boston planning & development agency

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PLAN: East Boston

The Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA)

The Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA) is the planning and economic development agency for the City of Boston. The BPDA plans and guides inclusive growth in our city, creating opportunities for everyone to live, work, and connect. Through our future-focused, city-wide lens, we engage communities, implement new solutions, partner for greater impact, and track progress.

Information

For more information about the PLAN: East Boston planning initiative please visit **bit.ly/PlanEastBoston**

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Contents

Overview

This document presents recommendations for zoning reform and public realm improvements that together present an ambitious and exciting vision for the future of East Boston.

PLAN: East Boston offers the unique opportunity to think about the future of an entire neighborhood and respond boldly to the challenges it faces today. It builds on the vision established by "Imagine Boston 2030," the citywide plan to "boost equity, resilience, quality of life in every neighborhood across Boston." The recommendations in this plan provide a vision for East Boston for the next 20 years.

Five high-level planning goals provide strategic direction to the plan.

Planning goals reflect shared values and provide strategic direction to the plan. Planning goals are neighborhood-wide and are organized by planning topic. PLAN: East Boston is driven by five high-level goals:

- Expand access to housing options that are affordable, stable, and able to meet households' needs as they change over time.
- Advance climate preparedness and promote a healthy environment.
- Ensure access to travel choices that connect all parts of the neighborhood to all parts of the city safely and reliably.
- Support neighborhood economies that meet the needs of local communities as well as regional industries.
- Guide neighborhood growth that is predictable and contextual and contributes to public spaces that are active and connected.

Character areas help identify types of places in the neighborhood. Recommendations are organized by character area.

While planning goals apply to the entire neighborhood, the neighborhood is made up of many different types of places. Character areas identify places in the neighborhood that share similar challenges and opportunities. This study identifies three primary character areas in East Boston and recommendations are organized by character area. All recommendations can be connected back to the planning goals identified here.

FIG 01 PLAN: EAST BOSTON STUDY AREA

STUDY AREA BOUNDARY

Changing Context

Planning trends help summarize what observable data says today about East Boston. East Boston Today documents these and other trends in greater detail. These trends are important drivers of planning goals and recommendations.

Three important trends help summarize change in East Boston. *East Boston Today*, the PLAN: East Boston existing conditions report, documents these trends in greater detail.

East Boston is uniquely vulnerable to threats of climate change - especially coastal and inland flooding.
East Boston's topography consists largely of low-lying infilled land. Waterfront bounds every edge of the neighborhood except for the northernmost boundary with Revere. These features make East Boston particularly susceptible to flooding caused by sea level rise and increased precipitation. More than half the land area in the neighborhood (58 percent) will be vulnerable to flooding as soon as the 2070s. Climate Resilient Solutions East Boston and Charlestown Phase I (2017) and Phase II (2022) identified critical flood pathways and resilience strategies along the entire East Boston waterfront.

The neighborhood's population is growing.
Boston and its metro area are undergoing transformational growth. In 2018, an update to "Housing A Changing City: Boston 2030" found that Boston's population was growing faster than initially projected, with 759,000 residents expected to live in Boston in 2030. East Boston's annual population growth rate is 2 percent, which is twice as high as the citywide average. As new residents come to East Boston, demand for housing and other neighborhood resources increases. Housing in East Boston has become more expensive. The neighborhood saw a 42 percent increase in average rents from 2000 to 2017.

Significant commercial growth will further East Boston's position as a regional job center.
Increasing population growth can be attributed in part to another important trend: regional job centers in Cambridge, Somerville, Chelsea, Everett, and the South Boston Waterfront have decentralized citywide growth patterns. Where development patterns in East Boston could have once been characterized by the neighborhood's connection to jobs in along Inner Harbor waterfront and Downtown Boston, development projects like Suffolk Downs are anticipated to deliver significant commercial growth furthering East Boston's position as a regional job center.

Sources:
U.S. Census Bureau, 1950–2010 Decennial Census, 2006–2010 American Community Survey, and 2013–2017 American Community Survey; BPDA Research Division.

The land area calculated for flood vulnerability is the PLAN: East Boston Study Area, which does not include Suffolk Downs or Logan International Airport.

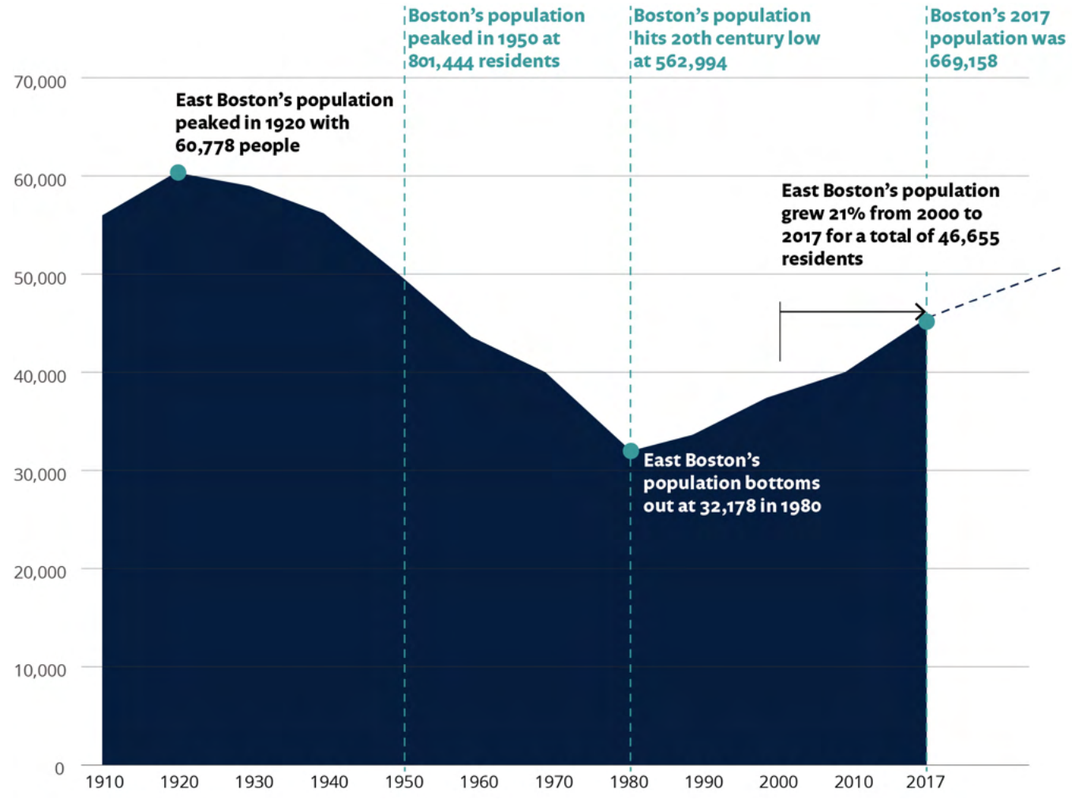


FIG 02 EAST BOSTON'S POPULATION, 1910-2017
An excerpt from "East Boston Today," the PLAN: East Boston existing conditions report. East Boston's population is growing twice as fast as the city's total population.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1910-2010 Decennial Census, NHGIS; 2013-2017 American Community Survey; BPDA Research Division Analysis.

Planning Context

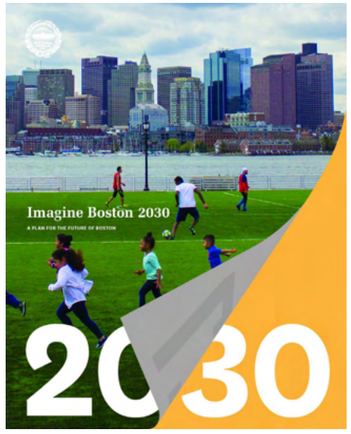
This effort updates the neighborhood-wide plan published more than twenty years ago and translates more recent citywide planning efforts to the neighborhood scale.

The most recent neighborhood-wide plan, the *East Boston Master Plan*, was published in April 2000. The plan was organized around four focus areas including "Reviving the East Boston Waterfront," "Enhancing the Neighborhood's Commercial Centers," "Strengthening the Residential Neighborhoods," and "Shoring up the Airport Edge." Many of the recommendations from the plan were since implemented, including renovated or new open spaces at Central Square, Piers Park, Noyes Playground, American Legion Playground, and LoPresti Park. A neighborhood Transportation Action Plan, published in 2008, offered short and long term recommendations to enhance pedestrian safety, improve traffic, and provide more parking for residents, but focused primarily on needed improvements to Central Square. Most projects, including the redesign of Central Square, are now complete. The East Boston Municipal Harbor Plan, published in 2003 and amended in 2008, focused on enabling waterfront development along Sumner Street and Border Street. All property contemplated by the Municipal Harbor Plan was redeveloped in accordance with the vision and regulations set forth by the effort. This planning effort provides updates to the East Boston Master Plan and the East Boston Transportation Action Plan, and establishes additional guidance for any future waterfront planning effort.

Neighborhood zoning, which encodes priorities for land use and built form, predates the most recent neighborhood-wide plan. Article 53 was established in 1993 and predates the neighborhood plan.

PLAN: East Boston builds on the vision and goals established by Imagine Boston 2030, the citywide plan to "boost equity, resilience, quality of life in every neighborhood across Boston."

Several citywide plans focus on the efforts of individual City departments. PLAN: East Boston takes the goals established by these plans and helps translate them to the neighborhood scale. In particular, the policies and projects included in Go Boston 2030, and the flood-vulnerability assessment and preferred alignment and strategies for flood-resilience infrastructure established by Climate Ready were carried forward in this planning effort.



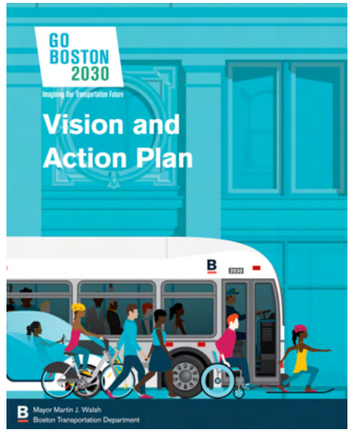


FIG 03 [TOP LEFT] Cover of Imagine Boston 2030.
FIG 04 [TOP RIGHT] Cover of Go Boston 2030
FIG 05 [BOTTOM LEFT] Cover of the East Boston Master Plan report (2000).
FIG 06 [BOTTOM MIDDLE] Cover of the East Boston Transportation Action Plan (2008)
FIG 07 [BOTTOM RIGHT] Cover of Coastal Resilience Solutions for East Boston and Charlestown (Phases I and II)

Community Engagement

The initiative was conducted in collaboration with the East Boston community over the course of a five year engagement effort.

Community engagement for this initiative launched in September 2018 and followed three phases: “establishing existing conditions,” “identifying challenges and opportunities,” and “imagining the future.”

Engagement events were designed to reach a wide range of participants, and special effort was made to engage groups typically underrepresented in planning processes.
Engagement events included in-person workshops, open houses, neighborhood walking tours, and “chat with a planner” and “pop-up” events. BPDA staff regularly attended neighborhood and civic association meetings and other community-hosted events. Following an eighteen-month engagement hiatus during the COVID-19 public health crisis, BPDA staff transitioned all engagement efforts to virtual forums for the remainder of the initiative. Spanish language access, including translated materials and simultaneous interpretation services, was provided at all in-person and virtual events.

A 20-person advisory group comprised of East Boston residents, business owners, and community leaders supported the effort.
Advisory Group members were appointed by elected officials and were regularly engaged in shaping community engagement strategy, previewing materials to be shared in public forums, and helping summarize and synthesize feedback received.

Community feedback directly informed plan recommendations.
Community feedback gathered in the “establishing existing conditions” and “identifying challenges and opportunities” phases informed the draft recommendations shared in the culminating phase “imagining the future.” Recommendations were shared in draft form to solicit additional public feedback.

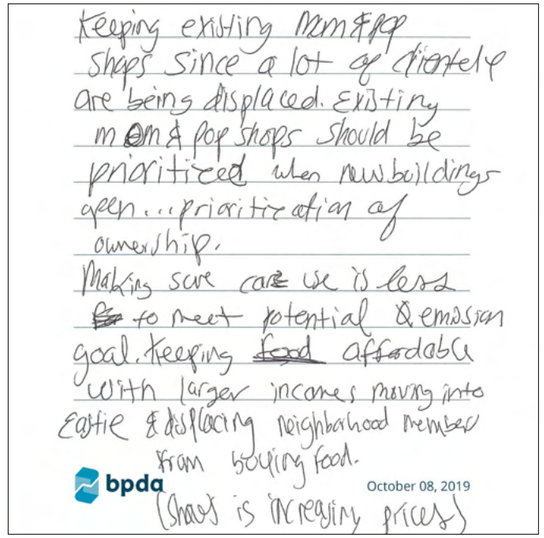


FIG 08 [TOP LEFT] “Popsicles with a Planner” pop up event July 2019 on the Mary Ellen welch Greenway near the Gove Street entrance.
FIG 09 [TOP RIGHT] A selection of comments submitted at a community workshop focused on character areas on October 08, 2019.
FIG 10 [MIDDLE RIGHT] Walking tour of Maverick and Central squares on June 22, 2019.
FIG 11 [BOTTOM RIGHT] Virtual “Chat with a Planner” event on January 7, 2020.
FIG 12 [BOTTOM LEFT] “Preserve Enhance and Grow” Community Workshop November 2018 hosted at the East Boston Social Center.

Character Areas

Character areas help identify types of places within the neighborhood. Recommendations are organized by character area.

East Boston has a unique and complex geography, with many different types of open spaces, streets, and buildings. Buildings and public spaces within a given character area share similar uses and physical features. East Boston has three primary character areas.

Neighborhood Residential Areas
These areas are primarily, though not exclusively, intended for residential uses and buildings are typically lower in scale. Streets in Neighborhood Residential areas are typically narrow and open space is typically limited to school yards and community gardens. Neighborhood Residential areas represent the greatest portion of land area in the study.

Squares and Corridors
These areas support the broader neighborhood by providing essential goods and services to residents, and entrepreneurial opportunities to businesses. Streets and intersections in these areas are typically very wide, and offer opportunities to reconsider how public space is allocated. East Boston has four main squares including Maverick Square, Central Square, Day Square, and Orient Heights Square. A fifth square, referred to here as Suffolk Downs Square, will emerge as construction begins at the Suffolk Downs redevelopment site. All squares are located near transit.

Waterfront and Evolving Industrial Areas
These areas historically prioritized commercial and industrial uses, however land uses in these areas are changing. Many of these areas require substantial investment in public infrastructure including streets, sidewalks, publicly accessible open spaces, and, critically, flood resilience. Many of these areas are at tremendous risk of flooding, and are often front-line opportunities for addressing neighborhood flood risk.

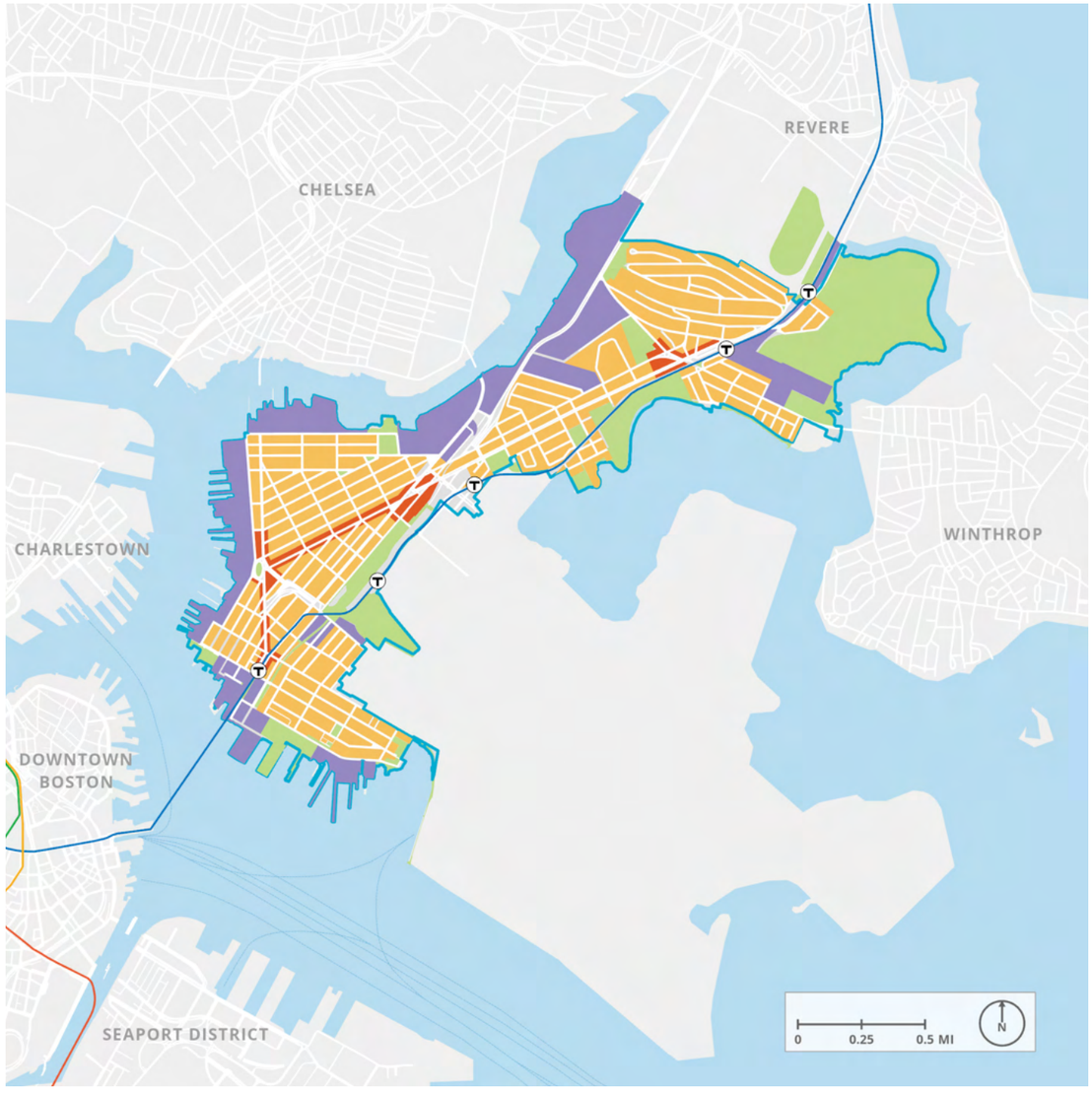


FIG 13 CHARACTER AREAS

- NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER AREAS
- SQUARES AND CORRIDORS CHARACTER AREAS
- WATERFRONT AND EVOLVING INDUSTRIAL CHARACTER AREAS
- OPEN SPACE

FIG 01-01 NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL AREAS
Overlooking the Orient Heights MBTA Station and portions of the Belle Isle peninsula and Constitution Beach from Gladstone Street in Orient Heights.

01. Neighborhood Residential Areas

Neighborhood Residential areas are the portions of East Boston where most people live. New zoning in these parts of East Boston will guide infill development to be predictable, appropriately-scaled, and aligned with broader planning goals, thereby reducing reliance on the Zoning Board of Appeals.

In this chapter, read about:

Context

Neighborhood Residential areas—defined in this chapter as existing residential zoning subdistricts—are primarily, though not exclusively, intended for residential uses and typically consist of low-scale buildings.

Neighborhood Residential areas cover 620 acres of East Boston and account for more land area than any other character area in this study. They were initially developed on the highlands of the neighborhood's original island geography and spread over time as filling connected low-lying areas.

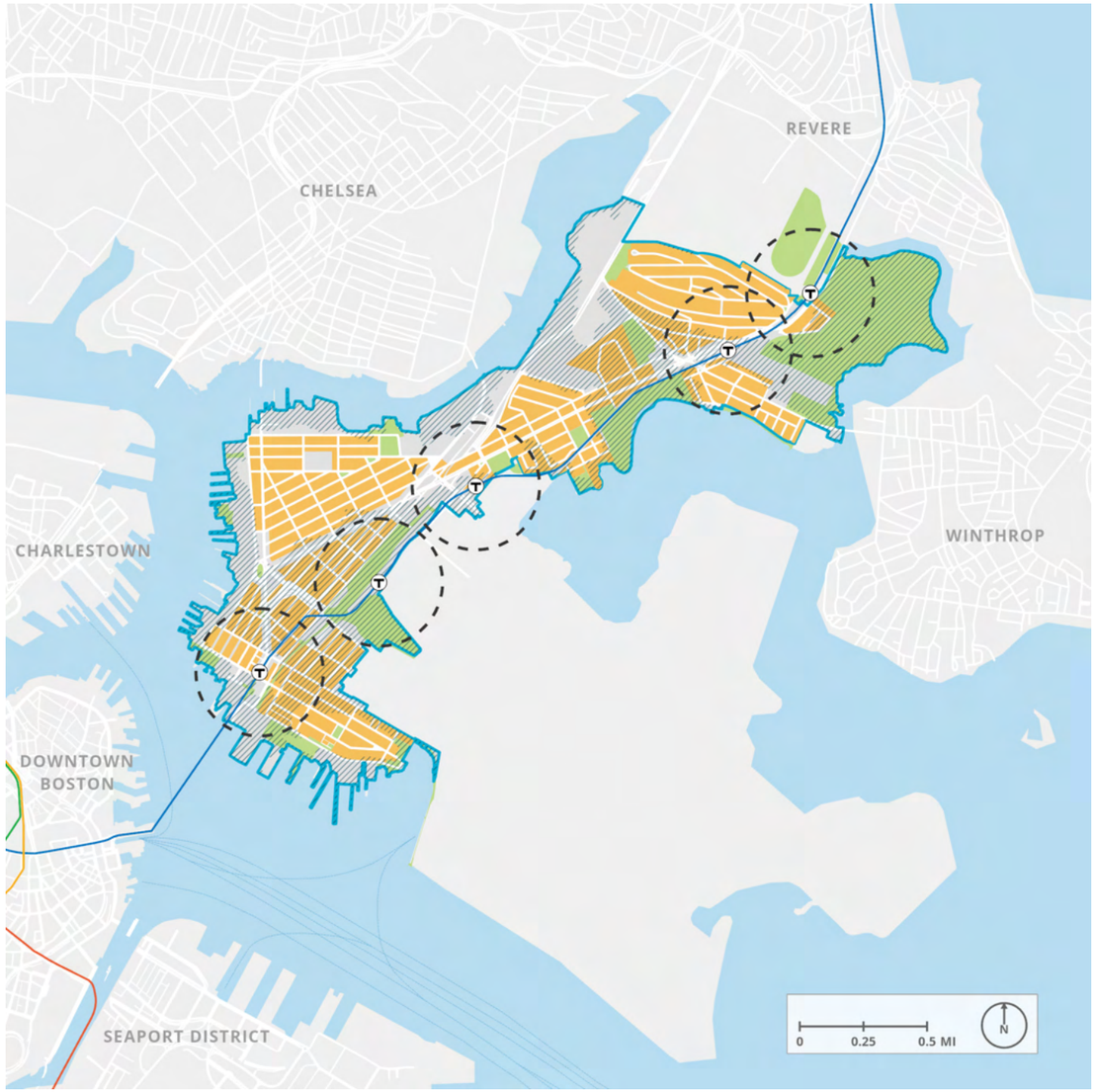
Flooding caused by climate change threatens much of East Boston's housing stock.
Climate change threatens existing housing in low-lying areas. Large portions of the Paris Flats, Maverick Central, and Harbor View are at particular risk of flooding—although nearly every part of East Boston has at least some portion located within the Coastal Flood Resilience Overlay District (CFROD). In total, almost a third of the land area of Neighborhood Residential areas is located within the overlay. The CFROD plays an important role in shaping new development. Proposed projects within the CFROD are subject to resilience review, which looks at the siting of mechanical systems, access, and ground floor elevation. For proposed projects in the CFROD, living space must be located above the Sea Level Rise - Design Flood Elevation.

Additionally, nearly three-quarters of East Boston's current housing stock is from 1939 or earlier. Aging housing stock built in low-lying areas of the neighborhood created by landfill is particularly vulnerable to flooding and will be challenging to adapt to meet resilience needs.

Green infrastructure in Neighborhood Residential areas is composed primarily of street trees. In 2020, the Tree Canopy Assessment Report released by the Parks Department found that East Boston had one of the smallest tree canopies in the city, and less than half of all street trees are considered to be in "Good" or "Excellent" condition. This lack of canopy exacerbates the urban heat island effect, harms the safety and comfort of residents, and discourages walkability.

Restrictive zoning conflicts with the diversity of existing structures.
Existing zoning requirements imagine a neighborhood with housing types that are highly segmented. Residential subdistricts are categorized by land use: single-family (1F), two-family (2F), three-family (3F), and multifamily residential (MFR). These divisions are then further categorized according to minimum parcel size. For example, a "1F-5000" subdistrict would allow at most one residential unit, and a given parcel must be at least 5,000 square feet in total area.

In reality, residential areas within East Boston contain a mix of housing types. "Single-family," "two-family," and "three-



Neighborhood Residential areas are made up of the following existing zoning subdistricts:

- 1F-4000
- 1F-5000
- 1F-7000
- 2F-2000
- 2F-3000
- 2F-4000
- 2F-5000
- 2F-7000
- 3F-2000
- MFR-1
- MFR/LS

FIG 01-02 PLAN: EAST BOSTON NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL AREAS

NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER AREA
COASTAL FLOOD RESILIENCE OVERLAY DISTRICT
5-MINUTE WALKING RADIUS
OPEN SPACE

family" buildings exist in every zoning subdistrict, often all on the same street. Even though two adjacent buildings may look the same, one may be allowed, and one may not due to their land use. Many lots also do not conform to the minimum size prescribed by their zoning subdistrict, often as a result of historic parcelization patterns or East Boston's dramatic topography. As a result, non-conformity exists on nearly every residential street in East Boston.

However, the same geographic constraints that contribute to zoning nonconformity also contribute to the wealth of architectural diversity found throughout the neighborhood. East Boston contains an eclectic mix of building forms that defies the use of any one typology.

Rapid development is changing the neighborhood in an unpredictable way.

The neighborhood is in the midst of a resurgence in population and an increase in housing production that began in the early 2000s. While much of this new housing is concentrated in apartment-style buildings in waterfront or formerly industrial areas, a considerable amount is the result of infill development in established residential areas.

Restrictive zoning prohibits most development, and almost all new construction in East Boston requires zoning relief. East Boston has the highest annual number of Zoning Board of Appeal cases per 1,000 parcels, compared to other Boston neighborhoods. Consequently, it can be difficult for residents to understand or predict how their neighborhood is changing unless they are familiar with the process because they can't use existing zoning as a guide to know what to expect.

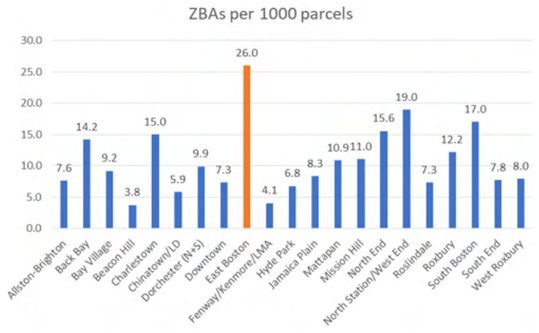


FIG 01-03 NUMBER OF ZBA CASES PER 1000 PARCELS BY BOSTON NEIGHBORHOOD

Analysis of ZBA hearings held between 2019 and 2021 found that East Boston had the highest rate of ZBA cases out of every Boston neighborhood.

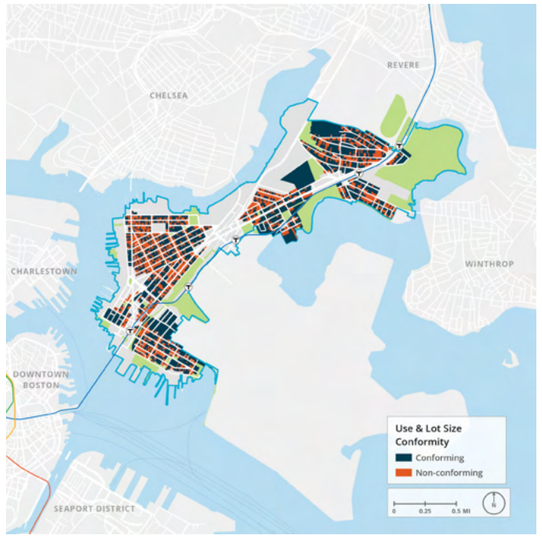


FIG 01-04 NONCONFORMITIES DUE TO LAND USE AND PARCEL SIZE IN RESIDENTIAL SUBDISTRICTS

Non-conformity with existing zoning exists on nearly every street in East Boston. Out of 5,665 total residential parcels, more than half—over 55%—do not conform to either the proscribed land use or the minimum lot size. Further analysis of FAR, setback requirements, and open space requirements would almost certainly push that number even higher.


Orient Heights


Gove Street


Jeffries Point


Belle Isle Penninsula


Eagle Hill

FIG 01-05 EXAMPLES OF DIVERSITY OF BUILDING TYPOLOGIES IN NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL SUBAREAS

Key Recommendations for Land Use and Built Form

Guide infill development that is predictable, appropriately-scaled, and aligned with broader planning goals.

Recommendations for guiding built form in Neighborhood Residential areas focus on infill development, referring to development on unused or underutilized parcels. Infill development in Neighborhood Residential areas must produce safe, affordable, and accessible housing. The following strategies work together to guide infill development that is predictable, appropriately-scaled and aligned with broader planning goals. Existing assets, such as historically significant buildings, or low-cost housing, should be protected using targeted, priority-based policies and programs.

