
6	The Mandarin @ 776 Boylston Street PH2-B	\$14,125,000	\$3,710	CONDOMINIUM
7	One Dalton Four Seasons #5501	\$13,750,000	\$3,716	CONDOMINIUM
8	122 Commonwealth Avenue PH	\$12,500,000	\$3,016	CONDOMINIUM
9	The Carlton House @ 2 Commonwealth Avenue #15-E/F	\$11,000,000	\$3,353	CONDOMINIUM
10	126 Marlborough Street	\$11,000,000	\$2,297	SINGLE-FAMILY
11	29 Commonwealth Avenue #9	\$10,750,000	\$3,493	CONDOMINIUM
12	29 Commonwealth Avenue #8	\$10,500,000	\$3,390	CONDOMINIUM
13	29 Commonwealth Avenue #7	\$10,400,000	\$3,358	CONDOMINIUM
14	One Dalton Four Seasons #4902	\$10,200,000	\$3,466	CONDOMINIUM
15	One Dalton Four Seasons #4901	\$10,039,918	\$2,757	CONDOMINIUM
16	142 Beacon Street PH	\$9,200,000	\$2,558	CONDOMINIUM
17	The Mandarin @ 776 Boylston Street PH1-F	\$9,150,000	\$3,563	CONDOMINIUM
18	The Clarendon @ 400 Stuart Street #PH-3	\$9,100,000	\$2,567	CONDOMINIUM
19	Four Seasons @ 220 Boylston Street #9001, #9003	\$8,850,000	\$3,025	CONDOMINIUM
20	445-447 Marlborough Street	\$8,600,000	\$1,387	SINGLE-FAMILY

*Average price per square foot among the
20 most expensive Back Bay Sales for 2021: **\$3,169***

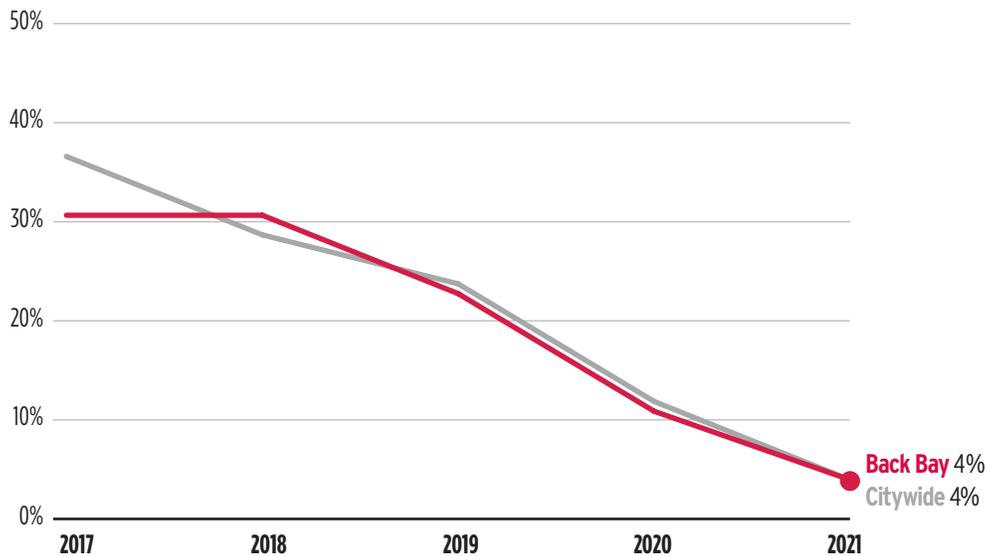


BACK BAY V. BOSTON CITYWIDE

Five Year Price Index: Back Bay v. Citywide



Sales Over Asking Price for Past Five Years: Back Bay v. Citywide



Source: LINK Boston



MEET BOSTON'S PREMIERE REAL ESTATE AGENTS

The Steven Cohen Team provides expert insight, guidance and representation for discerning residential property buyers and sellers in Boston's Back Bay and adjacent neighborhoods. Our unmatched experience in the local real estate market, long-term approach to customer service, and coordinated teamwork make us an industry leader in Back Bay and beyond.

