

MASTER PLAN



# East Boston

City of Boston Thomas M. Menino, Mayor

Boston Redevelopment Authority Mark Maloney, Director

April 2000

Dear East Boston Friends:

It gives me great pleasure to release the East Boston Master Plan. This document is a community-based plan that establishes the framework for future development in East Boston, ensuring that the community's voice is heard before development occurs. The plan provides a balance between a variety of competing interests, all of which are important. Thank you for all of your long hours at community meetings, thoughtful public comments and willingness to work together -- as a community -- for the greater good.

East Boston's proximity to downtown, its historic waterfront, and diverse population make the neighborhood one of the city's best-kept secrets. As the waterfront evolves from a busy maritime industrial port to a mix of industrial, commercial, residential and recreational uses, many exciting opportunities for economic development are created. Development should and will be balanced and thoughtful. With this plan, your vision has laid the groundwork so that all future economic development will benefit the entire community, and no one will be left behind.

The Master Plan also builds upon East Boston's natural and cultural resources. With the implementation of the open space strategy laid out in this plan, residents of East Boston will enjoy one of the highest concentrations of open space per square mile in our city. This is just one of the exciting prospects that have come out of the Master Planning efforts.

Strengthening neighborhoods, reviving the waterfront, enhancing commercial centers, energizing the McClellan Highway / upper Chelsea Creek corridor and seizing balanced economic development opportunities are all central themes in this plan. I look forward to continuing our work together. Our next step is to draft and submit to the state a Municipal Harbor Plan that will enable your vision for the waterfront to be realized.

Please stay engaged in this important process. Together we are reshaping one of the City of Boston's greatest assets – its neighborhoods.



Thomas M. Menino  
Mayor of Boston

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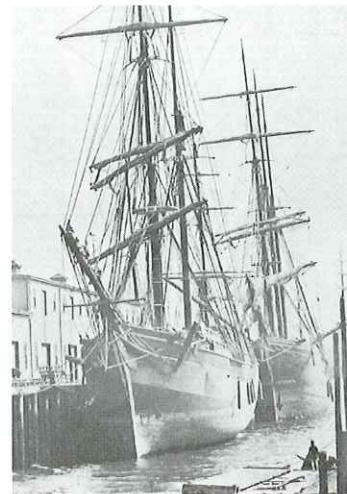
Constitution Beach

# CHAPTER ONE - OVERVIEW

## INTRODUCTION

The East Boston Master Plan provides a framework for new growth and development in the community's commercial districts and waterfront area, while preserving and enhancing the quality of life in the community's adjacent residential neighborhoods. Beginning in the 1830s, when East Boston first developed as a residential neighborhood and commercial district, through the thriving economic period of shipbuilding and maritime industry and in the present period of major transportation and infrastructure development, East Boston has maintained a distinct physical and demographic identity. Immigrants to the region have frequently settled in East Boston, drawn initially by employment opportunities and proximity to the downtown and remaining because of the stock of affordable housing and the clear sense of community, among other features. Today, the diversity created by this continuing immigration is one of the community's greatest strengths.

East Boston, like other waterfront communities in New England, has been impacted by the severe decline in traditional water-dependent industries. Despite that fact that the number of jobs related to these industries has declined over the decades, a strong community environment, improved rapid transit and vehicular connections to downtown Boston, and airport-related economic opportunities work together to make the



Clippership Wharf circa 1850



Chelsea Creek: Maritime Industrial Character

community a desirable place to live. And while East Boston's harborfront is today a substantially underutilized asset, it is a major component of Boston Harbor, supporting residential, recreational, tourism, and traditional port activities.

The East Boston Master Plan provides a means to take full advantage of these assets. No master plan is cast in stone; to be successful, a master plan must provide an overall vision while remaining flexible and responsive to unforeseen opportunities and changes in circumstances that may arise while the plan is carried out. The Master Plan represents the result of a broad-based community process. It is the product of several years of goal-setting, the evaluation of alternative development scenarios, and a careful reviewing of alternatives for feasibility.

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### This document is divided into four sections:

**Chapter One** provides an overview of the East Boston Master Plan.

**Chapter Two** presents a summary of the planning process and public involvement and describes current projects and planning efforts, and provides a real estate market assessment.

**Chapter Three** presents the key elements of the Plan and describes recommended actions within each geographic area.

**Chapter Four** presents implementation recommendations.



Piers Park



Boston Tow

### THE VISION: A VIEW TO THE FUTURE

Piers Park demonstrates the pattern of development that should continue in the future. To either side of the park, the anticipation of positive change will soon be fulfilled. Piers Park will be extended to land adjoining, the nearby Shipyard will be revitalized, and a new waterfront neighborhood of housing with inviting public uses and outdoor open space will soon be developed. Supported by the renewed activity on and around the waterfront, ferry service will again be running to downtown Boston. The new East Boston Greenway will provide a unique linear open space, linking Piers Park and East Boston's waterfront with several of the community's neighborhoods and a restored Constitution Beach.

And nearby, in the local commercial districts and residential neighborhoods from Maverick Square to Orient Heights, orderly growth and change is taking hold.

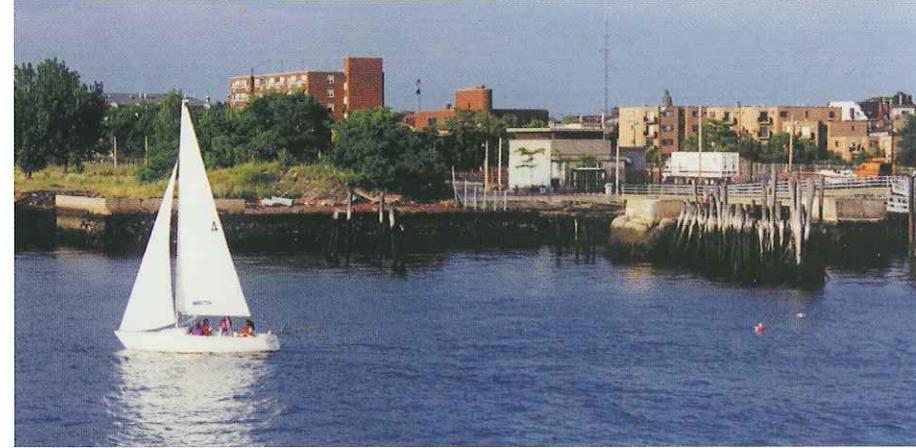
The Master Plan describes planning for East Boston's waterfront and its maritime-related industries. It describes methods to protect and enhance existing residential neighborhoods, what role the community's history will play in future development, and what new economic development opportunities exist along the harborfront and in the community's various commercial districts. Descriptions of some of the key elements of the Plan are provided in this section. They are the building blocks of the Master Plan: urban design, transportation, open space, and economic development.

### A Revived Waterfront from Boston Harbor to Chelsea Creek

In the near future, residents and visitors alike will be able to emerge from a new Maverick Station on the Blue Line and stroll down Lewis Mall with the skyline of the Financial District in full view. The handsomely paved and landscaped pedestrian way will be the "Main Street" of a new waterfront residential district, stretching from Piers Park to LoPresti Park. It will be lined with shops, cafes, and other public spaces – including community space and possibly a museum. At the foot of the Mall, a revived ferry service, supported by the new residents, and increased retail activity at the water's edge in East Boston, will once again link the neighborhood with the Financial District and downtown.



Chelsea Creek: open space improvements



Boston East development site

Within East Boston, access to and around the waterfront also will be enhanced. The East Boston Greenway will link the community's neighborhoods from Piers Park to Constitution Beach. The series of streets that run along the waterfront, from Marginal Street at Piers Park to Condor Street along Chelsea Creek, are physically linked with a new public way through Clippership Wharf, and visually connected through a common streetscape treatment as East Boston's "Waterfront Way." Chelsea Creek and its waterfront, still an active industrial area, are being cleaned and improved. The long-fallow Condor Street Urban Wilds site is being transformed into another neighborhood park, joined by a 1,200 foot segment of Harborwalk along the Creek to an observation point at the bulkhead line of the former Hess Oil site.

### Vibrant Business Districts

As new economic development begins to transform the East Boston waterfront, East Boston's current and new residents will see benefits in the community's neighborhood commercial centers as well. The success of the Main Streets program for both Maverick and Central Squares in improving the appearance and vitality of East Boston's main business districts can be expanded to Orient Heights and Day Square. Streetscape improvements in each square will simplify traffic patterns, remove excess asphalt and increase pedestrian space. In Central Square, modifications to Liberty Plaza will also provide better pedestrian connections, both to the street and to

the waterfront, which today lies hidden and inaccessible immediately behind. At Maverick Square, the reconstruction of the Blue Line station will also create a more pedestrian-friendly environment, with streetscape enhancements and widened sidewalks that will provide space for outdoor cafes.



Central Square



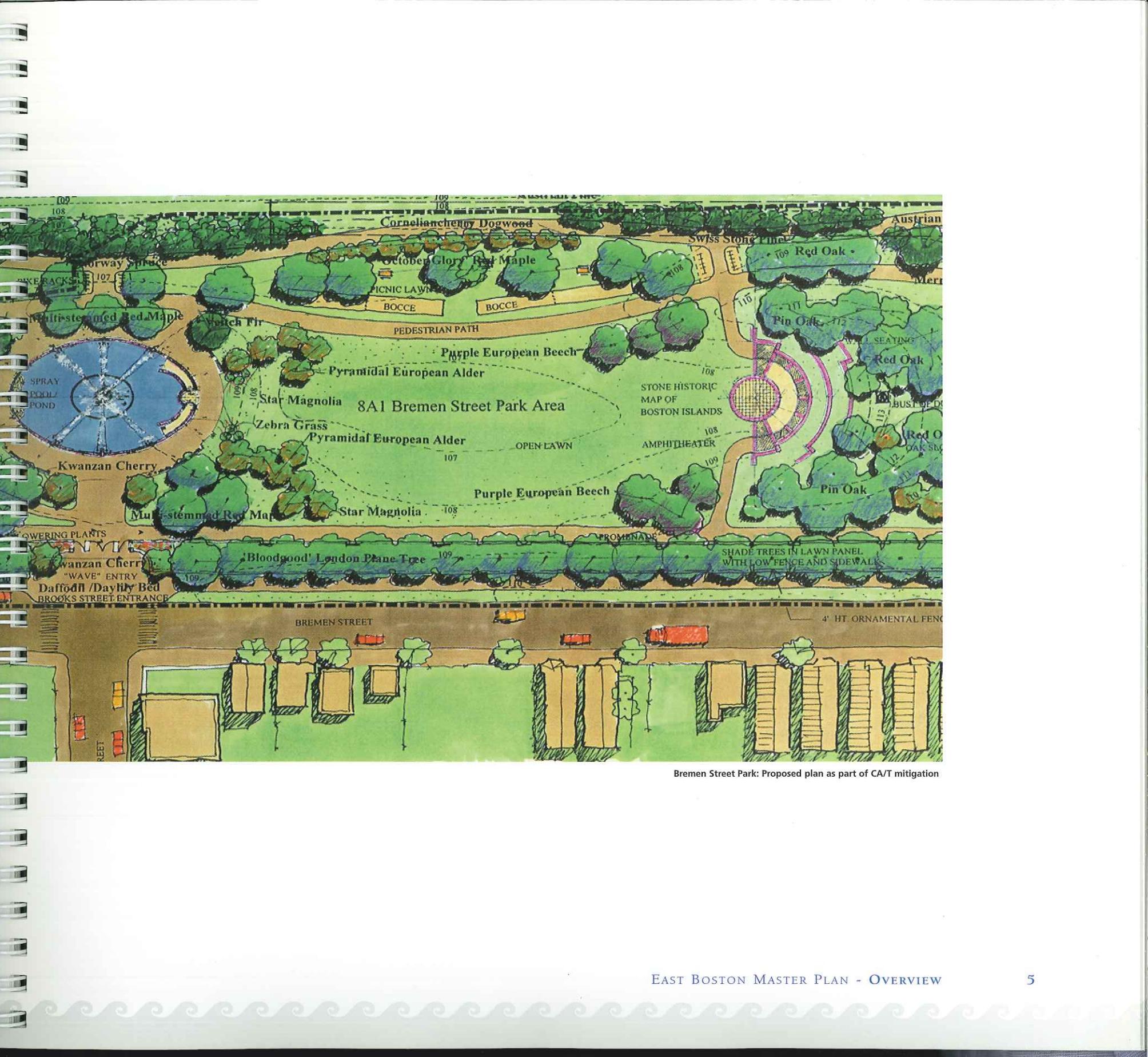
Historic East Boston neighborhood

### A Unique Network of Open Spaces and Historic Resources

East Boston has historically suffered from insufficient open space, and loss of Wood Island Park to airport expansion is a painful memory for long-time residents. However, in the next few years the increase in the amount and variety of high-quality open space available to East Boston residents, especially along the waterfront, will be even more dramatic than the amount of new building construction. Piers Park II and the likely park development of Massport's Pier 5 will more than double the size of the current 6.5 acre Piers Park. Along Chelsea Creek, the improvement of the Condor

Street Urban Wilds will add another waterfront park setting for Eagle Hill residents who can walk along the Creek on Condor Street and continue out to the bulkhead via a landscaped pedestrian walk on the former Hess Oil site. The new Bremen Street Park, restored and improved Memorial Stadium complex, and the East Boston Greenway provide additional amenities and recreational opportunities for both community residents and visitors. The Metropolitan District Commission's restoration of Constitution Beach, including much improved access and facilities, and the nearby Belle Isle Marsh, provide an unmatched diversity of open space and recreational opportunities within an urban setting.

The history of East Boston will also come alive in and around this network of open spaces. A series of interpretive kiosks will be placed at intervals along the waterfront, as a component of an expanded Harborwalk. A community room in the new East Boston Sailing Center at Piers Park II will provide waterfront meeting space and an opportunity for educational programs for schools. In addition, a series of decorative gateways, designed with community input and erected with a grant from the Robert Ingersoll Browne Fund, will help to establish a unique sense of place at each location.



Bremen Street Park: Proposed plan as part of CA/T mitigation

East Boston  
Main Streets: facade  
improvements



## Diverse Neighborhoods

While new housing and open space development is occurring around the perimeter of the community, East Boston's core – its varied and close-knit residential neighborhoods – will be protected from unwanted development impacts and enhanced through small-scale, community-sensitive treatments. Market studies indicate that demand for homeownership and rental housing opportunities in East Boston is high. Fortunately, opportunities for infill housing development to respond to this demand can be found throughout the community. Other infill sites might be devoted to vest-pocket off-street resident parking lots or community gardens. The triangular mixed-use neighborhood bounded by Central and Maverick Squares and the waterfront presents a special opportunity for a combination of infill and larger scale development. The city-owned Boston East site on the waterfront could be an attractive location for potential artist live-work space similar to the existing community along the Fort Point Channel. Traffic calming measures will help to ensure that the quiet residential side streets of the community stay that way. With the neighborhood parking crunch eased by off-street locations, some of the unique triangular intersections on Eagle Hill may be freed of their use as parking lots and converted into neighborhood greens.



Eagle Hill

In summary, the East Boston Master Plan provides:

**A vision** - for East Boston's waterfront, commercial districts, open spaces, transportation corridors, and neighborhoods that is supported by the community and public agencies, including local community organizations and city and state agencies.

**A vehicle** - to attract and guide private sector involvement -- including CDC and neighborhood associations -- in key projects in the community, including housing revitalization and other development in neighborhood commercial districts and on the waterfront.

Implementation of the Master Plan can begin immediately as it has been accepted by key parties. The Plan identifies projects that can be accomplished in the short term, as well as establishes mid- and long-range priorities that will require further planning, design, and development.

The Master Plan is being finished at a time when resources and opportunities are available to resolve long-standing issues in revitalizing East Boston and to realize a well planned, community-based vision for East Boston.



Aerial view of Baywater neighborhood and Constitution Beach

# CHAPTER TWO - PLANNING FRAMEWORK

## The Planning Process

The Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) and the community-based Planning Coordinating Group (PCG), building upon the process initiated by the Comprehensive Planning Initiative (CPI), have worked together over the past year to develop the East Boston Master Plan. The PCG is an 18-member group representing diverse organizations in East Boston. Its monthly meetings, which have been open to the public, have been well attended by members of the community.

The PCG has reviewed and discussed each key step in the development of the Master Plan:

**Existing Conditions** – land use, transportation systems, and economic market analyses.

**Planning Areas** – key characteristics to create a framework for planning analysis.

**Focus Issues** – topics of concern to be addressed by the Master Plan.

**Goals and Evaluation Criteria** – framework for developing the Master Plan.

**Planning Alternatives and Strategies** – three different approaches to the Master Plan.

**Preferred Alternative** – recommended approach based on community ideas and opinions.

Three workshops and two community meetings provided the opportunity for public input at each major decision point in the development of the Master Plan. Attendance ranged between 75 to 100 people at the following meetings and workshops:

**Kick-Off Meeting**, June 30, 1998 to describe the planning process and introduce BRA staff and its team. Participants were also asked to share their thoughts on issues of concern through a survey form.

