

As snow falls, complaints about space savers increase

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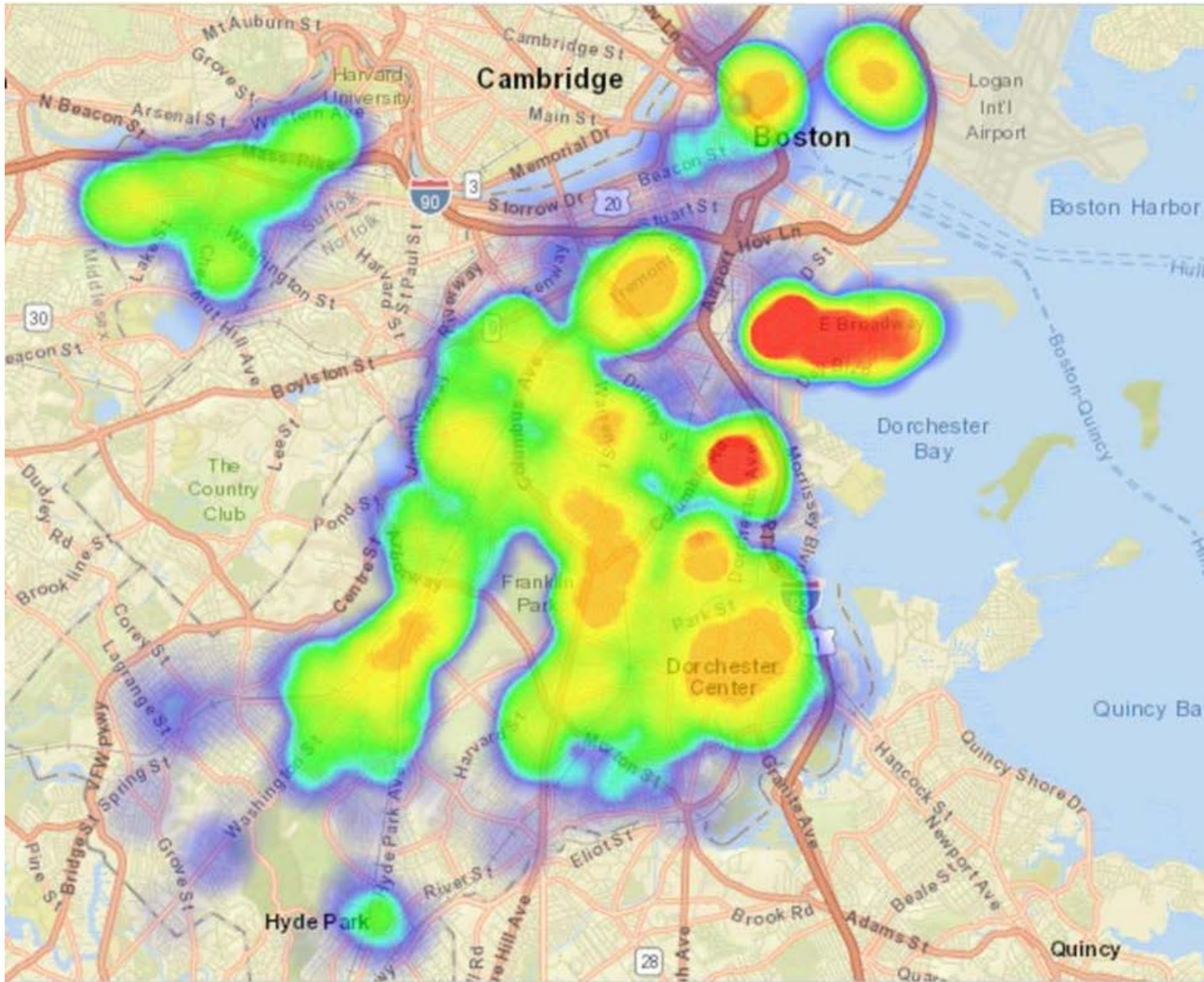
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CITY OF BOSTON

This map shows where residents filed space saver-related complaints filed between mid-2011 and Feb. 12, 2017.