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WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY ABOUT US

"The entire team was involved from beginning to end, keeping me **fully informed**, answering all my questions in nearly **immediate responses** to my email and phone calls, and making sure that the process from beginning to end was **as pain-free as possible**. I can't say enough good things about those on the Steven Cohen Team I was most in communication with."

"The entire team was **remarkably responsive** and helped with every aspect of the process. We felt **wonderfully represented** and **supported**, and recommend the Steven Cohen Team to anyone selling in Boston."

"I put **all my trust** in the Steven Cohen Team with Keller Williams and was **not disappointed!**...I used every service recommended to me (broker, lawyer, etc) which I found to **be very helpful** and ensured my trust in closing the deal. I truly felt like they **handled everything for me** & I did not have to stress on my own end."

"Great, friendly team that can be **completely trusted** when navigating the real estate market."

"I worked with the Steven Cohen Team in 2020 to sell my condo. Now I used them **to buy** a condo and I was **as pleased as I was with the sale.**"

THE STEVEN COHEN TEAM IN 2021

A YEAR IN REVIEW

\$200+ million in sales volume

Top Real Estate Producer in *Boston Magazine*

#1 Boston LocalBest Agents

#4 on the **Large Teams by Volume** for Massachusetts list in **America's Best Real Estate Professionals**, as advertised in the *Wall Street Journal*

#1 in Sales Volume among 6,000+ New England Keller Williams associates.

MEET A BACK BAY LANDMARK

THE ENGINE 33/LADDER 15 FIREHOUSE AND POLICE STATION 16

On the corner of Back Bay's Boylston and Hereford Streets are two buildings that, once upon a time, made up Boston's first combination police and fire station. City Architect Arthur H. Vinal designed the buildings in 1886. Vinal was a prolific architect most well-known for his work in the then popular Richardsonian Romanesque style. This style, based on the work of Boston's celebrated architect Henry Hobson Richardson, was defined by large round towers, prominent arches, and — typically — heavy, massive polychromatic stone or brick construction. Most Richardsonian Romanesque buildings have squat columns and decorative plaques with intricate or interlacing patterns.

Police District 16 occupied the larger four-story building at 951 Boylston Street, and was noted as being "the handsomest station house in America" in 1888, a year after its completion. By the early 1900s, the police needed additional space and a small, Classical Revival building at 955 Boylston Street was constructed. By 1976, however, the advent of motorized patrols had led to a consolidation of Boston's smaller police divisions, including division 16, into larger police districts, resulting in the closure and redevelopment of the police station. In 1976, architect Graham Gund converted the building into art galleries for the Institute of Contemporary Art, and in 2007 it was acquired by the Boston Architectural College.

While the former police station has been extensively altered on the interior, its exterior retains traces of its original purpose. This evidence of earlier use is most clearly observed in the courtyard that still connects it to its neighboring building at 941 Boylston Street. A central bay with a large opening originally



led to shared stables for the fire department and police horses. The two buildings were truly meant to exist symbiotically, just as the two departments were meant to work side by side.

The firehouse at 941 Boylston Street opened on February 20, 1888 and exhibits a number of the Romanesque style's classic features, including numerous arches over doors and windows, carved foliate decorations, heavy rusticated stone, and clusters of engaged columns between windows. Two large arched openings accommodate equipment, including the first ladder truck in Boston to be equipped with a three-horse hitch, as well as the first turntable aerial truck. The tall turret at the northeastern corner of the building was designed so that the heavy canvas hoses could be hung to dry. The overall earthen style of the building is in stark contrast to the flair of nearby Newbury and Boylston Streets, and draws plenty of out-of-town visitors.