Allow for a mix of housing types within a limited range and affirm the physical characteristics that define low-scale neighborhood fabric.
Rather than segmenting residential uses, zoning will focus on setting limits on the size of potential buildings—an approach referred to as "form-based" zoning. These limits would be set by using existing built forms as a guide, ensuring that the size and scale of new development are consistent with what already exists.

Additionally, zoning derived from existing forms will help those existing structures rely less on the Zoning Board of Appeal. Homeowners who want to make small changes to their houses—such as adding a dormer, creating an in-law suite in a basement, or building a new deck—will require fewer variances, making it easier for people to stay in their homes as their needs change.

Preserve privately-owned open space and increase permeable areas.
The spaces between buildings created by front, side, and rear yard setbacks contribute to neighborhood open space and provide the space needed for trees and other plants to grow. Permeable areas are needed to support groundwater recharge and limit stormwater runoff that contributes to neighborhood flooding and worsens water quality.

Improve access to neighborhood-serving retail amenities.
Neighborhood corner stores are integral to East Boston's economy and social fabric, providing walkable access to essential goods and services. Small retail uses like coffee shops, service uses like laundromats, and community uses like daycares provide essential neighborhood amenities but are currently forbidden by zoning.

FIG 01-06 DRAWING FROM OCTOBER 24, 2019 COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

What we heard
At a series of workshops, residents had the chance to sketch their vision for the future of residential areas and give feedback on proposed changes. At every session, residents voiced a desire to see planning that confirms the existing scale and neighborhood character. Form-based zoning will meet resident desires by drawing on existing building dimensions to ensure that future construction looks similar to what exists today.

Zone	Maximum Number of Units	Maximum Building Height (Stories)	Lot Coverage		Min. Permeable Surface Area		Front Setback (Feet)		Minimum Side Setback (Feet)	Minimum Rear Setback (Feet)	Maximum Building Width (Feet)	Maximum Building Depth (Feet)	Maximum Floor Plate Size (Square Feet)
			Mid-Block	Corner	Mid-Block	Corner	Min	Max					
EBR-1	2	2.5	40%	50%	50%	40%	5	20	5	1/3 lot depth	50	50	1,800*
EBR-2	3 (parcel width < 50') 6 (parcel width ≥ 50')	3	60%	75%	30%	15%	2.5	5	2.5	1/3 lot depth	50	70	3,000
EBR-3	-	4	60%	75%	30%	15%	2.5	5	5	1/3 lot depth	120	70	8,000

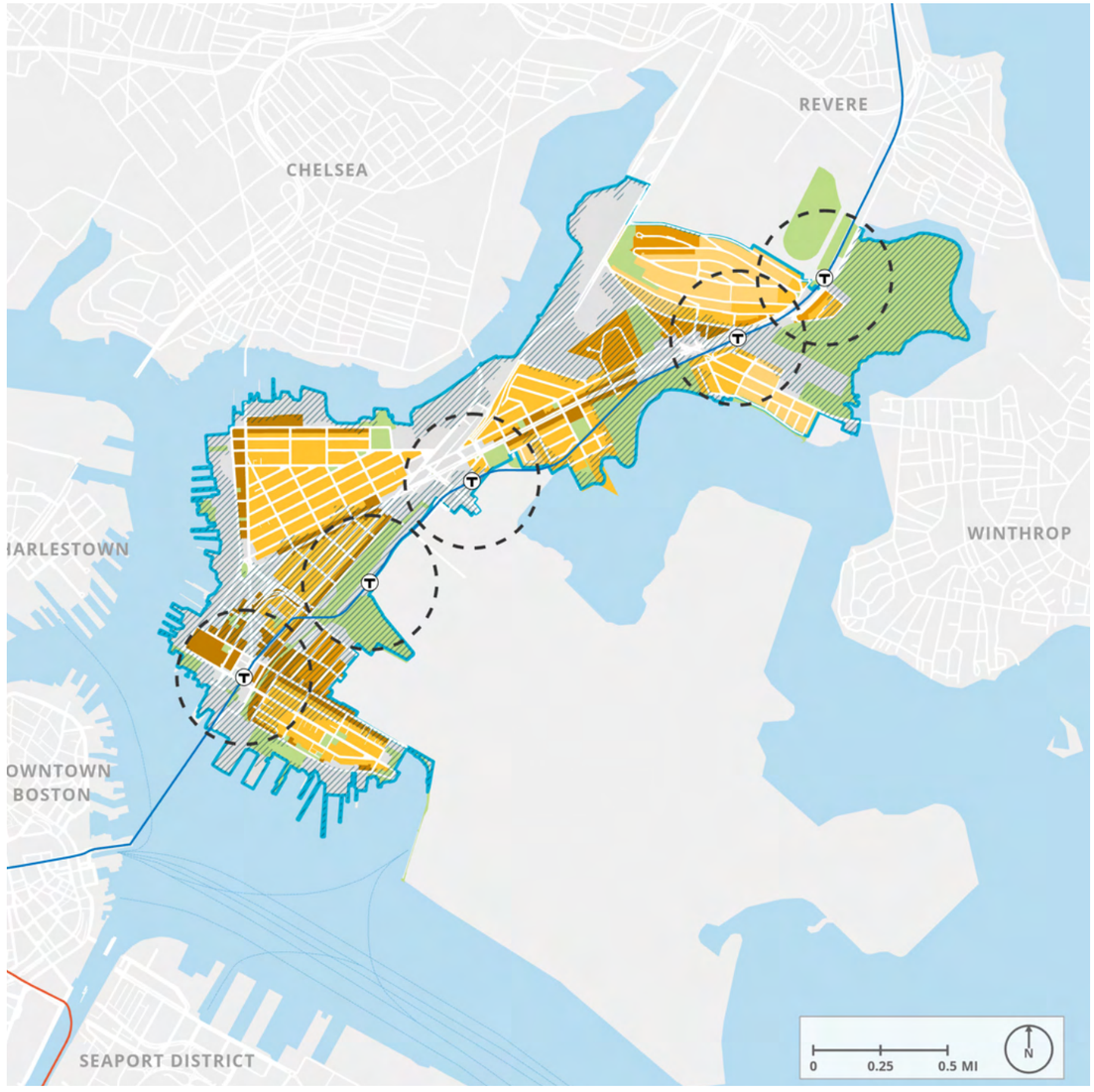
* Property located in EBR-1 subdistricts would also be subject to a limitation on total gross floor area

FIG 01-07 PROPOSED NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL SUBDISTRICTS AND DIMENSIONAL CONTROLS

Revised zoning for East Boston will consolidate low-scale residential uses and focus on controlling density through building form. Rather than lot size, this new zoning will use number of stories and lot coverage as defining features of residential subdistricts, considerably simplifying the number of subdistricts and dimensional requirements needed to build or renovate. Other building dimensions such as maximum building width and depth will also be restricted to create buildings that match their context and to introduce opportunities for open space. Proposed dimensions were derived from common building types in the neighborhood.

FIG 01-08

Dimensional requirements have to accommodate a range of common conditions. For example, the building on the left has a deep frontyard, while the building on the right has almost no frontyard. The building on the left is 2-1/2 stories tall while the building on the right is 3-1/2 stories tall.



New subdistricts would reflect patterns of land use, existing building form, and access to transit.

FIG 01-09 MAP OF PROPOSED NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL SUBDISTRICTS AND ZONING OVERLAYS

- ERB-1
- ERB-2
- ERB-3
- MFR/LS
- COASTAL FLOOD RESILIENCE OVERLAY DISTRICT
- 5-MINUTE WALKING RADIUS
- OPEN SPACE

Key Recommendations for Transportation and Public Realm

Streets in Neighborhood Residential areas will prioritize quality of life and safe transitions from major corridors.

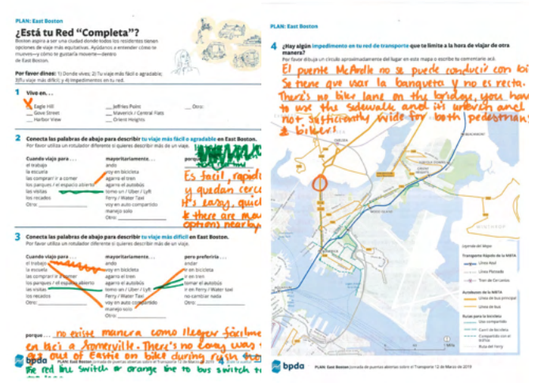
Streets and sidewalks make up the bulk of publicly accessible space in Neighborhood Residential areas. The primary goals for Neighborhood Residential streets are to provide access to homes, connect residents to neighborhood destinations with legible walking and biking routes, and accommodate trees and green infrastructure. These goals are supported by the underlying strategies listed in this section and are integral to quality of life in Neighborhood Residential areas and the *citywide* vision for all Boston residents to have better and more equitable travel choices.

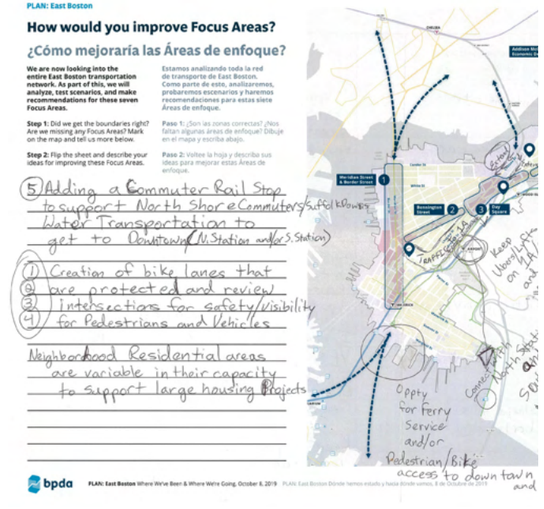
Leverage opportunities to incorporate green infrastructure.

The Urban Forest Plan released in 2022 identified several priority areas for the planting of trees in the neighborhood, including 220 potential planting sites for street trees. On privately owned land, urban design guidelines of the design, sizing, and planting of open space will help to create outdoor spaces that are resilient and comfortable. New lot coverage maximums and pervious surface minimums written into the zoning code will ensure that new projects leave room for open space beyond just paving.

Additionally, the City has established a Green Infrastructure Policy to reduce stormwater flooding through design strategies—use of trees, plants, soil, and other natural materials—that mimic nature. These strategies will help increase the tree canopy, mitigate the urban heat island effect, and help make Neighborhood Residential areas more walkable, connected, and beautiful. Critically, the City has set aside funding to maintain green infrastructure as it is added to the public rights-of-way.

Intersections in Neighborhood Residential areas can be oversized or irregular in alignment, which creates opportunities for green infrastructure through reclamation of excess pavement. These locations, as well as existing unused tree pits, are opportunities to expand the tree canopy in East Boston.





What we heard

East Boston residents attended walking tours, mapping workshops, and town hall presentations. Throughout the hundreds of pages of feedback generated by these sessions, a number of common themes emerged: an urgent call to prioritize safety for all modes of transit; the desire for improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure; and the need to preserve existing mature trees and promote the planting of new street trees wherever possible.

The public realm recommendations in this chapter begin to address these themes, and describe the steps that can be taken to put residents' voices into action.

Improve safety through street design.
Neighborhood Residential streets should feel comfortable and enable the safe sharing of space by people walking, biking, and driving. This is accomplished through design strategies that would encourage:

- **Safer speeds** to slow down drivers;
- **Safer turns** to encourage yielding and reduce conflicts and near-misses; and
- **Safer crossings** to make pedestrians more visible and connect people to their destinations.

Boston follows a Complete Streets design philosophy that places all street users on equal footing, whether traveling by foot, mobility device, bike, bus, or motor vehicle. The Boston Transportation Department (BTD) translated this philosophy into a Street Safety Toolkit to better define available design tools. Not every tool works on every street, and so the Street Safety Toolkit also helps link different tools to different contexts. For example, tools that raise the street level, like speed humps or raised crossings, are most appropriate on Neighborhood Residential streets because these streets are rarely used by large vehicles, like buses and trucks. These specific tools can also help drivers transition from higher-speed streets, like Bennington Street or Meridian Street, to slower Neighborhood Residential streets. Sometimes multiple tools are used in the same location to achieve a specific outcome.

Expand transportation access so that all residents are within a 10-minute walk to frequent transit, bikeshare, and car share.
Recommendations include better:

- **Access to buses** to enhance the passenger wait experience;
- **Access to bikeshare** to provide travel options; and
- **Access to high-quality public realm** to prioritize health, social fabric, and green infrastructure through better use of excess pavement.

Public realm recommendations are intended to guide future conversations about specific projects.
These public realm recommendations identify the "where and why" within Neighborhood Residential areas. Specific designs—the "how"—will be developed by BTD and the Boston Public Works Department (BPWD) during a project development process through one of the City's existing transportation investment programs, including:

- **Sidewalk reconstruction and repair projects**, such as new or updated curb ramps, are prioritized using a proactive approach that considers both physical condition and areas of greatest need. As this is a maintenance program, it has no community process.
- **Safety Surge projects** include speed humps and safety changes to intersections. The City plans to install up to 500 speed humps on an annual basis on eligible streets. Maverick Central, Eagle Hill, and Paris Flats are prioritized for 2024-2026 implementation. The City will redesign select intersections annually using the Street Safety Toolkit. Data analysis and community input will determine future intersection project locations.
- **Corridor projects** address safety and access along streets using quick-build materials or limited construction. Through this process, the City can make targeted changes, like changing traffic signals and creating Green Links crossings and connections.

The MBTA upgrades crosswalks and boarding areas at existing bus stops throughout the region through its "Plan for Accessible Transit Infrastructure" (PATI) program. PLAN: East Boston recommends that all bus stops be brought up to contemporary accessibility standards.

FIG 01-10 EXAMPLE STREET SAFETY AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE TOOLS
(Clockwise from top left) Curb extensions with bioretention, clear corners, street trees with porous pavers, raised side street crossings, and speed humps
Source: Boston Streets Cabinet

For a complete listing of tools, refer to the Street Safety Toolkit and Environmental Standards for City Infrastructure.

Policy Considerations for Better Bike Lanes

Boston is working to make the bike network safer, more connected, and family friendly.

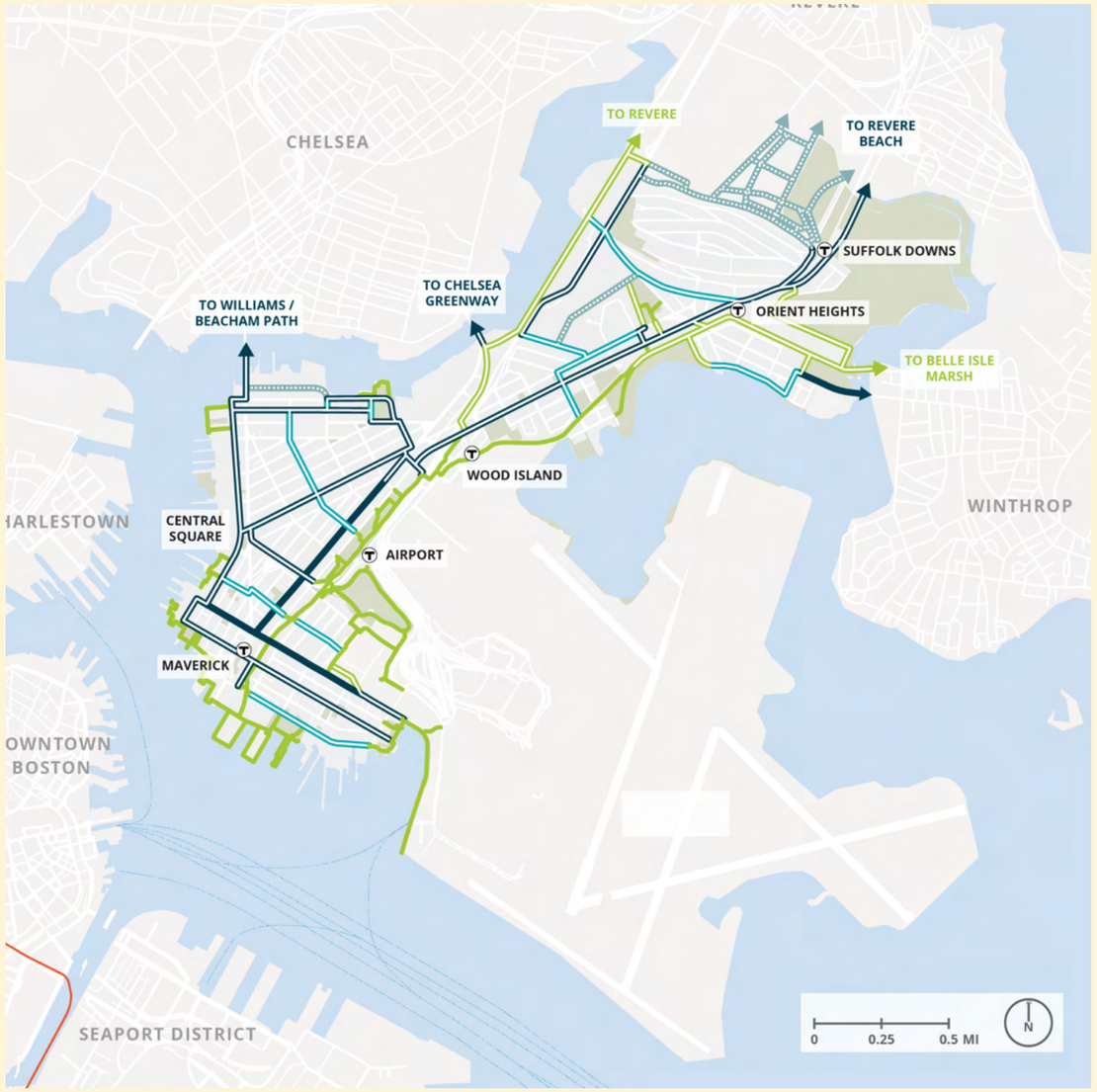
Enabling more trips by bike is essential to reaching citywide climate and public health goals. While each block of safe, comfortable bike lane is important, it's more important that they connect to each other. A connected network is worth more than the sum of its parts.

East Bostonians deserve safe access to the expanding bike and shared-use path network. The City is working to transform streets to better serve people walking, rolling, and riding bikes. That means closing gaps and expanding East Boston's emerging network of family-friendly bike routes, greenways, and safe crossings. In addition to neighborhood planning efforts, like PLAN: East Boston, the City is working intentionally with residents to design an expanded bike network that works for their communities.

East Boston's growing bike network must include the types of bike facilities that make the most people feel comfortable: greenways, separated bike lanes, and traffic-calmed streets. The proposed bike network seeks to better integrate airport buffer paths into the neighborhood fabric. PLAN: East Boston recommends 24-hour access or, at minimum, longer hours of operation for the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway to reflect its role as the backbone of the neighborhood's bike network.

FIG 01-11 EXAMPLE BETTER BIKE LANE STRATEGIES

Traffic-calming local streets (top photo) help discourage unnecessary through-traffic by drivers, while making useful connections for people walking or biking. These make smaller neighborhood streets easier and safer to travel within East Boston, reach transit, and connect to the greenway network. Upgrades to conventional bike lanes and crosswalks help make people walking and biking more visible to drivers. For example, at the Chelsea Street / Putnam Street intersection, the existing bike lane transitions to a separated bike lane through the intersection and the City added a crossing island (bottom photo).



Boston is creating a citywide bike plan, which will embed local needs and priorities into route selection and design. PLAN: East Boston will inform that process with this proposed bike network.

FIG 01-12 PROPOSED EAST BOSTON BIKE NETWORK

- PROPOSED OFF-STREET GREENWAY / SHARED-USE PATH
- PROPOSED SEPARATED BIKE LANE OR CONTRAFLOW BIKE LANE
- PROPOSED TRAFFIC-CALMED STREET
- PROPOSED NEW STREET WITH BIKEWAY
- EXISTING GREENWAY / SHARED-USE PATH
- EXISTING CONVENTIONAL BIKE LANE
- OPEN SPACE

Maverick Central

This subarea includes the limited residential district between the Meridian Street Main Street district and the Border Street waterfront, from Maverick Station to Central Square. The Meridian Street corridor is addressed in the “Squares and Corridors” chapter, and the area between Border Street and the Inner Harbor is addressed in the “Waterfront and Evolving Industrial Areas” chapter.

The Maverick Central area contains a variety of building forms, densities, and residential uses, with no one dominant building typology. Recent redevelopment activity in this subarea is primarily concentrated along Border Street and Liverpool Street and includes BPDA-approved proposals at 75-85 Liverpool Street and 151 Liverpool Street and recently completed redevelopment of 75 Border Street and 80 Liverpool Street (Coppersmith Village) and 152 Liverpool Street.

Maverick Landing, owned by the Boston Housing Authority, encompasses four blocks between Sumner Street and Maverick Street from Havre Street to New Street. Redevelopment of the property was completed in 2006 and includes 426 income-restricted housing units.

FIG 01-13 AERIAL IMAGE OF THE CALLAHAN AND SUMNER TUNNELS (C. 1955-1964)
Construction of the Sumner Tunnel (opened in 1934) and Callahan Tunnel (opened in 1961) cut through the middle of the area and required the demolition of established residential fabric between Liverpool Street and Havre Street. Today ventilation facilities for both tunnels loom large over residential buildings in the area. Image accessed via Northeastern University Library, Archives and Special Collections.

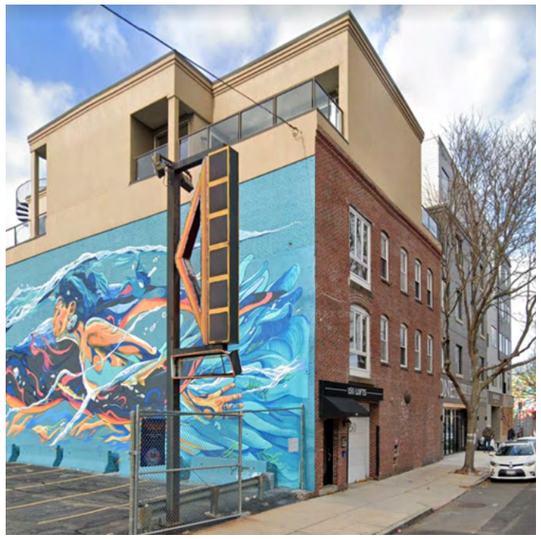


FIG 01-14 [TOP LEFT] 150 Liverpool Street (2022)
FIG 01-15 [RIGHT] Maverick Landing
FIG 01-16 [BOTTOM LEFT] Coppersmith Village

Recommendations for Land Use and Built Form
Today, zoning in the Maverick Central area includes a single Multifamily Residential (MFR) subdistrict and two disconnected Three-Family (3F-2000) subdistricts. Both subdistrict types limit allowed building height to three stories despite the areas close proximity to transit and increased building scale along the waterfront.

Consolidate MFR and 3F-2000 subdistricts in the area into a single residential subdistrict. Use Border Street to delineate Waterfront zoning subdistricts.

Increase allowed height in the consolidated subdistrict to five stories, responding to increased allowed heights along the Meridian Street corridor and the Border Street waterfront area.

Support adaptive reuse of existing structures.
Several examples of the area's 20th century industrial heritage still exist, concentrated primarily in two blocks between Border Street and Liverpool Street, bounded by Maverick Street and Central Square.

FIG 01-18 A
n example of the variation in building type in the area: at left, a single-story commercial building, at center typical two-and-a-half and three story residential buildings, and at right the Sumner Tunnel Ventilation building.

FIG 01-19 EXISTING REGULATING PLAN FOR MAVERICK CENTRAL WATERFRONT

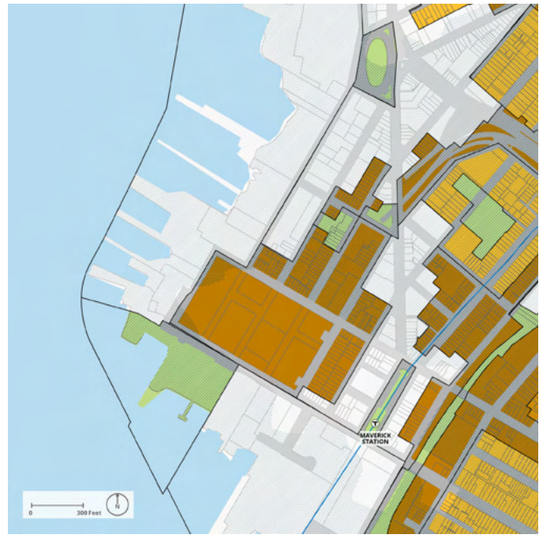


FIG 01-20 PROPOSED REGULATING PLAN FOR MAVERICK CENTRAL WATERFRONT

- EBR-1 SUBDISTRICT
- EBR-2 SUBDISTRICT
- EBR-3 SUBDISTRICT
- MFR/LS SUBDISTRICT
- OPEN SPACE SUBDISTRICTS
- COASTAL FLOOD RESILIENCE OVERLAY DISTRICT

Recommendations for Transportation and Public Realm
Maverick Central is one of East Boston's most walkable areas. The area is compact, flat, and dense with intersections and streets. With waterfront blocks defining the western and southern neighborhood edges, traffic volumes west of Meridian Street are low. Meridian Street and Chelsea Street, however, experience congestion because they connect drivers to the Sumner Tunnel at Central Square.

Add crosswalks leading to LoPresti Park and Lombardi Memorial Park.
Accessible crosswalks that align with existing walking patterns to these open spaces are missing. A crosswalk is needed at the Sumner Street/Liverpoool Street intersection to LoPresti Park, while a series of crosswalks aligning with Landing Street and Cunard Way would better connect residents to Lombardi Memorial Park.

Introduce clear corners at all crosswalks.
Parked vehicles block views of other people waiting to cross at nearly all crosswalks in Maverick Central, but parking is prohibited ahead of a crosswalk or within an intersection in Boston. Introducing clear corners at every crosswalk would reinforce this restriction and reduce the likelihood of crashes with painted or concrete curb extensions. Safety Surge street changes within Maverick Central are prioritized for 2024-2026 implementation through BTD's Safety Surge program.

Add bikeshare stations near the Paris Street Community Center, East Boston Neighborhood Health Center Taylor Building, and Lombardi Memorial Park.

FIG 01-21 SUMNER STREET AT LOPRESTI PARK
FIG XX Despite aligning directly with Liverpool Street, LoPresti Park's eastern promenade lacks a crosswalk spanning Sumner Street. Adding a crosswalk at this location would reflect existing walking patterns. The Squares and Corridors chapter makes specific recommendations for Sumner Street including shorter crosswalks and a two-way separated bike lane along the Inner Harbor side of the street to connect LoPresti Park and the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway.

Refer to the Squares & Corridors and Waterfront chapters for changes envisioned for Meridian Street, Border Street, Maverick Square and Central Square.

See "Policy Considerations for Better Bike Lanes" on page 25 for bike network recommendations.

FIG 01-22 PLAN DIAGRAM OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC REALM FOR MAVERICK CENTRAL

- NEW OR UPGRADED CROSSWALK
- NEW OR UPGRADED CROSSWALK AND PUBLIC REALM
- NEW BIKESHARE STATION
- FURTHER STUDY TO ADDRESS SPEEDING OR CUT-THROUGH TRAFFIC
- OPEN SPACE
- RECOMMENDATION IN THE SQUARES AND CORRIDORS CHAPTER

Eagle Hill and Paris Flats

This subarea stretches from the Border Street and Condor Street waterfront areas to the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway, bounded by the Meridian Street Main Street district and Day Square, and is bisected by a portion of the Bennington Street corridor. Eagle Hill was established on the upland portion of the original Noddle's Island geography and was among the first areas planned and developed in East Boston and as such has some of the oldest, most diverse housing stock in the neighborhood. Geography between Bremen Street (which as of the 1880s was the last public right of way before the waterfront) and Bennington Street, east of Meridian Street, referred to today as the Paris Flats, was established on a lowland portion of Noddle's Island and remains low-lying relative to other residential areas in East Boston and is vulnerable to flooding.

Many buildings in the area are three stories tall and contain up to three units. Rear-yard additions, like enclosed rear decks, are common. Examples of fourth story additions exist in the area but are much less common. Most buildings are close to the sidewalk edge, if not immediately abutting it, and are close to each other.