**Issues/Opportunities** in Planning Areas Workshop, October 14, 1998 was preceded by a neighborhood bus tour and followed by the workshop at which participants discussed critical issues for the Waterfront, Business District/Gateways, and Neighborhoods and Connectors planning areas.

**Alternatives Workshop**, December 9, 1998 at which participants were asked to indicate strengths and weaknesses of the three alternatives presented.

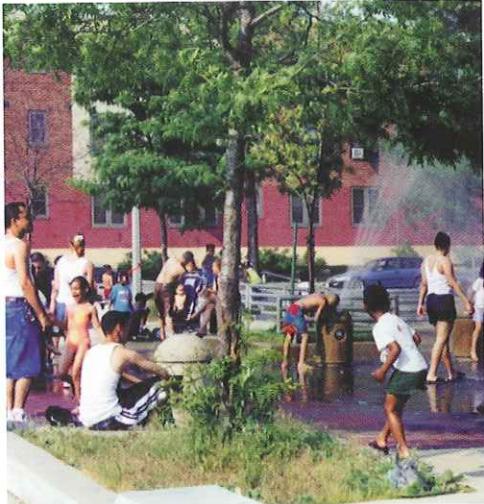
**Alternatives Evaluation Workshop**, March 10, 1999 presented the preferred alternative evaluation and recommendations. The participants were asked to provide opinions about the waterfront sub-option choices and to indicate priorities for the waterfront, neighborhood and transportation, and economic development elements.

**Draft Master Plan Public Meeting**, May 26, 1999 to review the draft Master Plan with the community and provide an opportunity for comments before finalizing the Plan.

**Public Outreach** – Each workshop involved community-wide distribution of a bilingual (English and Spanish) BRA bulletin describing the outcome of the previous workshop and purpose of the upcoming workshop and other pertinent information. Workshops were well publicized with notices and radio announcements in English and Spanish.

Throughout the process, the BRA met with elected officials, individuals, businesses, and other interested parties for briefing and discussion purposes. A focus group discussion on neighborhood commercial centers was held with individuals representing business, residential, and ethnic community interests to test ideas about the retail and commercial opportunities of the centers.

Technical Memoranda and workshop materials were made available for review at East Boston libraries and the Harborside Community Center and on the Internet in order to afford individuals additional opportunity to study the information and provide comments to the BRA. The large attendance at the PCG meetings and the workshops demonstrated the community's interest and involvement in the planning process and provided extensive feedback on the Plan as it evolved.



LoPresti Park

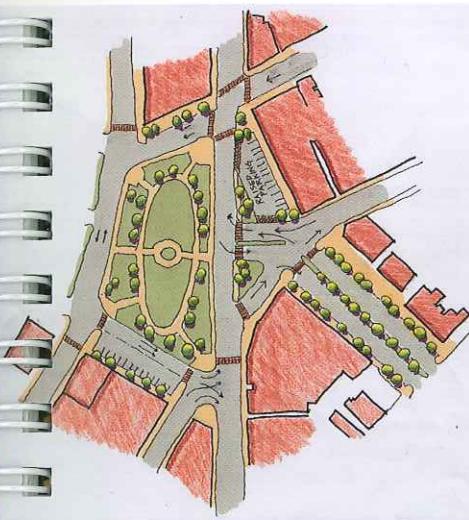
**Coordination** – The BRA coordinated the development of the Master Plan with key city and state agencies as well as sponsors of on-going development projects, such as the Massport Piers and Clippership Wharf.

**Consensus** – The BRA worked toward consensus among the parties affected by the Master Plan. As individual projects are implemented, the City will continue to provide opportunities for community involvement and review. It is expected that the Master Plan will be amended in the future to meet changing conditions.

### Goals of the plan

Through the planning process, a set of goals and objectives were created that reflect the community's desire to maintain East Boston's identity and culture while accomodating new and innovative land uses in the future. The Master Plan includes the following goals:

- **Provide for a full utilization of the East Boston Inner Harbor waterfront and Chelsea Creek corridor** for industrial, maritime, commercial, residential, and recreational use.
- **Support economic development in East Boston with a compatible mix of public and private projects** including housing, retail, offices, and open spaces, that will complement existing uses and enhance the community as a whole.
- **Reinforce the existing commercial and business centers** that serve the neighborhoods and the community in general.
- **Improve access to and from the waterfront** for the neighborhoods and East Boston as a whole.
- **Reconnect neighborhoods** through better access and better pedestrian pathways.
- **Diversify water and land transportation linkages** between East Boston and the surrounding communities, including downtown Boston.
- **Preserve and maintain the character** of the historic residential neighborhoods and natural resources of the community.
- **Address overall access to and parking** problems in East Boston.
- **Reduce the negative impact of large transportation facilities** and infrastructures, such as the airport, on the community.
- **Develop a network of open spaces** that would build upon existing resources and improve the quality of life in the neighborhoods of East Boston.
- **Develop Harborwalk** along all waterfront areas.
- **Increase the quantity and variety of employment opportunities** for residents of East Boston.



Central Square: conceptual improvements



Maverick Station: MBTA redesign proposal



Memorial Stadium: proposal improvements as part of CA/T mitigation

### Concurrent Planning Efforts

The East Boston Master Plan process has identified concurrent planning efforts "in the pipeline". The purpose of outlining the improvements currently planned is to understand the actions which will occur regardless of the Master Plan. However, for projects early in their development process, the Master Plan provides recommendations reflecting public comments. The Master Plan attempts to use these current trends to guide development toward the goals of the community. This section will briefly describe the major planning efforts already underway that affect the Master Plan and East Boston.

**A - The Shipyard** will be repositioned to decrease its impacts on the adjacent community and to allow for pedestrian access through the facility.

**B - Pier 5** will be utilized for additional marina related development to complement the adjacent 180 slip recreational marina.

**C - A conceptual design** for Piers Park Phase II at Pier 3 illustrates a water fountain feature, expanded sailing activities, and active recreation areas.

**D - A request for proposals for Pier 1** will offer a major redevelopment opportunity for one of the most desirable properties on the waterfront.

**E - Clippership Wharf development proposal** (adjacent to the Massport Pier 1) has shown preliminary intentions of developing a mixed-use residential program on the site and should be a major component of waterfront development.

**F - Boston East** is a vacant 4.8 acre parcel owned by the City. Seaport bond funding has been secured to clean up dilapidated piers and derelict piles at the site.

**G - Liberty Plaza Waterfront** in Central Square is the proposed site of a new ferry dock. Passenger water transportation facilities currently available in East Boston include active and inactive boarding docks as well as layover berthing and vessel repair locations.

**H - Hess Oil** site has undergone soil testing which has identified a number of contaminants. The owners of the site, Hess Oil Corp., have presented their findings to the Chelsea Creek Action Group and will continue to inform the community on future redevelopment issues.

**I - MBTA Car Barn** - The City has proposed a new police facility at the former MBTA car barn site on East Eagle Street. The project will include a new police station, a two-bay Emergency Medical Service (EMS) area, a public park and a police boat docking area. The City of Boston Public Works Department will have new administrative offices, a new vehicle storage garage and salt shed on the site.

**J - Suffolk Downs-McClellan Highway corridor** offers opportunities for development of new and expanded non-water dependent industrial facilities.

**K - Proposed Hotels** - Two hotel developments have been proposed at Cottage and Porter Streets. The two projects, currently undergoing BRA review, would create approximately 650 guest suites.

**L - East Boston Greenway Phase I** implementation reuses the former Conrail right-of-way for a planned pedestrian/bikeway connection throughout East Boston. Phase I is funded with \$850,000 and started in the fall of 1999, and will run a 1/2 mile from Marginal to Porter Street.

**M - CA/T Mitigation: Bremen Street Park** will replace the existing parking lot with a linear park, complementing the Greenway section running alongside the park.

**N - CA/T Mitigation: Memorial Stadium park improvements** will reconnect Memorial Stadium and its adjacent land to the Gove Street neighborhood by rerouting the elevated Route 1/Airport access roads further north, thus adding much-needed open space and physical access to the community.

**O - MBTA Blue Line Modernization Program** involves improvements to the Maverick, Airport and Orient Heights T stations to accommodate six car trains.

**O1 - MBTA Maverick Station improvements** will reconfigure Maverick Station to include a new headhouse and redesigned sidewalks to better accommodate riders, pedestrians, buses, and other vehicles.

**O2 - MBTA Airport Station redesign** will move the station further north in conjunction with the CA/T mitigation projects, Bremen Street Park, and Memorial Stadium Park improvements.

**O3 - MBTA Orient Heights Station redesign** involves improvements to the Orient Heights Station to improve streetscape and traffic circulation, including the relocation of the busway from Barnes Avenue to Bennington Street in order to reduce impacts on abutters.

**P - Overlook Terrace**, the BHA housing project in Orient Heights, will receive a \$7 million major renovation which will include unit upgrades and site improvements.

**Q - The Golden Stairs** within Jeffries Point are being refurbished as part of ongoing open space improvements being conducted by Boston's Parks and Recreation Department.

**R - Lewis Mall** proposed landscape improvements will alleviate pavement problems and enhance an area used for outdoor activity for the elderly residents of the Boston Housing Authority's Heritage Homes.

**S - City of Boston Main Streets Program** (within the Maverick and Central Square area) continues to promote businesses within East Boston through marketing, signage, and physical improvements such as facade improvements.

**T - MDC Constitution Beach renovations** will renovate the bath houses, parking and general landscaping to improve the already-unique beach environment.

**U - Condor Street Urban Wilds** has been transferred to the City of Boston Parks and Recreation Department which will begin clean-up of contaminants and develop a new 5-acre park on the site.

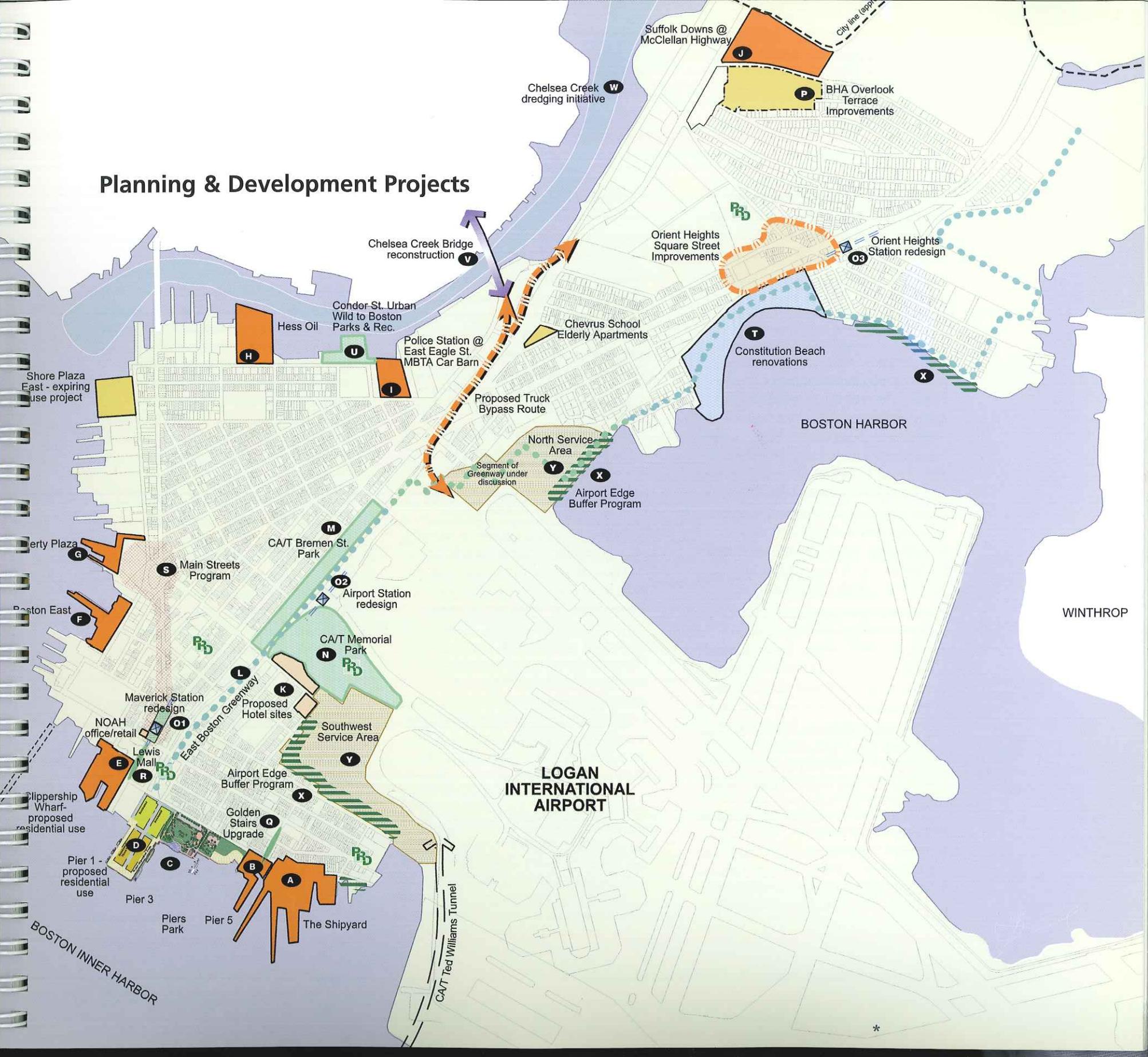
**V - Chelsea Creek Bridge reconstruction** started in 1999 will improve truck circulation in this heavy industrial area along the Chelsea Creek.

**W - Chelsea Creek dredging** is scheduled to be complete in 2000 will enhance the capabilities of deep draft ship access by dredging the Creek all the way to Revere.

**X - Massport's Airport Edge Buffer Program** projects include access from the Greenway for views of Wood Island Marsh in the North Service area, beautification of the shoreline along Bayswater Street, and better access and landscaped screening outside the Southwest Service area.

**Y - Massport North Service Area** - preliminary plans suggest the North Service area would be reserved for kitchen/catering and the Southwest Service area for car rental facilities.

## Planning & Development Projects



**Past planning studies and documents have been taken into account when developing the East Boston Master Plan:**

***Reconnect - An East Boston of the Future, 1989*** establishes a framework for development possibilities at various areas in East Boston.

***Urban Design Study - Airport Edge, January 1993*** is a starting point for discussion of compatible uses adjacent to Logan Airport and the East Boston community. Existing conditions, possible uses, and design options are the sections addressed in the design exploration of six sites around the Airport.

***Orient Heights Station Area Circulation Study, November 1994*** evaluates options and identifies the safest long term strategy for bus and passenger/parking circulation at the Orient Heights station.

***East Boston: Building Momentum for Change, June 1995*** summarizes a consensus building workshop that was conducted by architect Antonio DiMambro with participating East Boston community groups.

***Port of Boston – Economic Development Plan, March 1996***, investigates the various market sectors that the Port of Boston served in the past and will serve in the future.

***Results of the September 21, 1996 Community Planning Day*** are listings of comments from discussions held in small issue work groups regarding various important planning topics includ-

ing: economic development, housing, community safety, human services, education, open space, health, arts/culture/heritage, and transportation.

***Chelsea Creek Study - Introduction, August 1997*** serves as a starting point for discussion on how groups could work together to impact the environmental issues surrounding the Chelsea Creek.

## **MARKET ASSESSMENT**

After examining baseline improvements in the first section of this chapter, this section, Market Assessment, will examine the feasibility of the planning framework given various market forces.

Economic growth is evident in virtually every economic sector in East Boston. East Boston shows significant improvement in all sectors since the trough of the recession, as measured in sales, expenditures, employment, occupied square feet and available housing units. This improvement arises largely from East Boston's participation in an expanding regional economy; however, East Boston's share of the regional markets shows moderating declines or stability in almost all sectors. Without continued effort, East Boston's economic growth is vulnerable to regional competition (especially if there should be a general economic downturn). East Boston's local economy is also small in size, which creates a vulnerability to the fortunes of individual companies, property owners, and industries.

Significantly improving competitive positioning will require implementation of major new public and private initiatives. A lack of pro-active effort would likely lead to a loss of market share and increased vulnerability to external market conditions. East Boston's current and future market positioning relies to a great degree on its competitive strengths, which include its proximity to downtown Boston and Logan International Airport, its waterfront location and facilities, its established businesses and institutions, its physical quality, and its relative affordability. These factors can be used to stabilize and improve East Boston's economic condition.

## **Opportunities**

Specific opportunities exist for East Boston to capture a larger share of the neighborhood retail, marine-services, industrial, residential, and hospitality markets. An expanded neighborhood retail market would include improved sales at existing facilities and new retail and restaurant development within the existing commercial nodes. The marine-services market would include expanded water-side activities (commercial and recreational dockage, water transportation, excursion/charter usage) and expanded landside supports (toilets/showers, boat repair, storage, retail, and restaurants). Improved occupancy and utilization at existing marine industrial facilities and the development of

new and expanded non-water-dependent industrial facilities within the McClellan Highway corridor would be included in industrial market expansion. Renovations of existing residential properties, conversion of obsolete industrial/commercial properties, and the development of new rental and ownership housing stock would be implemented for the residential market. New facilities oriented to the business traveler and tourism markets would be included in the hospitality sector.