The Boston Fire Department was first founded in 1678, and Engine 33 and Ladder 15 are the oldest of 35 active firehouses. Today, they cover Back Bay, the South End, Fenway, and Roxbury. Engine 33 is among the most active fire companies in the city, responding to approximately 4,100 incidents per year, and Ladder 15 keeps just as busy with around 3,800 incident responses per year. Their crew were the first responders during the Boston Marathon Bombing that took place just a few blocks away in 2013. Plaques at the entrance of 941 Boylston Street memorialize four of the Boston firefighters killed in the line of duty who served out of the esteemed building: Cornelius J. Noonan (d. 1938), Richard F. Concannon (d. 1961), Richard B. Magee (d. 1972), and Stephen F. Minehan (d. 1994). The firehouse has been designated a Boston Landmark by the Boston Landmarks Commission.



Sources: *Esquire*, *Boston Herald*, *Boston Fire Historical Society*, *Boston Architectural College*

MEET A BACK BAY RESIDENT

SUE PRINDLE

Sue Prindle made Back Bay her home in 1968. The neighborhood was a convenient distance from Logan Airport for her husband's business travels and — shockingly for our 2022 sensibilities — affordable enough to allow a young couple to purchase an entire building. "Part of it was a dentist's office and the rest was apartments. The building had been empty for a year," Sue recalled. "We were looking for an apartment, but we thought we could swing the building because it had income. We bought it for a price that would be unimaginable today but it was a stretch for us, and we almost turned it down."

Back Bay was a very different neighborhood from what it is now when Sue and her family moved in. "There were a lot of students, a lot of nonprofits, a lot of offices," she said. There was more crime, too. "We got broken into a couple of times. Now it's much quieter and more residential." The mixed-use nature of the neighborhood was what attracted her initially. But over the years, what she needed out of Back Bay evolved and so did the neighborhood.

"My husband was approached by one of his friends to join the Neighborhood Association of Back Bay (NABB)," Sue said. NABB was founded in 1955 with the purpose of halting the deterioration of the neighborhood, maintaining its architectural beauty, and furthering its historic residential character. Today, the association continues to work to preserve and enhance the quality of life in Back Bay.

"Through his involvement, we discovered that the city and the state were planning all sorts of interesting projects for Back Bay, such as an overpass going down Dartmouth Street, and high-rise apartment buildings along Beacon Street and on the corners of Commonwealth Avenue." Sue found herself involved in helping organize the development opposition efforts. "I wanted to stay here," Sue recalled. "I liked the architecture, I liked the sky, I liked the balance of green and buildings, and my friends were here. None of us had a lot of money. The only thing we could do was to argue, so we did."





Such development plans in the heart of Back Bay seem inconceivable today. At the time, however, the Back Bay Architectural District had only just been established and the Back Bay Architectural Commission (BBAC) — a city commission that has jurisdiction over any exterior changes to buildings in Back Bay — didn't yet have the teeth that it has now. Sue recalls serving on the commission in the '80s when it put together the guidelines for the district that still help inform residential development today. Although the guidelines took several years to develop, they have remained largely intact over the years, evidence of their effectiveness.

Sue's efforts have had a lasting impact on the shape of Back Bay, but her most memorable achievement is one closer to her heart. The Clarendon Street Play Area, established in 1977, is located at the corner of Clarendon Street and Commonwealth Avenue. "I knew first-hand how important it is for city kids to get out and run around, for their mental health and their parents'," Sue said. It took several years of hard work to bring the playground to life, because the City didn't believe there were enough children in Back Bay to justify it. Now it provides play space for hundreds of children between two and twelve years old. It is nestled under a dense canopy of mature trees and watched over by a committee from the Neighborhood Association and the local pre- and elementary schools.

Today, Sue is chair of NABB's Architecture Committee, which reviews projects that impact the architecture and streetscapes of the Back Bay Historic District. The committee's main purpose is to provide input to the BBAC. "They make the decisions, we provide comments," Sue clarified. In evaluating a project, the committee members consider whether it conforms to the zoning laws, how it fits with previously approved projects, whether it would set a precedent — for better or worse — and whether it would damage the original historic material.