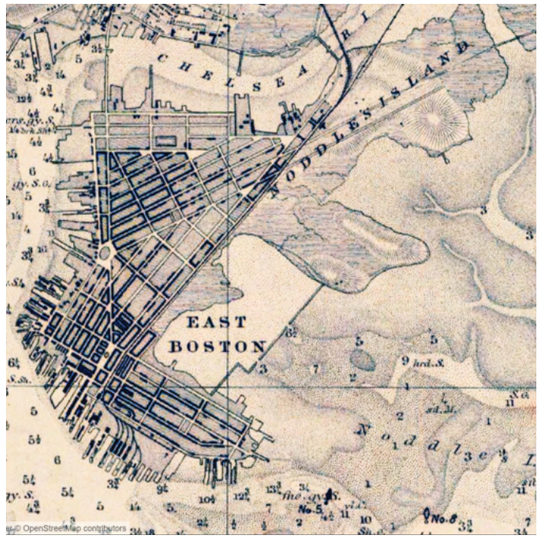


FIG 01-23 NOAA BOSTON HARBOR CHART (1878)

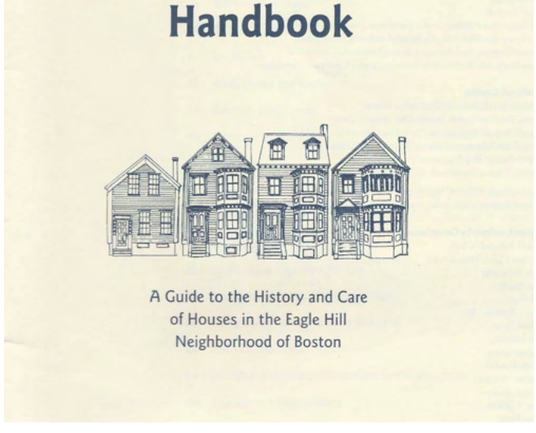


FIG 01-24 [TOP RIGHT] Residential buildings at the corner of Princeton Street and Prescott Street (2022)
FIG 01-25 [TOP LEFT] 158 and 160 Princeton Street (2022)
FIG 01-26 [BOTTOM LEFT] Angela's Cafe at the intersection of Lexington Street and Brooks Street.
FIG 01-27 [BOTTOM RIGHT] Issued by the Boston Landmarks Commission in 1997. The Commission selected Eagle Hill as a "pilot project for the Heritage Neighborhood Program which coupled National Register listing with technical assistance in the format of the Homeowner Handbook and an ongoing partnership with the Eagle Hill Civic Association."

Recommendations for Land Use and Built Form

Allow schools and childcare facilities in all Residential subdistricts.
East Boston High School is contained within a Community Facilities subdistrict. Schools and childcare facilities support residential uses and should be allowed by right in all Residential subdistricts, thus making distinct Community Facilities subdistricts unnecessary.

Combine relevant 2F-2000 and 3F-2000 subdistricts.
Residential zoning divides the area into separate 2F-2000 and 3F-2000 subdistricts, despite nearly identical parcelization patterns and building types between the two. New dimensional regulations will allow for the diversity of housing types that exist.

Connect the Central Square Community Commercial (CC) subdistrict to the Day Square Neighborhood Shopping (NS) subdistrict along Bennington Street.
Bennington Street passes through a small Multifamily Residential / Local Shopping subdistrict centered on the Brooks Street intersection. Ground floor retail uses are common along the length of the corridor.

Establish a subdistricts along Condor Street and Meridian to moderate changes in allowed height between Residential and Waterfront subdistricts.
The area is bordered by waterfront and industrial subdistricts along Meridian Street, Condor Street and Bremen Street. "Transition" residential districts will allow a modest increase in height and density to moderate differences in building scale.

FIG 01-28 LEXINGTON STREET
"End house," detached and semi-attached three-deckers, and row house buildings types are common throughout the Eagle Hill area.

FIG 01-29 EXISTING REGULATING PLAN FOR EAGLE HILL AND PARIS FLATS

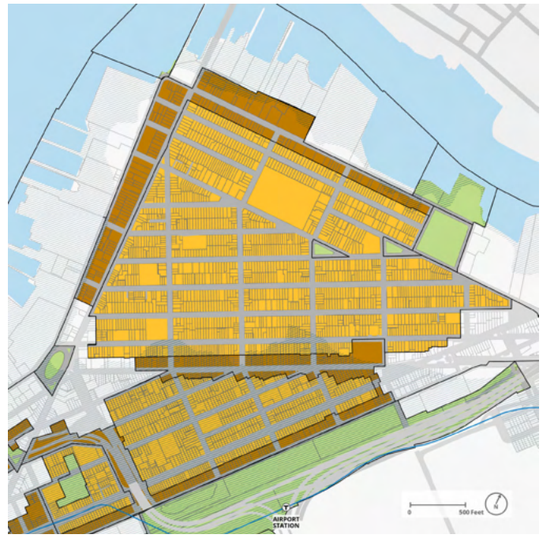


FIG 01-30 PROPOSED REGULATING PLAN FOR EAGLE HILL AND PARIS FLATS

- EBR-1 SUBDISTRICT
- EBR-2 SUBDISTRICT
- EBR-3 SUBDISTRICT
- MFR/LS SUBDISTRICT
- OPEN SPACE SUBDISTRICTS
- COASTAL FLOOD RESILIENCE OVERLAY DISTRICT

Recommendations for Transportation and Public Realm
The area is bounded by waterfront industrial uses to the north and west that are connected by major corridors accommodating truck traffic.

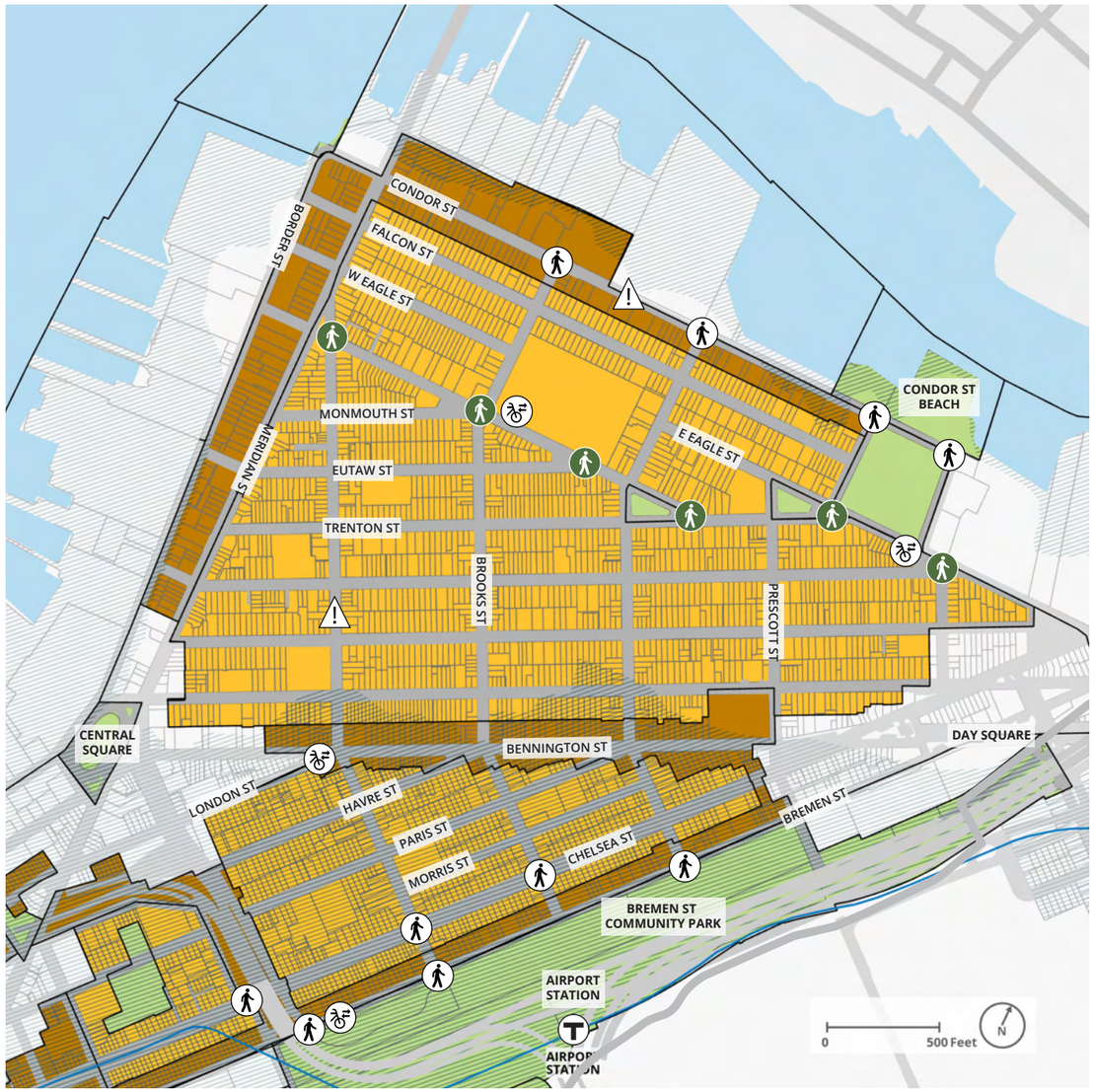
Calm traffic and clear corners on neighborhood residential streets.
Neighborhood Residential streets can feel the impact of cut-through traffic resulting from connections to the McArdle Bridge, Chelsea Street Bridge, and Route 1A. Traffic safety and diversion concerns are amplified during bridge closures, as more drivers seek alternative routes through the neighborhood. Parked vehicles block views at most crosswalks in Eagle Hill and Paris Flats, but parking is prohibited ahead of a crosswalk or within an intersection in Boston. Clear corners at every crosswalk would reinforce this restriction and reduce the likelihood of crashes with painted or concrete curb extensions. Street changes within Eagle Hill and Paris Flats are prioritized for 2024-2026 implementation through BTD's Safety Surge program.

Simplify intersections and create public space at irregular intersections along White Street and East Eagle Street.
Marion, Brooks, Putnam, and Prescott Street intersections with Bennington, White, and East Eagle Streets are irregular, wide, and dominated by parking. Reducing the size of large intersections and formalizing parking will shorten crosswalks, improve visibility, and create space for green infrastructure. Irregular intersections along Bennington Street are discussed in the Squares and Corridors chapter.

Add bikeshare stations near East Boston High School, YMCA, and at Bennington Street/Marion Street.

CONDOR STREET LOOKING EAST TOWARD BROOKS STREET

Redesign Condor Street for safer conditions with expanded public realm.
Condor Street illustrates typical but challenging conditions to resolve for transition zones along Neighborhood Residential areas: residential and industrial uses, minimal public realm, high speeds, frequent truck use, and poor visibility. Condor Street recommendations from prior neighborhood planning efforts remain unresolved, including recommendation for consistent streetscape improvements as part of a "Waterfront Way." Extending Nay Street could help divert truck traffic, which is discussed further in the Condor Street and the Lower Chelsea Creek Waterfront recommendations of the Waterfront chapter.



Refer to the Squares & Corridors and Waterfront chapters for changes envisioned for Meridian Street, Border Street, Day Square, and Eagle Square.

See "Policy Considerations for Better Bike Lanes" on page 25 for bike network recommendations.

FIG 01-31 PLAN DIAGRAM OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC REALM FOR EAGLE HILL

- NEW OR UPGRADED CROSSWALK
- NEW OR UPGRADED CROSSWALK AND PUBLIC REALM
- NEW BIKESHARE STATION
- FURTHER STUDY TO ADDRESS SPEEDING OR CUT-THROUGH TRAFFIC
- OPEN SPACE
- RECOMMENDATION IN THE SQUARES AND CORRIDORS CHAPTER

Jeffries Point and Gove Street

This subarea is bounded by the Inner Harbor waterfront along Marginal Street and Jeffries Street, Logan Airport along portions of Maverick Street and Geneva Street, and the Bremen Street corridor extending from Marginal Street to Porter Street. The area known today as Jeffries Point was established in the 1830's on a portion of the original Noddle's Island geography. Geography north of Maverick Street, known today as the Gove Street area, was created by landfill in the late 1890s. The Gove Street area remains lowlying relative to other residential areas in East Boston and is vulnerable to flooding.

The residential fabric of the Jeffries Point area contains a diverse mix of building types, similar to Eagle Hill. However, unlike Eagle Hill, block structures are more variable and are often interrupted by mid-block courts or alleys that impact resultant parcelization. Buildings in the area often use flat facades and either limited or no side setbacks, creating long, continuous streetwalls. The Gove Street area, encompassing six blocks of nearly uniform three- and four-story brick flats and apartment buildings, is unique within East Boston. Adaptive reuse of former industrial and institutional buildings establish important exceptions to prevailing height in the area.

FIG 01-32 132 MARGINAL STREET (1909)
Accessed via City of Boston Archives and Records.

FIG 01-33 [TOP LEFT] 1 Frankfort Street looking north towards Porter Street (2023)
FIG 01-34 [TOP RIGHT] 177 - 193 Webster Street (2023)
FIG 01-35 [MIDDLE LEFT] Haynes Street looking northwest towards Orleans Street. (2023)
Haynes Street demonstrates the constrained dimension of mid-block street conditions, typical of courts and alleys in the area. Note the architectural variety, a defining feature of the character of Jeffries Point: many different facade expressions, projecting elements, heights, and building materials.
FIG 01-36 [BOTTOM RIGHT] 389 Maverick Street at the intersection of Maverick Street and Jeffries Street (2023) Tawakal Halal Cafe.
FIG 01-37 [BOTTOM LEFT] McCormick Square at the intersection of Sumner Street and Webster Street (2023)

Recommendations for Land Use and Built Form
Residential fabric in Jeffries Point is currently contained within a single 3F-2000 zoning subdistrict. Much of the internal fabric of Jeffries Point would remain within a single subdistrict allowing three stories of height. New dimensional regulations will allow for the diversity of housing types that exist.

Increase allowed height in the Gove Street area to four stories.
Residential fabric in Gove Street is currently contained within a single Multifamily Residential subdistrict that restricts allowed height to three stories. Height non-conformity in the subdistrict is the rule rather than the exception, as most buildings are either three and a half or four stories tall.

Treat Maverick Street as an extension of the Maverick Square area and as a "transition" between the Jeffries Point area and the Airport.
"Transition" residential districts will allow a modest increase in height and density and encourage active ground floor uses.

FIG 01-38 231 MAVERICK STREET (2023)
Example of infill development along Maverick Street.

FIG 01-39 EXISTING REGULATING PLAN FOR JEFFRIES POINT AND GOVE STREET

FIG 01-40 PROPOSED REGULATING PLAN FOR JEFFRIES POINT AND GOVE STREET

- EBR-1 SUBDISTRICT
- EBR-2 SUBDISTRICT
- EBR-3 SUBDISTRICT
- MFR/LS SUBDISTRICT
- OPEN SPACE SUBDISTRICTS
- COASTAL FLOOD RESILIENCE OVERLAY DISTRICT

Recommendations for Transportation and Public Realm
Streets in this area connect to waterfront industrial uses or gated airport entries. Truck drivers can become lost and stuck on neighborhood streets, impacting safety for all users and delaying buses.

MBTA and City should continue to partner to upgrade Maverick Street and Sumner Street bus stops.
Route 120 bus stops lack basic passenger amenities. Existing City and State partnerships through PATI, Bus Network Redesign, and Article 80 development review can improve the accessibility, amenities, and spacing of bus stops serving Route 120 over time.

Massport and the City should continue to explore opportunities to better connect existing airport buffer paths with new extensions and improved on-street connections on Maverick Street and Marginal Street.
While the neighborhood is surrounded by parks and pathways, including the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway and waterfront parks, they do not form a legible, continuous network with each other or on-street connections. Path gateways can be uninviting or difficult to access with bikes or mobilty devices. While the City striped additional parking on Sumner Street following prior neighborhood planning efforts, previously proposed walking and biking improvements for this street remain unimplemented.

Evaluate the effectiveness of truck restriction signs and continue coordination with industrial property owners.
New truck restriction signs at the Orleans Street and Sumner Street intersection were installed in 2020.

Add bikeshare stations near Lewis Terminal, the Shipyard, Brophy Park, and at Gove Street.

GOVE STREET/ORLEANS STREET INTERSECTION

Create a welcoming and accessible gateway to the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway at the Gove Street / Orleans Street Intersection
The Greenway elevation is lower than Gove Street, creating accessibility and visibility challenges that require reimaging of the street west of Orleans Street. In 2019, the Boston Society of Landscape Architects and the Friends of the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway implemented a placemaking project that painted both sides of the Gove Street gateway. In 2021, the City implemented safety-focused changes to the Gove Street/Orleans Street intersection, including an all-way stop design, as part of the BTD GoHubs! pilot program. Further changes are anticipated as a community benefit of the Frankfort + Gove development project.

Refer to the Squares & Corridors and Waterfront chapters for Maverick Square and Meridian Street draft recommendations.

See “Policy Considerations for Better Bike Lanes” on page 25 for bike network recommendations.

FIG 01-41 PLAN DIAGRAM OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC REALM FOR JEFFRIES POINT AREA

- NEW OR UPGRADED CROSSWALK
- NEW OR UPGRADED CROSSWALK AND PUBLIC REALM
- NEW BIKESHARE STATION
- FURTHER STUDY TO ADDRESS SPEEDING OR CUT-THROUGH TRAFFIC
- OPEN SPACE
- RECOMMENDATION IN THE SQUARES AND CORRIDORS CHAPTER

Harbor View

This subarea extends north of Day Square to Orient Heights Square, bounded by Route 1A, Logan Airport and Constitution Beach. The area is bisected by the Bennington Street corridor and the Blue Line. Much of the land in this subarea was created by landfill connecting the original geography of Noddle Island and Breed Island. Much of the area remains lowlying relative to other residential areas in East Boston and is vulnerable to flooding.

A wide range of building types can be found across the area: from small, one-and-a-half story buildings to full three deckers and a small number of three-story apartment buildings. Many buildings, regardless of size, have modest front setbacks used for porches or planting, as well as larger side setbacks. As a result, buildings appear to be further apart than other areas with similar building types, such as Eagle Hill.

FIG 01-42 NOAA BOSTON INNER HARBOR CHART (1897)
Wood Island Park and blocks between Prescott Street and Parkway (now known as Neptune Road) were demolished to make way for Logan International Airport's expansion in the 1960s.

FIG 01-43 [TOP LEFT] 30 Wordsworth Street
FIG 01-44 [TOP RIGHT] Constitution Beach (2022) Image accessed via Wikimedia Commons
FIG 01-45 [BOTTOM RIGHT] Saratoga Street between Curtis Street and Moore Street
FIG 01-46 [BOTTOM LEFT] Bennington Street and Moore Street intersection

Recommendations for Land Use and Built Form
Most of Harbor View is covered by a range of two-family subdistricts, with the two exceptions of a three-family corridor along Bennington Street and a multifamily subdistrict containing Brandywyne Village. The Corridor Enhancement subdistrict extends to the edge of the Bennington Street Cemetery, including primarily residential properties around Mendoza Square between the Wood Island MBTA Station and Swift Street. The McLellan Highway Economic Development Area subdistrict extends across Addison Street, including primarily residential properties along the southwestern side of the street.

Connect the Day Square Neighborhood Shopping (NS) subdistrict to the Orient Heights Neighborhood Shopping (NS) subdistrict along Bennington Street.
To enhance Bennington's role as a major connective corridor, both sides of the street will be added to a newly created subdistrict allowing up to four residential stories. Priorities for Bennington Street are detailed further in the "Squares and Corridors" chapter.

Consolidate relevant 2F-2000, 2F-3000, 2F-4000 and 3F-2000 into a single subdistrict.
Much of the remaining fabric will be consolidated into a single subdistrict, defined by a moderate lot coverage requirement and allowing up to three stories by right. A small 2F-5000 subdistrict regulating Neptune Circle would limit allowed height to two and a half stories.

Relocate portions of the Corridor Enhancement and McLellan Highway Economic Development Area subdistricts into Neighborhood Residential zoning to better match the existing context.

FIG 01-47 SARATOGA STREET
Because the Habor View area is adjacent to several existing industrial subdistricts which have seen increased development activity, larger development projects have been constructed along streets such as Saratoga Street. New zoning will put strict limits on the size of what buildings can be built, helping to rightsize development pressure and maintain the existing scale of the area.

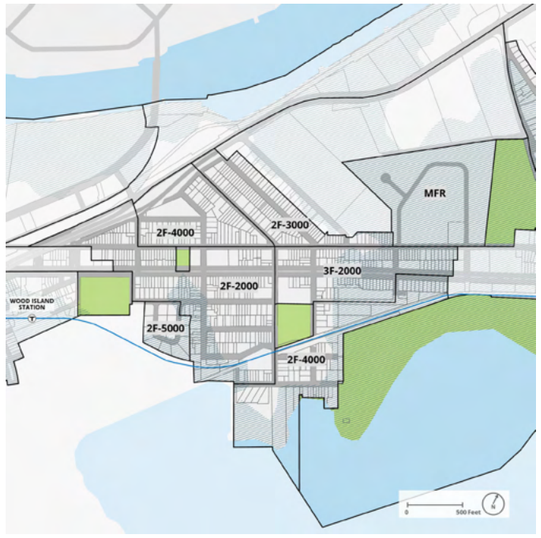


FIG 01-48 EXISTING REGULATING PLAN FOR HARBOR VIEW AREA

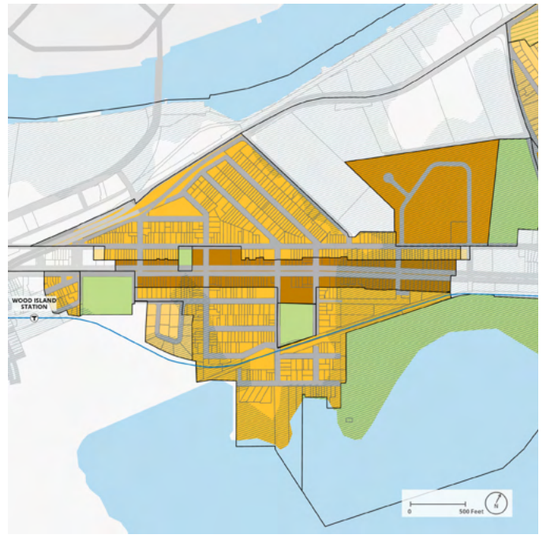


FIG 01-49 PROPOSED REGULATING PLAN FOR HARBOR VIEW AREA

- EBR-1 SUBDISTRICT
- EBR-2 SUBDISTRICT
- EBR-3 SUBDISTRICT
- MFR/LS SUBDISTRICT
- OPEN SPACE SUBDISTRICTS
- COASTAL FLOOD RESILIENCE OVERLAY DISTRICT

Recommendations for Transportation and Public Realm
The area is bisected by Bennington Street and Saratoga Street. Proximity to water, Route 1A, and the Blue Line physically limit connectivity of its streets.

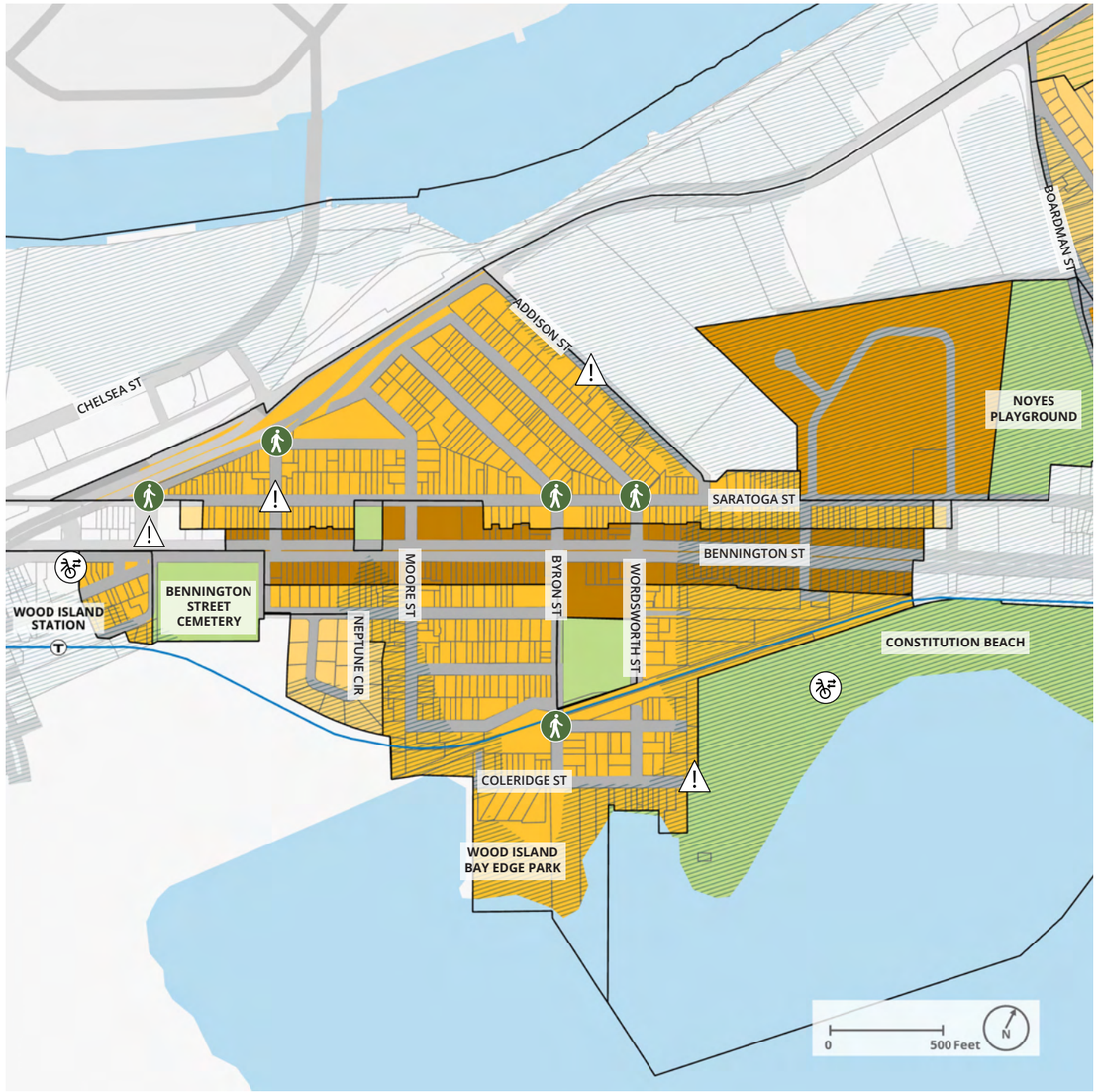
DCR and the City should study modifications to neighborhood circulation, including the Constitution Beach parking lot, to discourage cut-through traffic.
Some drivers attempt to avoid congestion in Orient Heights Square by instead driving through the Constitution Beach parking lot via Byron Street and Coleridge Street. Most streets north of Bennington Street, like Addison Street, facilitate access to Route 1A, resulting in higher traffic volumes and some speeding. Potential circulation changes should be studied in context with envisioned changes to Bennington Street. Future speed humps on Harbor View's Neighborhood Residential streets, which could help discourage cut-through traffic, would be identified and prioritized through BTD's Safety Surge program.

Create a Mary Ellen Welch Greenway access point at the Byron Street/Cowper Street intersection.
Harbor View lacks direct access to the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway. Opening the Greenway's Short Street gate or creating a new Greenway access point at Byron Street and Cowper Street using excess Massport land would provide create direct path access.

Add bikeshare stations near Wood Island Station and Constitution Beach.

CURTIS STREET, LOOKING NORTH

Rightsize Swift Street and Curtis Street
Swift Street and Curtis Street connect directly to Route 1A, and Curtis Street (shown above) is a designated National Highway System (NHS) roadway because of its connectivity to nearby Logan International Airport. While these streets provide critical regional connectivity, they are also residential in nature. Swift Street is very wide and both Swift Street and Curtis Street intersect with Route 1A on- and off-ramps. These intersections are overly wide, facilitating high turning speeds and limiting public realm opportunities. Rightsizing these streets would slow speeds, reduce crossing distances, and create space for green infrastructure strategies.



Refer to the Squares & Corridors and Waterfront chapters for changes envisioned for Chelsea Street and Bennington Street.

See "Policy Considerations for Better Bike Lanes" on page 25 for bike network recommendations.

FIG 01-50 PLAN DIAGRAM OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC REALM FOR HARBOR VIEW

- NEW OR UPGRADED CROSSWALK
- NEW OR UPGRADED CROSSWALK AND PUBLIC REALM
- NEW BIKESHARE STATION
- FURTHER STUDY TO ADDRESS SPEEDING OR CUT-THROUGH TRAFFIC
- OPEN SPACE
- RECOMMENDATION IN THE SQUARES AND CORRIDORS CHAPTER

Belle Isle Peninsula

This subarea is bordered by the Belle Isle Marsh and an MBTA rail yard to the north, Bennington Street and the Orient Heights Blue Line station to the west, Constitution Beach to the south, and Winthrop to the east. The southern edge of the area still follows the original coastline of Breed's Island, before it was connected to the rest of the neighborhood by infill. The area is bisected by Saratoga Street, one of only two land connections for the Town of Winthrop.

While most areas in East Boston have parcels that are narrow and deep, the Belle Isle peninsula has many parcels that are shorter and wider. The resulting building stock is relatively large for East Boston, especially compared to the buildings found in the neighboring Orient Heights area. These parcel dimensions also allow for generous setbacks that are often used for front porches. The concentration of four-sided Gambrel roof forms found along St. Andrews Road is uncommon within East Boston, and gives the area a unique architectural character.

FIG 01-51 AERIAL IMAGE OF THE BELLE ISLE PENINSULA CIRCA 1925.
Image accessed via https://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/8k71nz613

FIG 01-52 [TOP LEFT] Buildings along the southern edge of Saratoga Street near the Barnes Avenue and Saratoga Street intersection.
FIG 01-53 [TOP RIGHT] Bayswater Street
FIG 01-54 [BOTTOM RIGHT] Corner of Barnes Ave and St. Edward Road (2022)
FIG 01-55 [BOTTOM LEFT] South bus loop Orient Heights MBTA Station (2022)

Recommendations for Land Use and Built Form
Today, most of the area is contained within a single 2F-4000 subdistrict, with a small pocket of 3F zoning along Barnes Avenue. The Saratoga Street Economic Development Area bounds the area to the north, and a small portion of the Orient Heights Neighborhood Shopping District extends into otherwise residential zoning along Saratoga Street.

