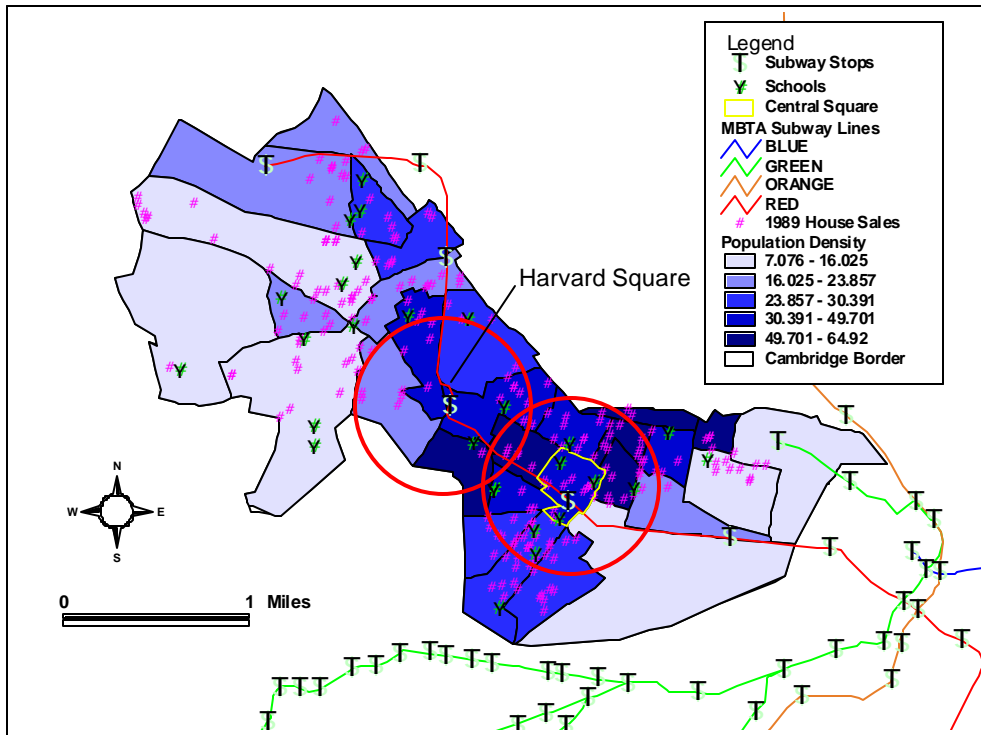


How do Schools Affect the Character of a Place?

Cambridge Schools and 1989 House Sales: A Comparison of Harvard Square and Central Square.

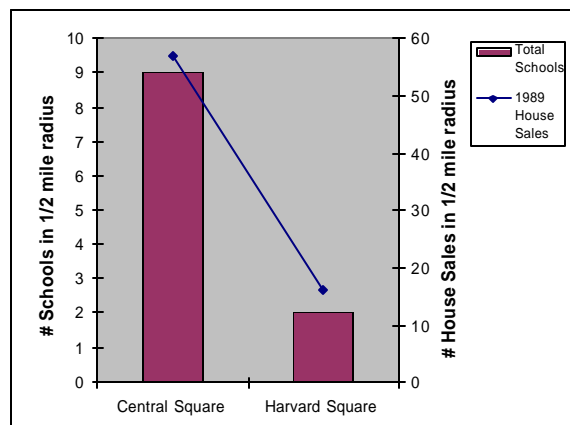
Data Sources: US Census 2000, MBTA, 11.204



Circles of a half-mile radius drawn in red around Harvard and Central Squares illustrate the correlation between school density and house sales.

| | Central Square | Harvard Square |
|------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Total Schools | 9 | 2 |
| 1989 House Sales | 57 | 16 |

Data Source: US Census 2000



Impact of School and Residential Patterns on the Image of Central Square

Traffic



Restaurants



Organizations



Retail



How do Schools Affect the Character of a Place?

Project Analysis

- This study has been prepared by AJ Whitlow and Co. Urban Consultants for the Cambridge Public Schools as part of their strategic effort to position themselves as an important force shaping the urban fabric of Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- I was interested in addressing the question of how schools shape the urban fabric by examining their relationship to house sales by comparing two central locations in Cambridge with different school concentrations: Central Square and Harvard Square.
- As this was a short study with limited data, I was forced to assume that house-sale data from 1989 is an adequate measure and was not skewed by unseen economic forces that may have been acting at that time.
- I relied on a combination of quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data supported the argument that schools and house sales are related, and qualitative data demonstrated the impact of that finding on the character of the square.
- I found that schools and house sales seem to be correlated, suggesting a higher residential density—most likely of families—in areas of more concentrated schools (especially public elementary schools). This finding supported my original hypothesis. Because the character of Harvard Square is strongly influenced by the University, I focused my visual study on elements of Central Square that respond to a dense residential area supporting families with school-age children. I found that the square hosts a variety of businesses that provide necessities for children and families: banks, youth organizations, clothing and shoe stores, and fast-food restaurants to accommodate the hectic schedule of families with children.
- 3 Constraints I faced during the project:
 - Availability of digital cameras
 - Availability of workstations with relevant programs
 - Ability (or lack thereof) to repeat skills learned through previous labs
- I would have acquired my own copy of the Dreamweaver and ArcView software prior to starting the project to overcome the second obstacle. Given the entire semester, I would have wanted to incorporate more data into the final project and maybe would have done a more in depth visual exploration of the area through photography.
- I really enjoyed the process. I am interested in education and schooling, so I was interested by the question. Had the data not been available to pursue that topic, however, I would have found the process much more frustrating because we were so limited in what we could use.