The committee members might not all be professionals, but they all care deeply about the architecture and development of the neighborhood. "I hope we do a reasonable job of making things fit in and adhere to the guidelines, while giving developers at least some of what they want," Sue said. "At the end of the day, it's about striking the right balance between adapting to new uses and technologies, giving residents a secure and pleasant place to live, and protecting Boston's historic assets, which are one of the main reasons people want to live, work, and visit our city."

The committee is Sue's main focus these days, but she's also a member of several Boston organizations dedicated to preserving the city's architectural and natural gems. The Friends of the Public Garden, one of the nation's oldest parks advocacy groups, works to protect the Common, the Public Garden, and Commonwealth Avenue Mall. The Boston Preservation Alliance is a nonprofit dedicated to caring for and improving the quality of the city's architectural heritage.

"I've always felt a stewardship responsibility," Sue said. "The buildings and landscapes we all love and work for have been here a lot longer than I have and will continue to be here, I hope, long after I'm gone."

RIISING FROM THE ASHES

THE GREAT BOSTON FIRE OF 1872 AND RECOVERY

Ranked as one of the most costly fire-related property losses in American history, the Great Boston Fire of 1872 scorched a good chunk of the city's downtown area and completely changed fire laws and regulations. What were the conditions that made the disaster possible? What was done in the fight against it? And what emerged from its ashes?

A PERFECT STORM

The Boston of 1872 was a fast-growing city with few — if any — regulations on land use or building quality. The building stock included old and run-down structures erected in a time when Boston was a smaller and much less wealthy settlement. While many buildings were made of brick or stone, the window frames, mansard roofs, and other fixtures were made of wood. There was no strictly enforced building code and the streets were narrow and crooked, their too tall structures crowded too closely together. Owners had few incentives to implement fire-safety measures, their buildings often insured at or above full value. Arson for the sake of insurance money was not uncommon. In addition, merchants were not taxed for inventory stored in their wood attics, so they would fill them to the brim with flammable goods such as wool, textiles, and paper stocks. And this was only what was visible on the surface; there were much bigger issues brewing beneath Boston's streets and inside its walls.

The downtown area had undergone rapid development in the years after the Civil War, but improvements — especially city services — had not kept pace with its growth. One man who all but predicted the impending disaster was Boston Fire Department Chief





Engineer John Stanhome Damrell. Damrell had been on a campaign to modernize fire safety in the city since 1866 and while he successfully lobbied for the first fireboat and won the right to make building inspections, he worried that this would not be enough to protect Boston from a catastrophic fire.

There were not enough fire hydrants throughout the city to adequately cover the surrounding buildings and the hydrants that were available didn't have standardized couplings, making it harder for firefighters to connect their hoses and related equipment. Damrell was also concerned with the city's antiquated and corroded water pipes, which couldn't produce enough water pressure to reach the top floors of newer buildings. He warned that the existing infrastructure was inadequate and appealed for new water mains and additional hydrants to be installed, but officials called his request extravagant and rebuffed him.

In 1871, Damrell traveled to Chicago alongside other fire department chiefs after the Windy City's own Great Fire to see what could be learned from the disaster. He came home more convinced than ever that Boston was at risk. One year later, a virulent epizootic disease incapacitated the specially trained horses that hauled heavy equipment to the sites of fire. And though Damrell wasted no time in hiring an extra 500 men to manually pull engines, the fire department's response time was still delayed by a few crucial minutes. This was the final nail in the coffin; the stage for the Great Boston Fire was set.

THE GREAT FIRE

At approximately 7 p.m. on November 8, 1872 a spark of undetermined origin ignited highly flammable material in the basement of a wholesale dry goods store at the corner of Summer Street and Kingston Street in the downtown area of Boston. The flames rushed up the wooden elevator shaft, roared through floors jammed with rolls of cloth, hosiery, gloves, laces, and hoop skirts, and set the wooden roof ablaze. Assuming someone else had alerted the fire department, curious onlookers watched the fire burn for over 20 minutes before an alarm was sounded.