Rebalance the georaphy of the two subdistricts to account for existing building forms, land uses, and distance to the Orient Heights Blue Line station.
A subdistrict allowing for new buildings to be three stories and up to three units on most lots and six units larger lots, could be created northwest of St. Edward Road (within a quarter mile walking distance of the station). Southeast of St. Edward Road (further from the T), new buildings would be allowed to go up to 2 - 1/2 stories and up to two units, similar to what is allowed today.

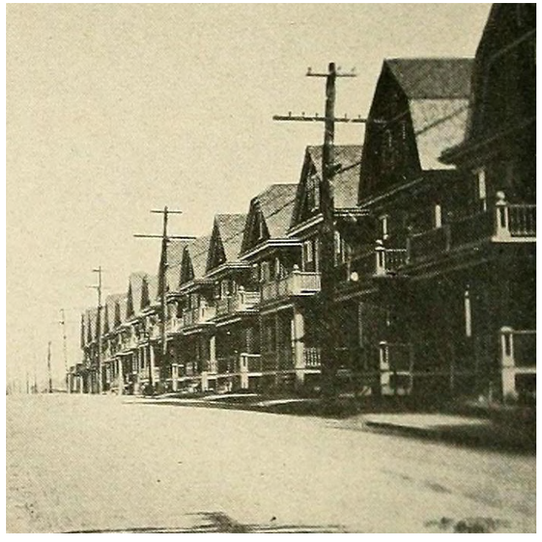


FIG 01-56 SARATOGA STREET (2022)
Many buildings in the area, such as those on St Andrew Road pictured above, have large front porches and gambrel roof forms—contributing to a unique architectural character within East Boston.

FIG 01-57 EXISTING REGULATING PLAN FOR THE BELLE ISLE PENINSULA

FIG 01-58 PROPOSED REGULATING PLAN FOR THE BELLE ISLE PENINSULA

- EBR-1 SUBDISTRICT
- EBR-2 SUBDISTRICT
- EBR-3 SUBDISTRICT
- MFR/LS SUBDISTRICT
- OPEN SPACE SUBDISTRICTS
- COASTAL FLOOD RESILIENCE OVERLAY DISTRICT

Recommendations for Transportation and Public Realm
The area is bisected by Saratoga Street, one of only two land connections for the Town of Winthrop.

The City, MBTA, and Trails Team, an interagency initiative between MassDOT, DCR, and the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, should advance design and implementation of the connection of the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway and Winthrop Greenway by repurposing the Barnes Avenue busway at Orient Heights Station
The MBTA's Bus Network Redesign creates an opportunity to rethink the Orient Heights Station area to expand and connect the emerging greenway network. Refer to the Saratoga Street Economic Development Area and the Belle Isle Marsh Waterfront recommendations in the Waterfront chapter for detail.


BAYSWATER STREET, LOOKING SOUTHEAST

Add bikeshare stations near Orient Heights Station and the Saratoga Street/Teragram Street intersection.
A GoHub! location at the intersection of Teragram Street and Saratoga Street would co-locate a bus stop, a bikeshare station, and potential Winthrop Greenway access with a new crosswalk. Refer to the Winthrop Greenway Policy Considerations discussion in the Squares and Corridors chapter for detail.

DCR and the City should study modifications to neighborhood circulation, including the Constitution Beach parking lot, to discourage cut-through traffic.
Some drivers attempt to avoid congestion in Orient Heights Square by instead driving through the Constitution Beach parking lot via Bayswater Street and Thurston Street. Potential circulation changes should be studied in context with envisioned changes to Bennington Street and Alfred B Goodearly Square (Bayswater Street, Barnes Avenue, and Saratoga Street intersection). Future speed humps on Belle Isle Peninsula's Neighborhood Residential streets, which could help discourage cut-through traffic, would be identified and prioritized through BTD's Safety Surge program.

Refer to the Squares & Corridors and Waterfront chapters for changes envisioned for Alfred B Goodearly Square and the proposed Winthrop Greenway.

See "Policy Considerations for Better Bike Lanes" on page 25 for bike network recommendations.

FIG 01-59 PLAN DIAGRAM OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC REALM FOR BELLE ISLE PENINSULA

- NEW OR UPGRADED CROSSWALK
- NEW OR UPGRADED CROSSWALK AND PUBLIC REALM
- NEW BIKESHARE STATION
- FURTHER STUDY TO ADDRESS SPEEDING OR CUT-THROUGH TRAFFIC
- OPEN SPACE
- RECOMMENDATION IN THE SQUARES AND CORRIDORS CHAPTER

Orient Heights

This subarea is bounded by Suffolk Downs to the northeast, Route 1A to the northwest, Boardman Street and Orient Heights Square to the southwest, and Bennington Street to the southeast, in addition to a small enclave of residential area on the east side of Bennington Street. The area was established on the upland portion of the original Breed Island geography and was among the later areas planned and developed in East Boston.

The topography in Orient Heights limits what can be built and where. Much of the building stock is small scale, defined by sloping roof forms, large front yards, and wide side setbacks; although more dense uses and larger buildings do exist throughout the area. Additionally, the redevelopment of Suffolk Downs to the northeast will create new pressure on the area with the creation of thousands of new housing units and jobs.

FIG 01-60 AERIAL IMAGE OF ORIENT HEIGHTS AREA LOOKING FROM CHELSEA CREEK ACROSS ROUTE 1A. (1939 - 1947)
Image accessed via Digital Commonwealth. Construction of fuel tank infrastructure in the foreground. Residential development at this time was concentrated towards the southern and eastern sides of the hill.

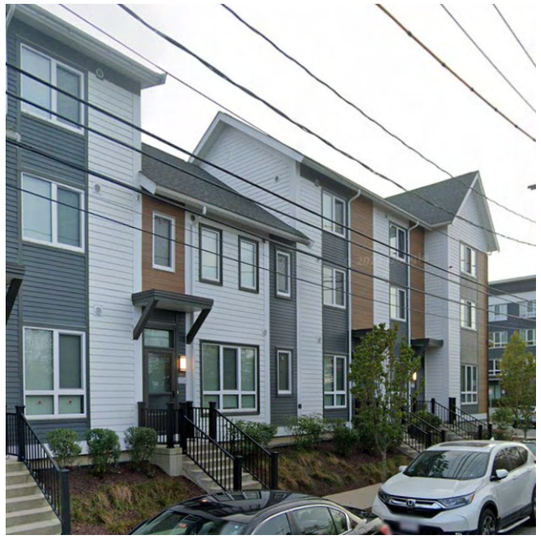


FIG 01-61
While much of Orient Heights contains small, one-to-two story buildings, larger buildings are not uncommon throughout the area, especially closer to Bennington Street and Orient Heights square. Large development proposals in the adjacent industrial and economic development areas will create additional density nearby. It is important for new zoning to mediate between these conditions and create an appropriate transition between different scales of development.

Recommendations for Land Use and Built Form

Orient Heights contains the only single-family zoning in East Boston, with some two-family subdistricts located on the front of the hill. Some pockets of three-family subdistricts exist closer to Orient Heights Square, and the Boston Housing Authority's Orient Heights community is contained by its own Multifamily Residential subdistrict. The area is bounded on all sides by the Suffolk Downs, Mclellan Highway, and Saratoga Street Economic Development Areas, as well as the Upper Chelsea Creek Waterfront Manufacturing subdistrict.

A subdistrict with a maximum building height of 2.5 stories would be created along the north portion of the area. This subdistrict would have a low maximum lot coverage requirement, larger setback requirements, and smaller maximum building dimensions to affirm the existing built character of Orient Heights.

The southeast portions of the area—the parts closest to Blue Line stations—would become part of a subdistrict allowing buildings up to three stories. Portions of the neighborhood along Bennington Street and encompassing the existing Boston Housing Authority development would become part of a subdistrict allowing up to 4 stories.

FIG 01-62 ORIENT AVENUE NEAR THE ORIENT AVENUE AND FAYWOOD AVENUE INTERSECTION. (2023)

The building on the right is assessed as a single-family dwelling, and the building on the right is assessed as a three-family dwelling. Both buildings are located in a "Two-Family" zoning subdistrict.

FIG 01-63 EXISTING REGULATING PLAN FOR ORIENT HEIGHTS

FIG 01-64 PROPOSED REGULATING PLAN FOR ORIENT HEIGHTS

- EBR-1 SUBDISTRICT
- EBR-2 SUBDISTRICT
- EBR-3 SUBDISTRICT
- MFR/LS SUBDISTRICT
- CPS SUBDISTRICT
- OPEN SPACE SUBDISTRICTS
- COASTAL FLOOD RESILIENCE OVERLAY DISTRICT

Recommendations for Transportation and Public Realm
Many of the neighborhood's streets, which respond to steep topography and are one-way, limit through traffic but create accessibility challenges.

MBTA and City should continue to partner to upgrade area bus stops.
Narrow sidewalks and steep topography create accessibility challenges at bus stops serving Route 120. Existing City and State partnerships through PATI, Bus Network Redesign, and Article 80 development review can improve the accessibility, amenities, and spacing of bus stops serving Route 120 over time. MBTA has proposed circulation changes for Route 120 as part of Bus Network Redesign.

Add bikeshare stations near the Martin Pino Community Center, YMCA, the Waldemar Avenue/ Crestwau Road intersection, Suffolk Downs Station, and Belle Isle Marsh Reservation.
Operating bikeshare stations in areas of steep topography is a known challenge. Bikeshare could be expanded around the base of the hill where terrain is flatter and locations would best serve transit, community destinations, and greater population density.

Redesign Waldemar Avenue for safer conditions with expanded public realm.
Waldemar Avenue's connection to Route 1A encourages higher traffic volumes and its straight alignment and lack of intersections encourages speeding. While Waldemar Avenue is not eligible for speed humps, its design will be explored through future phases of the Suffolk Downs Redevelopment as new residences and open spaces are constructed.

ORIENT AVENUE AT SEAVIEW AVENUE, LOOKING NORTH

Simplify intersections and create public space at irregular intersections along Orient Avenue and Faywood Avenue.
Neighborhood topography can result in overly wide intersections that have very long crosswalks and poor visibility. Though only accommodating a single travel lane, the crosswalk spanning Seaview Avenue at the intersection with Orient Avenuem, shown above, exceeds 100 feet. Rightsizing this intersection, and other similar intersections, would shorten crosswalks, slow speeds, improve visibility, and create space for accessible curb ramps and green infrastructure. Prior planning efforts have resulted in intersection improvements, like Faywood Avenue and Crestway Road.

Refer to the Squares & Corridors and Waterfront chapters for changes envisioned for Orient Heights Square, Suffolk Downs Square, and Bennington Street.

See "Policy Considerations for Better Bike Lanes" on page 25 for bike network recommendations.

FIG 01-65 PLAN DIAGRAM OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC REALM FOR ORIENT HEIGHTS

- NEW OR UPGRADED CROSSWALK
- NEW OR UPGRADED CROSSWALK AND PUBLIC REALM
- NEW BIKESHARE STATION
- FURTHER STUDY TO ADDRESS SPEEDING OR CUT-THROUGH TRAFFIC
- OPEN SPACE
- RECOMMENDATION IN THE SQUARES AND CORRIDORS CHAPTER


Maverick Square


Central Square

Day Square


Meridian Street


Orient Heights Square


Bennington Street


Suffolk Downs Square

02. Squares and Corridors

Squares and Corridors are important points of gathering and connection within a neighborhood. They provide essential goods and services to local residents, and create important job and entrepreneurial opportunities for the broader East Boston community. Squares and Corridors also operate as gateways, connecting East Boston to important regional destinations. Planning for the future of these areas must leverage transit-oriented development opportunities to deliver mixed-use districts supported by active and connected public spaces.

In this section, learn about:

Context

East Boston is supported by four main squares and three main corridors. A fifth square is contemplated by the Suffolk Downs redevelopment project.

East Boston has four main squares including Maverick Square, Central Square, Day Square, and Orient Heights Square. A fifth square, referred to here as Suffolk Downs Square, will emerge with the construction of the adjacent Belle Isle Square within the Suffolk Downs Redevelopment site. Connections between the squares occur primarily along Meridian Street, Bremen Street, and Bennington Street, with a future connection to be made between Orient Heights Square and Suffolk Downs Square along Walley Street. While each square and corridor has a unique history and identity, they share several features in common.

All Square and Corridor areas have direct access to transit.
Maverick Square, Day Square, Orient Heights Square, and Suffolk Downs Square are each within a 5-minute walk from an MBTA Blue Line station. Maverick Square and Central Square are located along MBTA Key Bus routes. With the exception of Suffolk Downs Square, all squares are served by local bus connections. Maverick Square will have access to a ferry terminal. A temporary ferry terminal was installed at Lewis Mall in 2020.

Squares and Corridors, and the networks that serve them, are vulnerable to flooding.
Portions of all Square and Corridor areas are vulnerable to coastal flooding associated with sea level rise and flooding associated with major storm events. This vulnerability is projected to increase over the next century. A quarter of East Boston's major streets and four of the five Blue Line stations in East Boston are vulnerable to flooding today (Maverick Station, Airport Station, Wood Island Station, and Orient Heights Station). By 2070, more than 80 percent of East Boston's major streets and all Blue Line stations in East Boston will be threatened by flooding.

Squares are often neighborhood heat islands.
Heat islands are areas that tend to be hotter on average than the surrounding area. Due to limited tree canopy and abundant pavement, East Boston's squares are among the neighborhoods hottest areas. The City is embarking on an Urban Forest Plan to establish a vision and implementation plan to build on the City's tree canopy goals that are aligned with the goals of Imagine Boston 2030 and Climate Ready Boston.

FIG 02-01 DIAGRAM OF SQUARES AND CORRIDORS
Existing zoning identifies these areas as Neighborhood Shopping (NS), Multi-family Residential / Local Shopping (MFR / LS), and Community Commercial (CC). Recommendations for zoning in these areas would categorize all three existing subdistricts as Mixed-use (MU) and would create subdistricts based on building height including 3-story (MU3), 4-story (MU4), and 5-story (MU5) subdistricts.

SQUARES AND CORRIDORS CHARACTER AREAS
1/4 MILE WALKING RADIUS
OPEN SPACE

Policy Considerations for Supporting Small Businesses

Small and local businesses contribute significantly to the character of East Boston's Squares and Corridors.

East Boston's economy is driven primarily by two different commercial scales and uses: transportation and airport-related operations, and small businesses with 50 or fewer employees. Micro-businesses (five or fewer employees) comprise 49 percent of all businesses in East Boston. Another 42 percent of businesses in East Boston have 5–49 employees, meaning that more than 90 percent of businesses in East Boston are small businesses.

Small businesses are highly concentrated but not limited to Squares and Corridors. In these geographies, the majority of businesses service residents with ground-floor retail, accommodations, and food services. There are also many small professional offices offering finance, insurance, and information services or health care and social assistance. These businesses reflect the diversity of East Boston's residents, with many Spanish-speaking and immigrant-owned establishments.

Throughout the planning process, residents have stated that it is a priority to maintain and support existing small businesses. New investment in neighborhoods can cause changes that directly or indirectly force people and businesses to move, like the demolition of buildings or rapid increases in rents. It is a goal for the City of Boston to support growth and investment in East Boston without displacement. Rapid escalation in real estate values and commercial rent can be a product of a sudden influx of investment. Instead, gradual, sustained, and smaller-scale improvements in buildings and public space over time support stable and sustainable growth.

Zoning strategies—the focus of PLAN: East Boston's recommendations—can increase opportunities for business operations in the neighborhood but are limited in their ability to directly support businesses. Examples of zoning strategies that address small businesses include limits on floor plate sizes, active ground-floor requirements, and expanded geographies allowing as-of-right commercial uses. These measures help make it easier to open a business and encourage engagement between commercial spaces and the public realm.

Policy strategies can directly address existing businesses. Today, the Small Business Unit (SBU) through the Office of Economic Development supports small businesses with technical assistance, grants, and other programming. Policy related to economic development and supporting small businesses is enacted at a city-wide scale, and is a continued priority for the City through the work of the SBU and Office of Economic Development.

The SBU offers resources for small businesses needing support with internal processes—like marketing, legal, and accounting—and permitting and licensing processes—like coordinating certification for local, women-, minority-, and veteran-owned businesses—through the Equity and Inclusion Unit. Through grants and technical support for storefront beautification, including business signage and facade improvements, the SBU directly invests in existing businesses. Smaller-scale investments in businesses support the vision for sustainable investment without displacement.

PLAN: East Boston is continuing to coordinate with the Office of Economic Development to identify strategies to support small businesses and ensure that commercial retail continues to reflect the needs of East Boston's diverse population.

FIG 02-02 9-12 CENTRAL SQUARE, 2018 [ABOVE]

FIG 02-03 9-12 CENTRAL SQUARE, 2017 [BELOW]
With the assistance of East Boston Main Streets and Restore programs through the Office of Economic Development, 9-12 Central Square underwent a facade renovation and restoration of the original ornamental stone work and brick. The building owner received architectural and graphic design assistance through the Restore program to assist with the vision of transforming the first-floor commercial facade of the building and received $55,000 from the City towards the construction phase of the project.

Policy Considerations for Increasing Access to Travel Options

As important points of connection, Squares and Corridors are ideal locations for expanding access to transit, carshare, and bikeshare.

On average, 38 percent of East Boston households do not have access to a vehicle. Neighborhood population is growing faster than passenger vehicle registrations, and an East Boston resident is less likely to own a vehicle than the typical Boston resident. East Boston residents are more likely to commute by transit than any other Boston neighborhood, but some established and emerging job centers are inaccessible by transit within a reasonable amount of time. East Boston needs more and better travel options to align with its existing population and to encourage alternatives to driving for new residents.

It is the City of Boston's goal to ensure that all residents are within a 10-minute walk to frequent transit, carshare, and bikeshare by 2030. Residents also need safe, comfortable, and reliable travel networks to make these options viable choices for everyday trips. Together, these policy goals are integral to the development of recommendations for PLAN: East Boston. This is especially true for Squares and Corridors, which are not only important points of connection for the neighborhood but also locations with the most congestion and the most crashes requiring Emergency Medical Services response.

In addition to developing concepts as part of PLAN: East Boston, the BPDA is working closely with the Boston Transportation Department to bring travel options to East Boston's Squares and Corridors through the GoHub! program. GoHubs! make it more convenient for people to get around by offering more options to travel, meet up, and find their way. They are identifiable places where travel options, information, and placemaking elements are combined near bus stops, Blue Line stations, and bikeshare stations. GoHubs! can include amenities like carshare, pick-up and drop-off for ridehailing, electric vehicle charging, information kiosks, seating, and public art.

Implementation of GoHubs! is a key strategy in achieving the City's ambitious 2030 transportation and equity goals. In 2020, the Boston Transportation Department launched a pilot GoHub! program throughout East Boston, installing transportation services and amenities in eight locations based on community input, proximity to bus stops and Blue Line stations, and existing gaps in transportation access. Locations and services are highlighted on the following page. As part of the GoHub! at Gove Street near the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway, new stop signs will be added to the Gove Street and Orleans Street intersection.

FIG 02-04 GOHUB! PILOT LOCATIONS
The pilot GoHubs! program added three new bikeshare stations (33 new bikeshare bikes), 14 bike parking racks, 14 new carshare spaces, and four smart benches with Wi-Fi and personal device charging in East Boston. Travel options were paired with information signs to make locations easily identifiable. The Boston Transportation Department is evaluating the pilot program to help the City understand how well GoHubs! achieve their intended goals and outcomes. For more information visit www.boston.gov/gohubs (Map credit: Boston Transportation Department)

Policy Considerations for Calibrating Off-street Parking Requirements

Availability of parking is linked to more driving, higher housing costs, and more greenhouse gas emissions.

Curbside regulations may alter how spaces are used, but the supply of on-street parking spaces is relatively stable. Factors that determine this supply, such block length and street width, rarely, if ever, change. Off-street parking, however, can increase as parcels are redeveloped. East Boston's existing zoning code requires this increase. Zoning dictates how many off-street parking spaces are required by use in different districts. Residential uses typically require 1–2 spaces per unit, while commercial uses can require 2 spaces per 1,000 SF for retail or 0.3 spaces per seat for a restaurant, for example.

Off-street parking can be convenient for some, but increasing the supply can have many negative consequences. Off-street parking costs $28,000 to $53,000 per space to build in Boston, and more if structured or underground.[1] Parking costs are passed on to building occupants, whether they own a car or not, and can cost renters an additional $1,700 per year in housing costs.[2] Off-street parking uses space that could otherwise be used for housing, active ground-floor uses, or open space.

The *Phase II Report* (2019) of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's (MAPC) Perfect Fit Parking Initiative found that on-street parking is overbuilt in the Boston region. Within Boston, MAPC surveyed 55 buildings and found a 50 percent oversupply of off-street parking (average parking supply of about 0.75 spaces per unit and an average parking demand of about 0.5 spaces per unit). Within East Boston, MAPC found a 31 percent oversupply of off-street parking at The Eddy and 245 Sumner Street.

Parking is often a contentious issue for residents who drive and also rely on availability of on-street parking. However, many East Boston households do not have access to a vehicle. As of 2018, East Boston residents outnumber registered passenger vehicles 3 to 1. As part of PLAN: East Boston, the process can reconsider how much parking is required for residential, commercial, and other uses. The process could also consider an approach that other cities are trying: maximum, rather than minimum, parking requirements. The Boston Transportation Department already incorporates maximum parking ratios for large developments (≥50,000 GSF). Requirements could also vary by proximity to Blue Line stations, a strategy that the Mayor's Housing Innovation Lab employs for developments participating in the Compact Living Pilot.

1 Rider Levett Bucknall. First Quarter 2020: Quarterly Construction Cost Report.
2 Gabbe,C. J. & Pierce, G.. (2016). Hidden Costs and Deadweight Losses: Bundled Parking and Residential Rents in the Metropolitan United States.

FIG 02-05 AREAS WITHIN AN 5-MINUTE WALK TO A BLUE LINE STATION
Most of East Boston's residents have access to transportation options like rapid transit, Key Buses, bikeshare, and carshare. However, East Boston's zoning code does not consider access to transportation options when defining minimum off-street parking ratios. That means a building is required by zoning to have the same quantity of off-street parking if its proposed in Maverick Square, where Blue Line access is very high, or if its proposed in Harbor View, where Blue Line access is lower. (Map credit: Toole Design Group)

AREAS WITHIN A 5-MINUTE WALK TO A BLUE LINE STATION

Key Recommendations for Land Use and Built Form

Squares and Corridors are suited for active ground-floor uses, supported by a higher density of people and businesses.

Zoning and design guidelines work together to shape building form and are important planning tools. Zoning and design guidelines must reflect the priorities set out by high-level planning goals. The following strategies are unique to buildings located in neighborhood Squares and Corridors, and inform recommendations for zoning and design guidelines in these areas.

Encourage active uses at the sidewalk.
Retail uses and their patrons contribute to active streets and sidewalks. In addition to providing essential goods and services, businesses are important attractors and contribute significantly to the character of Squares and Corridors. Other uses, like parking or residential uses, do not contribute to active streets and sidewalks, and may not be desirable at the ground-floor in squares and along some corridors. Zoning can restrict ground-floor uses in these areas to commercial activity.

Concentrate added height and density near transit.
Directing added height and density to East Boston's Squares and Corridors is related to preserving low-scale development in neighborhood residential areas. Added height and density are appropriate in Squares and Corridors for two reasons. First, all Squares and Corridors in East Boston are well-served by transit. Promoting height, density, and a walkable and inviting public realm near transit is referred to as "transit-oriented development." Increased density near transit, in coordination with decreased parking requirements, helps reduce an over-reliance on cars, a critical strategy for achieving safety, sustainability, and climate resilience goals. Second, ground-floor commercial uses, particularly retail, depend on some amount of density to support them. At the scale of an individual building, retail spaces are competing with more-profitable residential uses, and are often subsidized by added residential uses above the ground-floor. At the scale of an entire square, retail uses depend on increased density to generate added foot traffic and, ultimately, patrons. Added height and density in Squares and Corridors should be transitioned away from neighborhood residential areas.

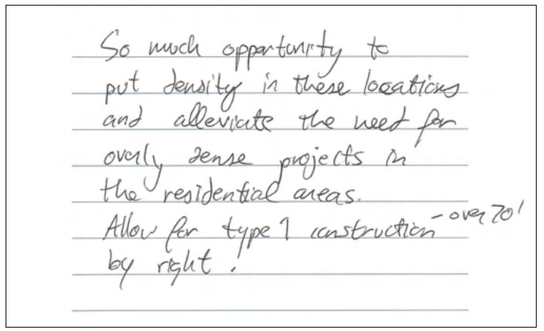


FIG 02-06 A SELECTION OF COMMENTS FROM NEIGHBORHOOD WALKING TOURS DURING APRIL, MAY, AND JUNE, 2019

Key Recommendations for Transportation and Public Realm

Squares and Corridors are important points of gathering and connection within a neighborhood. They are fundamentally a type of public space.

Most public space in Squares and Corridors is defined by streets and sidewalks. Boston follows a Complete Streets approach when designing streets. The approach puts walking, biking, and taking transit on equal footing with driving. Applying these guidelines to Squares and Corridors often requires the reallocation of public space.

Prioritize the quality of the pedestrian experience.
Squares and Corridors are places where people gather and interact, facilitating social exchange and creating economic value. They are the most well-suited locations for public space. Successful public spaces focus on the pedestrian experience by creating a venue for interaction, providing comfortable amenities, and safely connecting to buildings with ground-floor retail and civic activity. Reclaiming underused pavement, reducing pedestrian exposure to vehicles, and introducing amenities such as seating, plantings, and shade can help transform East Boston's Squares and Corridors into public "living rooms."

Balance and manage curbside space.
Curbside space is a limited and valuable commodity, creating competition between residents, businesses, buses, and other users. At the same time, extra pavement in Squares and Corridors has resulted in more surface parking than would otherwise be possible on a typical street. Street space in East Boston's Squares and Corridors can be rebalanced to unlock right-of-way for new public space and expanded transit access. New policies, regulations, and technology can help manage curbside space more efficiently.

Leverage opportunities in the public realm to incorporate green infrastructure.
A Complete Streets approach creates a canvas for resilient infrastructure strategies that protect against flooding, rising tides, and extreme heat. Critical to East Boston, coordinated near- and long-term actions can create a coastal flood protection system integrated in a new network of open spaces and Green Links connections.

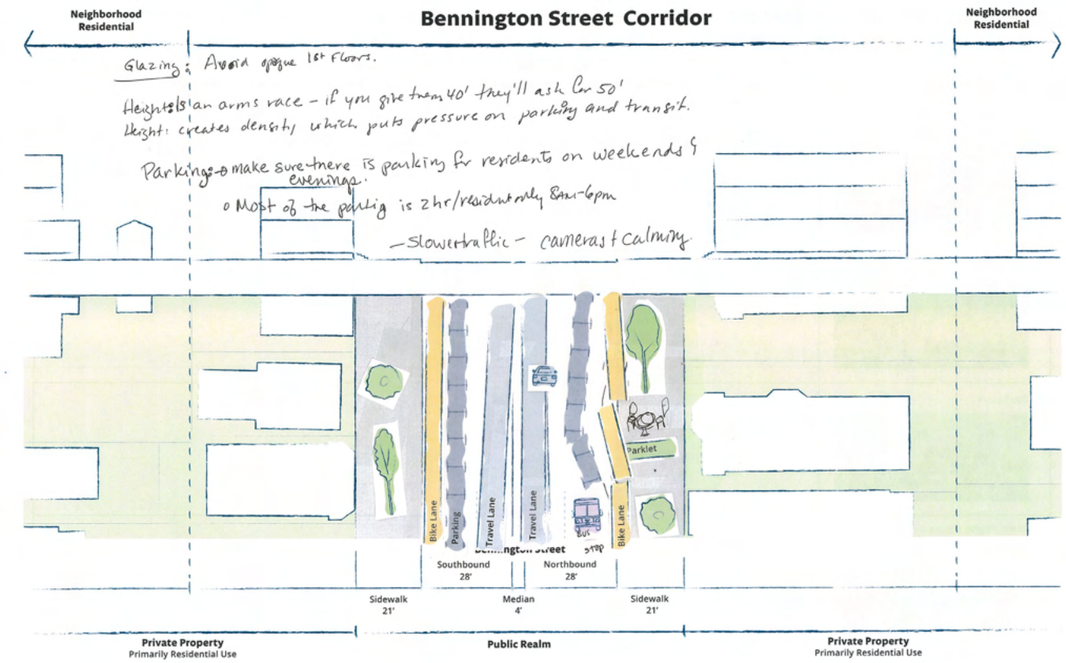


FIG 02-07 BENNINGTON STREET CORRIDOR WORKSHOP EXAMPLE [ABOVE]
An example vision for Bennington Street submitted by a member of the public at a community workshop focused on mixed-use nodes and corridors on November 06, 2019. Most participants desired fewer travel lanes, more planting areas, and bike lanes on Bennington Street.

FIG 02-08 PHOTOGRAPH [BELOW]
On-street parking re-purposed as outdoor dining for La Hacienda in Central Square (Photo credit: Jacob Wessel)

Maverick Square

An important regional gateway, Maverick Square should be a neighborhood destination and transit hub.

Maverick Square, formerly Hotel Square, is the oldest commercial center in East Boston. The East Boston Company established ferry service to Rhowes Wharf in 1833. The opening of the East Boston Tunnel in 1904, which allowed streetcars to travel under Boston Harbor to downtown, firmly established Maverick Square as a regional transportation hub. Today, nearly half of all bus and subway trips in East Boston start in Maverick Square.

