

# The Boston Globe

Serving our community since 1872

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2024

## AT EPICENTER OF BATTLE TO HOLD BACK THE SEA



JESSICA RINALDI/GLOBE STAFF

A runner navigated a waterlogged area of East Boston, the city's most flood-vulnerable neighborhood.

### In East Boston, tough questions about climate preparedness, gentrification

By Erin Douglas  
GLOBE STAFF

Just above a rocky shoreline in East Boston is a housing development built on elevated land so that its residential entrances are 14 feet above mean high tide and much less vulnerable to flooding.

The Clippership Wharf development offers a glimpse of how Boston's shoreline could soon change under the city's ambitious strategy to protect coastal neighborhoods from a warming planet and the rising Atlantic Ocean.

The boxy mid-rise buildings provide front-row ocean views, above a landscape that includes terraced salt marshes that act

as a buffer. Hailed as an example of climate-resilient housing, the development cost more than \$200 million.

But the transforming coastline raises tough questions about Boston's broader "Climate Ready" plan: Will it be enough to prevent flooding, will private developments built under its policies accelerate gentrification in flood-prone neighborhoods, and how will the city pay for necessary public improvements, such as flood walls and elevated roads?

East Boston, the city's most flood-vulnerable neighborhood, is the proving ground.

To address sea level rise, city planners envision a mix of public and private projects

that, like a skinny jigsaw puzzle, would fit together to create one long coastal barrier: elevated streets, flood barriers disguised as sloping parks, and new developments on higher ground.

In other words, plug all the holes along the coastline where seawater could penetrate. The total cost, though, could be more than \$3 billion.

"Are we going to be ready? I don't know," said Ellen Douglas, a climate scientist and lead author of Boston's foundational climate impact report that the city used to guide its strategy.

Climate scientists expect the long-held in-

EAST BOSTON, Page A10

## Ukraine retrenches after key city falls

Faces shortage of troops, ammunition; Russians on verge of a wider advance

By Thomas Gibbons-Neff  
NEW YORK TIMES

SUMY, Ukraine — With the Russian military's capture of the eastern Ukrainian city of Avdiivka on Saturday, the front line has shifted substantially, setting the stage for the war's next grueling chapter as Ukrainian forces retrench and Russian troops re-form for future assaults.

Ukraine's defeat in the embattled city, under attack since 2014, when Russian-backed separatists fought government forces for control of the country's east, comes at an especially perilous time. As Russia's full-scale invasion enters its third year, Ukrainian forces are low on ammunition and facing an increasing shortage of troops.

In the retreat from Avdiivka, these problems are exacerbated by the flat and unforgiving terrain outside the city. Without dominant hills, larger rivers or extensive fortifications of the kind it built around Avdiivka over the better part of a decade, Ukraine will probably have to cede more ground to hold back Russian units.

"They don't have a well-established secondary line to pull back to," said Michael Kofman, a Russia expert at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, in a telephone interview. "Much depends on whether Russian forces can keep pushing or if they run out of momentum."

Even now, Russian troops, despite taking heavy

UKRAINE, Page A6

## DCF tosses out hundreds of its neglect findings

Appeals officers reverse 40% of investigators' claims

By Matt Stout  
GLOBE STAFF

Stephanie awoke one morning last February to find her on-and-off-again boyfriend passed out on the couch and pools of vomit on the floor. They began to fight over his drinking, according to state records, but when he "slammed her to the ground" — her 6-year-old daughter later reported hearing a loud bang — Stephanie took the kids, went to the police, and got a restraining order.

Acting on a complaint filed by the boyfriend, an investigator with the Department of Children and Families later told Stephanie, 30, that she "did everything right" in the situation, she said in an interview. But she later learned the investigator drew another conclusion: He believed she neglected her kids because she acknowledged the altercation happened within their earshot.

"I was like, 'Are you serious?'" said Stephanie, who lives in Central Massachusetts and spoke to the Globe on the condition that her full name not be used given the sensitivity of the case. "I was shocked and baffled."