By 7:45 p.m. every fire company in the city was rushing to the site, pulling their engines by hand. Urgent calls for help were sent by telegraph and although it was delayed due to many telegraph offices being closed for the evening, almost every town and city surrounding Boston responded. For 15 hours nearly 1,700 firefighters from 27 different



towns — some as far away as New Haven and Providence — pumped weak, ineffective streams of water on the blaze.

The intense heat created its own roaring wind, shattered stone facades, and melted whole blocks of granite stores and warehouses into superheated rubble. Gas supply lines that couldn't be shut off quickly enough added literal fuel to the fire. The glow of the flames was so bright it was noted in ships' logs by sailors off the coast of Maine. Firefighters not only had to battle this inferno with inefficient water pressure, they also had to protect what some historians estimate were over 100,000 bystanders watching the disaster spread. Eventually, citizens asked Mayor William Gaston to authorize the use of gunpowder to blow up buildings in the path of the fire to create a firebreak. This tactic was controversial and largely ineffective, as it caused injury to the citizens involved and spread flaming debris to the surrounding buildings.

The fire was finally stopped at the corner of Washington and Milk Streets through the efforts of firefighters to save the Old South Meetinghouse. It left 776 buildings in Boston's commercial and warehouse district in ruins and killed 30 people, including 12 firefighters. The total damage was estimated at \$75 million, over \$1.6 billion in today's money.

RISING FROM THE ASHES

The November 11, 1872 front page of the Boston Globe read:

DEVASTATION!

A TERRIBLE CONFLAGRATION IN BOSTON.

\$250,000,000 LOSS!

CHICAGO REPEATED.

LOSS OF HUMAN LIFE.

RICH MEN BEGGARED IN A DAY.

TRIUMPH OF THE FIRE-FIEND.

However, Boston is nothing if not resilient, and its citizens did not allow themselves to linger in the aftermath of what became known as the Great Boston Fire of 1872. Instead, they chose to change their city for the better. Boston's officials realized that their fire-prevention efforts had been ineffective and began to revise and strengthen all of the fire laws and regulations. An inspection system was instituted and the local fire departments began to coordinate their efforts. Mansard roofs, deemed fire hazards, were prohibited. Some of the rubble from destroyed buildings was moved into the harbor to expand Atlantic Avenue. But the most drastic difference could be observed in the shape of the newly rebuilt district.

With a swath of Boston lying in ruins, a group of local leaders saw an opportunity to both modernize the city and help prevent such a disaster from ever happening again. A committee urged the city to "establish anew in the burned district the lines of all the streets which were too narrow or too crooked for the present and future wants of the chief city of New England." Thanks to over-insurance, many businesses had enough money to begin rebuilding soon after the fire. Boston's financial district was rebuilt in less than two years, but its new streets were re-established to be wider and straighter.





The restructuring allotted space to establish Post Office Square at the intersection of Milk, Congress, Pearl, and Water Streets. The reconstruction also re-assembled land plots into larger parcels, brought about widespread, simultaneous building upgrades and updates, and ensured that properties were rebuilt to suit the commercial nature of the district. Some of the buildings that arose from the ashes, such as Trinity Church, are considered to be among Boston's architectural jewels.

While nothing could bring back the souls that were tragically lost in the fire, the reconstruction did, unexpectedly, result in significant land value increases in the affected area, according to a 2017 study in *American Economic Review*. Researchers calculated that the value the fire added to the land in the burned area and surrounding neighborhoods was slightly more than the value of the hundreds of buildings it destroyed. In fact, building values in the affected area in 1882 were 67% higher than they would have been without the fire.