### **Constraints**

Specific limitations will have to be overcome for East Boston to capture a larger share of the market. These limitations include issues relating to cost, regulations, transportation, and community involvement. One specific factor is the high cost of (re)development relative to real estate prices in East Boston (especially including land costs, waterside infrastructure costs, parking costs, and landside development premiums). Another economic issue is the high cost of converting/redeveloping existing uses to more productive uses. There are regulatory limitations/conditions for certain uses of the waterfront (especially non-water dependent) and there is limited land available for new development. Two additional market constraints relate to the perceived inconvenience of vehicular access to downtown Boston and the perceived difficulty of a community review process.

### **Retail Sector**

#### **Economic Conditions**

Growing regional buying power is anticipated over the next 5-10 years. This growth suggests an expanded demand for region-serving retail services such as apparel, household goods, gifts, eating and drinking. East Boston resident expenditures are stable- to- growing, suggesting modest growth for traditional community-serving retail (food, drugs, liquor, and sundries).

Substantial local sales capture in some merchandise categories (eating and drinking, drugs/personal care, liquor, automotive, miscellaneous retail, building materials) indicate the importance of non-resident expenditures to market sales, while limited sales capture in others (food-at-home, apparel, furniture) indicate potential untapped market opportunities. The area shows relatively low retail vacancy rates, but also a significant under-utilization of space (relatively low sales volumes/SF). There is positive financial feasibility for rehabilitation of existing retail property and for in-fill development in established retail districts, but there is limited financial feasibility for new free-standing retail development of scale.

#### **Competitive Advantages & Disadvantages**

There are several competitive advantages and disadvantages relating to growth in the retail sector for East Boston. The area shows significant evidence of entrepreneurial activity and investment. Existing retail space within the districts is well concentrated, with

each district having well-defined boundaries and an identifiable retail theme or demand focus. There are also significant niche market opportunities for groups such as tourists, waterfront users, daytime employees, commuters, and neighborhood residents. Low lease rates, the presence of major demand generators (i.e. Logan Airport), and reasonably good availability of public parking all contribute to potential for positive retail opportunities in East Boston. Limitations in quality space options and land available for new development might hamper development, while cost sensitivity of the market may also hinder the feasibility of major rehabilitation and new construction activity.

### **Hospitality Sector**

#### **Economic Conditions**

Growth is expected near term in all demand sectors of the hospitality industry. It is especially strong in the “extended stay” business traveler and tourism sectors. However, the limited room supply in East Boston currently results in the diversion of business and tourism demand to other locations. This is particularly troublesome given the economic potential lost when more affluent, longer-stay business users and visitors take their spending power out of the neighborhood. Near term financial feasibility is positive for “extended stay” hotels oriented to cost conscious visitors (business and tourist) room-rate and product requirements, and is limited for new waterfront hotel development.

### **Competitive Advantages & Disadvantages**

There are several competitive advantages and disadvantages relating to growth in the hospitality sector for East Boston. The presence of major demand generators (e.g., Logan Airport) add to significant niche market opportunities. There is also potential for relatively affordable pricing. However, there are limited sites with highway access, visibility, and/or presence—which would be key to the business market—and access to downtown Boston is perceived to be difficult.

### **Office and R&D Sectors**

#### **Economic Conditions**

There is a growing demand in both office and Research and Development (R&D) sectors in the region, but a shrinking market share for East Boston, which shows low vacancy rates and little or no recent new development in these sectors. However, competitive rates and positive near term financial feasibility for upper floor office space in existing commercial districts demonstrate positive near term financial feasibility. Limited near term financial feasibility exists for new free-standing offices or R&D development, except for “built-to-suit” occupants.

### **Competitive Advantages & Disadvantages**

There are several competitive advantages and disadvantages relating to growth in the office and R&D sectors for East Boston. Low lease rates, good public transportation, the presence of a major demand generator (Logan Airport), and niche market themes/attractions such as waterfront, tourism, history, and architecture are all positive factors in the area's development. However, cost sensitivity of the market and developable land constraints may hinder the feasibility of major rehabilitation and new construction activity. There are limited sites with access/visibility from major highways and limited quality space options currently available for either office or R&D users. The shrinking market share is likely to continue unless active steps are taken to support existing businesses and to promote business retention and internal growth.

### **Industrial Sectors (Marine and Non-Marine)**

#### **Economic Conditions**

There is a shrinking though stabilizing demand in city-wide industrial employment and a growing airport-related industrial demand resulting from economic expansion and diminishing supply of space on airport property. Although airport-related industrial vacancy rates are low, several new airport-related industrial facilities are in the planning stages. There is also a shrinking marine industrial demand;

however, the market is active for existing lower intensity maritime users (marine services, marine construction, boat repair, staging, storage, and layover berthing). There are high rates of existing underutilized marine industrial properties and no recent new marine industrial development. Without subsidy, a limited short and long term feasibility for new marine industrial development is projected. There is positive near term financial feasibility for new non-marine industrial development, and East Boston boasts competitive lease rates.

### **Competitive Advantages & Disadvantages**

There are several competitive advantages and disadvantages relating to growth in the industrial sectors for East Boston. The presence of Logan Airport and niche market themes/attractions (airport proximity, deep water berthing, accessible Inner Harbor location) work toward growth in East Boston. The area boasts relatively low lease rates on the underutilized land with expensive waterside infrastructure needs. However, cost sensitivity of the marine industrial market hinders the feasibility of major rehabilitation and new construction activity. There are also limited sites with the access/visibility from major highways needed for successful development of new non-marine industrial facilities.

## **Residential**

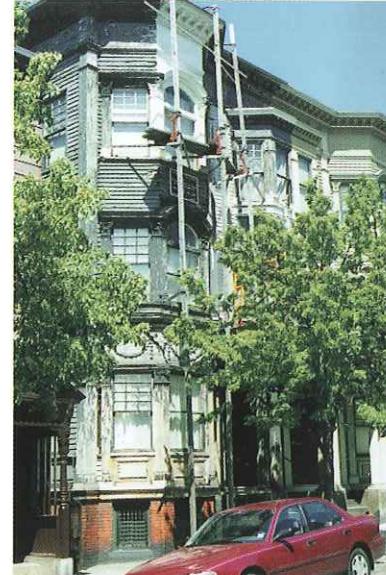
### **Economic Conditions**

In general, there are low vacancy rates in rental and limited inventory in for-sale properties. Low income households spend well over the 33% of income standard (routinely between 40% and 50%) on housing costs and have virtually no home ownership opportunities in the East Boston market. Moderate income households have disproportionately few home ownership opportunities; the number of affordable ownership units is disproportionately low relative to the number of middle income households. Moderate income households appear to be reasonably well served by the existing rental stock.

Feasibility of moderately priced ownership and rental apartments in the neighborhoods (non-waterfront) is positive, but feasibility of low priced ownership and rental apartments in the neighborhoods (non-waterfront) is only positive if subsidized. Upper income households appear to be reasonably well served by the ownership market but underserved in the rental markets; the number of higher priced units is disproportionately low relative to the number of upper income households. New (or rehabilitated) housing units tend to be affordable only to the upper income tiers of the market unless subsidized. The feasibility of new luxury waterfront rental housing development is positive but also especially sensitive to land acquisition pricing, parking costs, and other development cost premiums. There is limited evidence to support the current feasibility for luxury ownership apartments on the waterfront, as the cost of development is likely to exceed current end-unit pricing potentials.

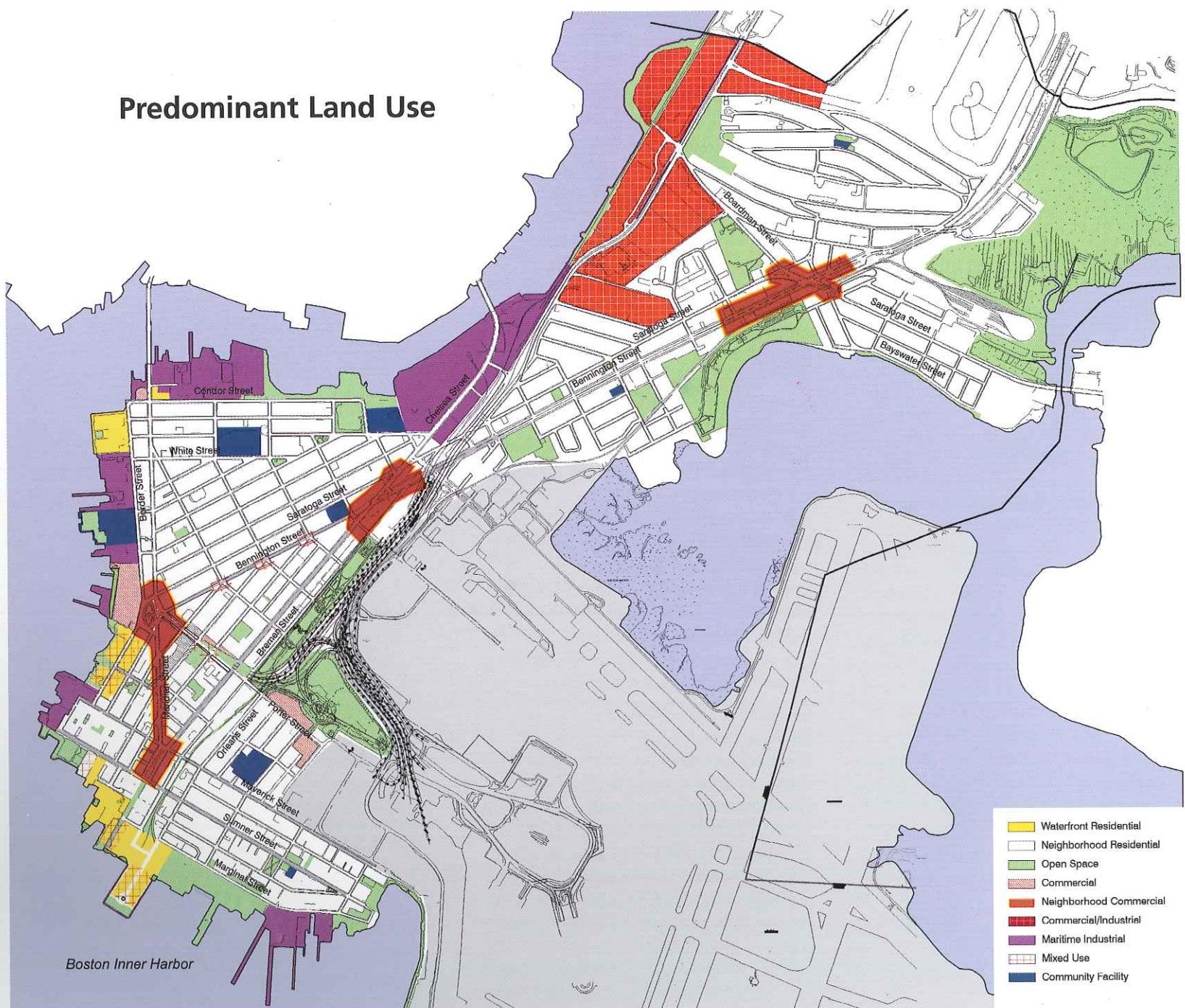
### **Competitive Advantages & Disadvantages**

There are several competitive advantages and disadvantages relating to growth in the residential sector for East Boston. Pricing is relatively affordable and there exist niche market opportunities such as water views, history, architecture, and tax-credit eligibility potentials. However, access to the area is perceived to be difficult.



**Eagle Hill: residential improvements**

## Predominant Land Use



# CHAPTER THREE - THE PLAN FOR EAST BOSTON

The following chapter is divided into two sections. In the first section, "Elements of the Plan," the various planning considerations used to develop this Master Plan are described and there is a brief discussion of how the planning considerations apply to East Boston as a whole. In the second section, the planning considerations are applied to five "focus areas and projects" with specific recommendations for each focus area that arise from applications of the planning considerations.

## 1.0 Elements of the Plan

The Master Plan has been influenced by East Boston's physical characteristics and the community's current organization. The most prominent physical features are the waterfront and neighborhoods, and the Master Plan proposes to build upon these two core features of East Boston.

### 1.1 Land Use

This term refers to location of core uses and activities including residential, commercial and business districts, and key new institutions (heritage, education).

**Residential use** - East Boston is a residential community and housing is likely to remain as the area's most significant component.

Development opportunities where housing should be pursued include:

- New waterfront housing.
- Continued infill in the neighborhoods.
- Rehabilitation of existing older housing stock throughout East Boston.
- Additional housing above commercial uses within commercial centers.
- Reuse of vacant industrial/manufacturing buildings for residential uses, including artists' live/work space.

### Commercial and retail development

There is strong community support for development of retail and commercial uses, and resulting employment opportunities for community residents. The Plan makes five specific recommendations:

1. Reinforce the existing business districts including Maverick Square, Central Square, Day Square, and Orient Heights Square.
2. Improve the physical environment and image of connections among neighborhood business districts by enhancing Bennington, Chelsea, Meridian, and Saratoga Streets.
3. Promote entrepreneurial commercial development by local residents.
4. Facilitate new commercial/industrial development along McClellan Highway.
5. Integrate commercial and mixed-use activities within larger waterfront development or redevelopment sites such as Liberty Plaza, Pier 1, and Clippership Wharf.

**Institutional use and facilities** - East Boston institutional and educational services aid the residents and these uses should be supported by:

**Upgrading** and expanding city facilities such as the Umana Barnes School and the proposed police station on the former Car Barn site, and including the school playground initiative.

**Reinforcing** cultural institutions by creating a heritage venue in conjunction with waterfront redevelopment and a heritage trail to link existing cultural resources within the community.

**Maritime and industrial use** - Maritime and industrial activities have played an important role in the history and development of East Boston. These activities are located primarily along the Inner Harbor waterfront and Chelsea Creek. Some maritime-related activities are in decline, as illustrated by the closing of the Hess Oil Tank site; other maritime service industries such as towboats are still in demand. To promote and maintain the maritime uses, recommendations include:

**Maintain** existing viable maritime activities and regroup compatible activities together when feasible, such as in the case of the Massport initiative.

**Market** East Boston as the center for port services for the Harbor.

## 1.2 Open Space and Public Environment

Special attention has been given to open space and the pedestrian environment, as the East Boston community has historically suffered from a lack of open space and inadequate pedestrian access to existing open space and the waterfront. Creation and reinforcement of open spaces include attention to the waterfront open space and Harborwalk, neighborhood open space, streetscape and boulevards, and the Greenway, a network of new or existing adjacent open spaces.

**Harborwalk** - The creation of pedestrian walkways along the waterfront and expansion of the existing Boston Harborwalk system in East Boston is proposed. Harborwalk is an important element of downtown Boston's waterfront, of which the East Boston waterfront should be a vital component. Principles which should be used in shaping the East Boston waterfront include:

- Designated Harborwalk areas to establish a viable and attractive waterfront public pathway, with consistent and appropriate signage.
- Encouragement of public/private partnerships to provide additional amenities along the Harborwalk.

**Waterfront open spaces** - Expansion of the waterfront open space network along the Inner Harbor and Chelsea Creek is proposed. These open spaces could be created as an expansion of existing major public spaces, as is planned for Piers Park Phase II at Pier 3. Other open spaces can be created where open land was reserved for this use, such as at the Condor Street Urban Wilds. In addition to this important open space, additional waterfront open spaces could be created as part of mixed-use developments.

**East Boston Greenway** - Several open spaces are planned as part of the Greenway, including:

- The Conrail corridor from Piers Park to Bremen Street Park: Phase 1 construction scheduled to begin in early summer of 1999; Phase II construction scheduled for spring of 2000.
- Bremen Street Park: To be built during the latter phases of construction of the Central Artery/Tunnel Project (CA/T).
- Memorial Park: To be rehabilitated during the latter phases of the CA/T.
- Constitution Beach/Bath House Renovation Construction: Currently under construction, with completion scheduled for April 2000 under MDC administration.
- Bayswater Street landscaping/Airport Edge Buffer: Enhancements as part of the Airport Edge Buffer Program under Massport.

- BIFCO property: Transferred to City of Boston Parks and Recreation Department for clean-up, this site is located at the entry into the Belle Isle Marsh.