Neighborhood-serving commercial uses line the square while Maverick Station (Blue Line), Key Bus routes (116/117), local bus routes (114, 120, and 121), and bikeshare create all-day activity. Building heights are varied and several one- and two-story commercial buildings dot the square, despite close proximity to Maverick Station.

Development in the heart of the square has been limited. The East Boston Neighborhood Health Center redeveloped 79 Paris Street, the former Sturtevant House site, in 2010, delivering roughly 49,000 square feet of office, clinical, and active ground-floor retail use. It is an invaluable neighborhood asset. In 2019, the BPDA approved two projects, 9 Chelsea Street and 2–10 Maverick Square, which combined will deliver approximately 50,000 square feet of commercial space including active ground-floor retail uses.

Today, Maverick Square prioritizes buses and motor vehicles within the square's interior, and consolidates public realm amenities along the square's commercial edges. People walking are in frequent conflict with motor vehicles because of limited crossing opportunities and the abundance of parking and loading activity. Curbside space for bus loading is limited and buses are often blocked by motor vehicles.

The Lewis Mall Ferry Terminal (under construction) and the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway are located two blocks away, but both lack legible connections to Maverick Square. All streets connecting to Maverick Square are considered high-stress and unsuitable for bicyclists of all ages and abilities.

FIG 02-09 MAVERICK SQUARE, 1918 [ABOVE]
Source: Historic New England.

FIG 02-10 MAVERICK SQUARE, 2019 [BELOW]
Maverick Square lacks legible connections to the Greenway and Lewis Mall, despite their proximity. Source: Google Earth (2019)

Recommendations for Land Use and Built Form
Maverick Square is an important place of gathering, centered on a regional transit hub. It is appropriate that allowed density leverage proximity to transit and that buildings contribute active ground-floor uses to support a vibrant public realm. Most of the area is contained within a single Neighborhood Shopping (NS) zoning subdistrict that limits allowed height to 35' and allowed FAR to 1.0.

Increase allowed height and density in the Neighborhood Shopping subdistrict.
Maverick Square is a wide (110') right-of-way, well suited for added height and density. Before it was demolished in 1927, the Sturdevant House was five stories. Zoning should increase allowed height and density across the entire subdistrict and particularly for those parcels immediately fronting the square.

Prioritize active ground floor uses in Maverick Square and its intersections with Meridian Street, Chelsea Street, and Sumner Street.
The ground-floors of buildings along these edges should be dedicated primarily to retail uses and should restrict inactive uses like parking, residential, and commercial offices. Curb cuts along these streets should be limited so as to not interfere with pedestrian movements. The Mary Ellen Welch Greenway should be given similar consideration. While retail uses may not be viable along the Greenway given its mid-block configuration, inactive uses like parking garages should be avoided or appropriately distanced from the right-of-way and screened.

FIG 02-13 SOUTHEAST CORNER OF MAVERICK SQUARE AT SUMNER STREET, 2021
Many of the buildings facing Maverick Square could accommodate greater height and density.

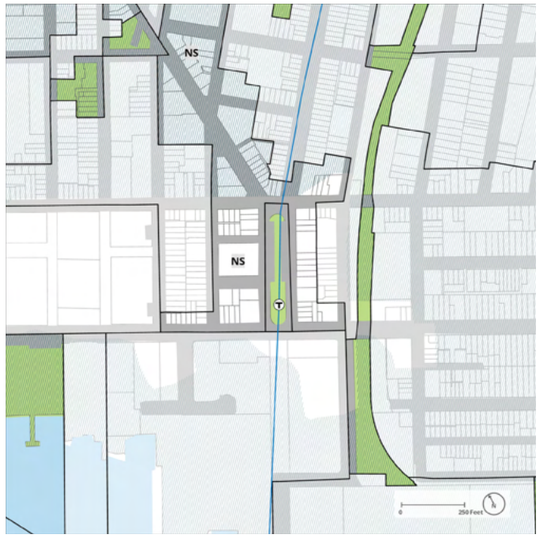


FIG 02-14 EXISTING REGULATING PLAN FOR MAVERICK SQUARE

FIG 02-15 PROPOSED REGULATING PLAN FOR MAVERICK SQUARE

MFR/LS SUBDISTRICT
CC OR NS SUBDISTRICT
OPEN SPACE SUBDISTRICTS
COASTAL FLOOD RESILIENCE OVERLAY DISTRICT

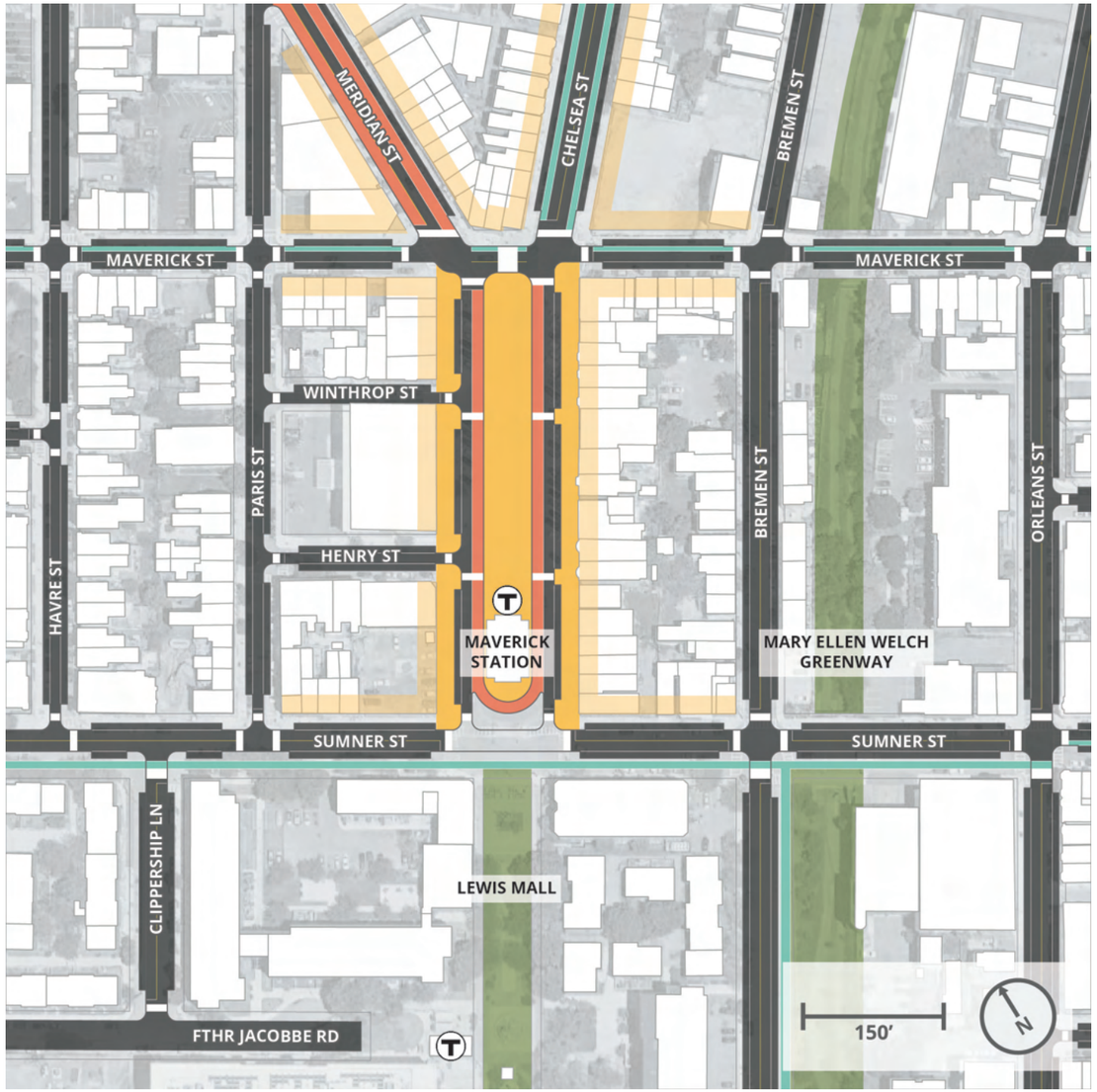
Recommendations for Transportation and Public Realm

Create a green and flexible public gathering space in the heart of Maverick Square.
Maverick Square is East Boston's front door but is largely designed as a parking lot. A large, centralized public space would create a more welcoming entry to the neighborhood by reorienting the square around Maverick Station, which enlivens the area with all-day foot traffic. This public space would better serve residents, businesses, and visitors alike by providing amenities for public life and creating space for gatherings, markets, and events. Expanded public realm creates space for green infrastructure, including new tree canopy.

Make space for buses within Maverick Square.
Transit—including the transfer between buses and subway—is the key ingredient for Maverick Square's vitality. Yet buses are routinely stuck behind congestion and curbside conflicts created by motor vehicles. A continuous dedicated bus lane within the square would make bus service more reliable, predictable, and accessible. Dedicated bus lanes would enable the MBTA to spread out bus boarding areas along the proposed public space and would allow greater flexibility during emergency shuttle operations. Maverick Square bus lanes would connect to proposed bus lanes on Meridian Street, discussed further in the Meridian Street / Border Street section of this document.

Modernize curbside regulations.
The vision concept would preserve on-street parking and loading along the outer commercial edges of Maverick Square, but eliminate spaces along the median. Recommendations for the quantity of parking spaces and regulation of curbside space, including bus stops, loading, pick-up/drop-off, and parking, would be identified as the Maverick Square vision concept is refined through a design and community engagement process.

FIG 02-16 BUSES QUEUING AT MAVERICK STATION, 2020
Of all the people arriving at Maverick Station, 44 percent take the bus and 52 percent walk or bike. All told, 96 percent of people accessing Maverick Station either walk, bike, or take the bus, an increase from 87 percent a decade ago.



The Maverick Square vision concept would create a new public space of nearly half an acre by reimagining excess street space that has, over time, been given over to motor vehicle uses.

FIG 02-17 PLAN DIAGRAM OF MAVERICK SQUARE VISION

- PARKS / OPEN SPACE
- IMPROVED PUBLIC SPACE
- DEDICATED BUS LANE
- BIKE LANE
- PRIORITY EDGES

Vision for the Future of Maverick Square

Central Square

The area presents an important opportunity to connect the Inner Harbor waterfront to the East Boston Main Street district.

Central Square, also known as William Kelly Square, is located at the intersection of Meridian Street, Border Street, Saratoga Street, and Porter Street, centered on Alfred L. Bertulli Park. Central Square was planned as a commercial node on the route between Chelsea and downtown Boston and was serviced by a streetcar line from the 1860s through the early decades of the 20th century. Today the area is an anchor of the East Boston Main Streets district, and many businesses providing necessary goods and services line three-quarters of the square. The remaining edge, defined by property along Border Street, presents primarily surface parking and single-story commercial buildings associated with Liberty Plaza. Despite it's close proximity to the waterfront, Central Square lacks any meaningful physical or visual connection to the Inner Harbor. Central Square itself is at significant risk of inland flooding associated with climate change and will rely on district-scale flood infrastructure along the Inner Harbor waterfront for protection. Study of district-scale flood protection, documented in *Coastal Resilience Solutions for East Boston and Charlestown* (2017) identified the Border Street waterfront as a critical flood pathway, and envisioned a network of elevated parks, Harborwalks, docks, and nature-based features to address these risks and accomplish important community objectives for waterfront access. Areas west of Border Street are addressed in the "Waterfront and Evolving Industrial Areas" chapter.

FIG 02-19 PLAN DIAGRAM OF ALFRED L. BERTULLI PARK (2018).
Image accessed via Klopfer Martin Design Group project website. Significant reconfiguration of surrounding streets was completed in 2018. The oval park survives from the original 1833 plan for East Boston.

FIG 02-20 [LEFT TOP]
Porter Street and Bennington Street intersection from Meridian Street. (2022) Image accessed via Google Street View.
FIG 02-21 [LEFT MIDDLE]
Surface parking lots associated with 184 - 220 Border Street, known as Liberty Plaza. (2023).
FIG 02-22 [LEFT BOTTOM]
Porter Street and Bennington Street intersection from Meridian Street. (2011) Image accessed via Google Street View.
FIG 02-23 [RIGHT]
Alfred L. Bertulli Park (2018). The East Boston Farmer's Market operates in Central Square during summer. Image accessed via Klopfer Martin Design Group project website.

Recommendations for Land Use and Built Form
Central Square is an important place of gathering, serviced by access to local and key bus routes. It is appropriate that allowed density leverage proximity to transit and that buildings contribute active ground-floor uses to support a vibrant public realm. Today the entirety of the Central Square area is contained within a single Community Commercial (CC) zoning subdistrict that limits allowed height to 35' and allowed FAR to 1.0.

Increase allowed height and density in the Community Commercial subdistrict.
Central Square is a wide right-of-way, properties immediately fronting the square are particularly well suited for added height and density.

Prioritize active ground floor uses in Central Square and along portions of Meridian Street, Porter Street, and Bennington Street.
The ground-floors of buildings along these edges should be dedicated primarily to retail uses and should restrict inactive uses like parking, residential, and commercial offices. Curb cuts along these streets should be limited so as to not interfere with pedestrian movements.

Support adaptive reuse of existing structures.
Massachusetts Historical Commission documented several buildings of historic significance including 35 Central Square (1902), the former Central Square Theatre (now Starlight Bowling) at 36-44 Bennington Street (1914), and the former East Boston Relief Station (1907) at 14 Porter Street in a 1997 survey of the Central Square area.

Modify the Community Commercial subdistrict boundary to move property west of Border Street into a mixed-use Waterfront subdistrict.
Parcels west of Border Street are significantly larger than those in elsewhere in Central Square. Property west of Border Street faces challenges and opportunities similar to other waterfront areas. Priorities for property along Border Street are included in the "Waterfront and Evolving Industrial Areas" chapter.

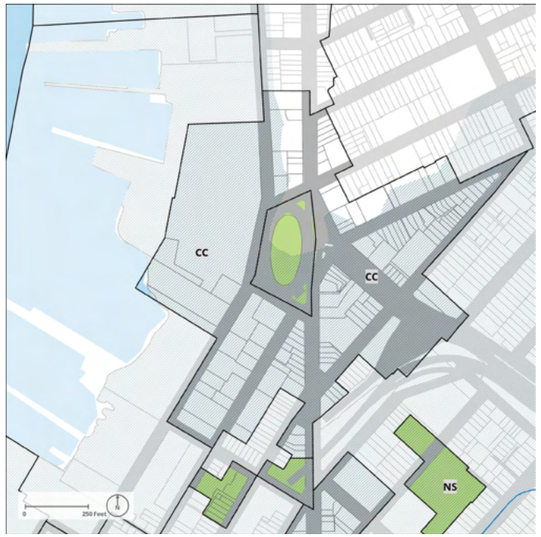


FIG 02-24 EXISTING REGULATING PLAN FOR CENTRAL SQUARE

FIG 02-25 PROPOSED REGULATING PLAN FOR CENTRAL SQUARE

MFR/LS SUBDISTRICT
CC OR NS SUBDISTRICT
OPEN SPACE SUBDISTRICTS
COASTAL FLOOD RESILIENCE OVERLAY DISTRICT

Recommendations for Transportation and Public Realm

Connect the Inner Harbor waterfront and Border Street separated bike lanes to the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway with State- and City-owned streets.
Central Square is East Boston's most disconnected major square from the Green Links network. A new shared-use path connection from the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway to the Inner Harbor waterfront could be created by rethinking Visconti Road along Route 1A inbound and Porter Street west of Visconti Road. This connection would continue across Meridian Street to follow the contour of Alfred L. Bertulli Park's northern and eastern edges, ultimately connecting to the envisioned Border Street separated bike lanes. Concepts envisioned for Meridian Street and Border Street are shown in the plan diagram on the following page and described further in "Meridian Street Corridor" on page 91.

MassDOT owns Visconti Road. Continued coordination with MassDOT, Boston Transportation Department, and Boston Parks & Recreation Department is critical to the feasibility of this connection.

Create public realm and eliminate regional cut-through traffic on London Street with access management.
London Street north of Porter Street is a shortcut for drivers accessing the Sumner Tunnel from Bennington Street or Marion Street. Disconnecting this block of London Street from Porter Street, and instead connecting it to Havre Street via the adjacent municipal lot, eliminates its attractiveness for drivers accessing the Sumner Tunnel while retaining access for abutters. The simplified intersection of London Street and Porter Street would eliminate some conflicts with people walking and biking and create new City-owned land for expanded public realm, green infrastructure, and design flexibility for a new Henry Selvitella Overpass in the future. Today's pedestrian overpass, which spans Route 1A and links Havre Street and Paris Street, was constructed in the late 1960s and does not meet contemporary accessibility standards.

The City of Boston intends to launch a design study to evaluate coastal resilience strategies along the Border Street waterfront in East Boston.
Given the near-term flood risk and extent of potential flooding in the area, developing actionable coastal resilience strategies for Border Street is a key next step in implementing the City's Climate Ready Boston initiative. The City will engage with a stakeholder working group consisting of private property owners along the waterfront, community-based organizations, and the East Boston community more broadly to advance the design of flood protection strategies that were studied in the *2017 Climate Ready Boston plan, Coastal Resilience Solutions for East Boston and Charlestown (Phase I).*

The Central Square vision concept would connect the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway to the Inner Harbor waterfront, and create new public realm while limiting the impacts of regional cut-through traffic.

FIG 02-27 PLAN DIAGRAM OF CENTRAL SQUARE VISION

- PARKS / OPEN SPACE
- IMPROVED PUBLIC SPACE
- DEDICATED BUS LANE
- BIKE LANE
- PRIORITY EDGES

Meridian Street Corridor

Planning for the Meridian Street and Border Street pair will safely balance travel options and create opportunities to incorporate flood-resilience infrastructure.

Meridian Street and Border Street operate as a pair, making north / south connections between Maverick Square, Central Square, and the City of Chelsea. The streets are parallel from the Chelsea Creek waterfront to Central Square, and are divergent from Central Square to Maverick Square, connected via Maverick Street.

The Meridian Street bridge, now the Andrew McArdle Bridge, connecting East Boston to Chelsea over the Chelsea Creek, was opened in 1855. A Boston Landmarks Commission inventory noted that "by the early 1860s horse-drawn streetcars were in operation on this section of the street. As a result of these transportation developments, the character of Meridian Street shifted from primarily residential to a combination of commercial and residential in the third quarter of the 19th century." Today Meridian Street is the spine of the East Boston Main Streets district and hosts Key Bus routes 116/117 and local bus routes 114, 120, and 121. Meridian Street cuts diagonally though the prevailing street grid and as a result, intersections at Paris Street, Havre Street, and London Street can be difficult to traverse. Several of East Boston's most severe crash hot spots are located along Meridian Street.

FIG 02-28 [TOP] Meridian Street at Havre Street looking north. (1908) Image accessed via Historic New England website.
FIG 02-29 [BOTTOM] Meridian Street at Havre Street looking north. (2002) Image accessed via Google Street View.

A Massachusetts Historical Commission inventory report described the loss of the historic physical link between Central Square and Maverick Square further south "severed by building demolition, particularly in connection with the construction of the Sumner (1931-1934) and Callahan (1958-1961) auto tunnels to downtown Boston."

FIG 02-30 MERIDIAN STREET LOOKING SOUTH FROM DECATUR STREET. (2020)
Recent development along Meridian Street integrates two ground floor retail spaces with four stories of residential units above.

FIG 02-31 248 MERIDIAN STREET (THE SEVILLE). (2023) [TOP]
The development presents as six stories on Meridian Street and seven stories on Border Street, traversing significant change in elevation across the site.The development program included 66 dwelling units and some 15,000 square feet of retail space.
FIG 02-32 MERIDIAN STREET AT EUTAW STREET LOOKING SOUTH. (2020) [BOTTOM]
Buses operate in mixed traffic, which result in delays and unreliable service. Midday vehicle delay on Meridian Street is worse than the traditional morning and afternoon commute periods.

Recommendations for Land Use and Built Form
Building form along the corridor is varied and includes several four-story buildings from the late 19th century as well as one- and two-story commercial buildings and surface parking lots. Recent development activity along the corridor includes mixed-use mid-rise project at 248 Meridian Street (The Seville). It is appropriate that the length of Meridian Street connecting Maverick Square and Central Square support mixed-use mid-rise development. Today the corridor passes through a Neighborhood Shopping (NS) subdistrict near Maverick Square, a Community Commercial (CC) subdistrict near Central Square, a Multi-family Residential / Local Shopping (MFR/LS) subdistrict for blocks between Princeton Street and Eutaw Street, a 2F-2000 subdistrict for bocks between Eutaw Street and Condor Street, and finally between a Waterfront Manufacturing (WM) and Maritime Economic Reserve (MER) as it approaches the McArdle Bridge.

Prioritize active ground floor uses along the length of Meridian Street, especially for the segment between Maverick Square and Central Square.
As the spine of the East Boston Main Streets district, Meridian Street should be considered as having priority edges along its length from Maverick Square to Central Square. The ground floors of buildings along these edges should be dedicated primarily to retail uses and should restrict inactive uses like parking, residential, and commercial offices. Curb cuts along these streets should be limited so as to not interfere with pedestrian movements.

Consolidate the Neighborhood Shopping and Community Commercial zoning subdistricts and modify the resultant boundary in line with recommendations for Maverick Square and Central Square.

Increase allowed height and density in the consolidated Neighborhood Shopping and Community Commercial zoning subdistricts.

Create a subdistrict to regulate blocks between Border Street and Meridian Street from Princeton Street to Condor Street.
Increase allowed height in this subdistrict to appropriately transition building scale from the three-story residential subdistrict regulating Eagle Hill, to the mixed-use Waterfront subdistrict that will regulate the Border Street waterfront area.

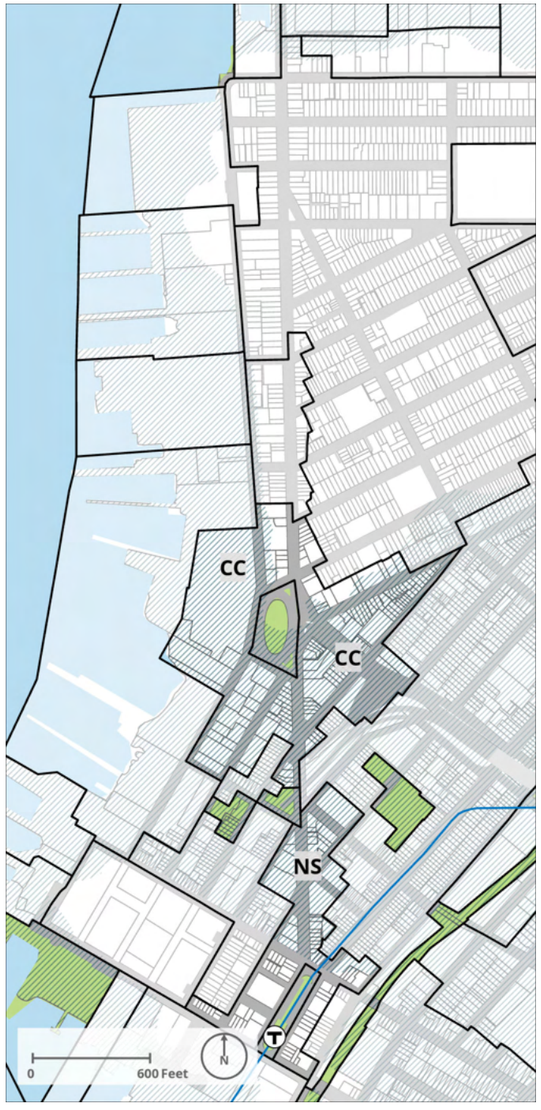


FIG 02-34 EXISTING REGULATING PLAN FOR MERIDIAN STREET AND BORDER STREET

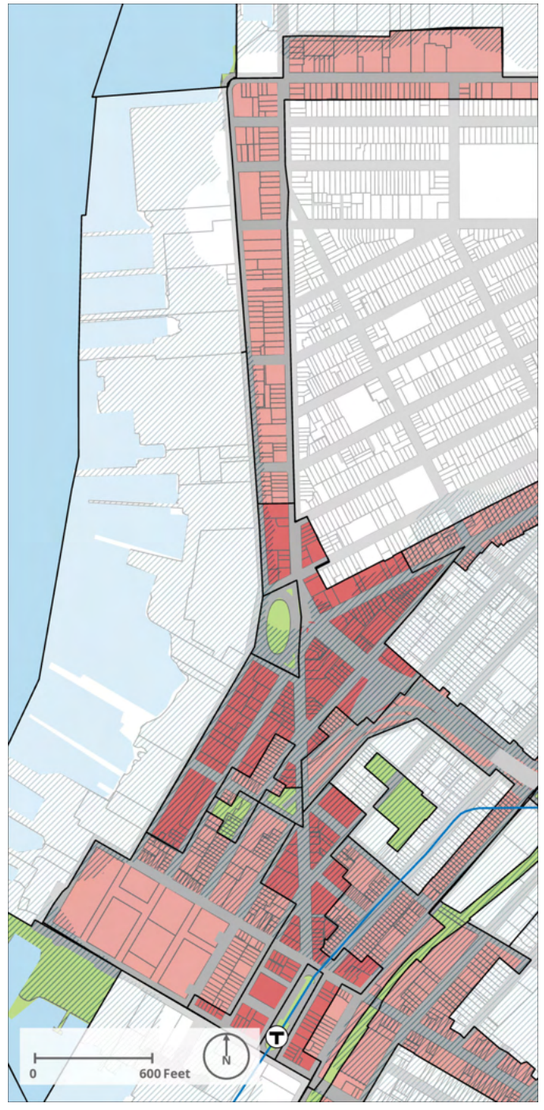


FIG 02-35 PROPOSED REGULATING PLAN FOR MERIDIAN STREET AND BORDER STREET

MFR/LS SUBDISTRICT
CC OR NS SUBDISTRICT
OPEN SPACE SUBDISTRICTS
COASTAL FLOOD RESILIENCE OVERLAY DISTRICT

Recommendations for Transportation and Public Realm

Create all-day dedicated bus lanes on Meridian Street between Princeton Street and Maverick Square.
All-day bus lanes are warranted because of consistent vehicle delay and significant bus ridership throughout the day. Introducing inbound and outbound bus lanes could discourage regional cut-through traffic and would require inbound drivers accessing local destinations to instead use Border Street, Chelsea Street, or Bremen Street. Street network circulation, including changes envisioned for Border Street, should be studied in greater detail.

Eliminate conflicts and add public realm at intersections with Marion Street, London Street, Havre Street, and Paris Street.
Introducing bus lanes and modifying circulation would result in fewer conflicts between turning drivers and crossing pedestrians at these intersections. Extra street space can be reconfigured into shorter crossings, simplified circulation patterns, and new public realm with trees, seating, GoHubs!, and other amenities.

Address safety concerns and bus delay at the intersection with Border Street and Condor Street.
This intersection, which is one of East Boston's crash hot spots and a site of significant bus delay, will be included in scope of the upcoming McArdle Bridge rehabilitation project. For additional information, see the Condor Street and the Lower Chelsea Creek Waterfront section.

Prioritize green infrastructure and family-friendly biking along Border Street.
Introducing dedicated bus lanes requires relocation of Meridian Street bike lanes to Border Street. Border Street is well-suited for bicycle infrastructure because, compared to Meridian Street, it has flatter terrain, access to the waterfront and Harborwalk, and fewer conflicts with turning vehicles and large vehicles. A two-way separated bike lane with a green buffer is envisioned for Border Stret. For additional information, including Border Street's role in coastal resilience, see the Border Street and the Inner Harbor Waterfront section.

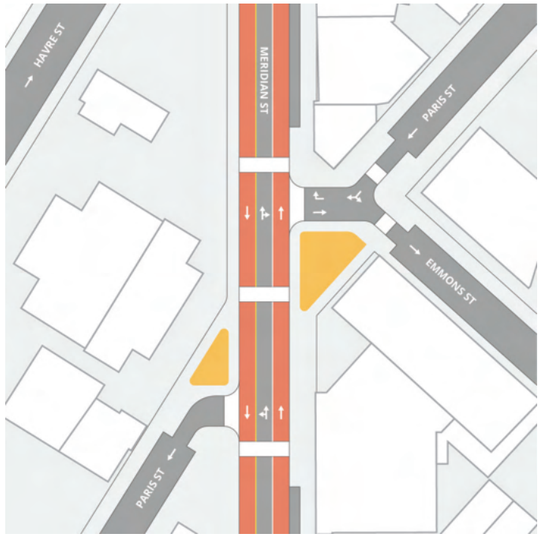


FIG 02-36 MERIDIAN STREET/PARIS STREET INTERSECTION - PROPOSED CONDITION
The vision concept for Meridian Street prioritizes walk-friendly designs. At the intersections with London Street, Havre Street, and Paris Street, pedestrian crossings would be shortened and some turning movements would be eliminated with the introduction of inbound and outbound bus lanes. This would make intersections easier to manage and safer for everyone to traverse. In 2023, the Boston Transportation Department (BTD) implemented safety-focused changes based on the proposed condition. This interim condition shortens crosswalks and slows vehicle turns through the through the use of paint and signs only.