Unfortunately, one of the casualties of the fire was Damrell's career. Despite his warnings and foresight, officials held him responsible for the disaster. In 1874, he lost his job as chief engineer. However, that same year the city finally overhauled its water mains. Damrell himself founded the National Association of Fire Engineers (today's International Association of Fire Chiefs) to campaign for nationwide building safety codes. In 1877 he was appointed Boston's first building commissioner.

Today, a plaque at the corner of Kingston and Summer Streets installed by The Bostonian Society marks the start of the Great Boston Fire of 1872.

Sources: Boston Fire Historical Society, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.com, The Boston Globe, American Economic Association



INTERIOR DESIGN IN 2022

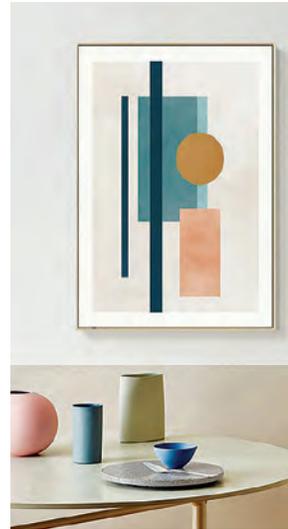
OUT WITH ARCHED GRANDMILLENNIAL, IN WITH COZY MOTHER NATURE

The past couple of years have brought unprecedented change to the manner in which we relate both to our homes and corporate offices. In the aftermath, our homes and corporate offices have taken on a new meaning. In its fifth annual Interior Designer Trends Survey, online design marketplace 1stDibs sought to explore the interior design trends we can expect in 2022 and what's — finally — going out of style.

Colors

👎 OUT: Primary and secondary colors are staying behind. The least popular colors for 2022 are millennial pink, tangerine, light yellow, and bright red.

👍 IN: Green is by far the most favored color, with a number of paint brands declaring its variations as their Color of the Year for 2022. This includes dark greens such as emerald, and lighter shades such as sage. Warmer earth tones like burnt orange and tan come second, and cobalt is right behind, solidly beating out navy as the new reigning blue.



Source: 1stDibs 2022 Interior Designer Trends Survey

Patterns, Finishes, and Materials

OUT: Structured seating is out, falling behind more plush designs. It seems that with everyone spending so much time at home, any sofa or chair beyond the most sumptuous, comfortable option is out of favor.

IN: Organic motifs, bold and large scale prints, and plant patterns are the top three choices. All options that are either derived from nature or have a tactile finish will be in demand, including wood, plaster, bronze, and leather.



Art

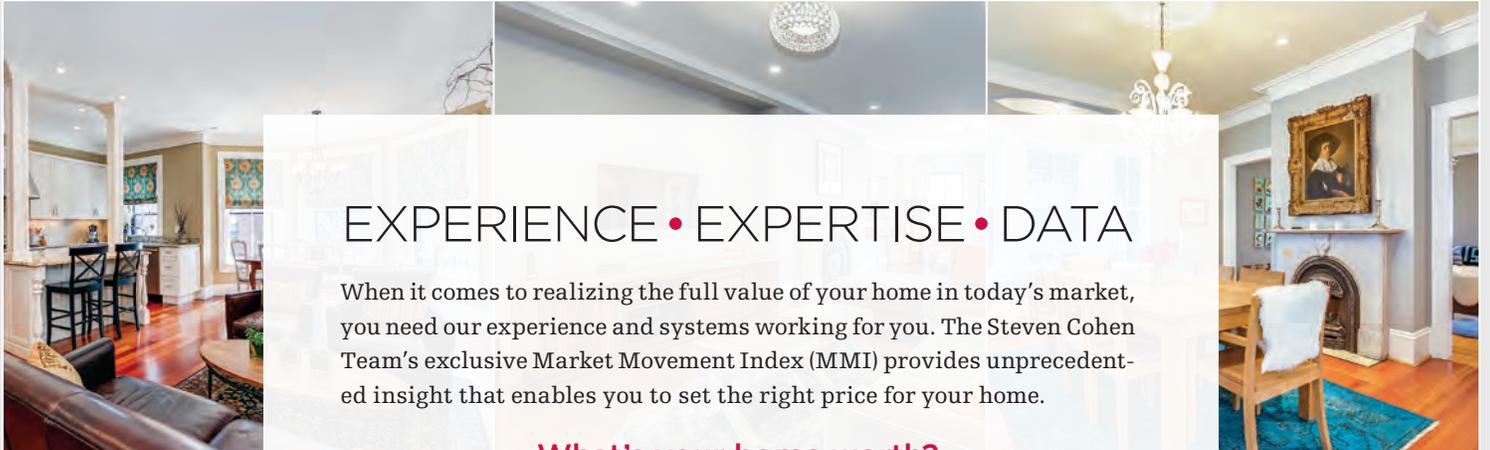
OUT: Designers name ephemera and posters as the least likely art pieces to be used.