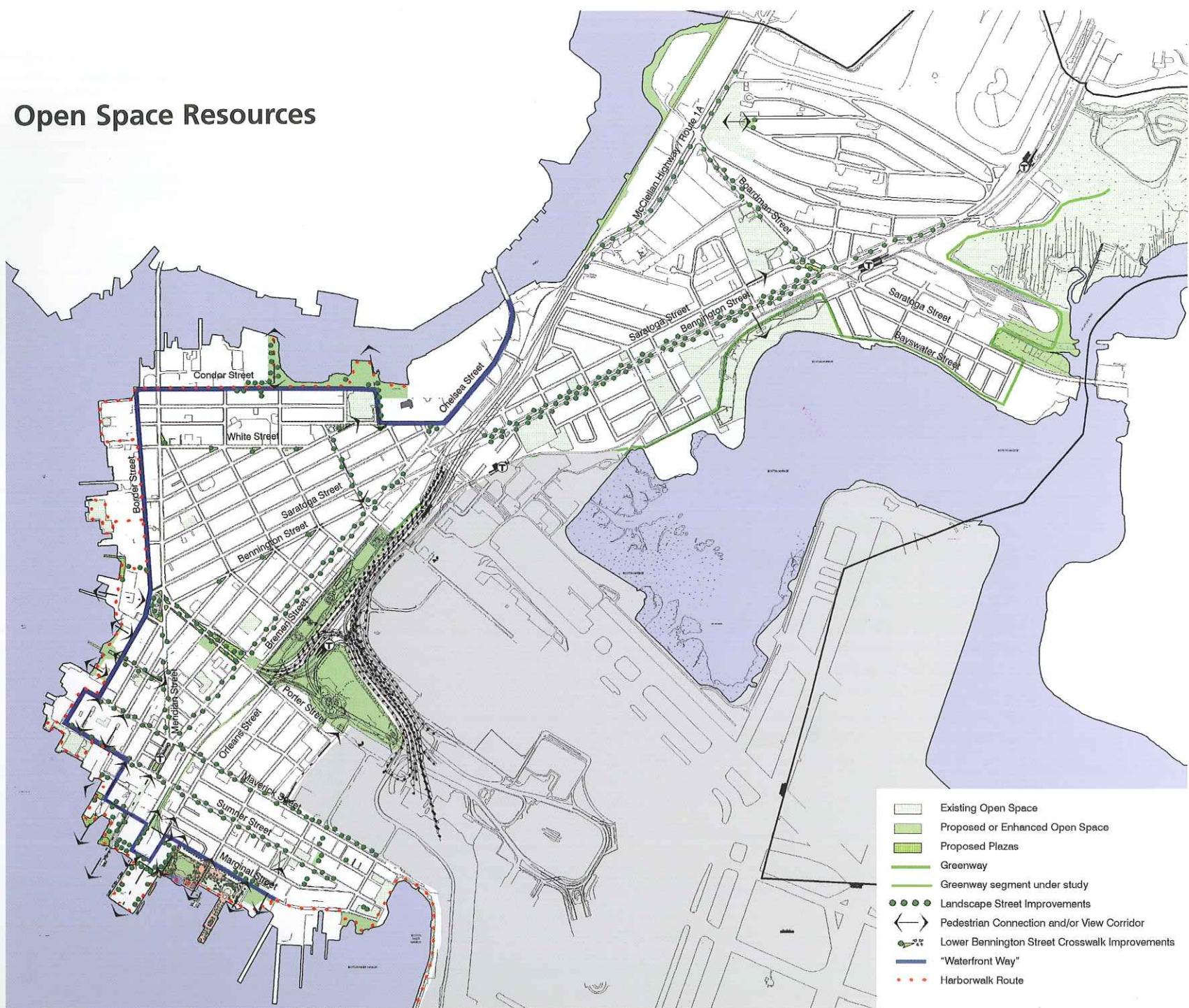
### **Other public space improvements** -

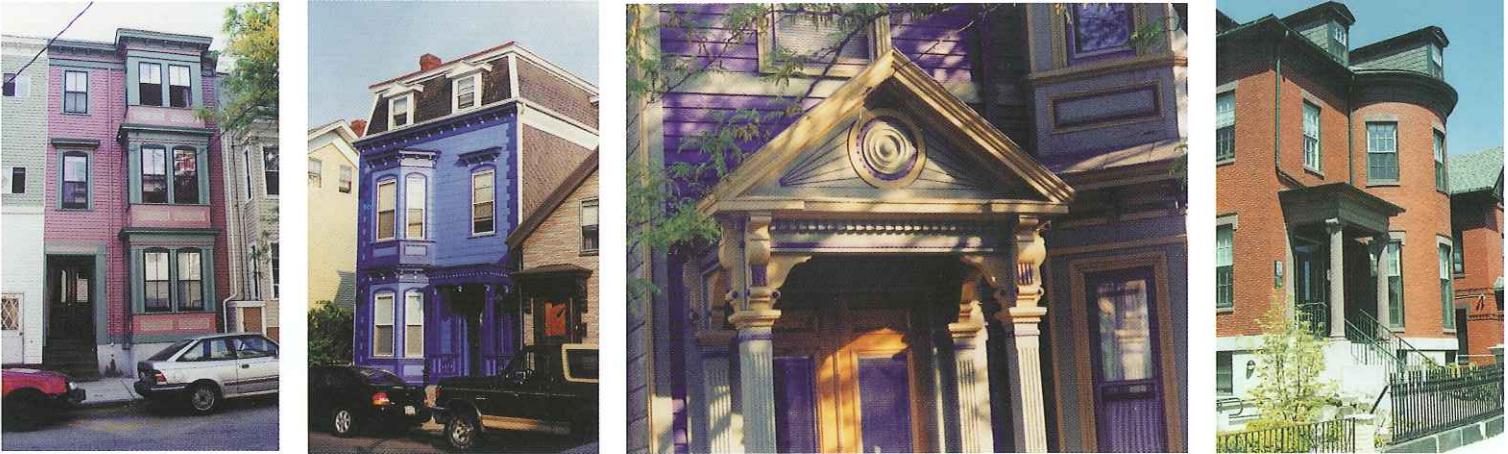
Several open spaces have been designated for improvements by the Boston Parks and Recreation Department including Porzio Park, Noyes Playground and the Paris Street Playground. Open spaces or plazas within commercial centers should also be improved. In addition, it is recommended that a series of existing triangular intersections be improved and that "pocket park" improvements be included while maintaining parking spaces, as the community desires or as opportunities arise.

**Streetscape Improvements** - Major areas for streetscape improvements have been designated to reinforce the recommendations of the Plan. These include:

- Boulevard improvements.
- Addition of new streets perpendicular to the waterfront.
- Improvement of existing waterfront streets with a consistent streetscape image, including special signage designating an "East Boston Waterfront Way".

## Open Space Resources





Historic homes in East Boston neighborhoods

### **1.3 Historic Resources & Heritage**

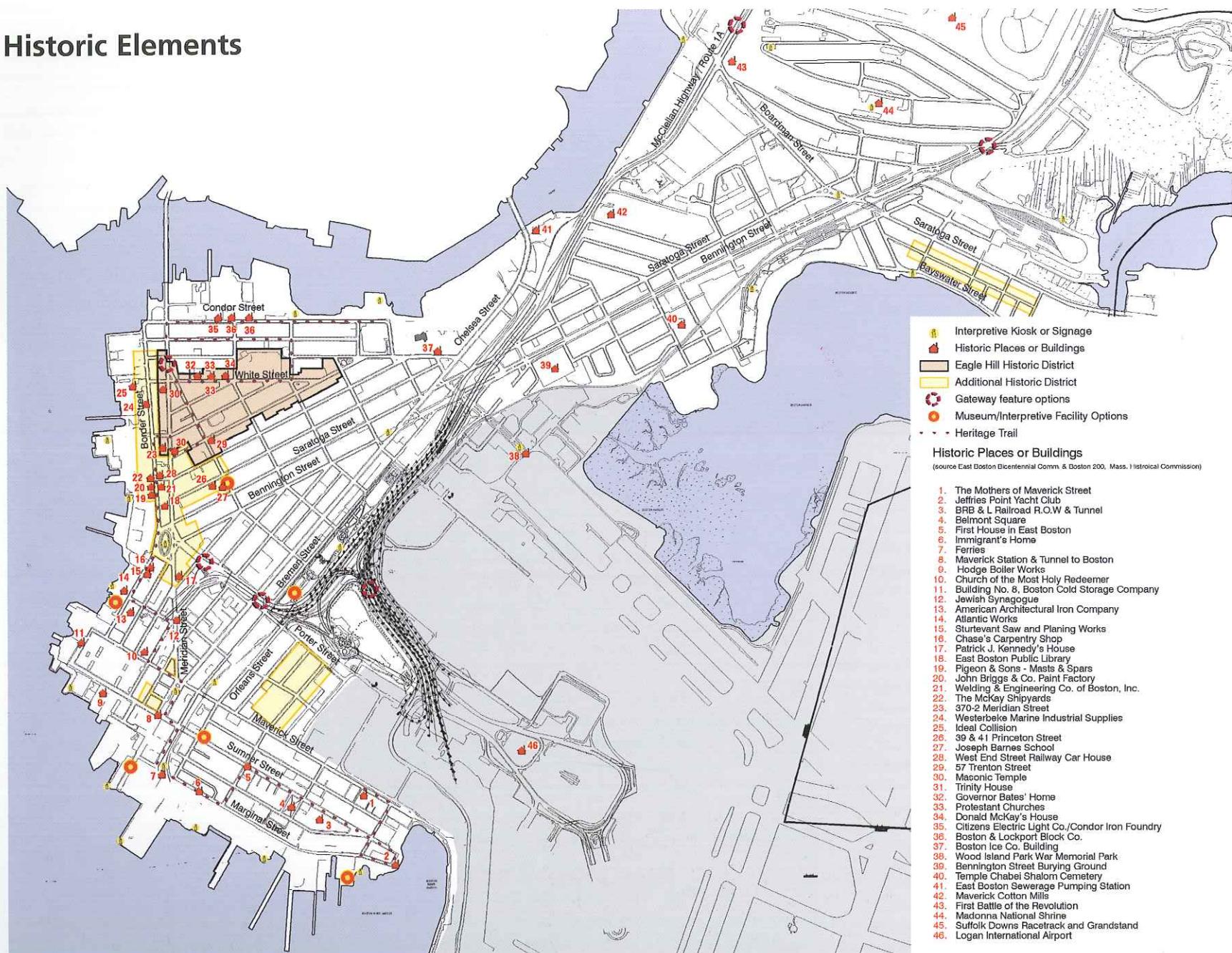
Historic preservation is a key principle under the Plan. An extensive field survey was done by the Boston Landmarks Commission (BLC) in 1989/1990 which documents approximately 6,194 historic structures, with several districts recommended for local designation or for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. More recently, the Landmarks Commission has completed a survey of East Boston's industrial waterfront structures.

The BLC recommendations seek to preserve and enhance the character of East Boston's waterfront and its neighborhoods. The newly-designated Eagle Hill National Register Historic District expands upon a recommendation in the 1989/90 BLC survey. Trinity House, the Donald McKay House, and 39 and 41 Princeton Street are designated Boston Landmarks.

Building upon the findings of the BLC survey, the Master Plan recommends continued rehabilitation of historic structures and establishment of additional historic districts in neighborhoods and along the waterfront, consistent with the Boston Landmarks Commission's historic surveys and findings.

East Boston historic features should continue to be inventoried. Creation of a "heritage" type trail that links the waterfront and neighborhoods' historic resources throughout East Boston is strongly recommended.

## Historic Elements





Proposed improvements for Bennington Street

#### 1.4 Transportation & Parking

Transportation, parking, and access to other Boston neighborhoods are prominent elements of the quality of life, health, and stability of East Boston. The transportation aspects of the Master Plan must address the needs of all users including pedestrians, cars, truck, buses, and rapid transit, as well as water transportation.

Recommendations include short-term traffic-calming measures and designated truck routes, and long-term circulation improvements such as depression of the tunnel portals, improved parking, water and land public transportation, and designation and improvements of “Gateways to East Boston”. East Boston has sacrificed much of the continuity and amenity of its local vehicular and pedestrian circulation system to

regional transportation projects. In particular, Logan Airport, Route 1A, the Sumner and Callahan Tunnels and the new Ted Williams Tunnel have taken up land, generated truck and automobile traffic, and created physical barriers between neighborhoods and the waterfront. The transportation recommendations of the Master Plan seek to mitigate the negative impacts of these facilities by stressing pedestrian, transit, and water transportation improvements which provide alternatives to auto travel and restore connectivity between neighborhoods and open spaces.

##### **Transportation Recommendations:**

**Enhance** Sumner Street, Marginal Street, New Street and Border Street in combination with new connections through the Clippership Wharf and Pier One development parcels to create a clearly identifiable

waterfront boulevard—a “Waterfront Way”. The new street will serve as a connector between new residential communities and Central Square. “Waterfront Way” could also be extended to Condor Street.

**Undertake** short-term traffic-calming measures to limit airport-generated and highway by-pass traffic from using the Sumner Tunnel access streets (London, Paris and Gove), the Logan Airport/Ted Williams Tunnel access streets (Jeffries, Maverick and Sumner Streets), Day Square, Orient Heights Square, Saratoga and Bayswater Streets, and Condor Street.

**Improve** traditional and new boulevards, especially Bennington Street from the Revere town line to Central Square.

**Develop** special treatment at East Boston gateways to Revere, Chelsea and highway ramps to improve the public realm and identify the neighborhood.

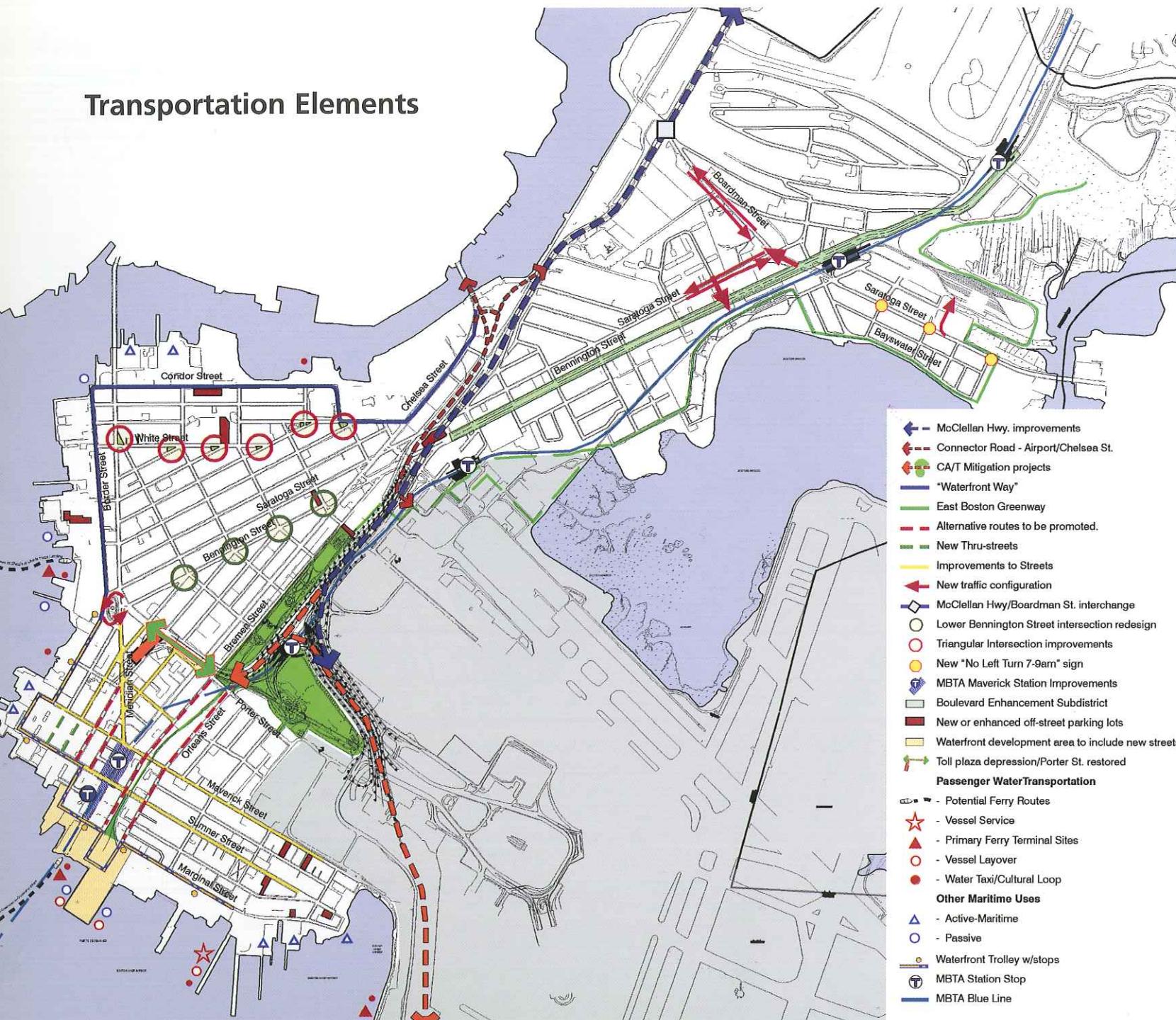
**Simplify** traffic circulation, facilitate bus movement, provide additional off-street parking, and enhance pedestrian amenity and safety within business districts including Central Square, Day Square, Maverick Square and Orient Heights Square.

**Designate** and sign truck routes and create a new bypass road from the Chelsea Street Bridge and Route 1A to Logan Airport.