- SIDEWALK
- ROADWAY
- DEDICATED BUS LANE
- IMPROVED PUBLIC SPACE

Meridian Street is the backbone of the East Boston bus network. During pre-pandemic weekdays, Meridian Street buses moved 26–53 percent of all people on the street in only 2–5 percent of the vehicles. However, congestion creates unreliable and unpredictable bus service. Future service patterns from the MBTA Bus Network Redesign maintain three overlapping routes on Meridian Street, including the T116, a high-frequency route that consolidates today's 116 and 117. Under this service pattern, Meridian Street would see buses every several minutes throughout the day.

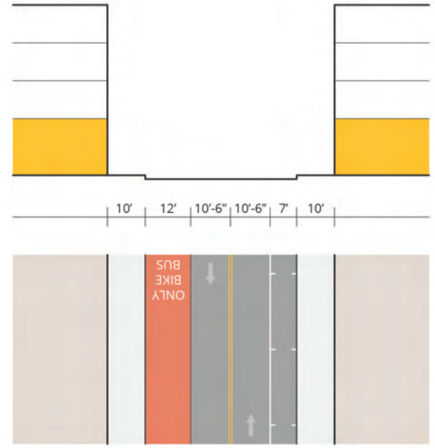


FIG 02-37 MERIDIAN STREET BETWEEN PRINCETON STREET AND SARATOGA STREET - PROPOSED CONDITION

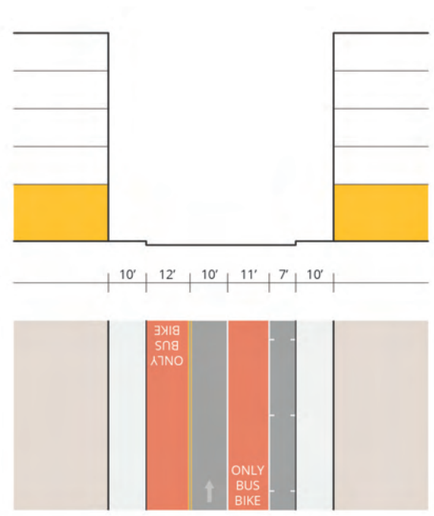


FIG 02-38 MERIDIAN STREET SOUTH OF SARATOGA STREET - PROPOSED CONDITION

Day Square

Planning in Day Square will give the area a clear form and identity, anchored by a new MBTA station for the Silver Line and local buses.

Day Square is the geographic center of the neighborhood and is the gateway into East Boston from Chelsea. Historically, Day Square's role as a neighborhood center has been sacrificed to the regional needs of railroads, highways, and energy infrastructure. While Day Square was not planned as a commercial center, over time, several small businesses, many reflective of East Boston's diverse immigrant communities, established a neighborhood commercial core.

Formed by the intersection of two different street grids, public realm in Day Square is defined by extra pavement and complex intersections. The challenges created by infrastructure in Day Square are not new. From the Report of the City Planning Board on the Development of the East Boston District, 1916: "There is now at and near Day square, Eagle Square, and Neptune Road a most incongruous and uninteresting collection of unrelated street ends, street intersections and public open spaces. The present plan is the result of the meeting of two distinct rectangular systems of streets with little attempt at adjustment, and with a railroad cut through it that has necessitated rising grades and rendered the district still less satisfactory. These street intersections form an important center that has already resulted in a rise in value of lands and bids fair to increase in importance."

Day Square is within a five-minute walk to Wood Island Station and the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway is located just one block south; both lack safe pedestrian and bicyclist connections into the square. Day Square is also served by three often-delayed and unreliable local bus routes. The SL3 passes by the square without stopping.

Context and location are important factors for successful public spaces, and Day Square has all the right ingredients: extra street space to be re-imagined, active ground floor uses to attract people, all-day foot traffic to keep spaces lively, and proximity to transit and path networks to connect to the region. At the same time, Day Square experiences very high heat because of its paved surfaces and lack of canopy. Public space creates opportunity to increase the tree canopy, which will help alleviate this heat island effect and make Day Square more pleasant for gathering.

FIG 02-40 [TOP] Day Square at the intersection of Prescott Street and Chelsea Street, 1948. Image accessed via Digital Commonwealth
FIG 02-41 [BOTTOM] Day Square at the intersection of Prescott Street and Chelsea Street, 2021.

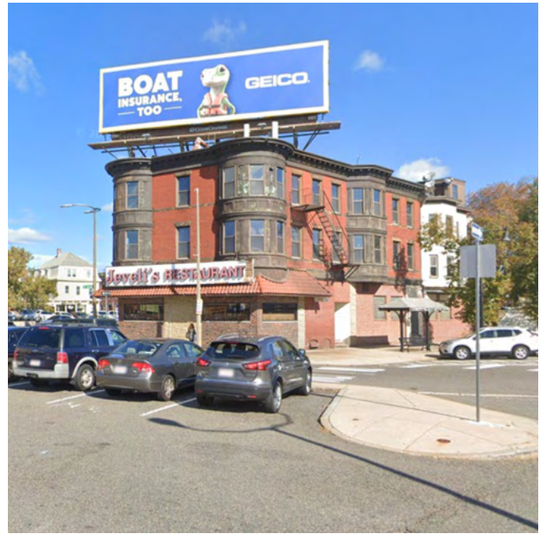


FIG 02-42 [TOP] Day Square at Chelsea Street
FIG 02-43 [BOTTOM] Intersection of Saratoga Street, Chelsea Street, and Neptune Road looking southeast, 2021.
Day Square is challenged by complicated intersections that are difficult for people to safely navigate, regardless of travel mode.

Recommendations for Land Use and Built Form
Many small businesses, including several restaurants reflective East Boston's diverse immigrant communities, line Day Square. Most of the area is regulated by a single Neighborhood Shopping subdistrict, which limits allowed height to three stories and FAR to 1.0. A portion of the Corridor Enhancement subdistrict along the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway and the East Boston Expressway (Route 1A). Parcels located in the Corridor Enhancement subdistrict are PDA-eligible.

Increase allowed height and density in the Neighborhood Shopping subdistrict.
Day Square is a wide right-of-way, well suited for added height and density. Zoning should increase allowed height and density across the entire subdistrict and particularly for those parcels immediately fronting the square. Additional height in the area is challenged by proximity to Logan Airport and FAA-regulations.

Prioritize active ground floor uses in Day Square and along portions of Meridian Street, Porter Street, and Bennington Street.
Because commercial uses in Day Square emerged over time, many businesses in the area occupy the ground floors of buildings that were not necessarily designed for retail use. Elevated ground floors and limited windows disconnect these spaces from the sidewalk and contribute little activation to the public realm. Development in Day Square must contribute to an active and vibrant public realm. Parking entrances on priority streets should be prohibited, and parking and service uses should be set back from the sidewalk, buffered by active uses including retail and residential lobbies.

FIG 02-44 259 BENNINGTON STREET, LA CHIVA RESTAURANT (2021) [TOP]
The restaurant occupies what was previously a gas station.
FIG 02-45 282 BENNINGTON STREET, SPINELLI'S RESTAURANT (2021) [MIDDLE]
The restaurant occupies what was previously a grocery store that was an adaptive reuse of the Day Square Theatre.
FIG 02-46 BUSINESSES ALONG CHELSEA STREET FROM THE SARATOGA STREET AND SHELBY STREET INTERSECTION (2021). [BOTTOM]
Examples of adaptive reuse of ground floor spaces in residential buildings for restaurant and retail uses.

FIG 02-47 EXISTING REGULATING PLAN FOR DAY SQUARE

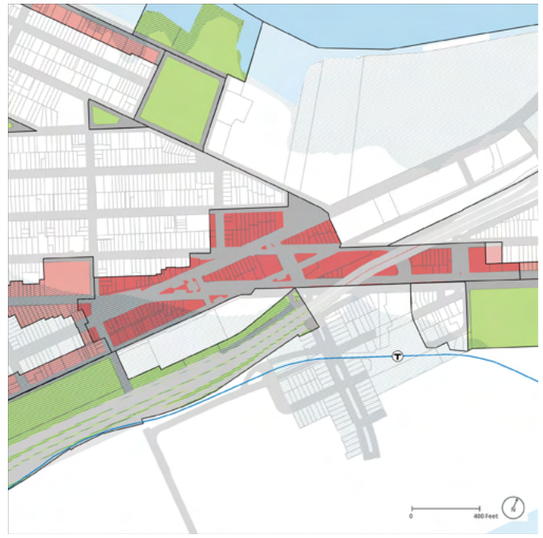


FIG 02-48 PROPOSED REGULATING PLAN FOR DAY SQUARE AREA

MFR/LS SUBDISTRICT
CC OR NS SUBDISTRICT
OPEN SPACE SUBDISTRICTS
COASTAL FLOOD RESILIENCE OVERLAY DISTRICT

Recommendations for Transportation and Public Realm

Create public spaces and expand the tree canopy in and near Day Square.
The Day Square vision concept would disconnect Bennington Street from Chelsea Street to make space for bus boarding areas and simplify intersections. This change creates opportunities for new City-owned public space. Additional public space could be created in partnership with MassDOT under Route 1A between Bennington Street, Neptune Road, and Vienna Street. A wider, tree-lined sidewalk along Prescott Street would connect the square, parks, and community destinations. Raising the Bremen Street/Prescott Street intersection would calm traffic.

Connect the Chelsea Creek waterfront and Chelsea Greenway to the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway with underused State-owned roadways.
A new shared-use path connection could be created rethinking the Route 1A inbound off-ramp between Route 1A and the Coughlin Bypass Road. MassDOT and Massport own these roadways, respectively. Continued coordination with MassDOT, Massport, and the City of Chelsea is critical to the feasibility of this connection. The 355 Bennington Street redevelopment will build a new path connection from the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway into Day Square.

Prioritize family-friendly biking on Bennington Street, Condor Street, Shelby Street, and Saratoga Street.
On-street bikeways allow people to safely travel from their homes to neighborhood destinations and the greenway network. Separated bike lanes on Bennington Street and Condor Street, alongside the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway and existing Chelsea Street bike lanes, form the backbone of the bike network. Contraflow bike lanes on Shelby Street and Saratoga Street would allow people to bike both ways on these one-way streets and help people avoid busy streets with bus and truck traffic.

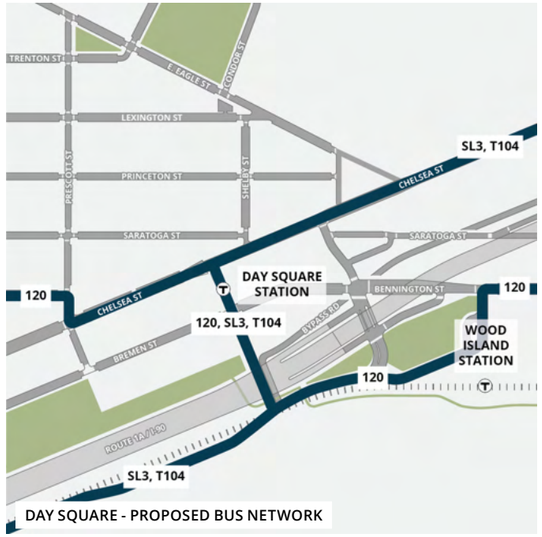
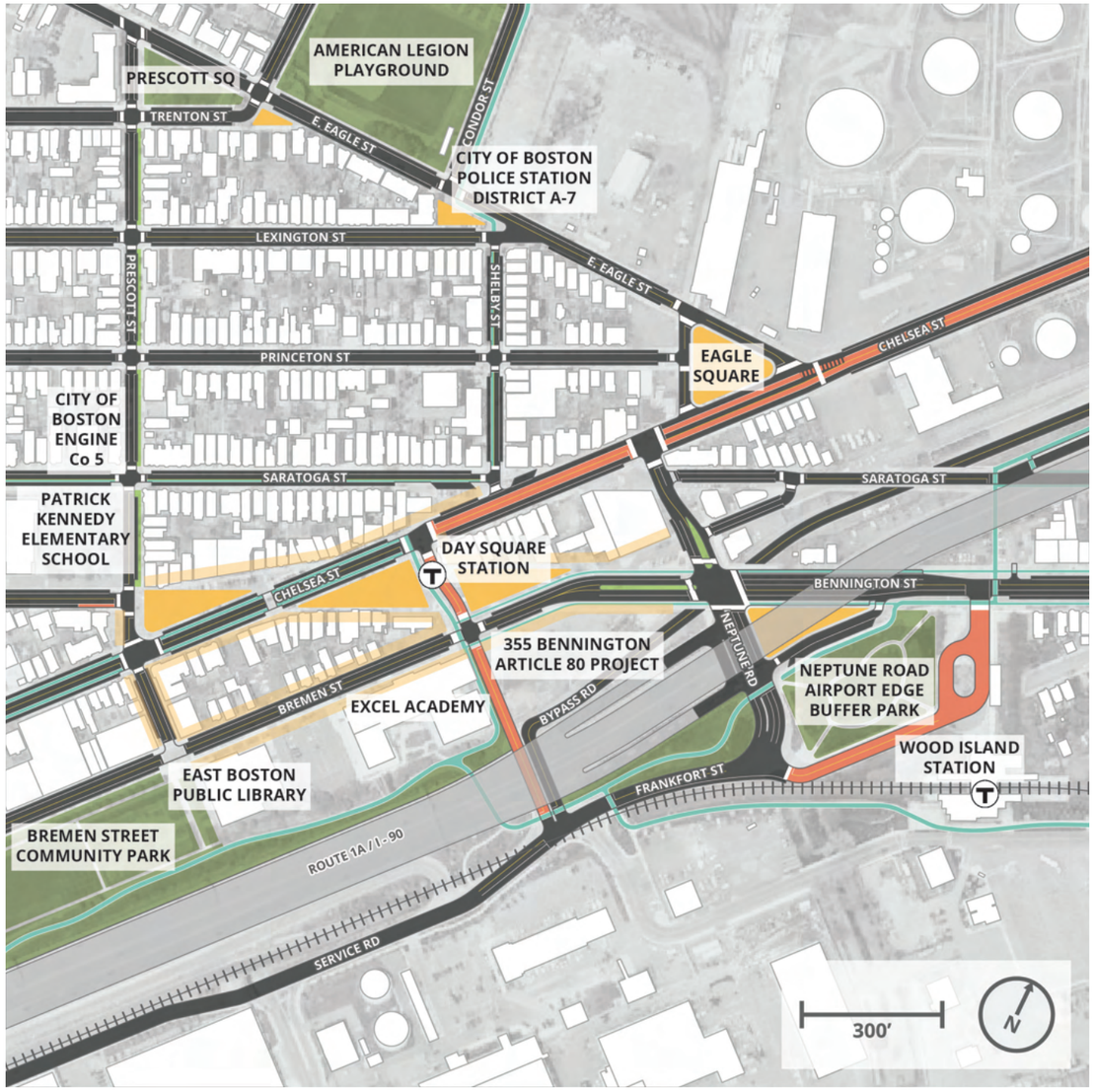


FIG 02-49 DAY SQUARE - PROPOSED BUS NETWORK

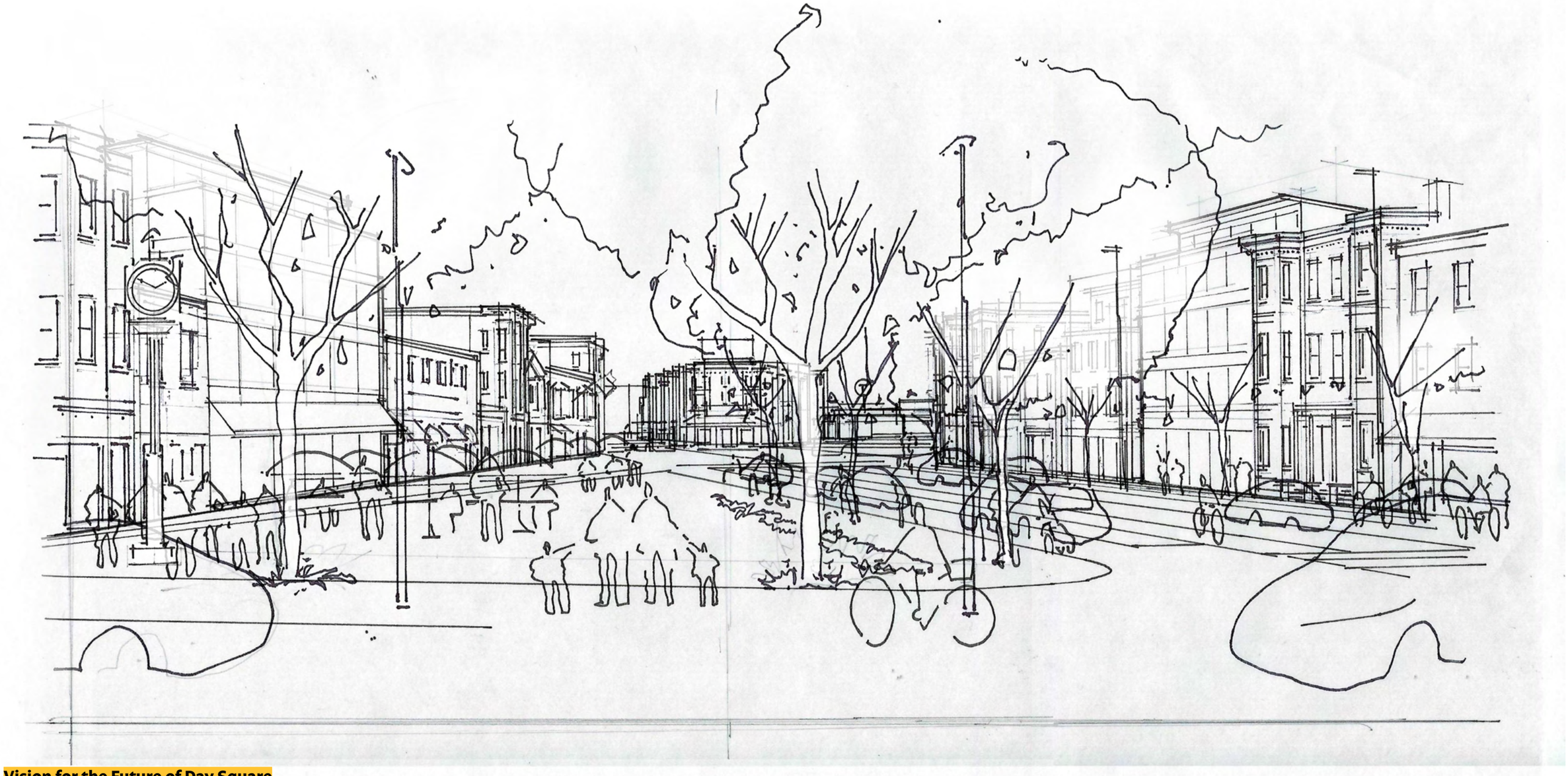
Create Day Square Station, a bus-only transitway between Frankfort Street and Chelsea Street, dedicated bus lanes on Chelsea Street, and a bus-only transitway to Wood Island Station.
Routing the SL3 and proposed high-frequency T104 service into Day Square would result in buses arriving every few minutes throughout the day and would create a direct transfer to route 120 that does not exist today. Chelsea Street bus lanes would enable the SL3 and T104 to bypass backups associated with Chelsea Street bridge lifts. Repurposing Frankfort Street east of Neptune Road for bus-only access to Wood Island Station would save Route 120 time by bypassing the Bennington Street and Neptune Road intersection. MassDOT and MBTA's Silver Line Extension initiative proposes an SL3 extension to Sullivan Square via Everett Square, better linking Day Square to the region. The City and MBTA are pursuing near-term changes to Day Square and Chelsea Street to realize core elements of this vision as part of the Bus Network Redesign. Full implementation of the Day Square and Wood Island transitways requires further design and coordination with Massport, MassDOT, MBTA, and private landowners.



Day Square Station will create a major stop in the heart of Day Square and provide a single transfer point for the SL3, proposed T104, and 120. With Day Square Station, the SL3 and T104 would connect to the 120, simplifying transfers and expanding the number of destinations available to passengers within a one- or two-seat ride.

FIG 02-50 PLAN DIAGRAM OF DAY SQUARE TOMORROW VISION

- PARKS / OPEN SPACE
- IMPROVED PUBLIC SPACE
- DEDICATED BUS LANE
- PATH / BIKE LANE
- PRIORITY EDGES



Vision for the Future of Day Square

Winthrop Greenway

The Friends of the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway envision a safe, pleasant, and convenient connection for active transportation and recreation between East Boston and Winthrop.

In 2016, the BPDA, MBTA, Massport, and Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) built the Narrow Gauge Link, completing a series of projects that extended the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway (then known as the East Boston Greenway) along the abandoned right-of-way adjacent to the Blue Line. The Narrow Gauge Link established a continuous walking and biking path through much of East Boston, from Piers Park to Constitution Beach.

Interest in a Greenway connection beyond Constitution Beach and through Orient Heights has existed for some time. The East Boston Master Plan (2000) identified a Greenway alignment from Constitution Beach along Bayswater Street, the Belle Isle Marsh Reservation, and the Orient Heights MBTA yard and maintenance facility. This recommendation, however, did not specify an alignment for a Winthrop connection. Now, the Friends of the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway (The Friends), a stewardship organization of residents, are studying the feasibility of a "Winthrop Greenway," which would connect the Town of Winthrop to the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway via Orient Heights. The Winthrop Greenway would connect to the planned Green Links connection from the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway to the Suffolk Downs Redevelopment site, to be designed and funded by HYM.

The Friends completed a feasibility study in 2021 that identified a preferred alignment based on an evaluation of the costs, benefits, constraints, and opportunities of several potential routes using a process informed by community engagement, which resulted in over 1,000 comments. From Orient Heights Station, the preferred alignment follows the MBTA-owned Barnes Avenue busway and station parking lot, an existing Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) sewer easement, and a former rail right-of-way across the inlet to Winthrop.

The Friends applied for, with City of Boston support, and received MassTrails funding to prepare a 10 percent concept design for a pedestrian and bicycle bridge across the inlet that connects to Morton Street in Winthrop, and to refine the overall path alignment. Additional community engagement and stakeholder coordination is needed to advance the route alignment, identify a project champion, and advanced the design and implementation process. The Winthrop Greenway would be implemented in phases.

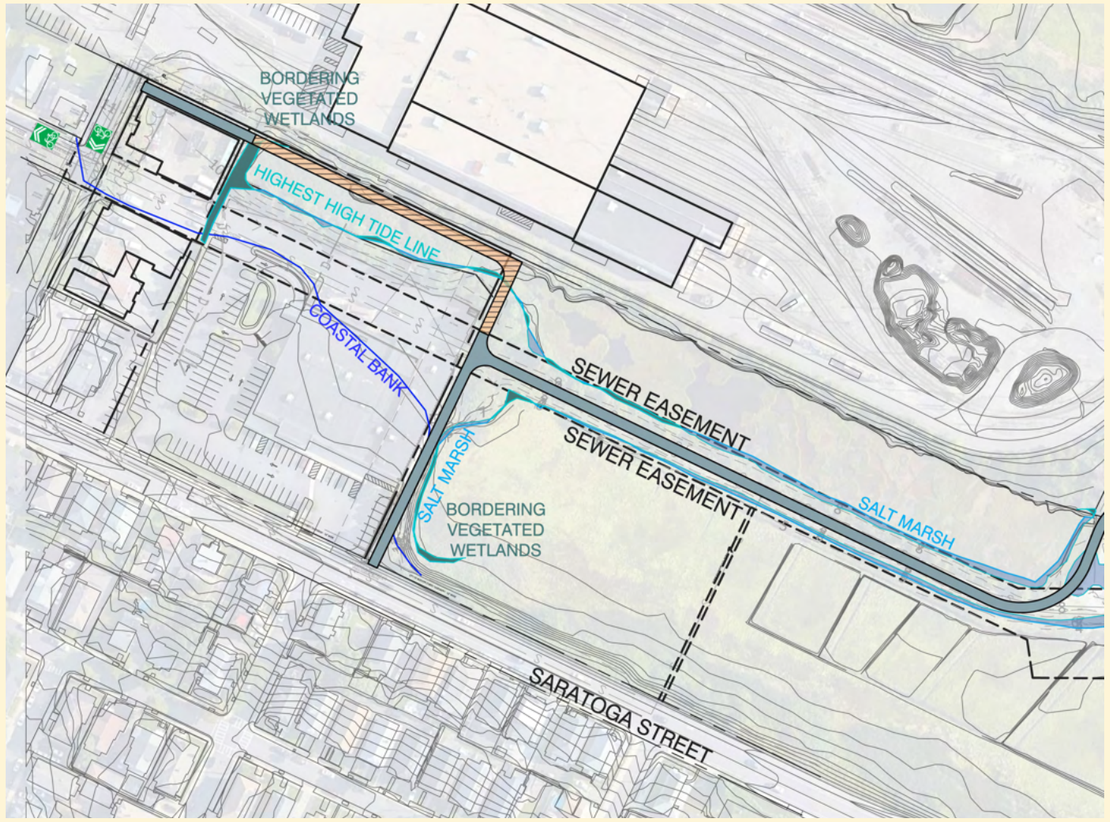


FIG 02-51 WINTHROP GREENWAY PATH ALIGNMENT
The study area alignment, advanced via MassTrails grant funding, in East Boston relies largely on an existing sewer easement and the 2 Shawsheen Road redevelopment project. While this first phase would connect to Barnes Avenue, the preferred alignment is for a continuous shared-use path along the south side the Orient Heights parking lot.

Source: The Friends of the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway, 2023.

Orient Heights Square

The square stretches across several intersections and is often ill-defined. The plan seeks to improve the legibility of the square and connect it to nearby assets.

Orient Heights Square is an active business district that stretches from Goodearl Square at the intersection of Saratoga Street and Barnes Avenue, to Noyes Park and the intersection of Saratoga Street and Boardman Street, which today meet in a traffic circle. In the late 1800s, it started as a regional connection between the Boston Revere Beach and Lynn Railroad and Boston and Winthrop Shore Railroad.

Nearby Orient Heights Station was built in 1952 as part of the East Boston Tunnel & Revere Extension, now known as the Blue Line, and required the demolition of several buildings along Bennington Street from Saratoga Street to Ashley Street. Orient Heights Station became the last stop on the Blue Line during the Blue Line Modernization project in 1992 and was completely reconstructed as part of the effort in 2013.

The intersection of Bennington Street and Saratoga Street remains the commercial center of Orient Heights Square and the primary commercial district in East Boston north of Day Square. It hosts restaurants, neighborhood-serving businesses, and some professional services.

The square's public realm is defined by pavement and parking, with limited public space to support its role as a neighborhood destination. The area is a gateway for regional vehicle traffic from Winthrop and Revere, creating safety challenges for all travel modes. A number of parking lots contribute to an inconsistent streetwall, particularly on parcels that front Bennington Street and Saratoga Street. Building heights are also inconsistent, as several one- and two-story commercial buildings dot the area while a number of four-story precedents remain from the early twentieth century.

Despite Orient Heights Square's proximity to nearby Orient Heights Station and Constitution Beach, the square feels disconnected from these assets.

FIG 02-52 [TOP]
Buildings along Saratoga Street, Boardman Street and Ford Street from Saratoga Street. Image accessed via Google Street View.
FIG 02-53 [BOTTOM LEFT]
Buildings along eastern edge of Saratoga Street from the Saratoga Street and Bennington Street intersection. (2021)
FIG 02-54 [BOTTOM RIGHT]
985 Bennington Street (2022) Image accessed via Google Street View. Historic Orient Heights Theatre (1899)

Recommendations for Land Use and Built Form

Orient Heights Square is an important place of gathering, located near the Blue Line. It is appropriate that allowed density leverage proximity to transit and that buildings contribute active ground-floor uses to support a vibrant public realm. Building heights in the area are varied. The Neighborhood Shopping zoning subdistrict limits allowed building height to three stories, though several buildings from the late 19th century are four stories.

Saratoga Street and Bennington Street are a wide right-of-ways, well suited for added height and density. For buildings immediately facing the square, allowed height would increase from three stories to four stories. Projects proposing residential affordability beyond what is contemplated by the Inclusionary Development Policy could be allowed greater height in Orient Heights Square.

The ground-floors of buildings along these edges should be dedicated primarily to retail uses and should restrict inactive uses like parking, residential, and commercial offices. Curb cuts along these streets should be limited so as to not interfere with pedestrian movements.

FIG 02-55 ORIENT HEIGHTS SQUARE FROM SARATOGA STREET NEAR NOYES PARK, 2021

Orient Heights today hosts mixed-use buildings ranging from one- to four-stories.