IN: Abstract, contemporary, and sculptural art is trending, sculptural being the most favored. Most design projects involve sourcing art — a testament to its continued popularity — the web being the top resource designers use. According to designers, their clients care more about style than price or creating a long-term investment when it comes to collecting art.

Overall Design Trends

OUT: Designers are passing on a number of trends made popular through social media in recent years, such as neon signs, arches, cane seating, black interiors, and any and all hints of the dreaded, ubiquitous grandmillennial style.

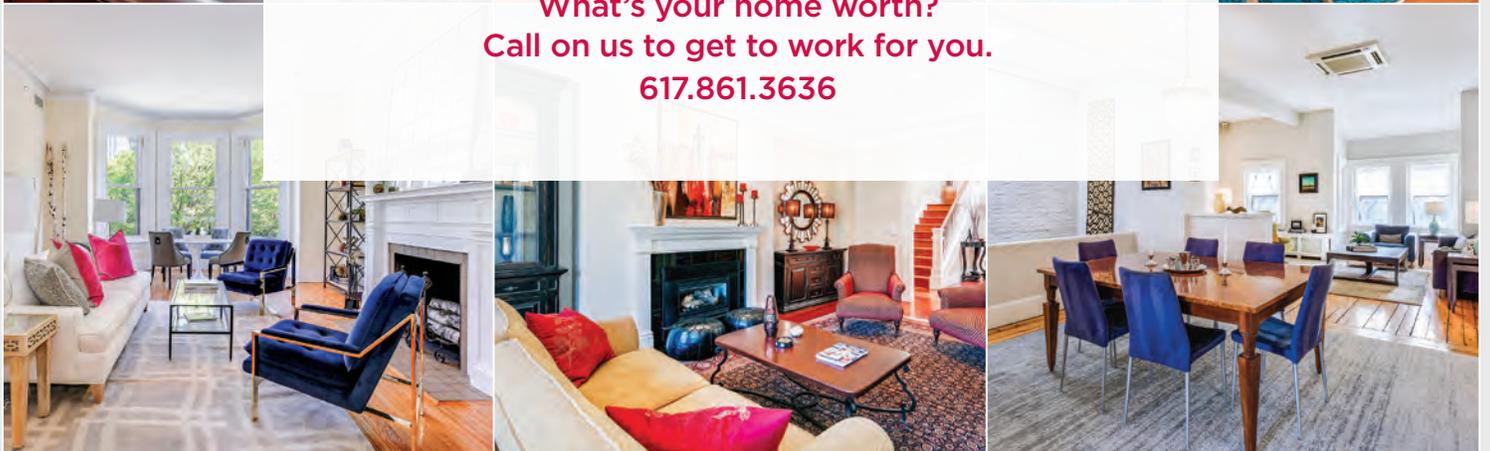
IN: Green is more than the name of the new color game; it also extends into green thumbs and green living. Sustainable materials and plants will remain popular, reflecting a desire to remain in harmony with the environment. The '70s is the decade most likely to make a comeback and furniture styles lean toward contemporary, followed by brutalist, art deco, and midcentury modern.

