

CENTRAL BOSTON

Play Across Boston

Active Facts



Figure 1: Types of Programs in Central Boston Offering Sports and Physical Activities to Youth (1999-2000)

Type of Program	Number in Central Boston	Number in Boston	% in Central Boston
Non-Profit	26	155	17%
For Profit	5	18	28%
Boston Public School	4	35	11%
Non-public School	3	15	20%
Total	38²	223	17%

Play Across Boston (PAB) is a project of the Harvard Prevention Research Center at the Harvard School of Public Health undertaken in collaboration with Northeastern University's Center for the Study of Sport in Society and a broad-based Community Advisory Board. PAB has worked since 1999 to describe youth sports and physical activity programs in Boston. Due to limited documentation of the local challenges to physical activity and sport promotion, **Play Across Boston** conducted a comprehensive community-based assessment of physical activity resources for Boston youth. In addition, we collected data concerning the presence and condition of publicly accessible parks, facilities and playgrounds in 12 Boston neighborhoods¹. For more detailed information, please refer to the full Play Across Boston Report (www.hsph.harvard.edu/prc).

As we work with our partners toward creating greater opportunities, **Play Across Boston** data provide a solid basis upon which to achieve our goals of improving community health and reducing disparities in physical activity access and participation. This **Active Facts** outlines the types of recreational programs and facilities available to youth in **Boston's Beacon Hill/Back Bay, North End, Fenway/Kenmore and South End neighborhoods**.

Youth Sports and Recreational Activities in Central Boston

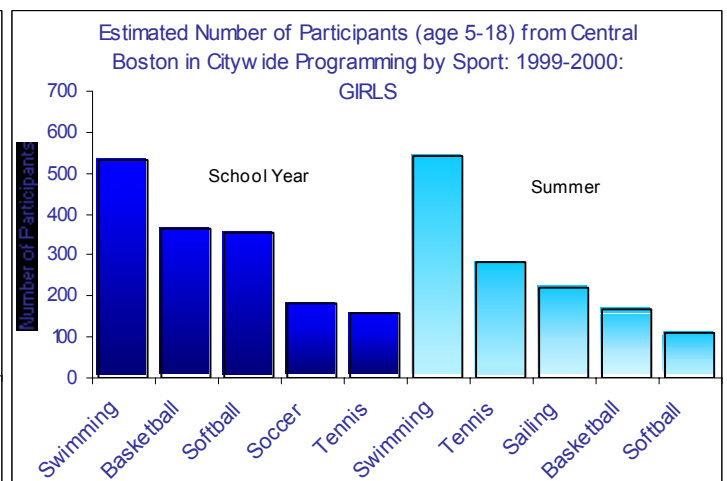
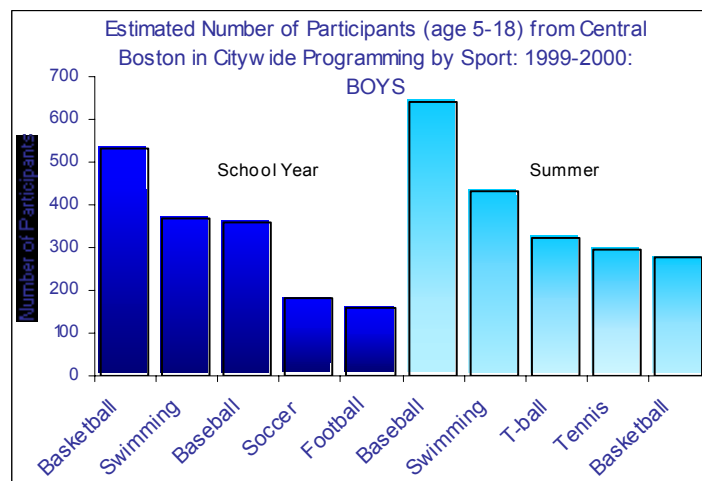
In 1999-2000, 38 different sports and physical activity programs² located in Central Boston responded to the **Play Across Boston** survey. Of those 38 programs, many were non-profit and over one-third did not charge a participation fee. Of the non-profit programs, most offered a single sport or were after-school programs. Figure 1 describes the

types of programs available in Central Boston and Boston overall.

As for participation in citywide programs, Central Boston youth represent about 10% of all youth sports and physical activity participants in Boston and comprise an equivalent 10% of Boston's 95,251 5-18 year olds. This means that youth participation in Central Boston is proportionate to other neighborhoods. Of the many sports and activities offered throughout the city, basketball was the favorite for boys during the school year and baseball was the favorite during the summer. Girls preferred swimming during both the school year and summer. Although boys participate at slightly higher levels than girls in Central Boston, the gender disparity does not appear as great compared to other Boston neighborhoods.

