

## Reconnecting Massachusetts' Gateway Cities City Profile: Brockton

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This profile provides key economic and demographic trends faced by Brockton relating to the MassINC / Brookings Institution report "Reconnecting Massachusetts' Gateway Cities: Lessons Learned and an Agenda for Renewal." To read the entire report, see [www.massinc.org](http://www.massinc.org) or [www.brookings.edu/metro/massgateways.htm](http://www.brookings.edu/metro/massgateways.htm).

For any questions or comments, please contact Michael McWilliams at MassINC ([mmcwilliams@massinc.org](mailto:mmcwilliams@massinc.org) / 617-224-1623) or Mark Muro at the Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program ([mmuro@brookings.edu](mailto:mmuro@brookings.edu) / 202-797-6315).

### **Brockton is outperforming Greater Boston on job growth**

The City of Brockton actually outperformed Greater Boston between 2001 and 2005 on job growth, adding 1,500 new jobs—a 4 percent increase—compared to Greater Boston's 6 percent, 99,000-job loss over the same timeframe. Employment growth in Brockton's surrounding towns gave the entire Brockton region a 1,900-job gain.

### **But since 1960, the city has lost over half its manufacturing jobs**

From 1960 to 2000, Brockton lost 56 percent of its manufacturing employment, or nearly 4,600 jobs, while Greater Boston lost 138,000 manufacturing jobs—a 48 percent loss.

### **More recently, though, Brockton has added knowledge industry employment**

Between 2001 and 2005, both the City of Brockton and the Brockton region generated a 13.0 percent increase in knowledge industry jobs. This respectful gain of 750 higher-paying jobs for the city and nearly 1,100 jobs for the region contrasts starkly with the 7.9 percent, 38,000-job loss in Greater Boston.

### **Furthermore, technology firms are beginning to locate there**

While no tech firms existed in Brockton in 1991, by 2004 the city was home to 12 such firms according to CorpTech data. Likewise, the Brockton region added 40 tech firms during that time, bringing its total up from 14 to 54. This significant percentage increase for Brockton and its surrounding towns—like most other Gateway Cities and regions—is overshadowed by the enormous gains in Greater Boston, where almost 1,600 new tech firms were established. In fact, Greater Boston increased its share of the state's tech firms from 53 to 60 percent in the 13-year period.

### **Nevertheless, Brockton's per capita income growth is relatively weak**

Brockton's real per capita income growth of 22.0 percent between 1980 and 2000 trailed the Gateway City average of 24.7 percent and was less than half that of Greater Boston's 59.1 percent gain. The Brockton region fared somewhat better, with income growth of 46.5 percent.

### **And less than one in seven adults in the city holds a bachelor's degree**

At just 14.0 percent, the share of Brockton's 25-and-older population that holds at least a bachelor's degree trails Greater Boston's 41.6 percent figure by nearly 28 percentage points. Even Brockton's regional mark of 21.7 percent is little more than half of Greater Boston's attainment rate.

**Meanwhile, Brockton's population is growing, albeit slowly**

While Brockton's 1.6 percent population growth in the 1990s lagged well behind Greater Boston's 4.5 percent increase, since 2000 the tables have turned: Brockton's growth has slowed, but its 0.3 percent gain between 2000 and 2005 bettered the 1.4 percent loss in Greater Boston.

**Foreign-born residents are making up an increasing share of the population**

Of the Gateway Cities, Brockton had the second-highest increase in its foreign-born resident share in the 1990s. The city's nearly 8-point gain—from 13.0 to 20.8 percent—moved it ahead of Greater Boston's 18.8 percent foreign-born share.

**Housing prices in Brockton are rapidly appreciating yet remain relatively affordable**

From 2000 to 2005, real median home prices in the City of Brockton rose a remarkable 83 percent—more than double Greater Boston's 37 percent increase. Yet even with the rapid appreciation, the median home price of \$280,000 in Brockton remains much more affordable than the \$429,000 price tag in Greater Boston.

**Moreover, housing unit production is quickly rising**

According to Census building permit data, Brockton is increasing its production of housing units significantly faster than Greater Boston. The city's 154-permit annual average between 2003 and 2005 represented an 81 percent jump over the 85-permit average in the years 2000 to 2002 compared to a 55 percent increase for Greater Boston.