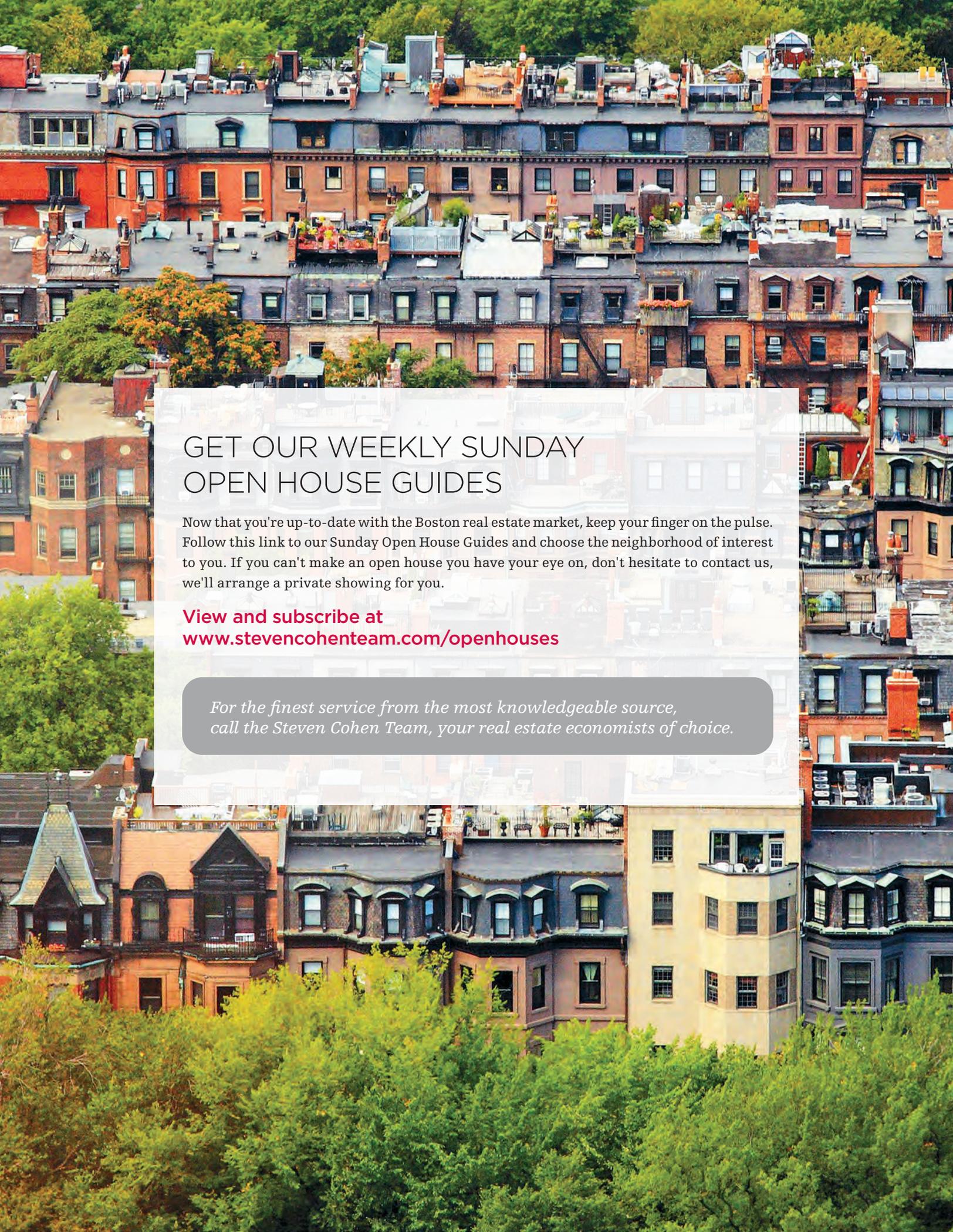


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