¹ Data for some Boston neighborhoods were combined for the purposes of the Play Across Boston Report

² Includes only those programs who responded to the Play Across Boston Survey



Parks, Playgrounds and Athletic Facilities in Central Boston

Encompassing some of Boston's oldest and most historical neighborhoods, Central Boston is filled with many parks, playgrounds and other facilities for youth sports and recreation. In 2000-2001, PAB surveyed 37 different public complexes in Central Boston to document the types of facilities and amenities available. These sites included 10 parks, 8 playgrounds, and 1 pool operated by the Parks & Recreation Department, 3 parks operated by the former MDC, currently the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), 1 Community Center and 1 Boston Community School (community center housed within Boston Public Schools). In total, these complexes housed 24 playgrounds, 20 basketball courts (13 full basketball courts), 8 softball fields, 2 baseball fields, 5 Little League fields, 12 tennis courts, 2 soccer fields, 3 pools, 1 football field, 1 track and much more! In addition, several private facilities in Central Boston host youth sports activities, including the Boston YMCA, the Wang YMCA of Chinatown, and the YMCA of Greater Boston. Assessments of playground quality indicate that Central Boston playgrounds ranked high.

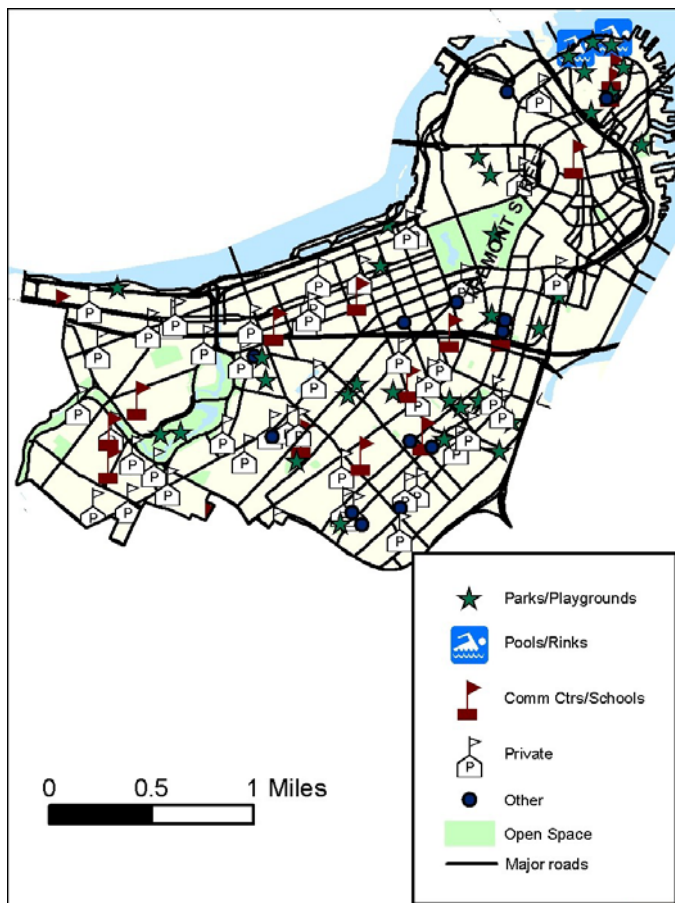
Central Boston has...

- 24 Playgrounds
 - 20 Basketball Courts
 - 12 Tennis Courts
- ... and more!

Public Recreational Facilities in Central Boston

	Central Boston	Boston	% in Central Boston
Overall Recreational Complexes	37	230	16%
Ball Fields			
Baseball	2	36	6%
Softball	8	69	12%
Little League	5	46	11%
Football	1	11	9%
Soccer	2	33	6%
Track	1	8	13%
Ball Courts			
Tennis	12	92	13%
Basketball (Full)	13	155	8%
Basketball (1/2 -court)	7	29	24%
Volleyball	2	10	20%
Street Hockey	1	17	6%
Handball	4	18	22%
Other Recreational Facility Types			
Pool	3	28	11%
Studio	1	7	14%
Other Recreational Facility	7	35	20%
Playgrounds			
Playgrounds	24	155	15%
Schoolyard Initiative Sites	1	29	3%
Total	94	809	12%

Recreational Facilities in Central Boston



Future Directions in Central Boston

Central Boston ranks average out of the 12 Boston neighborhoods¹ in both participation rates in sports and physical activity programs and in its facilities per youth ratio. Thus, in the future, to improve the opportunities for youth sports in Central Boston, Play Across Boston recommends that additional resources be allotted to increase the number of facilities available, to encourage higher levels of participation, and to maintain the safety and condition of the existing facilities.

Information for this publication was obtained from Play Across Boston, Census 2000, and the City of Boston's website.

For more information on programs available in your neighborhood, please contact:
 Boston Centers for Youth & Families
 617-635-4920
www.cityofboston/bcyf
 or
 The Mayor's Youthline
 617-635-2240
www.bostonyouthzone.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
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