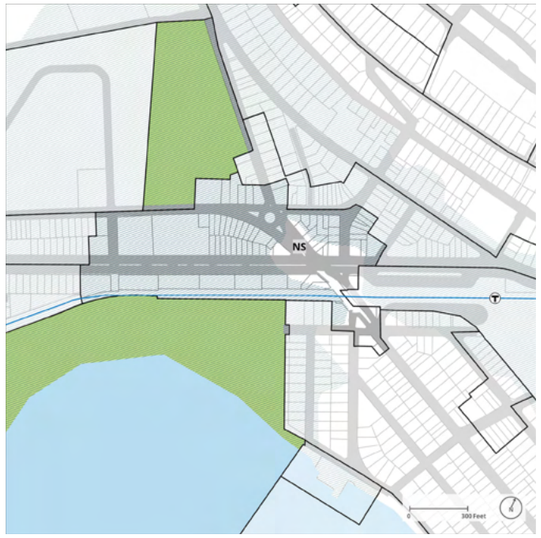


FIG 02-56 EXISTING REGULATING PLAN FOR ORIENT HEIGHTS SQUARE

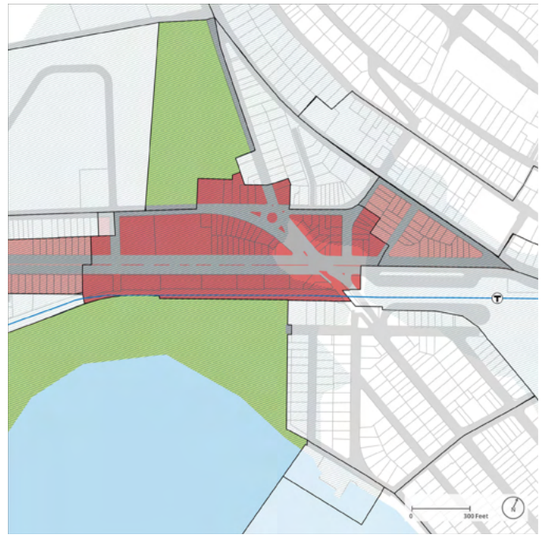


FIG 02-57 PROPOSED REGULATING PLAN FOR ORIENT HEIGHTS SQUARE

- MFR/LS SUBDISTRICT
- CC OR NS SUBDISTRICT
- OPEN SPACE SUBDISTRICTS
- COASTAL FLOOD RESILIENCE OVERLAY DISTRICT

Recommendations for Transportation and Public Realm

Simplify intersections with less pavement, shorter crosswalks, and simpler, more predictable intersections.

A smaller Bennington Street/Saratoga Street intersection would be easier to traverse for everyone and make space for separated bike lanes. Drivers traveling to Boardman Street from outbound Bennington Street would turn left at Trident Street, reducing delay at the Bennington Street/ Saratoga Street intersection. Converting Ashley Street from one-way to two-way travel may improve the safety and operation of the Bennington Street/Saratoga Street intersection. Because some drivers would use Ashley Street, the intersection could see up to a 30 percent reduction in delay if paired with some changes to signal timing.

A crossing island at Saratoga Street/Barnes Avenue intersection would eliminate some conflicts with turning drivers adjacent to the East Boston Senior Center. Drivers would instead make left turns at the Saratoga Street/ St. Edward Road intersection, which is controlled by a traffic signal. A Bennington Street crosswalk at Antrim Street would give more direct pedestrian access to Orient Heights Station. Reconfigured Ashley Street intersections at Boardman Street and Bennington street would shorten crosswalks.

Extend and connect the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway through the neighborhood and to the Winthrop Greenway.

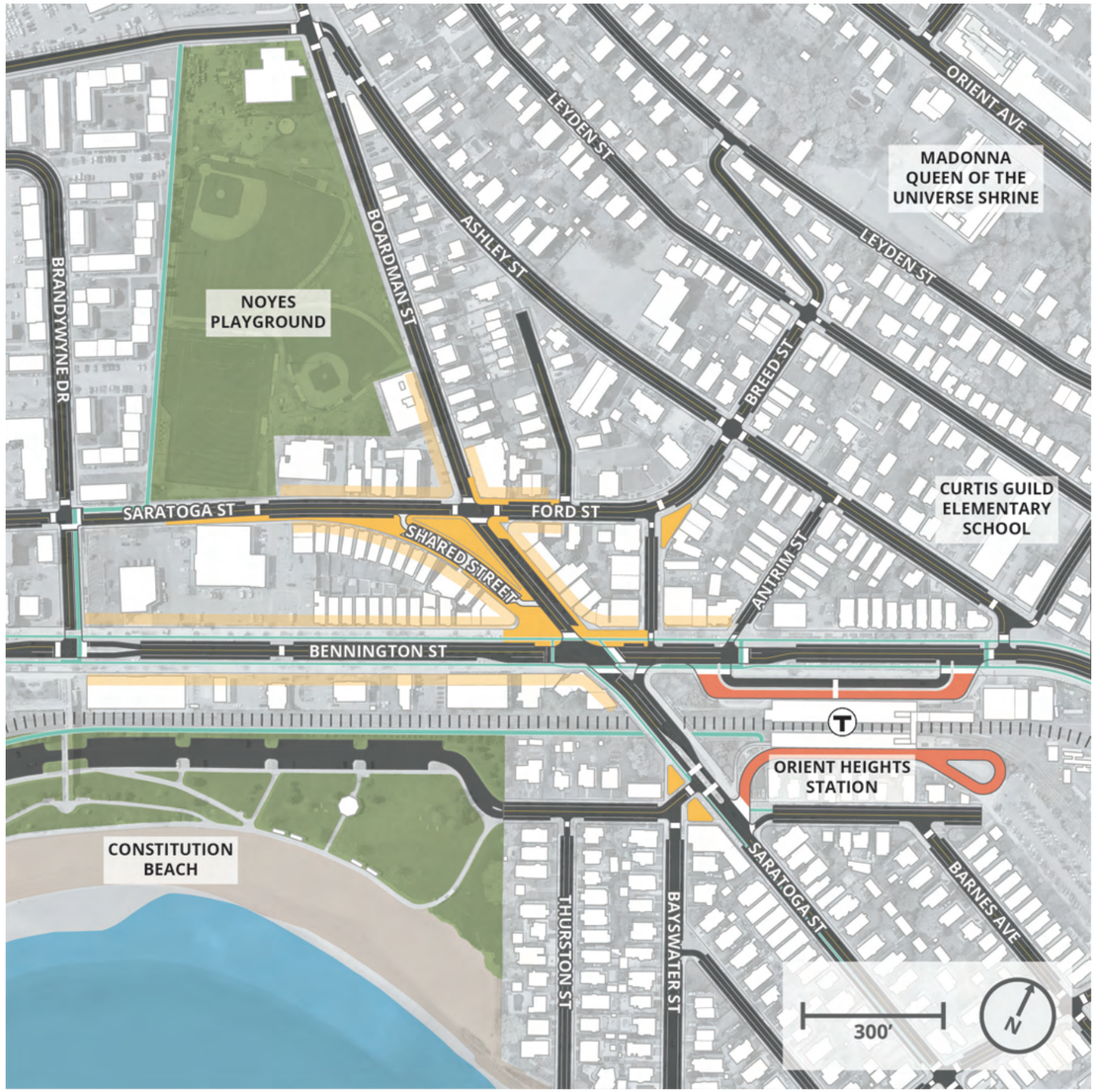
The Mary Ellen Welch Greenway would extend along Constitution Beach and under Saratoga Street to connect to Orient Heights Station. Once Bus Network Redesign is implemented and the Barnes Avenue busway is no longer needed, the Greenway can be connected directly to the proposed Winthrop Greenway. Separated bike lanes on Bennington Street would connect to this junction and bring the comfort and experience of the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway to Orient Heights, Suffolk Downs, and Revere. A two-way separated bike lane along Trident Street and a portion of Saratoga Street would connect Constitution Beach to Noyes Park and, eventually, the Chelsea Creek Waterfront.

FIG 02-58 ORIENT HEIGHT SQUARE PUBLIC SPACE - PROPOSED CONDITION

- EXISTING TRAFFIC ISLANDS
- SHARED STREET
- NEW PUBLIC SPACE

Create open space in the heart of the square and leverage opportunities to incorporate green infrastructure.

Today, drivers passing through the square mix with drivers parking, contributing to congestion and conflicts. The vision concept untangles some of these maneuvers by eliminating the traffic circle and providing a dedicated parking aisle accessible from either direction of Saratoga Street. Removing the traffic circle and connecting existing traffic islands would enable the square to host a public space that would serve residents, support local businesses, create direct paths of travel, increase the canopy, and manage stormwater. A curbless shared street along Saratoga Street would connect the public realm and maintain both angled and parallel on-street parking spaces.



The Orient Heights Square vision concept creates new public spaces in and near the commercial heart of the square by re-imagining excess street space that exposes travelers to conflicts and has, over time, been given over to motor vehicle uses.

FIG 02-59 PLAN DIAGRAM OF ORIENT HEIGHTS SQUARE TOMORROW VISION

- PARKS / OPEN SPACE
- IMPROVED PUBLIC SPACE
- STATION BUSWAY
- BIKE LANE / PATH
- PRIORITY EDGES

Bennington Street

Spanning all of East Boston, planning for Bennington Street will reduce speeding and reconnect the neighborhood.

Bennington Street spans East Boston, from Boston Harbor to the Belle Isle Marsh, and connects Central Square, Day Square, and Orient Heights Square. Bennington Street was the east-west streetcar spine for East Boston, funneling passengers through the neighborhood to the East Boston Tunnel. The Blue Line rendered this travel pattern obsolete, with Bennington Street bus passengers now primarily transferring to their nearest station.

Today, Bennington Street looks, feels, and operates like two distinct streets. Uses along Bennington Street change as it passes through neighborhood residential areas and active retail districts.

West of Day Square, Bennington Street is 50 feet wide and dotted with smaller squares at Havre Street and Paris Street. Intersections are large and have a history of crashes involving people walking and biking. Bus stops lack amenities and are frequently blocked by drivers, and tree canopy is extremely limited. Prevailing building height along this stretch of Bennington is three stories. Convenience shopping and several restaurants activate the streetscape, primarily at intersections.

East of Day Square, Bennington Street doubles in width, encouraging frequent speeding and use by regional drivers accessing Route 1A. In 2019, over 70 percent of all vehicle trips on this portion of Bennington Street started or ended outside of East Boston; 40 percent came from a municipality that does not border East Boston. Remaining mature trees create a boulevard feel but the canopy continues to diminish. Buildings along this stretch of Bennington Street are primarily residential and the prevailing building height is three stories. Some ground-floor retail exists, primarily at intersections.

Despite poor safety conditions, Bennington Street is the primary east-west bike route when the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway is closed at night, and the only bike route north of Constitution Beach.

FIG 02-60 [TOP]
Safety island at Bennington street and Westbrook Street, 1948. Image accessed via City of Boston Archives.

FIG 02-61 [BOTTOM]
Concrete median on Bennington Street between Wordsworth Street and Westbrook Street, 2020. Streetcar tracks and safety islands have been replaced with additional travel lanes.

Recommendations for Land Use and Built Form

Bennington Street stretches the entire length of the neighborhood and connects three major squares, passing through one Community Commercial, one Local Shopping, and two Neighborhood Shopping zoning subdistricts.

Bennington Street is a wide right-of-way, well suited for added height and density. Today, zoning limits building heights along the entire stretch of Bennington Street, regardless of street width, to three stories. It is appropriate that buildings along Bennington Street are allowed additional height. Projects proposing residential affordability beyond what is contemplated by the Inclusionary Development Policy could be allowed greater height—potentially up to five stories—along Bennington Street.

It is appropriate that retail uses are allowed but not required on the ground floor of buildings along its entire length. The condition exists today with several small retail uses located at the corners of most Bennington Street intersections.

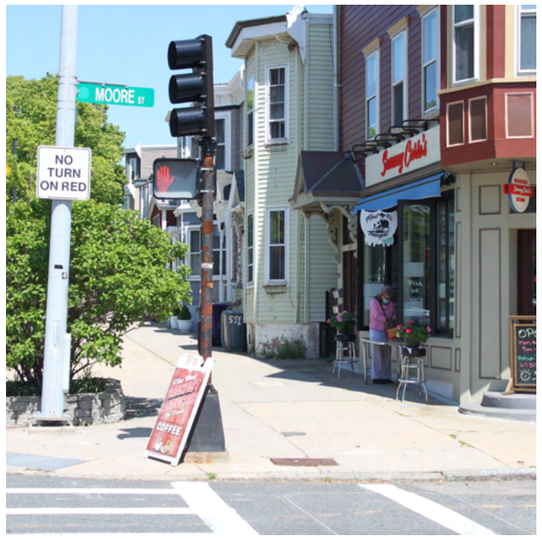


FIG 02-62 BENNINGTON STREET AT MOORE STREET, 2021

An example of a small cafe with residential uses above at the intersection of Bennington Street and Moore Street.

FIG 02-63 EXISTING REGULATING PLAN FOR BENNINGTON STREET

FIG 02-64 PROPOSED REGULATING PLAN FOR BENNINGTON STREET

- MFR/LS SUBDISTRICT
- CC OR NS SUBDISTRICT
- OPEN SPACE SUBDISTRICTS
- COASTAL FLOOD RESILIENCE OVERLAY DISTRICT

Recommendations for Transportation and Public Realm

East of Day Square, rightsize the street to reign in speeding, shorten crosswalks, provide family-friendly bike connections, and leverage opportunities to incorporate green infrastructure.

Bennington Street serves both neighborhood and regional roles, but today favors regional, high-speed traffic. Over two-thirds of drivers traveling on Bennington Street are speeding in excess of 30 mph. Rightsizing the street to one lane per direction with left-turn lanes at intersections, where needed, would reduce speeds while maintaining capacity to process traffic. Left-turn lanes would help create more efficient travel flow and would be safer for everyone, no matter how one chooses to travel.

Fewer lanes would mean shorter crossings, safer biking, and opportunities for green infrastructure and more trees. At traffic signals, a pedestrian head start would turn on the walk signal before the green light. Intersections without signals would have raised crosswalks at side streets. Bus bulbs would create space for passenger amenities and often results in more parking compared to pull-in bus stops. Separated bike lanes would provide a continuous low-stress connection from Day Square to Belle Isle Marsh. New buffer spaces would be available for trees, landscaping, and stormwater management. Parking would be maintained on both sides of the street.

West of Day Square, create public space and simplify intersections with London Street, Havre Street and Paris Street.

Bennington Street experiences very high heat because of its abundance of pavement and lack of tree canopy. New public realm creates opportunities for new street trees

FIG 02-65 BENNINGTON STREET/BROOKS STREET/HAVRE STREET
FIG 02-66 INTERSECTION - PROPOSED CONDITION WITH NEW PUBLIC REALM

SIDEWALK
ROADWAY
IMPROVED PUBLIC SPACE

and stormwater management strategies which mitigate the urban heat island effect. More public space would also serve ground-floor commercial uses. Simpler intersections would encourage driver yielding and slower turning speeds while also shortening crosswalks, as exemplified by improvements to the London Street/Bennington Street intersection. Bus bulbs, which are curb extensions for bus stops, would create space for passenger amenities, like shelters and benches, and keep bus stops clear of parked vehicles .

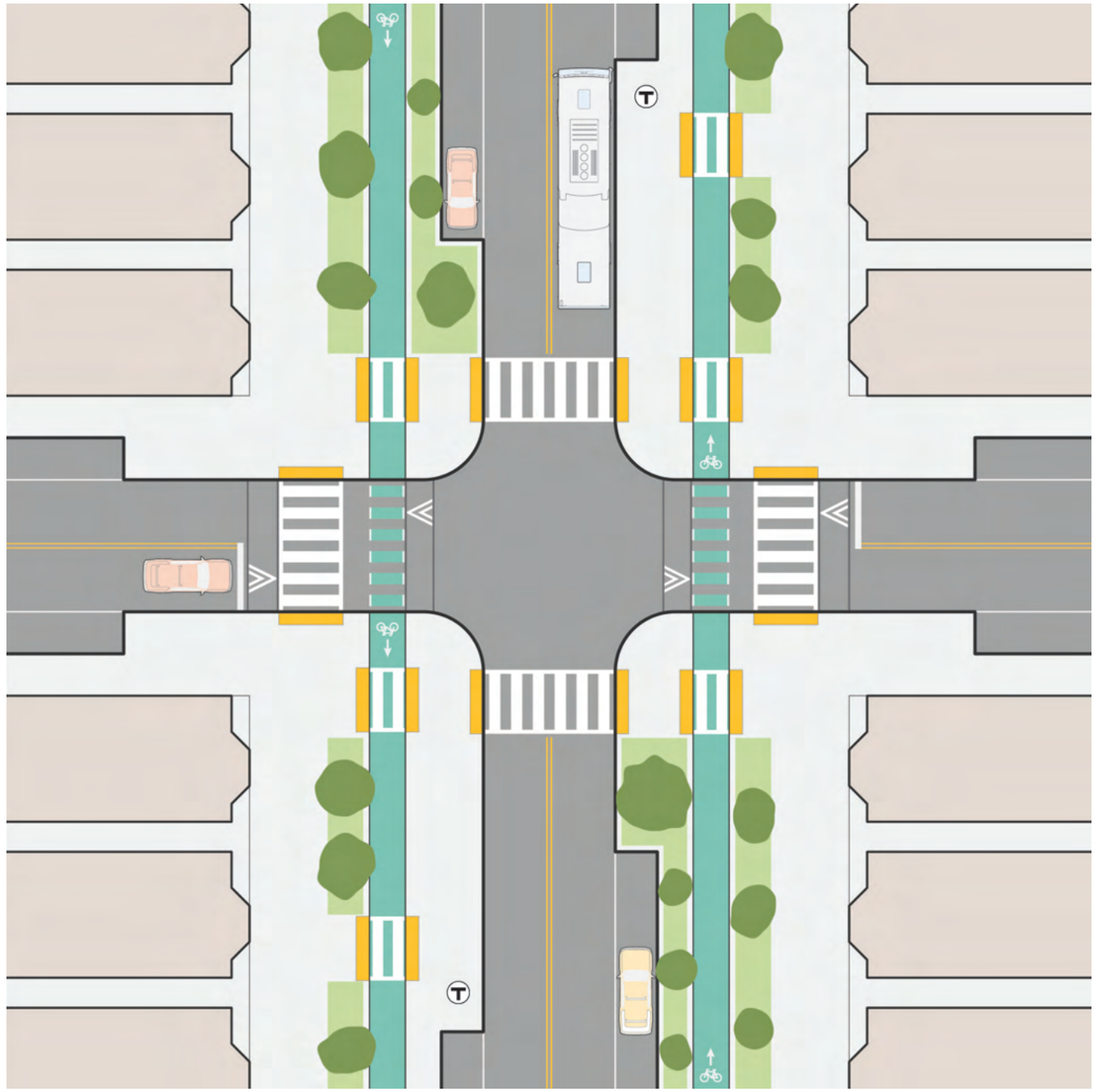


FIG 02-67 PLAN DIAGRAM OF BENNINGTON STREET VISION AT AN UNSIGNALIZED INTERSECTION BETWEEN DAY SQUARE AND ORIENT HEIGHTS SQUARE

Fewer lanes would encourage slower speeds and make it easier and safer for people to cross the street. Separated bike lanes would create an east-west spine for an East Boston family-friendly bike network and would provide an all-hours alternative to the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway. South of Saratoga Street, separated bike lanes would function as a one-way pair, as shown. North of Saratoga Street, they would be consolidated into a two-way separated bike lane on the south side of the street to serve as an extension of the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway.

BUILDING
SIDEWALK
ROADWAY
BIKE LANE
LANDSCAPING BUFFER
TREES

Suffolk Downs Square

The Suffolk Downs Redevelopment project will transform the former site of the Suffolk Downs racetrack into a mixed-use neighborhood.

Suffolk Downs Square emerged in the early 20th century with the introduction of Belle Isle Station, an infill stop of the Boston, Revere Beach, and Lynn railroad at the intersection of Waldemar Avenue and Walley Street. The Suffolk Downs racetrack, built in 1935 and closed in 2019, precluded planned residential development on the marsh side of Orient Heights. A planned extension of Walley Street, known as Washburn Avenue, continued as a private streetcar right-of-way to Revere. Streetcars turned around in the area until 1952 with the introduction of subway service and Suffolk Downs Station. The station was last upgraded in 1995 to accommodate six-car Blue Line trains.

Today the area around Suffolk Downs Station lacks definition, as Walley Street and Waldemar Avenue dead-end into a turn-around and drop-off area that service the station. The station is the least used subway station in the entire MBTA network, with just over 500 boardings per weekday. The Suffolk Downs Station area is designed to accommodate vehicle u-turns and pick-up and drop-off activity. There is no nearby carshare or bikeshare.

Significant changes in elevation separate Walley Street from Bennington Street. Pedestrian connections between Orient Heights and Belle Isle Marsh require people to walk through Suffolk Downs Station. Building types and land uses along its length are highly varied and include low-scale residential buildings, the MBTA station, the former racetrack, and light-industrial buildings along Bennington Street.

The Suffolk Downs Redevelopment project was approved by the BPDA in 2020. It will transform the 161-acre site and will create a new jobs center for East Boston and the greater region. When complete, the project will deliver approximately 10 million square feet of development, and will be connected to Suffolk Downs Square via a generous pedestrian plaza, referred to as Belle Isle Square. Planning for Suffolk Downs Redevelopment envisioned walking, biking, and private shuttle access to Belle Isle Square via Walley Street. Drivers, however, will be required to access the site via Route 1A.

FIG 02-68 [TOP]
Walley Street from the Bennington Street and Leyden Street intersection (2021)
FIG 02-69 [BOTTOM]
Rendering of Belle Isle Square as envisioned by the Suffolk Downs Redevelopment project. (2019)

FIG 02-70 [TOP]
\Walley Street looking east toward Suffolk Downs Station, date unknown. Image accessed via Digital Commonwealth.
FIG 02-71 [BOTTOM]
Walley Street looking east toward Suffolk Downs Station, 2021

Recommendations for Land Use and Built Form
Building types and land uses along Walley Street and Bennington Street are highly varied and include low-scale residential buildings, the Suffolk Downs MBTA station, a former racetrack, and light-industrial buildings along Bennington Street. Zoning includes single-family and two-family subdistricts as well as the Saratoga Street Economic Development Area and the Suffolk Downs Economic Development Area. Parcels located in both Economic Development Areas are PDA-eligible.

Bennington Street is a wide right-of-way, well suited for added height and density. For buildings immediately facing Bennington Street, allowed building heights would increase from three stories to four stories. Projects proposing residential affordability beyond what is contemplated by the Inclusionary Development Policy could be allowed greater height.

Walley Street is an appropriate opportunity to transition low-scale residential buildings to high-rise buildings proposed on the Suffolk Downs Redevelopment site. For buildings facing Walley Street, specifically those within a quarter-mile radius of Suffolk Downs Station, increased building height (four stories) would be appropriate.

FIG 02-72
Walley Street from Waledmar Avenue intersection (2020). Recent residential development along Walley Street capitalizes on its close proximity to Suffolk Downs Station.

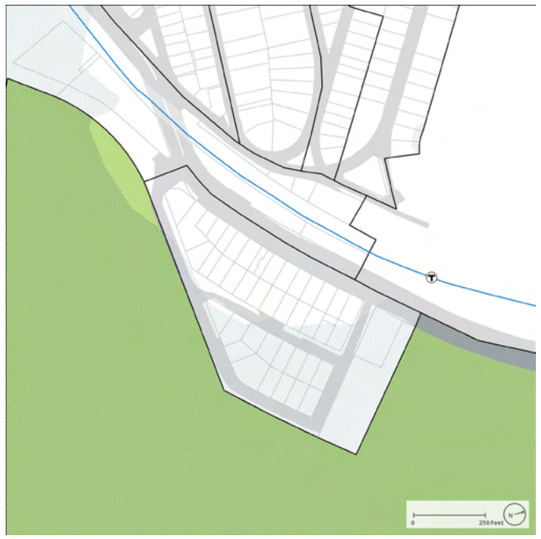


FIG 02-73 SUFFOLK DOWNS SQUARE & WALLEY STREET TODAY - ZONING DISTRICTS BY HEIGHT
Walley Street today touches six unique zoning subddistricts and separates three-story maximum height residential subdistricts from the Saratoga Street and Suffolk Downs EDAs.

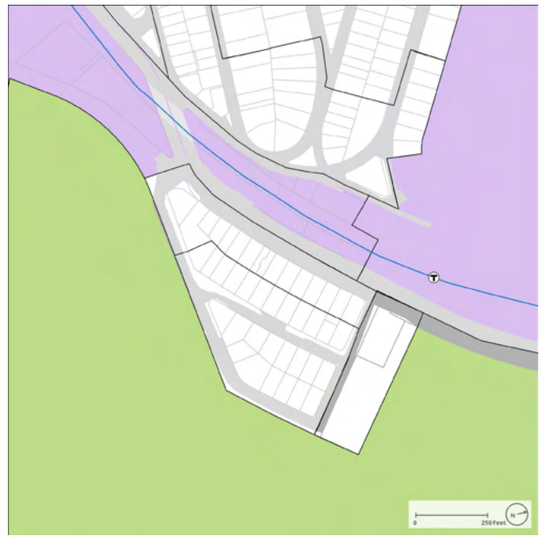


FIG 02-74 SUFFOLK DOWNS SQUARE & WALLEY STREET TOMORROW - PROPOSED REGULATING PLAN

Recommendations for Transportation and Public Realm

Introduce family-friendly walking and biking connections on Bennington Street, Walley Street, Palermo Street, and Austin Avenue.
When connected to the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway, two-way separated bike lanes on Bennington Street and Walley Street would create a continuous family-friendly biking connection across all of East Boston, from the Inner Harbor to Suffolk Downs, Winthrop, Revere, and beyond. Walley Street intersections at Gladstone Street, Orient Avenue, and Waldemar Avenue would be simplified for shorter, safer crosswalks and expanded public realm and green infrastructure opportunities. While collaboration does not imply endorsement, continued coordination with the MBTA, owner of the Bennington Street bridge, Suffolk Downs Station, and surrounding station area, is critical to the feasibility of this concept.

Reconfigure Bennington Street intersections at Walley Street, Leyden Street, and Palermo Street with new crosswalks protected by traffic signals.
The size and complexity of these intersections would be reduced, simplifying vehicle movements, slowing turns, and creating new opportunities. Traffic signals

Increase access to the Belle Isle Marsh at Palermo Street, Austin Avenue, and the Belle Isle Marsh Reservation.
The 1141 Bennington Street redevelopment project will build a shared-use path along the Belle Isle Marsh via Palermo Street and Austin Avenue, which could connect to paths along the Orient Heights rail yard, as envisioned in the East Boston Master Plan (2000). A new Bennington Street crosswalk at the Belle Isle Marsh entrance would expand open space access. MassDOT's Bennington Street Targeted Safety Improvement project will rightsize Bennington Street along the Belle Isle Marsh, creating space for a future crosswalk, crossing island, and curb ramps.

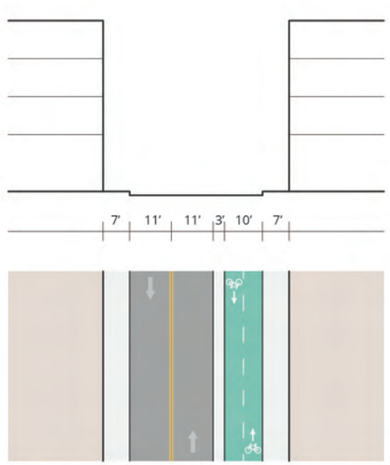
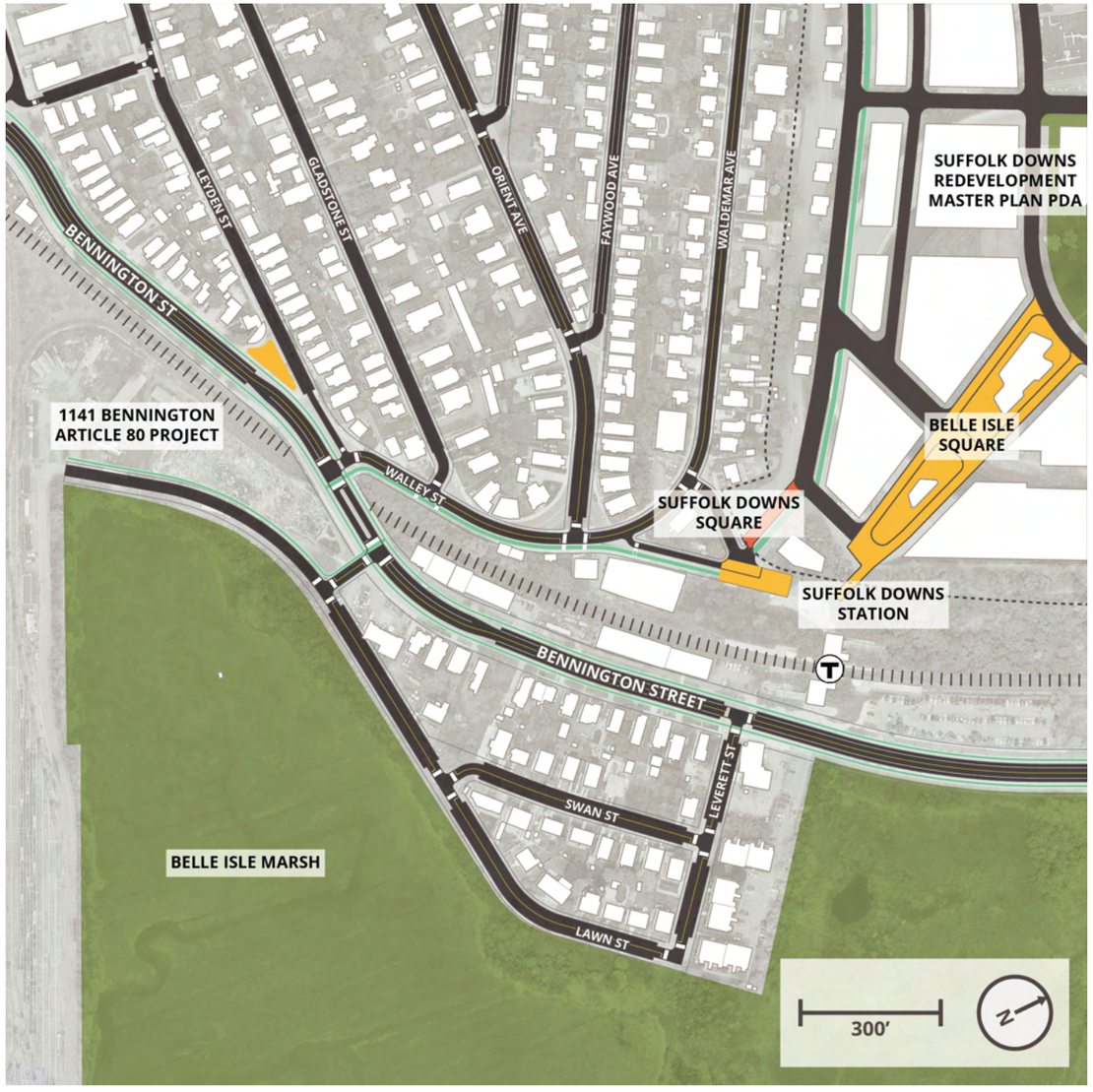


FIG 02-75 WALLEY STREET - PROPOSED CONDITION WITH TWO-WAY SEPARATED BIKE LANE

BUILDING
SIDEWALK
ROADWAY
SEPARATED BIKE LANE



The Suffolk Downs Square vision concept connects the area to the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway and Belle Isle Marsh while creating more and safer crosswalks along Bennington Street and Walley Street to destinations and the marsh.