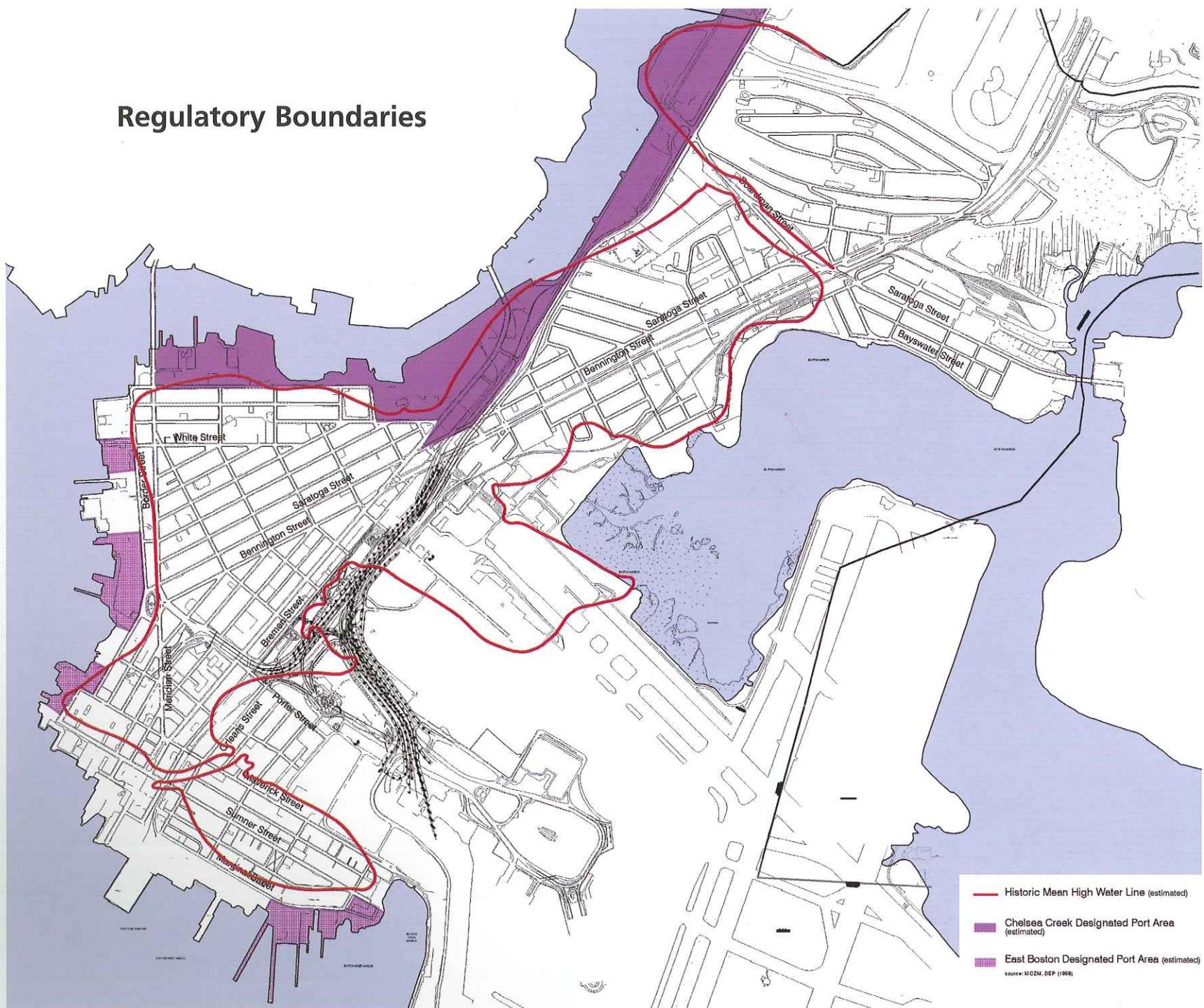
**Increase** the range of water transportation options, with expansion capabilities once markets are developed and ridership is established.

**Promote** long-term improvements such as the Urban Ring transit line and depression and relocation of the Sumner/Callahan tunnel portals.

## Transportation Elements



## Regulatory Boundaries



## 1.5 Development Guidance

Based on the market assessment, future economic development would occur within four areas: the waterfront along the Inner Harbor, the residential neighborhoods, the McClellan Highway and Chelsea Creek corridor, and the existing commercial business centers. The development guidance recommendations include:

**Building** on East Boston's competitive strengths, including its proximity to downtown Boston and Logan International Airport, its waterfront location and facilities, its existing businesses and institutions, its historic structures, and its relative affordability.

**Enhancing** the existing residential character of East Boston neighborhoods.

**Preserving** view corridors, access, and appropriate scale of development along the waterfront.

**Improving** the pedestrian experience and amenities throughout the community.

**Ensuring** continued public review of new developments.

**Promoting** the existing historic district and other programs to reinforce urban design character of the historic neighborhoods and waterfronts.

## 1.6 Regulatory Environment

East Boston's development must occur within the framework of city, state and federal regulatory programs.

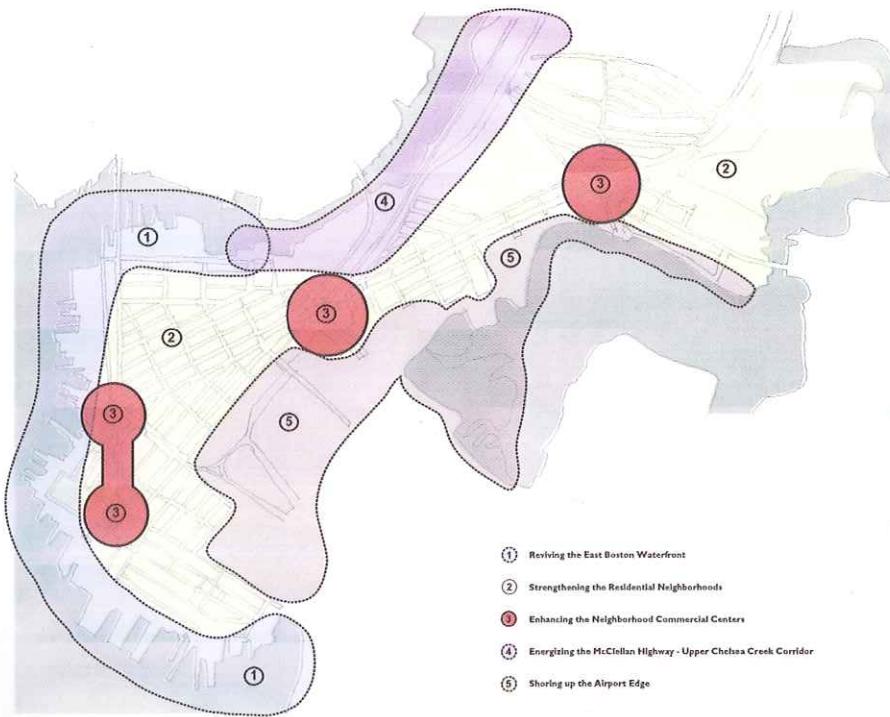
In 1993, Article 53 was adopted as part of the Boston Zoning Code and established the East Boston Neighborhood District. Article 53 zoning is generally compatible with the Master Plan goals and elements. One exception is zoning for Bennington Street in the area of Orient Heights Square where the Master Plan recommends a change to Corridor Enhancement Sub-District in order to strengthen the boulevard character of Bennington Street.

The Boston Zoning Code contains sections pertaining to waterfront development and other special districts. The regulations pertaining to the waterfront are the most critical to shaping East Boston's development future. Chapter 91 Waterways regulations preserve and protect the public rights to filled and flowed tidelands for uses that are water-dependent or otherwise serve a public purpose, including those waterfront resources classified by the Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management (MCZM) program as Designated Port Areas (DPA). There are two DPAs in East Boston: the Chelsea Creek DPA which includes a continuous strip of the land along the Chelsea Creek, and the East Boston DPA (Boston Inner Harbor waterfront) which is made up of four disconnected parcels.

When the City prepares its Municipal Harbor Plan for East Boston, it will be necessary to evaluate the DPAs in light of their suitability for maritime industrial use such as depth of water, characteristics of land area adjacent to the waterfront, as well as land based transportation access and available utility service, and other important attributes necessary for commercial maritime uses.

Consideration will need to be given to neighboring uses and the Master Plan recommendations as well as to the allocation of supporting commercial uses within the MCZM regulation's limit of 25% of total DPA land area.

The Master Plan is supportive of the goals of Chapter 91 and the MCZM Designated Port Area regulations. Within this regulatory environment, the Master Plan promotes additional open space and access along the waterfront. It retains and respects the DPA goal of protecting maritime industrial resources with some modification.



## 2.0 Focus Areas and Projects

The Plan identifies specific geographic areas of East Boston where change is anticipated. Determination of how these places will develop will be key to the success and quality of life of the East Boston community as a whole. The section is divided into five subsections, each dedicated to a particular sub-area or focus area.

Each focus area reflects planning analysis developed with the community during the planning process. Each area is accompanied by a description of recommendations in terms of the six elements of the plan, as applicable: land use, open space and public environment, historic preservation, transportation, development guidance, and regulatory environment.

### Reviving the East Boston Waterfront:

This focus area encompasses the Jeffries Point/Massport waterfront, the Old East Boston waterfront, and the lower section of Chelsea Creek bordering Eagle Hill,

### Strengthening the Residential Neighborhoods:

**Neighborhoods:** This focus area encompasses all residential neighborhoods including Jeffries Point, Eagle Hill, The Flats, Harborview, and Orient Heights.

### Enhancing the Neighborhoods' Commercial Centers:

**Centers:** This focus area includes actions and policies recommended in all four major business centers: Maverick Square, Central Square, Day Square, and Orient Heights Square.

### Energizing the McClellan Highway - Upper Chelsea Creek Corridor:

**Corridor:** The industrial waterfront in East Boston is primarily situated in the area along the Chelsea Creek and McClellan Highway. It is dominated by industrial and commercial uses that rely on the McClellan Highway for immediate truck access, providing major opportunities for economic development in East Boston.

**Shoring up the Airport Edge:** This focus area includes the various parcels of property which surround Logan Airport. This focus area affects most neighborhoods in East Boston and has opportunities for major community open space benefits.



East Boston Waterfront

### 3.0 Reviving the East Boston Waterfront

East Boston's waterfront is a critical area of focus for the Master Plan. The area offers great development potential, given its views of downtown Boston and Charlestown, its strategic location for maritime activities, and its rich history. Existing and recently proposed development projects on the waterfront focus on the Harbor. The community's desire for increased open space and cultural activities must be balanced with the private sector market demand for waterfront residential use and the regional demand for port-related activities.

Recommendations include regulatory and urban design guidelines intended to protect the public interest in, and access to, these valuable waterfront resources.

#### 3.1 Land Use

##### Recommendations:

**Expand** the mix of uses on the waterfront to include additional residential, retail/commercial and cultural uses coexisting with present marine industrial, residential and institutional uses.

**Increase** the quality of residential use on the waterfront by building new housing on Pier 1, Clippership Wharf, Boston East and other waterfront properties that become available for redevelopment, while improving Shore Plaza East and other residential uses adjacent to the waterfront.

**Promote** potential retail and commercial uses at new development sites that complement abutting commercial and retail uses in Maverick and Central Squares.

**Maintain** maritime use and maritime port services including those at the Shipyard, along the Inner Harbor waterfront and along Lower Chelsea Creek.

**Promote** cultural/institutional uses that reflect the heritage of the community. A cultural foundation should be formed and housed in a temporary facility as a first step toward the creation of a museum on the waterfront. The permanent museum could include exhibits that interpret East Boston's history and development summarized in four basic themes:

American Revolution - Chelsea Creek was the site of various events in the war, including the first naval battle of the war.

Maritime - Shipping and port-related buildings and spaces were significant in the development of the community.

Immigration - The people who immigrated to East Boston have left a cultural and physical legacy that is still reflected in many structures.

Transportation - Logan Airport and other transportation facilities have played an important role in the physical development of East Boston.



### 3.2 Open Space & Public Environment

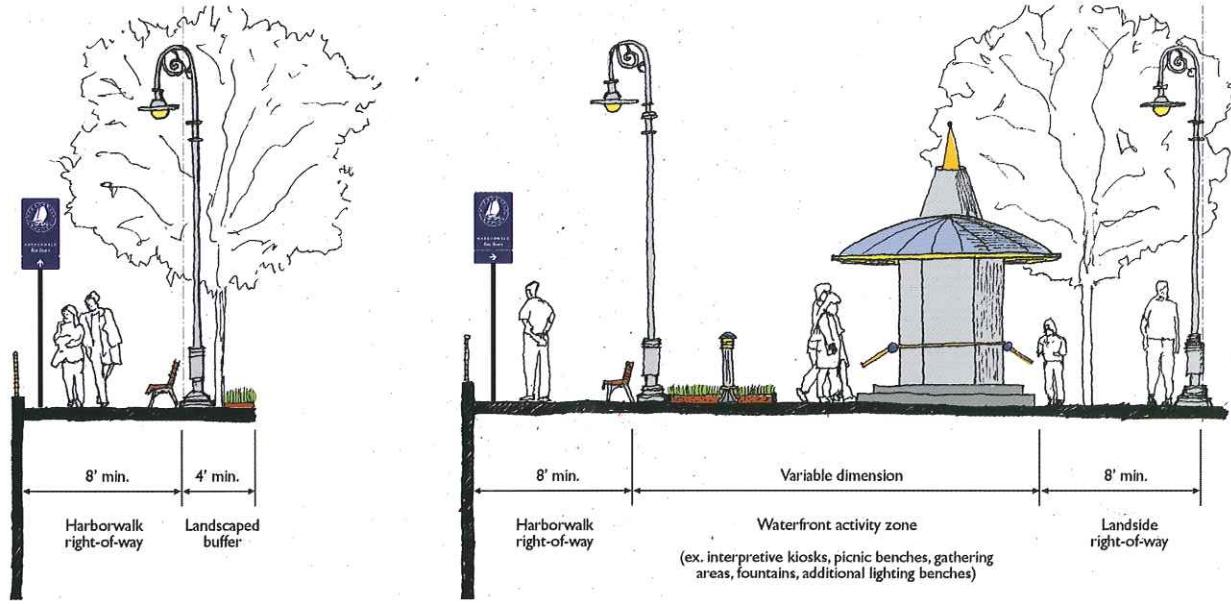
The waterfront offers the best opportunity for the creation of new parks and open space within East Boston.

#### Recommendations:

**Create** additional waterfront parks along the Inner Harbor waterfront. Expanding Piers Park by creating additional waterfront parks at Piers 3 and 5 would create a major waterfront open space with spectacular views of Boston Harbor and downtown Boston.

Programming for these two piers is currently at an early stage, but each park offers potential for active and passive recreation and would create a continuous landscaped public waterfront park along the Jeffries Point neighborhood.

**Develop** open spaces along the lower section of Chelsea Creek. The Condor Street Urban Wilds is being transferred to the City of Boston's Parks and Recreation Department, which plans to clean it and create a passive recreation park with restored vegetation and waterfront access. An additional open space in the form of a pedestrian access corridor to the bulkhead line would be created on a portion of the vacant Hess Oil site and connected to the Urban Wilds by a 1,200 foot segment of Harborwalk along Chelsea Creek. The site's redevelopment will necessitate a major clean up and might be constrained by its location within a Designated Port Area. The abandoned railroad right-of-way at the northern end of East Boston's Chelsea Creek shoreline may present an additional open space opportunity.



Cross section of Harborwalk and potential Waterfront Way

**Expand** Harborwalk to connect the waterfront open space system and public environment. The existing East Boston Harborwalk, which runs from the Harborside Hyatt Hotel to Porzio Park, should be extended when new parks and new activities are developed on the waterfront. Harborwalk would continue along Marginal Street's existing and new waterfront park system, threading its way around the proposed Pier 1 and Clippership Wharf developments, and connect to LoPresti Park. There are also opportunities to extend Harborwalk from LoPresti Park to the Boston East site, the Liberty Plaza (where a small Harborwalk already exists), Umana Barnes School, and Shore Plaza East. The route would then turn onto Condor

Street along the Chelsea Creek, through the Hess Oil site and up to the proposed Urban Wilds Park.

**Create** waterfront pocket parks and public access. In connection with future redevelopment at Pier 1, Clippership Wharf, Boston East, Hess Oil, and the Car Barn site, small pocket parks and public access right-of-ways would be an integral part of the site design.



Existing industrial waterfront

**Upgrade** existing public waterfront open space. Public spaces such as Porzio Park, LoPresti Park, and the Umana Barnes School property should be enhanced to be part of a cohesive waterfront open space network.

**Facilitate** public access and use of the waterfront. Privately owned waterfront properties where waterfront space is unused, such as Liberty Plaza, Shore Plaza East, and Hodge Boiler Works, present opportunities to continue Harborwalk.

### 3.3 Historic Resources and Heritage

East Boston was initially planned to contain a mix of homes, maritime and other industries, and recreational facilities. By 1839, East Boston was already an important waterfront industrial center, with shipyards specializing in the construction of clipper ships. East Boston's wharves served as Boston's

center for grain exports to Europe as well as the Boston terminal for the London-based Cunard ship line. Waterfront structures and features reflective of this heritage still remain. The Boston Landmarks Commission recently undertook an inventory of the Old East Boston waterfront and Lower Chelsea Creek waterfront and identified a number of significant structures. This existing industrial character of the waterfront is part of the quality of life and unique character of East Boston.