By [Matt Rocheleau](#)

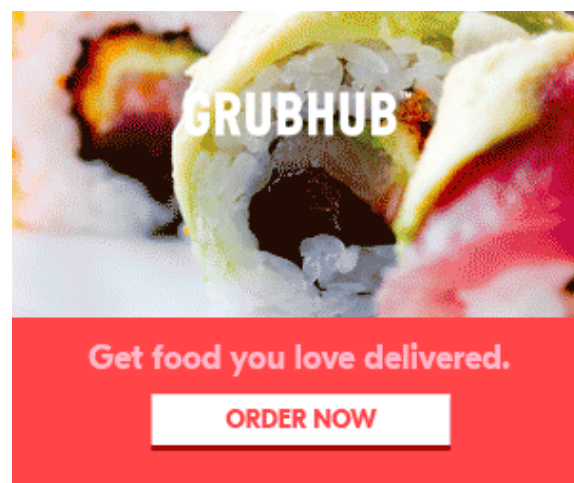
GLOBE STAFF FEBRUARY 13, 2017

Soon after flakes start to fly in Boston, space savers appear along the city's streets.

And with them come a flurry of complaints.

[Threatening notes](#) aren't the way for residents to express their displeasure. Each year, hundreds contact City Hall to complain about space savers, ratting out neighbors who, they believe, reserve parking spots in violation of city rules.

Such complaints are heavily concentrated in South Boston, where the practice has [long](#) been [known](#) to be [most popular](#). Parking can be tough to come by in that neighborhood even when there's no snow.



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In Boston, drivers can save curbside parking spaces with an object — often a safety cone or trash can — for up to 48 hours after a snow emergency has been declared for the city, [municipal rules say](#). But the space saver practice is [banned](#) in the city's South End.



Billy Baker vs Billy Baker: The space saver summit

(Mayor Martin J. Walsh this winter said that anyone who appends a threat to their space saver will have it removed by city officials.)

So, someone might file a complaint with the city to, for example, report space savers being used in the South End, after storms for which [no snow emergency](#) was declared, or beyond the 48-hour limit.

Some people who have filed complaints recently have lamented the difficulty of parking on a street rife with space savers.

On Sunday afternoon, someone used their iPhone to file a [complaint](#) with the city about an apparent plethora of space savers in South Boston: “Tons of space savers all up and down w 4th. Please remove!!!!”

Another [complaint](#) from South Boston Sunday afternoon was filed via a phone call to the city: “Caller reporting several space savers, at least 8 from this intersection down to East Fifth and L Street. Mostly cones and chairs, one fan.”

This year, through the end of the day Sunday, roughly 450 space saver-related complaints had been filed via the city’s [311 constituent services program](#), which fields reports via call, tweets, a website,



and mobile app.

That's already more than the roughly 375 of such complaints filed during all of 2016.

In 2015, when Boston endured its snowiest winter on record, the city received roughly 625 space saver-related complaints.

The map at the top of this page shows where space saver-related complaints have been filed in the past several years.

The table below shows that Dorchester had the highest number of complaints overall, but it is the city's largest neighborhood and [much larger](#) than South Boston in terms of both land area and population.