She wasn't alone. The allegation against her was one of hundreds of cases last year that internal hearing officers later overturned, ruling state investigators either lacked proof, ignored evidence, or violated their own policies when they initially determined parents and other caregivers had been

DCF, Page A7

The Boston Fire Department still struggles to diversify its ranks as most trainees tend to be white and male. **B1.**

A gunman holed up in his home killed two police officers and a paramedic in a Minnesota city. **A2.**

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel vowed to complete his nation's invasion of Gaza; US forces repelled Houthis attacks. **A4.**

It's the Lunar New Year, and a group of families turned to a quieter way to celebrate in Dorchester. **B1.**

In Central Square in Cambridge, what's old is new as shops selling vintage clothing, antiques, and goods open. **D1.**



1,000 points of light

**Monday:** Sunny and breezy. High 36-41, low 20-25.

**Tuesday:** A few more clouds. High 31-36, low 26-31.

Sunrise: 6:36. Sunset: 5:21.

Weather and comics, **D4-5.**

Obituaries, **C9.**

VOL. 305, NO. 50

\*

Suggested retail price  
\$3.50



## 'It is a humanitarian crisis': Religious groups mobilize to support migrants

Clergy step in  
with supplies,  
services, shelter

By Niki Griswold  
GLOBE STAFF

For more than a year, the headlines have been stark. A surge of people fleeing political strife, street violence, and economic collapse in Haiti, Venezuela, and elsewhere, landing in Massachusetts. Emergency shelters full, officials scrambling to find safe spaces for mothers and children to sleep. Worries over money. Anger over federal inaction.

Behind those headlines, a network of religious leaders and organizations has been diligently working to help the thousands and thousands of newly arrived migrants find a foothold in their



SUZANNE KREITER/GLOBE STAFF/FILE

Axel, 5, wore a backpack filled with art supplies while playing at an overflow migrant shelter run by Catholic Charities of Boston.

new land. They've become an essential part of the response to the unprecedented influx of migrants

that has stretched the state's emergency shelter system beyond

MIGRANTS, Page A7

## Across the Mystic, a rare example of a surge in housing

Everett bucks trend with cheaper land, building boom

By Jon Chesto  
GLOBE STAFF

Growing up north of Boston, John Tocco drove through Everett countless times without giving much thought to its gritty industrial areas or the waterfront tucked amid factories and fuel depots.

That all changed in 2012 when Tocco took a community affairs job helping Wynn Resorts build a \$2.5 billion casino on the Mystic River. He saw Everett's potential firsthand, particularly given all its underused industrial land, and waited for developers to swoop in. Eventually, he became one of them.

"The area's got to change," Tocco recalls think-

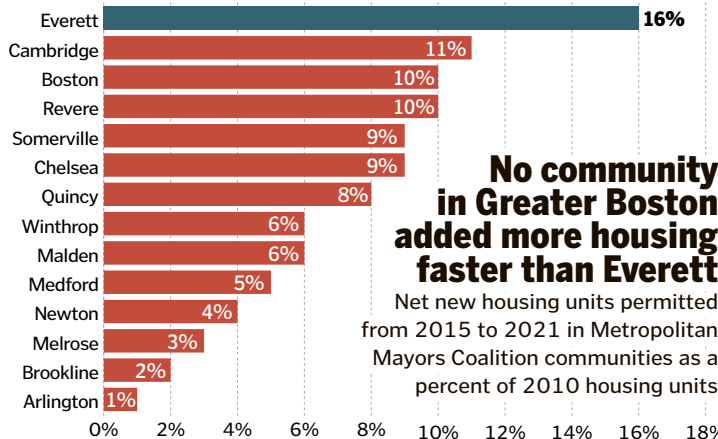
ing. "It's too close to Boston. You could get land at a reasonable price."

That proved to be a safe bet.

From 2015 through 2021, per the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, no community in Greater Boston added more housing at a faster clip than Everett — 16 percent. Today, there are nearly 1,600 additional units under construction in large buildings, according to real estate firm JLL, the most, after Boston, of any city or town in the region.

The construction surge has naturally raised concerns about affordability, as this working-class city confronts an influx of luxury apartments that

EVERETT, Page A10



**No community  
in Greater Boston  
added more housing  
faster than Everett**

Net new housing units permitted from 2015 to 2021 in Metropolitan Mayors Coalition communities as a percent of 2010 housing units

Source: Metropolitan Area Planning Council

DANA GERBER/GLOBE STAFF