#### Recommendations:

**Undertaking** projects designed to illustrate East Boston's rich history. These could range from historic markers and exhibit panels mounted along Harborwalk, to interpretive landscapes designed to be integrated into the waterfront park system, to a cultural waterfront facility such as a museum with community space and exhibits, modeled after the BRA's North End Historic Piers program.

**Establishing** historic districts to include the contiguous waterfront area where the density of historic maritime features and waterfront integrity is high.

**Adopting** historic waterfront guidelines that would not only protect significant structures but would also ensure the contextual respectfulness of new development.

### 3.4 Transportation

Transportation recommendations are centered around strengthening pedestrian and vehicular circulation along, to, and from the water in conjunction with

development or redevelopment of key parcels such as Pier 1 and Clippership Wharf.

#### Recommendations:

**Designate** a continuous "Waterfront Way" with a signature streetscape treatment along existing streets and new sections created within and between the development parcels.

**Create** a continuous pedestrian system linking the Greenway to Harborwalk (including passage through the shipyard).

**Provide** additional landings for water transportation services.

**Develop** a new Maverick Station headhouse closer to the water once development is completed at Clippership Wharf.

Abutter access to development parcels on Bremen Street and Havre Street should be promoted to encourage use of these streets for traffic resulting from new development, and thereby reducing traffic impacts on Orleans Street, Maverick Square, and Meridian Street. Higher residential densities should be planned in the areas closest to the Blue Line stations and water transportation landings; parking requirements should be tailored to allow for a lower ratio of spaces to dwelling units in areas closest to transit.

Detailed traffic impact studies need to be completed for each development site as part of the city and state environmental approval processes. But preliminary analysis of likely land uses and densities for the existing and new activi-

ties along the waterfront indicate that traffic can be accommodated without undue negative impacts on existing residential areas.

### 3.5 Land Transportation and Waterfront Access

#### Recommendations:

**Create** an additional street system to support vehicular access and traffic when developing larger waterfront parcels such as Pier 1 and Clippership Wharf.

**Integrate** a new street system while developing contiguous large parcels to allow for improved vehicular flow.

**Connect** a new street pattern to the existing East Boston street system to preserve public use of and access to the waterfront.

**Encourage** use of alternative routes to divert vehicles from the congested Maverick Square and Meridian Street.

**Develop** and maximize use of non-auto modes of transportation including water shuttles, bicycles, walking, buses, a waterfront trolley, and the Blue Line.

**Strengthen** pedestrian connections to the multi-modal transportation center in Maverick Square. A new pedestrian entrance to the station on the waterside of Summer Street should be created, and extra peak hour service should be added on the Blue Line to turn trains around at Maverick Square as development intensifies in this area. This will help insure that riders boarding at this station can be comfortably accommodated.

**Allow** on-street parking on new streets.

**Create** a connected pedestrian circulation system along Harborwalk, the Greenway, and connecting streets and sidewalks.

**Upgrade** the existing waterfront street network from Marginal Street to Condor Street—designated East Boston’s “Waterfront Way” with a signature streetscape design.

### 3.6 Water Transportation and Access

#### Recommendations:

**Provide** water transportation facilities (such as public ferry terminals for scheduled services, water taxi/cultural loop, and charter use) at key sites along the waterfront including the expanded Logan South, existing Lewis Mall, and a new terminal at the Liberty Plaza/Central Square waterfront.

Commuter shuttle services with associated landside improvements to facilitate access and passenger drop-off/pick-up may be added from Lewis Mall and Liberty Plaza once an adequate volume of ridership is established. At present, demand levels are too low to make such services and improvements.

**Create** additional space for public landings for small vessels at ferry terminals.

**Develop** docks and landings for water taxis and small boats at several existing and new locations. Existing docks with low free-boards are located at Boston Marine Shipyard and at the Piers Park sailing center. Additional sites may be added as part of new development at Clippership Wharf, Boston East site, and at the MBTA Car Barn site on Chelsea Creek. Such docks would provide a touch-and-go landings for smaller private and

commercial vessels.

**Allow** space for vessel support services (particularly ship repair and maintenance services) and layover berthing along the waterfront at a variety of East Boston pier sites would add incrementally to the East Boston economy by providing maritime employment.

### 3.7 Development Guidance

This section describes key development site guidelines for the Massport Piers, Boston East, Liberty Plaza, Hess Oil, and overall waterfront development guidance.

#### Recommendations:

**Maintain** view corridors to the water along Marginal Street, Clippership Lane, Lewis Mall, Bremen and Orleans Streets, and the Greenway.

**Maximize** views by designating Harborwalk to be barrier-free, limiting fences only for safety reasons, and creating structures and shelters which are transparent and screen-like.

**Develop** unified and unique lighting and signage consistent with Harborwalk and waterfront street frontage which celebrate East Boston’s waterfront heritage.

**Create** building blocks compatible in scale and character with the waterfront and adjacent neighborhoods.

**Make** street access as an extension of the existing street pattern.

**Minimize** traffic impact by orienting driveways for parking in line with Havre or London Streets, which should be improved to allow for increased vehicular use.

**Screen** and landscape undesirable uses (such as surface utilities, parking lots, and/or parking garages) with trees, shrubs, and other plantings. Parking garages should include street level retail frontage and other public spaces.

**Respect** setbacks at the edge of the water, which would include designing plazas or parks with street furniture and landscaping consistent with Harborwalk standards, taking advantage of the waterfront views.

**Provide** municipal services when developing larger parcels. The developer should address additional city service needs such as fire, police, schools, etc.

### 3.8 Regulatory Framework

To a large extent, the recommendations for the East Boston waterfront respect and conform to the existing city and state regulatory framework for tidelands and waterfront uses. New developments such as the Massport Piers Project and Clippership Wharf will have to comply with the state's Chapter 91 regulations and the city zoning regulations for Tideland and Waterfront Districts. The major principles of these two regulatory programs are:

**Provide** for public access to and along the waterfront through extension and enhancement of Harborwalk and creation of new public open spaces.

**Require** proper public purpose of projects within tidelands including conserving the capacity for water-dependent use through such measures as height and setback limits.

**Preserve** maritime industrial uses within the Designated Port Areas.

**Continue** and promote port service activities along the Inner Harbor.

**Provide** water transportation facilities.

The Master Plan includes recommendations for two waterfront sites which may require modification to a section of the Designated Port Areas (DPA).

**The Boston East site** is partially located within DPA at the north and south ends of the parcel. The Plan recommends housing development on this parcel, which would require removal of the Designated Port Area (DPA) classification. There are several reasons why removal of the DPA on the parcel should occur. First, the non-DPA center portion of the site makes it difficult to view the parcel as a cohesive planning unit. The City owns this parcel but not the abutting parcels. The divided nature of the parcel would make it difficult to have an on-going maritime industrial use when considered in relation to other conditions affecting the site that have contributed to its current vacancy. Border Street provides inadequate truck access to the site for DPA

uses. The waterside infrastructure is so dilapidated that the City is planning to use Seaport Bond funds to remove the derelict piers. Repair and improvement of the piers is not cost-effective for maritime industrial use. The parcel is zoned as Waterfront Commercial, which allows multi-dwelling residential uses on the second story and above with conditional use on the first floor and basement.

**The Hess Oil Site** on Condor Street and Chelsea Creek is located within the Chelsea Creek Designated Port Area as well as the Maritime Economic Reserve (MER) Subdistrict under Boston's Zoning Code. There is strong community support toward using this parcel as open space. This use would also require removal of the site from the Designated Port Area. Such a change, however, may be very difficult to implement since this site is large enough for backland operations, has good truck access, and is located at a shipping channel where large public sector capital investments are underway to improve its capacity, including dredging and reconstruction of the Chelsea Street Bridge. The current MER zoning uses are focused on water-dependent industrial uses. Open space uses are not allowed and would therefore require a zoning change. This site could, however, be reserved for environmentally compatible industrial uses while allowing landscaped pedestrian access to the bulkhead line within DPA regulations.



Eagle Hill



Orient Heights

## 4.0 Strengthening the Residential Neighborhoods

East Boston was one of the earliest planned communities, and its residential neighborhoods are the direct result of 19th century urban planning. The different residential neighborhoods are unique, yet have similar issues to be studied. Some of the key issues are the preservation of residential character, the development of connections to the waterfront and Harbor, and the mitigation of impacts from waterfront and other development.

This Master Plan makes recommendations for smaller scale housing and commercial development throughout the community, as well as the creation of additional buffer areas to protect residential neighborhoods from adjacent development sites and the Airport.

### 4.1 Land Use

East Boston neighborhoods are stable, with a high rate of homeownership despite changing demographics. Residential areas have continued to increase in value in line with current economic prosperity. Thus, land uses within residential neighborhoods have undergone little change. The future of East Boston neighborhoods should not be devastated by major land use changes for new development, but upon the minor land use changes to protect the existing quality of life.

#### Recommendations:

**Protect** residential neighborhoods, particularly Harborview and Orient Heights, from expanding commercial uses, especially auto-dependent activities along Bennington Street.

**Promote** the development of landscaped off-street parking lots within vacant lots in Eagle Hill and Jeffries Point.

**Upgrade** properties where open space areas and/or community gardens could be created, which would add desired green space within dense residential areas.

**Increase** the residential base west of Meridian Street by developing residential units such as artists' live/work spaces near the Boston East site as part of a strategy to diversify land uses near the waterfront and the Meridian Street corridor.

**Redesign** Maverick Gardens as a major public/private redevelopment venture to reduce density, improve physical image, and unite the project with the surrounding neighborhood.

**Review** potential school siting opportunities in light of the City's new policy favoring the establishment of "walk-to" schools. This may make previously infeasible options such as reuse of the historic Umana Barnes School viable, as major bus access would not be required.

### 4.2 Open Space and Public Environment

Analysis of neighborhood open space in Boston indicates that East Boston ranks low in open space acreage per capita among Boston neighborhoods. This situation is changing as a result of the many open space initiatives currently underway that will bring East Boston closer to the city average. The Greenway will add 15 acres of open space. Additional open space acreage also will be constructed with the opening of Piers Park Phase II at Pier Three (3.5 acres), Pier Five (1.5 acres), Bremen Street Park (13 acres), Memorial Stadium Improvements (2 acres), and the Condor Street Urban Wilds (8 acres). In addition, public environment improvements are planned for various areas that have long needed to be physically enhanced, such as the Airport Edge Buffer



Children enjoying open space in East Boston

Program areas in the North and Southwest service areas, Maverick Square, the Main Streets Program within Central and Maverick Squares, the Golden Stairs, and Maverick Gardens. Belle Isle Marsh, 139 acres of open space with trails and signage, is a unique and valuable community resource that will become more accessible via the Greenway.

Most major open space additions are recommended as part of waterfront development or C/A/T project mitigation. However, East Boston's neighborhoods would be improved with strategic recommendations toward increasing and enhancing green space. To sustain the traditional residential character of East Boston, new open space should be created, and neglected public realm zones should be enhanced to better connect the unique urban fabric.

#### Recommendations:

**Promote** a pedestrian connection within the Southwest Service Area corridor, from Maverick Street to Memorial Park, as part of the Airport Edge Buffer Program.

**Locate** opportunities for off-street, residential parking lots, to replace existing middle-of-the-street parking at various triangular intersections, and create small public plazas at these intersections.

**Redesign** intersections in the lower portion of Bennington Street in Eagle Hill with extended sidewalks and additional street trees. This densely populated area contains heavy pedestrian activity, thus improvements to the pedestrian zone along this street would create a more attractive corridor.

**Improve** streetscapes by consolidating curb cuts, adding street trees, and utilizing signage promoting commerce in Orient Heights, particularly south of Orient Heights Square. The renovation of Constitution Beach and its pedestrian bridge over the Blue Line to Bennington Street would benefit from an enhanced pedestrian environment.

**Reopen** pedestrian ways or streets through the Maverick Gardens development to allow for better pedestrian and vehicular access, and to restore sight lines from London and Border Streets to the water.

**Locate** a major gateway element near the toll/tunnel entry, which would be part of a Porter Street/Central Square beautification initiative. In the event of a major redesign of the toll/tunnel portal area, the location of a gateway element should occur prior to the entry into the tunnel.

**Construct** attractive signage along the McClellan Highway/Route 1A corridor welcoming travels to Boston, and directing people to special East Boston places such as Constitution Beach at the Boardman Street exit or Day Square at the Bremen Street exit.

**Enhance** the entry to the neighborhood via Bennington Street by reconstructing the thoroughfare in accordance with the City's Boulevards Initiative, with a properly-scaled, tree-lined, landscaped quality that is maintainable, long-lasting, and adapted to harsh urban conditions.

**Promote** a pedestrian/bicycle connection between the BIFCO site adjacent to Belle Isle Marsh and Winthrop, using the remains of the former Belle Isle Bridge.

**Create** a unique civic design element upon entry from Winthrop via Saratoga Street which could be tied into the East Boston Greenway, that crosses Saratoga Street from the Bayswater neighborhood into the Belle Isle Marsh.

**Include** public art in new developments and public realm improvements.



Meridian Street

### 4.3 Historic Resources and Heritage

The history of East Boston neighborhoods is reflected in the Victorian era houses which dot Eagle Hill's Historic District and other residential areas. The unheralded battles of the American Revolution, the landfill of five islands over time to form one East Boston, the taking of Wood Island Park (designed by Frederick Law Olmsted), the achievements of past war veterans, and the spirit of past community activists who fought for East Boston are just a few of the less obvious historic events which have shaped the heritage of East Boston neighborhoods and should be celebrated.

#### Recommendations:

**Continue** recognition and protection of historic landmarks among East Boston's traditional buildings and districts, as identified by the Boston Landmarks Commission and the Boston 400 inventory.

**Devise** a "heritage trail", celebrating sites, events, and people, that links selected historic sites and districts to commercial and transit nodes and the waterfront in an effort to guide the historic East Boston experience.

**Utilize** outdoor interpretive signage that illustrates the historical significance of East Boston's treasures, such as an interpretative kiosk atop Madonna Hill depicting the development of Orient Heights and the role of Chelsea Creek in the American Revolution.

### 4.4 Transportation

The transportation problems confronting East Boston's neighborhoods are common to those of other Boston residential communities. Inadequate parking, noise and congestion from trucks, and general traffic are the biggest concerns identified by community residents. Parking is under increased scrutiny due to the proposed influx of new housing units near the waterfront as well as increased in-fill housing within the neighborhoods. Truck traffic is an on-going problem due to East Boston's immediate proximity to Logan Airport and the regional highways. Traffic problems within East Boston are mostly the result of particular street configurations and commuter rush hour circulation patterns.

#### Recommendations:

**Continue** street improvements for Havre Street at Meridian Street as part of the East Boston Main Streets program, which has already made some streetscape improvements and implemented some geometric changes at acute angle intersections with Meridian Street. These improvements have worked well.

**Enforce** the measure which closes the Massport gate at Jeffries Street to all but local residents from 3-6 PM. This has been one mechanism for preventing cut-through traffic from accessing the Ted Williams Tunnel through Jeffries Point.

**Create** a new connector road that would use the unused railroad embankment to provide a connection for truck traffic from the Airport to the Chelsea Street Bridge, Boardman Street, and Route 1A without any travel on local streets.

**Make** Maverick Street an “official” two-way street between Chelsea and Meridian Streets, helping to improve safety and clarify an ambiguous traffic pattern.

**Limit** through traffic bypassing Saratoga Street east of Orient Heights Square on Bayswater Street and Goldstar Street by posting “No Left Turn 7-9 AM” signs on west-bound Saratoga at Annavoy Street, Teragram Street, and Shawsheen Road.

**Develop** vacant lots in neighborhoods as resident parking lots to minimize on-street parking demand. Neighborhood parking with landscaping should be promoted as a potential reuse for vacant city-owned parcels available for redevelopment through the Department of Neighborhood Development Real Estate Disposition Initiative program.

**Seek** additional residential parking opportunities in new public facilities by working with the Department of Neighborhood Development.

**Improve** existing parking lots as well as improving public access to them.

**Identify** existing parking lots for split-user (day/night) opportunities. Split-user or shared parking at sites such as Eagle Hill, East Boston High School, the Kennedy School, and Day Square would create more spaces during peak demand hours for a secondary user, which would occur during non-peak primary user hours.

**Initiate** a comprehensive traffic study for Jeffries Point to reflect changed conditions resulting from waterfront development at Massport’s Piers Project and Clippership Wharf.

#### 4.5 Development Guidance

East Boston’s residential neighborhoods have a distinct urban character. The amount of developable land within the neighborhoods is limited. On average, recent new development within the neighborhoods has come in the form of rehabilitated housing, open space improvements, or off-street parking. As new development occurs, controls are needed to ensure that the quality of life of existing residents is not diminished. While proposed projects must go through the mandatory design review process, the Master Plan emphasizes several points which the community has stressed.

**Emulate** the scale and bulk of adjacent residential structures.

**Seek** off-street parking opportunities.

**Screen** adjacent neighborhoods with landscaped buffers in the event of larger developments on Suffolk Downs and along McClellan Highway.

