

Only a few neighborhoods seeing development boom in Boston

\$7 billion in construction underway in city

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The \$7 billion in construction underway in this city right now is changing Boston forever. But some parts of Boston are changing much faster than others.

The 83 large building projects under construction in Boston stretch across 19 of the city's 25 neighborhoods, from Charlestown to Mattapan, according to data tracked by the Boston Redevelopment Authority. Yet they're concentrated in a relative handful of places. About \$4 billion worth of the construction — it includes everything from housing to hotels to new storefronts — is taking place in just three neighborhoods: the Seaport, downtown, and the Back Bay.

Count the number of projects, and nearly a fourth are in two neighborhoods: South Boston and the Fenway.

And there are places, both in the heart of Boston and along its southern boundary, that are seeing no sizable development at all.

In some ways, this is no surprise.

Office and condo developers are packing glitzy towers into the core neighborhoods, chasing rents this town has never seen before. Places with little room to build, such as the North End, or beyond the reach of the MBTA — Hyde Park, for instance — aren't seeing much going on at any scale. But neighborhoods in the middle with big universities or good T access are hopping.

Whether on the border of Dorchester and South Boston, where Synergy Investments is building a \$60 million apartment complex by JFK/UMass Station on the MBTA's Red Line, or on the East Boston waterfront, where Gerding Edlen is putting up a 200-foot residential building, developers are scooping up sites near T stations and within hailing distance of downtown.

Spots like that make a lot of sense to build in, said Harold Brown, one of the city's largest and most veteran landlords. A growing population of young professionals want to live in Boston, close to the action. They can't quite afford downtown rents, but they can pay enough to make new construction feasible.

That's why Brown's Hamilton Co. broke ground this summer on a 48-unit, \$11.5 million apartment building on Malvern Street in Allston.

It's part of \$100 million in housing investment that Hamilton has planned in the neighborhood over the next decade, a response, Brown said, to a new crop of renters moving to Allston.

“The population has changed. There’s a lot of young professionals coming there to live and taking jobs,” Brown said. “You have much bigger demand than ever before.”

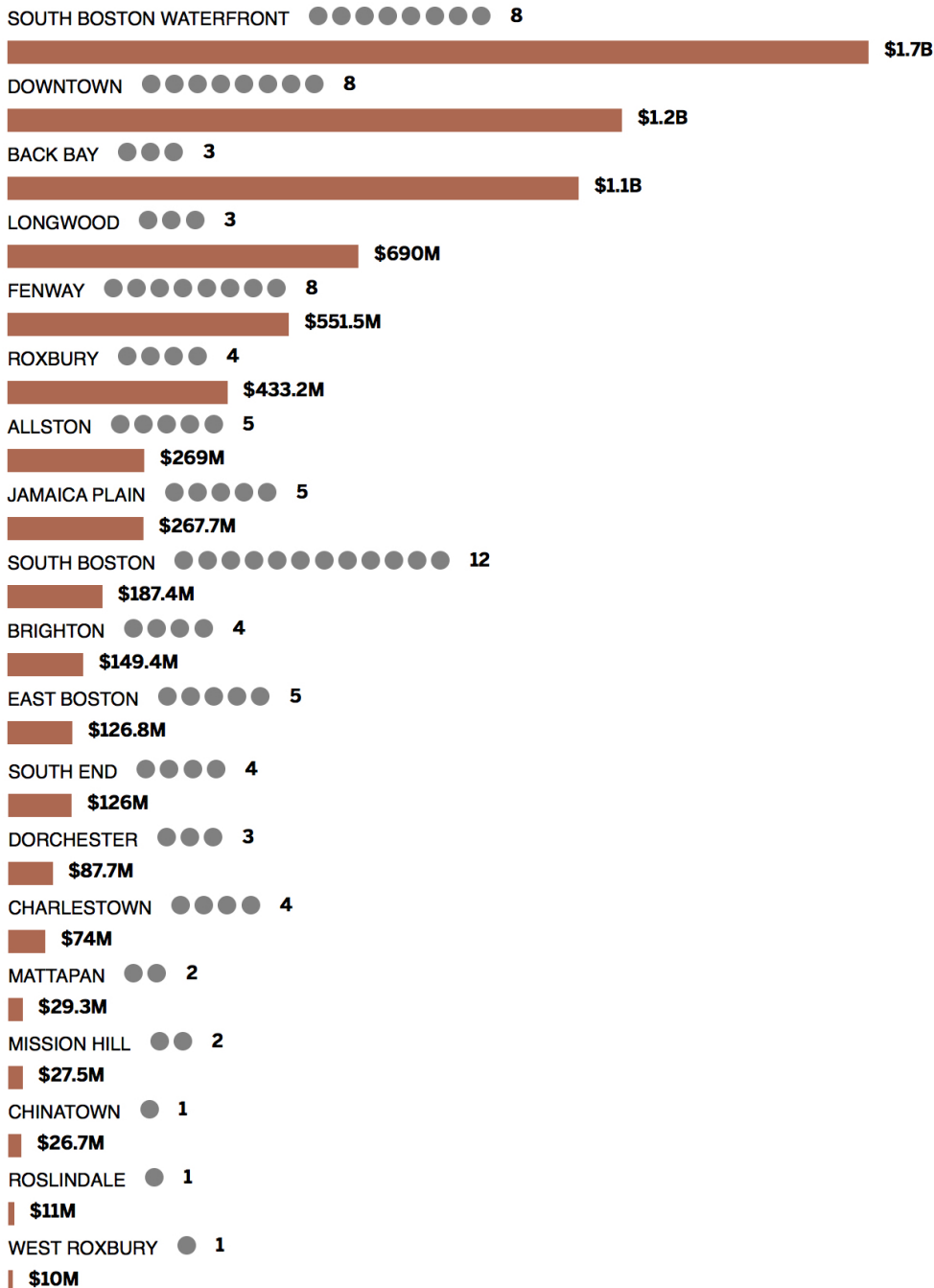
Boston developments

Throughout Boston neighborhoods, there are 83 development projects worth over \$7 billion. The breakdown:

These are projects tracked by the BRA, which monitors residential and commercial developments of at least 50,000 square feet downtown and 20,000 square feet in neighborhoods.

● Number of projects

● Value of developments



SOURCE: Boston Redevelopment Authority