Space saver complaints by neighborhood

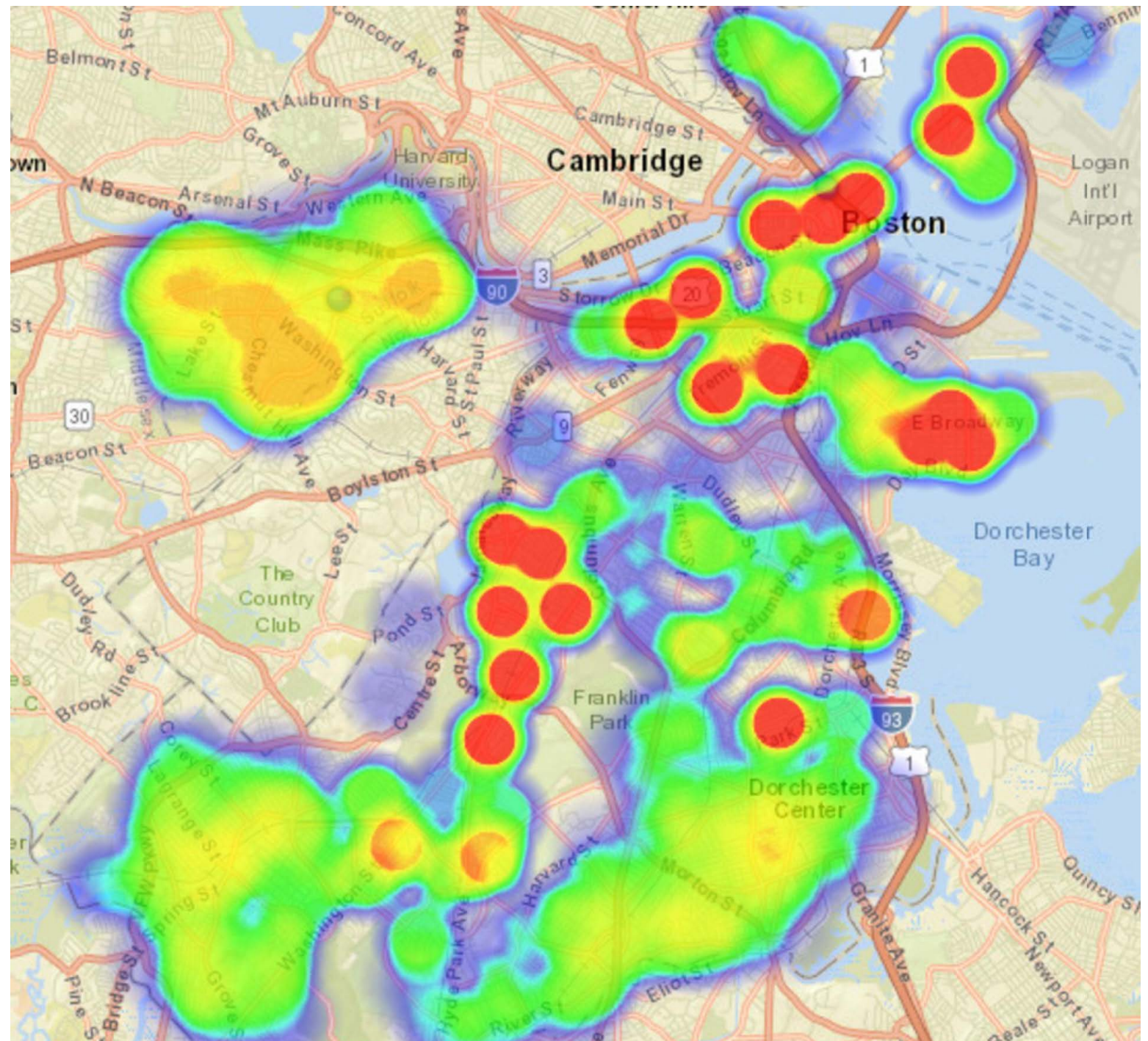
Data are for mid-2011 through Feb. 12, 2017.

Neighborhood	Complaints
Dorchester	585
South Boston	481
East Boston	284
Roxbury	250
Jamaica Plain	142
Mattapan	125
Allston-Brighton	121
Charlestown	118
Roslindale	104
South End	72
North End	52
Mission Hill	35
Hyde Park	26
West Roxbury	19
Downtown/Chinatown	18
Beacon Hill	10
Fenway	8

SOURCE: City of Boston

While space-saver complaints appear to be concentrated in certain areas of the city, other snow-related complaints are much more widespread.

For example, the map below shows where residents filed complaints during 2016 about other winter weather-related issues.



The map above shows where residents filed complaints about winter weather-related issues besides space saver-related complaints during 2016.

In recent years, space saver-related complaints have only accounted for about 8 percent of all winter weather-related 311 reports. The most common kinds of complaints are for unplowed streets and unshoveled sidewalks, which are each roughly four to five times as common as reports related to space savers.

The number of complaints about unplowed streets, unshoveled sidewalks, and other winter issues have followed a similar year-over-year pattern in recent years as complaints about space savers, with a significant spike in 2015 and complaints so far this year in the same range as the total for all of 2016.

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