#### Recommendations:

**Maintain** street grid and circulation patterns.

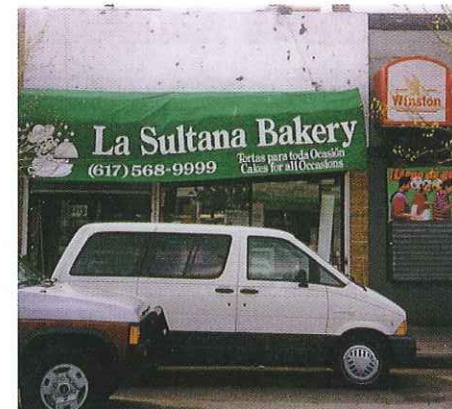
**Eliminate** structures which block important view corridors.

### 4.6 Regulatory Framework

The Master Plan recommendations would not require any changes to the existing zoning code, which provides an effective regulatory framework. There are no federal or state regulatory issues relative to the neighborhood recommendations.



Neighborhood commercial centers



## 5.0 Enhancing the Neighborhoods' Commercial Centers

The commercial centers of East Boston are the nodes of daily activity which help give the community an authentic urban character. The retail environment ranges from small ethnic markets and convenience stores to destination restaurant establishments and regional chains. The market from which East Boston's retail establishments draw leads the nature of commerce to be more neighborhood service oriented. These centers rely upon the immediate residential neighborhoods for the bulk of their customer base. As demographics change within the neighborhoods, the commercial activity evolves as well. With the recent influx of the Asian and Latino populations, retail services have reflected changing needs. New development of residential units would most likely key a slight evolution in these commercial centers to reflect these needs.

However, the scale and character should remain as a series of "main streets" and transit nodes with pedestrian scale commercial spaces.

Maverick Square is the primary southern gateway to East Boston and is directly accessible from downtown Boston by MBTA train and the Sumner Tunnel. Central Square is the core commercial and retail area of the community and includes Liberty Plaza. It is located on the edge of the Inner Harbor. Day Square is the central gateway to East Boston. It is directly accessible from Chelsea and the north through McClellan Highway/Route 1A and the Chelsea Street Bridge. Orient Heights Square is the northernmost business district and serves the Harborview and Orient Heights neighborhoods.

## 5.1 Land Use

The commercial centers have historically supported smaller scale retail establishments, except for the Shaws Supermarket at Liberty Plaza which is a regional store. The commercial centers provide opportunities for local residents to establish businesses, product diversification, and mixed-use commercial and residential infill and renovation. Nearby residential developments rely on the commercial centers to provide basic services and unique retail activity.

### Recommendations:

**Renovate** existing structures and create infill mixed-use development combining commercial/retail with second-story office or residential uses within Maverick, Central, and Day Squares.

**Improve** the design of Liberty Plaza to reorient some retail opportunities, allow for waterfront views and access, and enhance Central Square.

## 5.2 Open Space and Public Environment

Whether as a major transit node at Maverick Square or as a major shopping node at Central Square, the squares are places where East Boston residents congregate and interact. Open space and public environment improvements are needed within all the squares. The squares are pedestrian oriented and any streetscape improvement should further that characteristic. Street trees, lighting, crosswalks, expanded sidewalks, and signage are all characteristics that should be accounted for when analyzing the squares for public environment improvements.

### Recommendations:

**Design** infill development at Maverick and Central Square to shore up blighted space along the street wall.

**Widen** sidewalks, shorten crosswalks and improve pedestrian safety as part of transportation improvements in Central Square.

**Increase** street trees as a part of a beautification effort at Day Square.

**Create** pleasant outdoor café environments in sections of each square using landscaped sidewalks with trees and benches.

**Reduce** the length of the crosswalk of Saratoga Street at Bennington Street to improve the pedestrian circulation as part of planned transportation improvements in Orient Heights Square. Streetscape improvements within this project should be made to improve pavement features, landscaping, distinctive lighting, and street furniture.

**Connect** Constitution Beach and the Greenway to Noyes Playground and Orient Heights by improving the streetscape elements along Bennington Street near Saratoga Street, allowing for better pedestrian circulation.

## 5.3 Historic Resources and Heritage

The history of the commercial centers in East Boston is an important part of the development of this unique part of Boston. While historically significant buildings are typically not prominent features of the squares, the historic role and scale of these commercial centers are important elements to preserve. Furthermore, as efforts begin along the waterfront to highlight its history, the commercial centers would offer additional points of interest as part of a Heritage Trail.

### Recommendations:

**Preserve** the role of commercial centers as pedestrian friendly, accessible, diverse neighborhood service centers.

**Enhance** the historic neighborhood scale by upgrading pedestrian scale elements such as lighting, special pavement, signage, facade treatments, and other elements outlined within the Main Streets Program.

**Integrate** the squares as part of a future Heritage Trail which would highlight key historic buildings and places in and around East Boston.

## 5.4 Transportation

The issue of transportation is the most discussed topic among business owners and residents regarding commercial centers. Street configurations, streetscape elements, traffic public transit, and parking are problems which need to be resolved within the Master Plan. Daily commerce and residential activity require an efficient and viable transportation network within the squares. Traffic improvements will occur at Maverick and Orient Heights Square as part of the Blue Line Modernization Program.

### Recommendations:

**Improve** traffic and pedestrian circulation in Central Square. Maintain Border Street and Meridian Street as two-way, but Saratoga Street, between Meridian and Border Streets, would be made one way westbound and “South Central Square” would be made one-way eastbound, establishing a counterclockwise circulation pattern.

**Reorient** the Kennedy School parking lot to have frontage on Prescott Street, promoting user-shared parking; school use during the day and Day Square customer use in the evening and weekends.

**Enhance** the appearance and double the capacity of the existing parking lot at Bremen Street and Prescott Street which is used currently for customers and employees of the Square, but in the future will have increased demand from Bremen Street Park users.

**Improve** the appearance and security of the parking lot under the McClellan Highway along Bennington Street to encourage parking by Day Square employees, freeing up spaces within the Square.

**Upgrade** pedestrian crossings at Neptune Road/Chelsea Street and Bennington Street crossings at Wood Island Station are also desirable.

**Improve** circulation and on-street parking at Orient Heights Square. Community groups are meeting with the Boston Transportation Department to develop a plan which will improve safety, slow traffic speeds, and simplify circulation, while discouraging by-pass traffic on local residential streets.

**Create** a summer trolley service, tying Central to Maverick Square and waterfront parks. Trolley service would also help relieve parking demands created by park users

**Establish** a Neighborhood Transportation Association with the BRA and BTD to help find ways to meet transportation and parking needs in the neighborhood. In addition to neighborhood representatives, the NTA would include representation of other stakeholders, such as local businesses, the Main Streets Program, Massport, the MBTA, the Boston Housing Authority, airport businesses, waterfront industries, and developers of proposed projects.

## 5.5 Development Guidance

The traditional role of East Boston commerce will remain as development occurs because of the unique geographic and market orientation of East

Boston. As commercial space becomes available, efforts should be undertaken to attract businesses which would succeed within this retail environment. The community is becoming more ethnically diverse, and waterfront residential development will bring additional cash flow to these centers.

### Recommendations:

**Attract** traditional neighborhood businesses with a marketing initiative that outlines the benefits of the East Boston market.

**Extend** the Main Streets program from the Central Square-Meridian Street-Maverick Square corridor to Day Square and Orient Heights Square, which would help existing businesses formulate marketing goals and enhance the retail environment within East Boston.

**Increase** retail supply as development of waterfront housing occurs to take advantage of this new market.

**Encourage** training and technical assistance for local residents to aid them in becoming the new retailers in an enhanced commercial economy.

## 5.6 Regulatory Framework

City zoning is the primary regulatory tool applicable to the commercial centers.

### Recommendations:

#### Neighborhood Services vs. Community

**Commercial designations** - The current zoning reflects the community's input on differentiating

controls in Central Square from the other neighborhood centers.

**Guide retail** to ensure continued concentration within existing commercial centers.

**Enhance travel corridors** to strengthen the commercial districts' links visually and functionally.

## 6.0 Energizing the McClellan Highway-Upper Chelsea Creek Corridor

New industrial or commercial development in this area would be large-scale and could provide employment opportunities for local residents. The lack of residential neighborhoods adjacent to this area of the waterfront makes industrial uses more feasible. Furthermore, since nearly all of the East Boston parcels along the Chelsea Creek are Designated Port Areas under Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management and Chapter 91 regulation, certain uses—such as residential and recreational—would be strictly prohibited.

## 6.1 Land Use

Current land uses within this corridor are mostly commercial with some industrial uses. These existing commercial and industrial activities are mostly oriented toward the airport or the water port. As long as the airport remains, the demand for commercial and industrial uses associated with the airport will exist within the McClellan Highway corridor. In addition, planned transportation improvements to McClellan

Highway will increase its appeal for large scale commercial/industrial uses.

#### **Recommendations:**

**Support** and increase commercial/industrial uses in this area to generate significant positive economic benefits for the community in the form of additional jobs and taxes.

### **6.2 Open Space and Public Environment**

Open space in this corridor currently exists only at Madonna Hill, which is designated as an Urban Wilds. As a regional commercial and industrial corridor, demand for open space does not exist within this area of East Boston. Pedestrian and vehicular conflicts are obvious, and must be addressed if plans to widen McClellan Highway come to fruition. However, public environment improvements should be made to buffer residential areas from major development sites and future open space connections should be reserved within the corridor.

#### **Recommendations:**

**Secure** the sloped landscape at Madonna Hill to eliminate further erosion. Upgrade the existing park at the end of the intersection atop the hill to include better landscaping and observation areas.

**Establish** a landscape buffer between Waldemar Street and the Suffolk Downs access drive off McClellan Highway to protect the Orient Heights residential neighborhood from potential redevelopment of the Suffolk Downs site.

**Extend** the Greenway along the abandoned railroad right-of-way.

### **6.3 Historic Resources and Heritage**

The history of Chelsea Creek has gone untold for years. This important waterway has played a role in battles of the American Revolution and the development of adjacent communities. The history of the Chelsea Creek is evident within the Eagle Hill section of the Creek. This is an opportunity for the community to create a unique setting to illustrate the heritage of the Chelsea Creek.

#### **Recommendation:**

**Place** an interpretive kiosk atop Madonna Hill to illustrate the local history and natural environment.

### **6.4 Transportation**

McClellan Highway is the neighborhood's most traveled thoroughfare, with most of the traffic travelling to and from the airport or downtown. In an effort to minimize negative impacts from regional traffic, plans to produce a more efficient highway should be pursued. Commercial and industrial activities will most likely dominate the land uses along this corridor, due to its proximity to the regional highway system, Logan Airport, and the North Shore. Thus, transportation improvements should be directed to alleviate negative impacts of the highway on the community and facilitate the highest and best uses along

the corridor, which are commercial and industrial activities.

#### **Recommendations:**

**Create** a new Connector Road (as described above) in the railroad cut which parallels McClellan Highway in the vicinity of the Route 1A on and off-ramps at Neptune Road near Day Square. The road would exit the airport's North Service Area west of Neptune Road, passing under the elevated expressway viaduct to proceed along the railroad right-of-way either to the Chelsea Street Bridge or toward Route 1A at Boardman Street.

**Upgrade** McClellan Highway to include three lanes of traffic in each direction and construct an overpass at Boardman Street, thus minimizing peak period traffic along the corridor and within adjacent neighborhood and commercial areas.

### **6.5 Development 43**

#### **Guidance**

Improvements of the McClellan Highway traffic and streetscape will create improved access to adjacent land and create opportunity for commercial and industrial redevelopment in the future. Care should be given to avoid large expanses of parking lots in front of buildings and creation of a "strip" environment. As much as possible, new structures should be oriented toward the street and recreate a street front as redevelopment occurs. Along Chelsea Creek, a public Right-of-Way should be preserved and landscaped.

#### **Recommendations:**

**Retain** maritime access and industrial use along Chelsea Creek.

**Attract** airport and highway dependent industries along this corridor.

#### **6.6 Regulatory Environment**

The Master Plan recommendations for the McClellan Highway-Upper Chelsea Creek Corridor are consistent with local zoning. Two sections of the Corridor, Suffolk Downs and the eastern side of McClellan Highway, are zoned as Economic Development Areas, a designation designed to encourage economic growth through job opportunities in a manner that is compatible and sensitive to adjacent neighborhoods. These two areas are also zoned as Planned Development Areas, which also target economic development with planning and design controls to ensure public benefits and quality urban design.

The area of the Corridor between McClellan Highway and Chelsea Creek is zoned as Maritime Economy Reserve and Waterfront Manufacturing Subdistricts. This is compatible with the DPA designation at the state level. Both regulatory programs promote water-dependent industrial uses. To the extent that commercial or non-water dependent uses occur in this section, there may be a regulatory conflict.

The BRA should address this potential issue when developing its Municipal Harbor Plan for East Boston. One factor to be considered in such a plan is the percentage of total filled land within the DPA allocated to support commercial and non-water dependent uses.

#### **7.0 Shoring up the Airport Edge**

Logan Airport occupies most of the East Boston peninsula. The parcels that delineate the Airport edge focus area extend from Wood Island Marsh in the north to the beginning of Harborwalk in the south. Opened in 1923, Logan Airport is currently investigating further development with the airside expansion project. Access to Logan has been improved with the recent opening of the Ted Williams Tunnel for commercial traffic, but individual vehicular traffic to and from Logan is still a nuisance for East Boston.

Massport has launched an Airport Edge Buffer Program which investigates opportunities to improve the airport edge and its relationship to the East Boston community. In addition, airport-related commercial developments such as hotels have been proposed near residential areas. Mitigation efforts from the CA/T project and the East Boston Greenway are important factors when considering the emerging community benefits alongside the airport. While most of those projects are at various planning stages, the role of the Master Plan is to synthesize them, forming a cohesive vision for the community.

#### **7.1 Land Use**

The existing land uses around the airport are currently commercial-airport related, open space, or residential. The demand for more open space uses must be balanced with the airport's need to provide viable commercial space for services that require immediate airport access. The ball fields and cemeteries immediately adjacent to the airport are important community open spaces.

The loss of Wood Island Park years ago left an indelible mark upon the community, creating a desire for additional and improved open space uses around the airport. The Master Plan is consistent with land use changes proposed.

#### **Recommendations:**

**Create** open space use at the new Bremen Street Park, which replaces the current Park n' Fly lot.

**Relocate** the Park n' Fly lot to the southwest service area.

**Pursue development** of two sites adjacent to the Memorial Stadium near the Gove Street neighborhood.

**Consider** depression of the toll plaza, to reconnect the neighborhoods along Porter Street and create new open space and development opportunities.



Wood Island Marsh

## 7.2 Open Space and Public Environment

In conjunction with the waterfront, the airport edge area offers plentiful opportunities for open space development and public environment improvements. It is important to understand the potential open space network that the projects along the airport edge would create and the areas where connections to the neighborhoods could be accomplished. The following open space improvements are listed as they occur within East Boston, from north to south.

### Recommendations:

**Enhancement** of Bayswater Street using the Airport Edge Buffer Program, to create an important Greenway link.

**Improvement** to Constitution Beach.

**Provide access** to Wood Island Marsh through the north service area.

**Create connections** to East Boston Greenway.

**Create** of an 11-acre park on Bremen Street at the former Park N' Fly site.

**Improve** to Memorial Stadium .

**Improve access** to and screening of the Southwest service area .

## 7.3 Historic Preservation

The preservation of historic resources within the area is an important element of the airport edge. As part of airport expansion, Wood Island Park, an Olmsted designed park, was lost to the

community. Opportunities should be created to educate people about the unique environment and heritage of the community within the airport edge.

### Recommendations:

**Wood Island Marsh** exhibit, illustrating the natural environment which still exists as Wood Island Marsh, even after airport expansion.

**East Boston Greenway** interpretive signage, which is already planned, to help guide people to different community resources and illustrate key features along the route.

**Gove Street Historic District** designation, situated south of Memorial Stadium, to protect the intact elegant turn-of-the-century brick rowhouses and help protect the neighborhood from future non-conforming development.



## 7.4 Transportation

Improvements in the transportation network along the airport edge should help alleviate traffic within East Boston and expedite traffic to regional highways. In addition, public transportation improvements should be developed.

### **Recommendation:**

**Dedicated** truck routes, Ted Williams Tunnel mitigation, accommodation for the proposed Urban Ring, improvements to Airport Station, and depression of the Toll plaza.

## 7.5 Development Guidance

Massport has expressed its commitment to working with the community to mitigate airport projects and developments on the land abutting the neighborhoods, and to improve airport edge conditions. In order to insure consistent principles in the development of projects and improvements on the edge

of the neighborhoods and the airport, projects should be reviewed to insure compliance with the development guidelines.

### **Recommendations:**

**Create** new developments on airport edge land that are appropriate scale to adjacent neighborhood uses.

**Proposed** hotel development should include the Memorial Stadium Park connection to the neighborhood and Harborwalk.

**Enhance** airport edges, access roads, and highway with landscaped setbacks, screening, plantings, and other street furniture.

**Connect** Greenway to Wood Island Marsh.

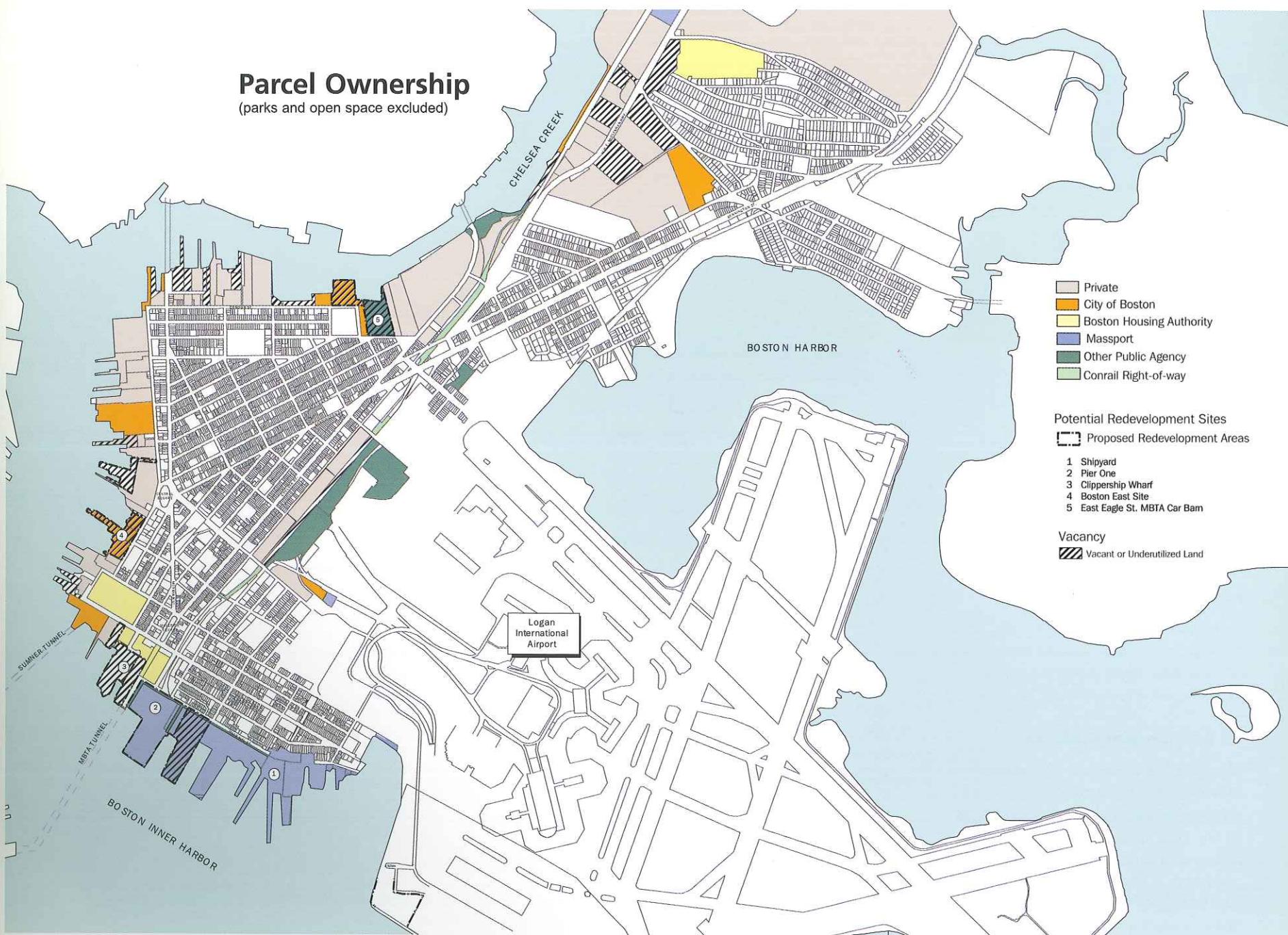
**Connect** neighborhoods and commercial centers at Bremen Street and Constitution Beach should be encouraged.

## 7.6 Regulatory Environment

Although Massport is a quasi-independent state agency, it is subject to Boston zoning. Though Massport airport operations are not subject to state regulations, such as Chapter 91, Massport complies with state regulations as a matter of practice, the prime one of concern in this area being Chapter 91 since a great deal of the area is filled tideland. In addition, the Airport Edge Buffer Program is supportive of Boston zoning since its purpose is to create a well-designed landscape buffer between the East Boston neighborhoods and airport land.

## Parcel Ownership

(parks and open space excluded)



# CHAPTER FOUR - IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

*The steps necessary to implement the Master Plan can be divided into four categories of activities: economic development projects, public realm improvements, regulatory action and community programs.*

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS:

### Retail Sector

In the short term, economic development opportunities in the retail sector will be buoyed by the growing expenditure potential of East Boston residents and employees. In the long term, new in-fill development potential especially along connecting corridors such as Meridian and Bennington Streets and in Central and Maverick Squares can be expected, capitalizing on increased capture of visitor dollars and new waterfront projects.

Planning for continued economic strength in the retail sector should include the coordination and promotion of retail activities within each commercial district through an expanded Main Streets program, the strengthening of ties between existing retail districts and key demand generators (commuters, employees, residents, tourists), and enhancement of the physical environment.

### Hospitality Sector

In the short term, economic development in the hospitality sector will be driven by development of affordably priced extended stay business/tourist class hotel rooms within the McClellan Highway corridor and proximate to Logan Airport. In the long term, development of luxury waterfront hotel rooms may follow successful completion of the proposed East Boston waterfront residential developments with ancillary waterfront enhancements (i.e. water shuttle, open space, marinas, and other attractions).

Planning for continued economic strength in the hospitality sector should include the coordination and promotion of East Boston retail districts and attractions for visitors to Boston, the encouragement and promotion of waterfront revitalization especially including ancillary waterfront enhancements such as water shuttle, a waterfront trolley, open space, marinas, and other attractions, and enhancement of the physical environment.

### Office and R&D Sectors

In the short term, economic development in the office and R&D sectors will be seen primarily by increased use of upper floors (rehab and in-fill) in existing commercial districts and corridors oriented to business and professional service sector occupancy. In the long term, development of new commercial office space on the waterfront may fol-

low successful completion of the proposed East Boston waterfront residential developments with ancillary waterfront enhancements (i.e., water shuttle, open space, marinas, and other attractions). Planning for continued economic strength in the office and R&D sectors should include promotion of East Boston retail districts' revitalization, continued development of the hospitality sector, the encouragement and promotion of waterfront revitalization, especially ancillary waterfront enhancements such as water shuttles, open space, marinas, and other attractions, and enhancement of the area's physical environment.

### Industrial Sectors (Marine and Non-marine)

In the short term, the development of new industrial facilities within the McClellan Highway corridor to serve current under-supply of industrial space will strengthen the industrial sector. Long term economic development goals for this sector require that sufficient land be zoned for these uses, including sites presently used for these purposes. Planning for continued economic strength in the industrial sectors should include the marketing of East Boston to targeted marine demand sectors (recreational and commercial boat owners, marine service providers, and tourists), the development of a strategy for subsidizing critical marine infrastructure improvements, and enhancement of the physical environment.

## Residential

In the short term, luxury rental development on the waterfront and moderately priced in-fill ownership and rental development in the neighborhoods and existing commercial districts are expected to characterize the residential sector. In the long term, development of luxury condominiums or co-ops on the waterfront should follow successful completion of the proposed East Boston waterfront rental developments with ancillary waterfront enhancements (i.e. water shuttle, open space, marinas, and other attractions). Planning for economic growth in the residential sector should include promotion of the revitalization of East Boston neighborhoods and retail districts, encouragement and promotion of waterfront revitalization, especially ancillary waterfront enhancements such as water shuttle, open space, marinas, and other attractions, and enhancement of the physical environment.

## Public Realm Improvements

Public Realm Improvements recommended by the Master Plan are:

**Create** the Massport portion of Harborwalk as a first phase of Massport Piers redevelopment initiative.

**Facilitate** formation of a museum by providing temporary space to various cultural interest groups to develop a business plan and program outlines, initiate fund raising, conduct market feasibility and design studies, and other necessary efforts to developing the museum recommended by the Master Plan.

**Expand** open space by creating parks at the public urban wilds location, Piers Park Phase II, and Pier 5, and public access to and along the water at Hess Oil and Boston East sites.

**Design** and creating distinctive signage and streetscape improvements for waterfront streets along the East Boston waterfront from Marginal to Condor Streets—the “Waterfront Way.”

**Facilitate** private water transportation projects such as the creation of a water shuttle service between Shaws Supermarket, the North End and Charlestown, and a waterfront trolley service linking Central and Maverick Squares with the Marginal Street waterfront.

## Regulatory Actions

Regulatory Actions recommended by the Master Plan are:

**Establish** Urban Design Guidelines for waterfront and Harborwalk, historic districts and commercial district centers in order to ensure appropriate building scale and character of the waterfront, preservation of public spaces and the street environment, and respect of the historic fabric of the residential neighborhoods.

**Use** Article 80 Development Review of the Zoning Code to review proposed development projects and ensure participation of the community.

**Develop** a Municipal Harbor Plan for East Boston to be undertaken as soon as possible in order to address the issues associated with the Chapter 91 Waterways regulations, such as public access, protection of public interests in tidelands, and maritime industrial usage. It is important that this study be undertaken both with a view to East Boston’s development as well as the role East Boston’s waterfront should play in the larger Boston Harbor context. As part of the Municipal Harbor Plan, supporting commercial uses within the DPA and the de-designation of Boston East as a DPA site should be investigated.

**Modify Current Zoning** The current zoning, the product of a 1997 study undertaken by the BRA in conjunction with the community, is largely consistent with the Master Plan with the exception of a few changes. The following modifications should be afforded top priority as the tool for accomplishing neighborhood enhancements:

- 1. Establish** a Corridor Enhancement District for Bennington Street which will safeguard the character of Bennington Street as a boulevard and protect it from fragmentation by practices such as unconsolidated curb cuts.
- 2. Expand** -Commercial Zoning Districts. Expansion of Community Commercial Subdistrict to allow for greater flexibility in uses in commercial districts. Currently, Neighborhood Shopping Subdistrict areas do not allow for entertainment uses, second story retail and commercial uses.
- 3. Extend** Historic District recommendations to additional areas identified by the Boston Landmarks Commission. Community-based groups should work with the Boston Landmarks Commission in a manner similar to the effort undertaken in Eagle Hill.

### **Community Programs:**

**Expand** the Main Streets Program to Orient Heights and Day Squares. Main Streets is a program through the City of Boston's Department of Neighborhood Development. The program is intended to improve the physical appearance of neighborhood "Main Streets", offering matching grants for facade improvements as well as funds for lighting and landscaping. The programs is also intended to build a community of businesses in a neighborhood business district that will engage in joint marketing efforts. Staff members of Neighborhood Development and Main Streets are available for technical assistance. Day Square and Orient Heights business and neighborhood constituencies should submit applications to the Main Streets Program so that it can be extended from Central and Maverick Squares to bolster these neighborhood commercial centers.

**Promote HomeWorks** as a means of rehabilitating historic buildings. The Department of Neighborhood Development sponsors this grant program aimed at assisting homeowners who undertake historically appropriate exterior repairs and improvements.

An outreach and educational program should be targeted to historic neighborhoods through a coordinated effort of city agencies, neighborhood associations and local financial institutions.

**Create** a program for entrepreneurs to facilitate training and creation of businesses within existing East Boston commercial districts.

The strength of a neighborhood shopping district relies on both large chains that bring a diversity of necessities at reasonable cost, such as supermarkets and drug stores, and shops that are owned by residents of the local and surrounding market areas and which reflect the interests and culture of the community. The City's Small Business Assistance Center should be used as a resource for these locally-owned shops. Technical assistance with business development, administration and marketing is available through the center. Also grants for up to \$2500 per client are offered. The Center will also help businesses obtain loans and build credit histories.

**Implement** traffic calming measures. Traffic calming in East Boston is primarily aimed at measures to limit airport-generated and highway bypass traffic from using local streets. Measures to slow traffic speeds are most appropriate along Bennington Street between Neptune Road and the Revere boundary, where traffic volumes are heavy and fast-moving during peak hours. Such measures include signals with a progression timed for slower speeds, protected pedestrian crosswalks and signals at key locations such as MBTA stations, narrowing of the travel lanes, and restoration of on-street parking in certain locations where it has been eliminated. It is also important to maintain and enforce existing traffic calming measures to protect neighborhoods from airport traffic impacts. These include restricting airport access from local streets to residents only at Jeffries Street gate; using police details to restrict turns to local streets at Neptune Road exit ramps and to keep airport traffic destined for the Sumner Tunnel on the highway; and to create discontinuous one-way street patterns to keep through traffic on arterial streets.

**Establish** a Neighborhood

Transportation Association (NTA) under the auspices of the BRA and the Boston Transportation Department to provide an effective mechanism for continuous tracking and updating of transportation conditions and issues and for community participation in the resolution of transportation issues. Funding for the NTA should be explored with CARAVAN for Commuters, which provides assistance in forming and sustaining similar groups.

**Massachusetts Small Business Development Center Network (MSBDCN)**

The MSBDCN is one of 53 state centers that provides consulting and technical services to small businesses and entrepreneurs. In Massachusetts, the MSBDCN is a collaborative effort among the Small Business Administration, the Massachusetts Department of Economic Affairs, and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Each year, MSBDCN counselors assist thousands of individuals and businesses, helping raise millions of dollars in capital and providing numerous educational programs and seminars. In addition, there is a Minority Business Assistance Center, located at the UMass-Boston campus, which focuses on helping minority entrepreneurs through Minority Business Programs, funding issues, and international trade.

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## CONTRIBUTING ORGANIZATIONS

Comprehensive Planning Initiative (CPI)

East Boston.com  
Frank Conte

East Boston Chamber of Commerce  
Lisa Capogreco

East Boston Greenway  
Coordinating Council

Harborside Community Center  
Marty Coughlin  
James Cali

## ELECTED OFFICIALS

Senator Robert Travaglini,  
*Massachusetts Senate*

Representative Anthony Petrucci,  
*Massachusetts House of Representatives*

Councilor Paul Scapicchio,  
*Boston City Council*

Emanuel Serra,  
*Former State Representative*

## CONTRIBUTING CONSULTANTS

ICON architecture, inc.

Beatrice Bernier  
Steven Heikin, *Principal*  
Beatrice Nessen  
Richard Perkins  
Felipe Schwarz

MSL/Management Strategies Limited  
Marilyn Swartz Lloyd

Byrne McKinney & Associates  
Pamela McKinney

Howard / Stein-Hudson Associates  
Jane Howard

## TAMS Consultants, Inc

Charles Norris  
McDermott/O'Neil  
Peter Gori

## PUBLIC AGENCIES

City of Boston  
Boston Redevelopment Authority  
Jansi Chandler, *Project Manager*  
Linda Mongelli Haar,  
*Director of Planning and Zoning*  
Jay Russo, *Regional Manager*  
Joanne Zambuto, *Project Assistant*

Transportation Department  
Bob D'Amico  
Vineet Gupta

Environment Department  
Ali Noorani  
Brad Swing

Parks & Recreation Department  
Aldo Ghirin

Department of Neighborhood  
Development  
Carol McDermott

Landmarks Commission  
Ellen Lipsey

Housing Authority  
Kate Bennet

Massachusetts Port Authority  
Alice Gray, *Project Manager*  
John Kravojic, *Airport Planning & Mitigation*

Massachusetts Bay Transportation  
Authority

Bill Howell, *Project Manager*  
*Design and Construction*

## PLANNING COORDINATING GROUP

Group/Elected Official      Representative

Mayor Thomas M.  
Menino      *Mary Lou Screni*

State Senator  
Robert Travaglini      *Mary Berninger*

State Representative  
Emanuel Serra      *Karen Pugsley*

Councilor  
Paul Scapicchio      *Stephen Scapicchio*

Eagle Hill Civic  
Association      *Glynce Kokkalis*

East Boston CDC      *Pasquale Cordisco*

EB Chamber of  
Commerce      *Maria DiLibero*

EB Environmental  
Rights Commission      *Mary Catino*

East Boston  
Main Streets      *Patty Sartori*

Gove Street  
Citizens Committee      *Ida LaMattina*

Jeffries Point Neighborhood  
Association.      *Karen Maddalena*

Land Use Council      *Joe Plagenza*

Latin American Planning  
and Development      *Ernesto Velasquez*

Maverick Housing  
Tenants Association      *Eleanor Saraceni*

Neighborhood of  
Affordable Housing      *Mary Ellen Welch*

Orient Heights  
Neighborhood      *Karen Buttiglieri*

Piers PAC      *Ron Jordan*

St. Mary's  
Neighborhood      *Michael Travaglini*



Boston Redevelopment Authority

City of Boston  
Thomas M. Menino, *Mayor*

Boston Redevelopment Authority  
Mark Maloney, *Director*

Clarence J. Jones, *Chairman*  
Consuelo Gonzales-Thornell, *Treasurer*  
Joseph Nigro, *Co-Vice Chairman*  
Michael Taylor, *Co-Vice Chairman*  
John M. Moscardelli, *Member*  
Harry Collings, *Secretary*

One City Hall Square  
Boston, MA 02201-1007  
Tel: 617.722.4300

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