FIG 02-76 PLAN DIAGRAM OF WALLEY STREET AND SUFFOLK DOWNS SQUARE TOMORROW VISION

PARKS / OPEN SPACE
IMPROVED PUBLIC SPACE
DEDICATED BUS LANE
BIKE LANE / PATH

Conditions along East Boston's waterfront are highly variable. Recent development efforts have transformed limited portions of the waterfront; however, much of the area remains physically and economically disconnected from the East Boston community.

FIG 03-01 LEWIS STREET (2020) [TOP LEFT] Boston Harborwalk and privately-owned publicly-accessible open space associated with development of Clippership Wharf.
FIG 03-02 605 CHELSEA STREET (2021) [TOP RIGHT] Surface parking and truck circulation surrounding the historic East Boston Steam Pump Station.
FIG 03-03 102 BORDER STREET (2021) [BOTTOM RIGHT] Vacant property located in the East Boston Designated Port Area.
FIG 03-04 CURTIS STREET OVERPASS (2021) [BOTTOM RIGHT] Disused rail right-of-way and fuel storage tanks along the Chelsea Creek.

03. Waterfront and Evolving Industrial Areas

Formed to service the needs of regional industry and infrastructure, most of East Boston's waterfront remains physically and economically disconnected from the East Boston community. Planning for the future of these areas must prioritize increasing public access to the waterfront, implementing resilience infrastructure, and supporting essential economic activity.

In this chapter, read about:

Context

Industrial economies transformed these areas from tidal flats to a working waterfront by the start of the 20th century. After decades of declining activity, these areas once again present significant opportunity for growth.

East Boston's evolution is perhaps most evident along the neighborhood's waterfront, where maritime industrial economies and regional infrastructure reshaped the shoreline from tidal flats to working waterfront by the start of the 20th century. However, as port-based and industrial economies changed over time, East Boston's waterfront entered a long period of disinvestment and neglect. Recent development efforts have transformed limited portions of the waterfront; however, much of the area remains physically and economically disconnected from the East Boston community. These areas must overcome significant physical challenges that would otherwise impede needed growth opportunities.

Industrial uses degraded ecological conditions along East Boston's shoreline.
Surface runoff from common uses along the waterfront, including fuel storage facilities, vast surface parking lots, and industrial scrapyards, flows into waterways, including the Inner Harbor, Chelsea Creek, and the Belle Isle Marsh. The impact of these uses lingers even after they are removed. Soil contamination caused by industrial activity and the improper disposal of waste may require costly remediation or contamination caps.

All of these areas are vulnerable to coastal and inland flooding associated with climate change.
The land in this subarea was historically low-lying marshland that was filled over time to increase East Boston's buildable land. These areas remain low-lying relative to other neighborhood geographies, and maps of projected future flood risk in the neighborhood demonstrate this challenge clearly. Much of the waterfront is privately owned, and delivering district-scale flood resilience infrastructure will require close coordination with property owners.

Many of these areas lack adequate public rights-of-way and sufficient transit access.
Designed to meet the needs of primarily industrial uses, streets in these areas often have poor and unsafe conditions, and in several places the street network is incomplete or non-existent. Many waterfront areas are not served by sufficient transit access and are considered "transit deserts."

Waterfront Service ("WS")
Waterfront Manufacturing ("WM")
Maritime Economy Reserve ("MER")
Waterfront Commercial ("WC")
Waterfront Residential ("WR")
Waterfront Community Facilities ("WCF")
Local Industrial ("LI")
McClellan Highway Economic Development Area
Saratoga Street Economic Development Area

FIG 03-05 EXISTING WATERFRONT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREA SUBDISTRICTS

Policy Considerations for Designated Port Areas

State-level regulations prioritize water-dependent industrial uses along much of the East Boston waterfront, and supersede zoning regulations.

Designated Port Areas (DPAs) are areas identified by the State that have physical and operational features that support industries that require close proximity to the ocean, such as commercial fishing and vessel-related shipping. These water-dependent industrial uses and commercial activities rely on marine transportation and may have regional, if not national, significance. The Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) regulates land uses in these areas. Land uses are limited to Water-Dependent Industrial (WDI) uses and prohibit other uses, including publicly-accessible open space. These regulations were designed to protect water-dependent industrial uses from competition with residential and commercial uses and higher property taxes. However, DPAs can not force any particular industry or specific business to operate in a specific, and as demand for water-dependent industrial land uses in East Boston waned, DPA regulations constrain and suppress economic development opportunities along the waterfront.

Further analysis is needed to understand how industrial waterfront areas can be consolidated to more efficiently and effectively serve future water-dependent production uses. The City, which previously solicited a boundary review in an effort to remove parcels from the East Boston DPA, is committed to working with state partners to identify opportunities to align state interests with the priorities of the local community.

"Our Administration believes that the majority of Designated Port Area (DPA) restrictions along East Boston's Inner Harbor and the Chelsea Creek no longer serve the community's needs and are not aligned with the future of the neighborhood. These lands have the unique ability to help address East Boston's most pressing needs, which include resilient infrastructure, affordable housing, space for local businesses, and access to reliable and sufficient food and services."

- Mayor Michelle Wu
Excerpted from comment letter submitted to Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs on September 19, 2022

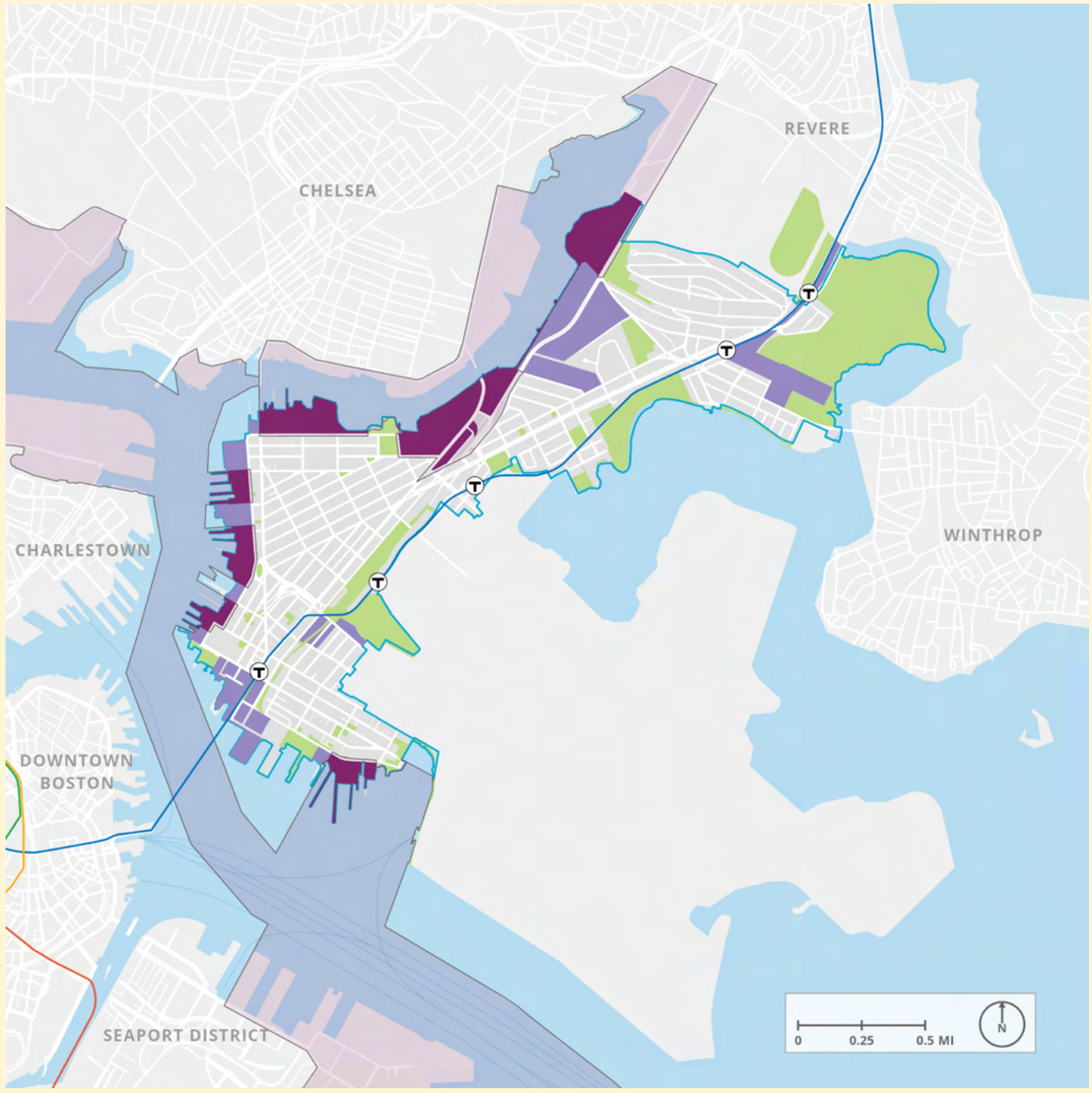


FIG 03-06 MAP OF DESIGNATED PORT AREA BOUNDARIES
There are two Designated Port Areas in East Boston covering much of the neighborhood's waterfront along Boston Harbor and Chelsea Creek. The boundaries of these areas were reviewed in 2022, resulting in minor modifications to both.

Policy Considerations for Harborwalk

The Harborwalk in East Boston is a product of both public and private investment. Is it discontinuous where waterfront industrial activity limit public access.

Boston's Harborwalk program aims for a continuous shoreline walking path and is one of the most important components of the City's waterfront revitalization efforts. The publicly-accessible system connects neighborhoods to the harbor, leading recreational, cultural and historic attractions, and water transportation facilities.
The Harborwalk stretches over 43 miles from Mattapan to East Boston and connects to a network of inland paths and trails, including the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway, the spine of East Boston's Green Links network.

Areas that are deemed water-dependent, such as maritime industrial ports, are exempt from Chapter 91 public access requirements. As mentioned previously, much of East Boston's waterfront is regulated by DPA overlays that limit public access and result in a fragmented Harborwalk (see page 129 - 130 for more information about DPAs).

Remaining connections will require reliance on public ways such as Marginal Street and Border Street to unify disconnected Harborwalk segments. Designs for these streets should ensure that waterfront public access is prioritized. Bayswater Street, for example, lacks public access along its waterfront edge, despite public investment in beautification and pedestrian-scale points of interest.

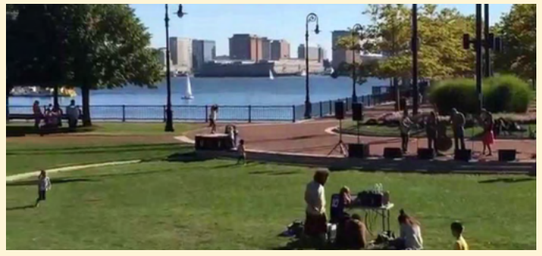


FIG 03-07 EAST BOSTON PIERS PARK
Piers Park is an example of public investment contributing to the creation of a public asset. Located in Jeffries Point, the park was constructed by the Massachusetts Port Authority in 1995 to allow residents access to the waterfront.

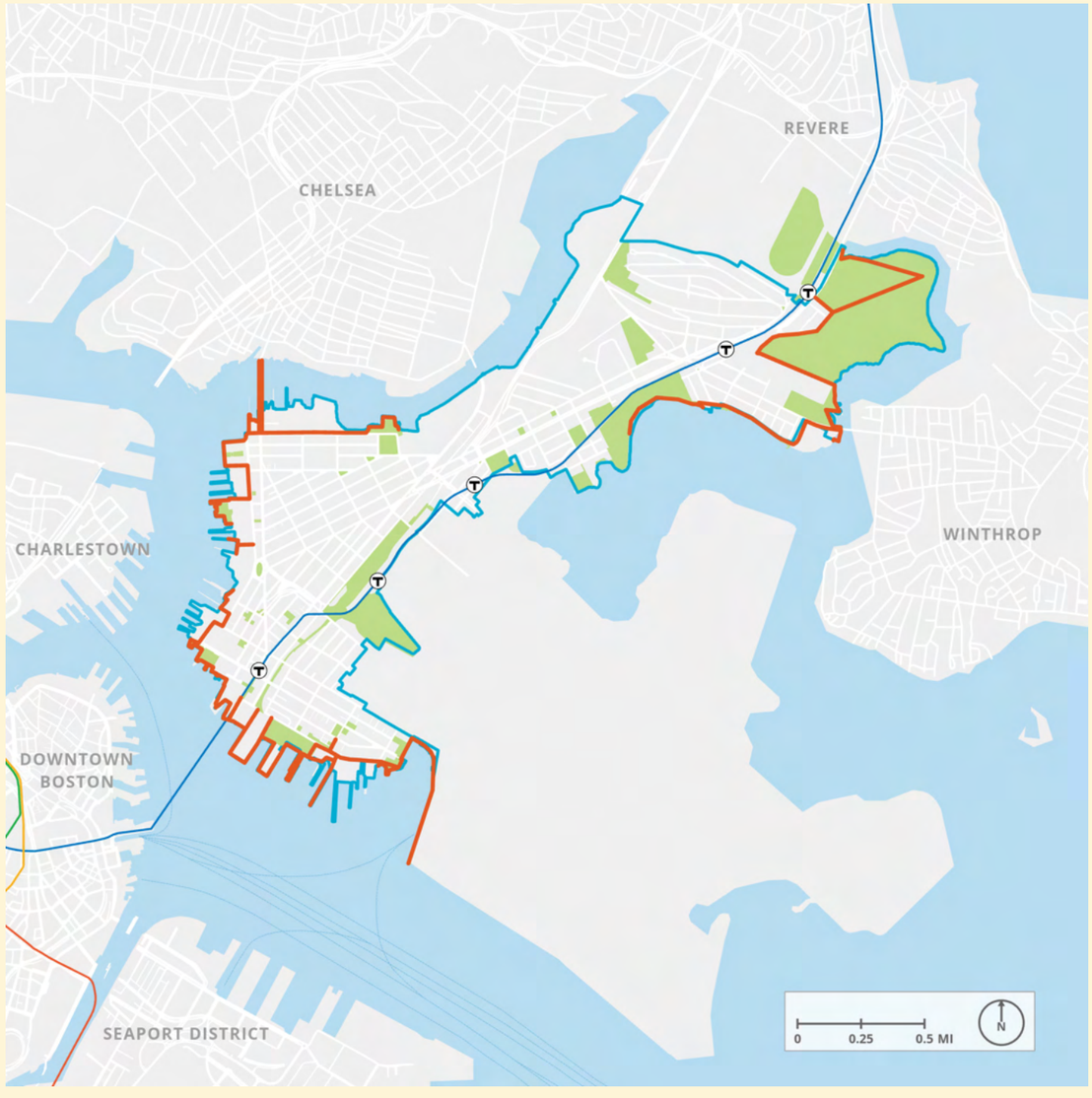


FIG 03-08 DIAGRAM OF EAST BOSTON HARBORWALK TODAY
East Boston Harborwalk investments are concentrated in Jeffries Point, owing to redevelopment of its waterfront enabled through retirement of most of its DPA and public investment in open space.

Key Recommendations for Land Use and Built Form

Development along waterfront or industrial areas typically occurs on large sites with little existing infrastructure and must balance demand for new uses with those that exist.

The economy of East Boston has changed over time, and as a result, demand for water-dependent and industrial land uses changed as well. Determining where to prioritize industrial uses versus where to prioritize commercial and residential uses is a critical part of planning for neighborhood growth.

Allow for a mix of uses that support essential economic activity to create opportunities for employment-focused development.
Existing use regulations in many of these areas identify commercial uses like “general office,” educational uses like “trade school,” community uses like “adult education center” and “community center,” cultural uses like “production studios” and open space uses like “recreational facilities” as either conditional or forbidden. These uses and others directly contribute to essential economic activity and should be allowed. Other zoning code provisions such as low limits on floor-area ratio and high minimums for off-street parking should be addressed to promote more efficient use of land.

Limit further proliferation of low-intensity uses such as self-storage and logistic centers.
The zoning code does not currently define self-storage and logistic centers, but both uses require targeted regulation. Like freight warehousing, car rental centers, and remote parking facilities, self-storage and logistic centers generate low job intensity while simultaneously generating outsized vehicular and truck traffic impacts.

Appropriately transition building scale.
Parcel sizes in these areas are typically much larger than parcel sizes in adjacent areas, and as a result, buildings tend to be much larger too. Where this adjacency occurs, it is important that building scale is appropriately transitioned. Building floor plates, particularly building length when parallel to primary streets, can be an important driver of perceived building scale.

Support adaptive reuse of existing structures.
Industrial buildings and infrastructure are an important part of East Boston’s industrial heritage and should be preserved where feasible. Adaptive reuse also contributes important sustainability benefits, such as reduced carbon impact compared to demolition and new construction.

- Opportunities to attract blue tech/blue economy companies + enterprises to East Boston

The character of the shipyard + marina is important to preserve. I hope it doesn't gentrify.

FIG 03-09 CHELSEA CREEK (2020). [ABOVE]
BPDA staff joined a tour of Chelsea Creek hosted by Harborkeepers, a waterfront advocacy organization as part of their “Vision Chelsea Creek” engagement effort.
FIG 03-10 SCAN OF COMMUNITY FEEDBACK (OCT 2019) [TOP RIGHT]
Community meeting hosted by BPDA focused on challenges and opportunities across character areas.
FIG 03-11 COMMUNITY MEETING (NOV 2019). [BOTTOM RIGHT]
Community meeting hosted by BPDA focused on challenges and opportunities specific to Waterfront and Economic Development Areas.

Key Recommendations for Transportation and Public Realm

State regulations and industrial uses limit opportunities for a resilient, publicly accessible waterfront. Transportation networks constrain how people travel to and from East Boston and within its waterfront.

East Boston's vulnerability to sea level rise requires an integrated network of coastal resilience solutions to effectively protect the neighborhood. This district-sale approach, as well as the creation of new and connectivity of existing waterfront open spaces, is challenged by DPA regulations. Physical and policy changes to streets, bridges, tunnels, and transit services would more equitably and sustainably accommodate growth areas and benefit the broader East Boston community.

Advance coastal resilience infrastructure.
With the completion of *Coastal Resilience Solutions for East Boston and Charlestown (Phase II)*, preferred concepts for all of East Boston's flood pathways are in place. The City will work with State and Federal partners to optimize long-term resilient infrastructure investments and continue to explore funding and financing options for public-private partnerships to construct district-scale coastal resilience solutions across public and private properties.

Increase open space and public access to the waterfront.
Few opportunities remain for new publicly accessible waterfront open spaces in East Boston. The City will seek new opportunities for point access to the waterfront, where possible, and to connect existing high-quality waterfront open spaces and Harborwalk segments via public rights-of-way.

Reconfigure waterfront transportation networks and expand transit options.
Designed to meet the needs of primarily industrial uses, streets in these areas often have poor and unsafe conditions, and in several places the street network is incomplete or non-existent. Many waterfront areas are not served by sufficient transit access and are considered "transit deserts." New high-frequency bus service paired with a Complete Streets approach would help expand safe and comfortable transportation options.

Evaluate equitable connections to opportunity.
East Boston is uniquely dependent on bridges, tunnels, and subway service for connectivity to the broader region. These connections, however, limit how and when residents and visitors can cross the Boston Harbor. The Blue Line, the backbone of East Boston's transit network, does not connect to the Red Line, commuter rail, or established and emerging employment centers west of Downtown. User costs for Harbor crossings vary by mode, which may reinforce inequities.

FIG 03-12 OPEN SPACE COMMUNITY WORKSHOP (JAN 2019)
Hosted at the East Boston YMCA, the event focused on discussing open space needs across the entire neighborhood.

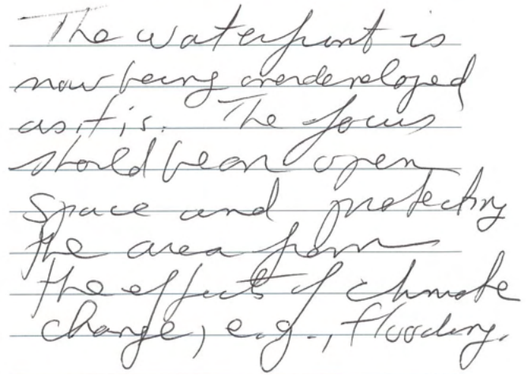


FIG 03-13 SCAN OF COMMUNITY FEEDBACK (OCT 2019)
Community meeting hosted by BPDA focused on challenges and opportunities specific to Waterfront and Economic Development Areas.

Marginal and Sumner Street Inner Harbor Waterfront

This subarea includes property primarily between Marginal Street and the Inner Harbor shoreline, from the terminus of Marginal Street at Porzio Park to the end of Sumner Street at LoPresti Park. The Grand Junction Railroad & Depot Company built the land in this subarea in the mid-1800s by building a seawall six hundred feet out from Marginal Street and backfilling the area. Wharves built on timber pilings extended the shoreline further. Property ownership changed several times as rail companies were consolidated and transacted through the 1960s and 70s. The property sat vacant for decades after Conrail abandoned the Grand Junction Railroad, the line that accessed the waterfront railyards, in 1976. Massport eventually consolidated ownership of all waterfront property between Lewis Street and the Jeffries Yacht Club, and in 1995 began construction on the first phase of Piers Park on a portion of the site as mitigation associated with Logan International Airport. Other waterfront parcels in this subarea were redeveloped in accordance with the vision laid out by the East Boston Master Plan (2000) and the East Boston Municipal Harbor Plan (2002). These projects include 99 Sumner Street (known as The Mark and formerly known as Hodge Boiler Works), Clippership Wharf, and a portion of the East Pier development (formerly known as Portside at Pier One.)

FIG 03-14 MARGINAL STREET WATERFRONT (CA 1955 - 1964).
Industrial facilities pictured here include Bethlehem Steel Company, now the Boston Harbor Shipyard & Marina, and the Grand Junction Railroad and Wharves, now open space associated with Piers Park. Image accessed via Northeastern University Library, Archives and Special Collections

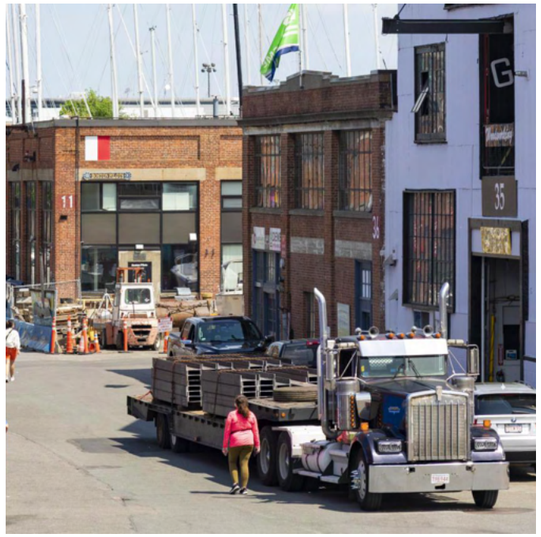


FIG 03-15 [TOP LEFT]
Marginal Street as it bisects the Boston Harbor Shipyard and Marina (2023)
FIG 03-16 [BOTTOM LEFT]
Harborwalk and publicly-accessible open space associated with Clippership Wharf (2023).
FIG 03-17 [TOP RIGHT]
LoPresti Park with residential development (99 Sumner Street, known as The Mark) in the background. (2023)
FIG 03-18 [BOTTOM RIGHT]
Flooding at Lewis Street (2018)

Recommendations for Land Use and Built Form
Remaining redevelopment opportunities are primarily controlled by Massport, a state agency not subject to municipal zoning restrictions. These include development associated with East Pier and The Shipyard.

Incorporate parcels east of Jeffries Street and between Sumner Street and Maverick Street into a mixed-use waterfront district.
Established parcelization and existing uses in this area are incongruous with its designation as a 3F-2000 zoning subdistrict. Allowed height and other dimensional restrictions should emulate those proposed for residential transition subdistricts identified in the Neighborhood Residential chapter.

Consolidate the Jeffries Point Waterfront Service (WS) Subdistrict and the South Ferry Waterfront Residential (WR) Subdistrict into a single mixed-use Waterfront subdistrict.
Existing uses in the Jeffries Point Waterfront Service (WS) are primarily residential, and incongruous with the Waterfront Service designation, designed to "protect against the encroachment of uses that threaten the continued economic viability of water-dependent commercial operations." Uses and built form in these subdistricts are indistinguishable from one another.

Designate the Navy Fuel Pier Airport Buffer Park as Open Space - Waterfront (OS-WA).
The open space is located in a small Waterfront Service (WS) subdistrict. Though the property is owned by Massport and therefore not subject to municipal zoning regulation, the Open Space - Waterfront (OS-WA) designation would be more consistent with how other Massport-owned open space, like Piers Park, is regulated.

FIG 03-19 EXISTING REGULATING PLAN FOR MARGINAL STREET AND THE INNER HARBOR WATERFRONT
Existing zoning in the area includes a patchwork of Waterfront Service (WS) subdistricts, Maritime Economy Reserve (MER) subdistricts, and two different open space subdistricts including a Recreation Open Space (OS-RC) subdistrict and a Waterfront Access Area Open Space (OS-WA) subdistrict.

FIG 03-20 PROPOSED REGULATING PLAN FOR MARGINAL STREET AND THE INNER HARBOR WATERFRONT

- WATERFRONT COMMERCIAL
- WATERFRONT ECONOMIC
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREA
- OPEN SPACE SUBDISTRICTS
- COASTAL FLOOD RESILIENCE OVERLAY DISTRICT

Recommendations for Transportation and Public Realm
The Marginal Street Inner Harbor waterfront enjoys some of the neighborhood's most concentrated and connected open space, including Porzio Park, Navy Fuel Pier Airport Edge Buffer, Piers Park, and Lo Presti Park, as well as several privately-owned public spaces contributed by private development. Expansion of Piers Park is underway. Phase II, which is currently under construction, will expand the park by 4.5 acres, and Phase III, which is currently going through community design review, will contribute an additional 3.8 acres.

Deliver coastal resilience infrastructure at key locations, such as Carlton Wharf and Lewis Mall.

The City, Massport, and Shipyard tenants should explore through a master planning process safety, accessibility, and connectivity improvements along and across the Marginal Street corridor for a better connected Harborwalk that accommodates Shipyard uses.
The vision for a continuous Harborwalk through the Shipyard to Porzio Park is not implementable without regulatory changes to the East Boston DPA. This gap could be bridged with improvements to Marginal Street, including extension of the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway. Marginal Street transitions from a public way to a gated private way through the Shipyard.

Topography and industrial uses limit connectivity to and from the waterfront and Jeffries Point, creating a significant gap between accessible connections at Cottage Street and Jeffries Street.

FIG 03-21 CONCEPTUAL RENDERING FOR COASTAL RESILIENCE INFRASTRUCTURE AT CARLTON WHARF INCLUDED IN *TECHNICAL ANALYSIS & RESILIENT DESIGN DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS FOR EAST BOSTON'S WATERFRONT REPORT* (BPDA, 2021)
The study built off climate vulnerability analysis and resilient strategies developed through Climate Ready Boston Coastal Resilient Solutions for East Boston (2017) and advanced design solutions to address two near-term critical flood entry points around Carlton Wharf and Lewis Mall.

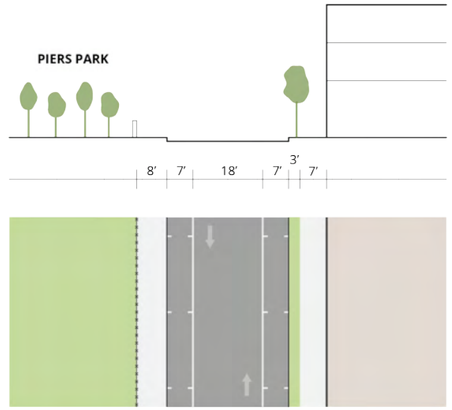


FIG 03-22 MARGINAL STREET SECTION - EXISTING CONDITION FOR PUBLIC WAY
The Marginal Street private way vision concept proposes a shared street through the Shipyard. This street would be shared by people using all travel modes at slow speeds. Shared streets can support commercial and retail activity, restaurants, and parking and loading activities. Shared street surfaces are often delineated with pavers or other types of decorate treatments.

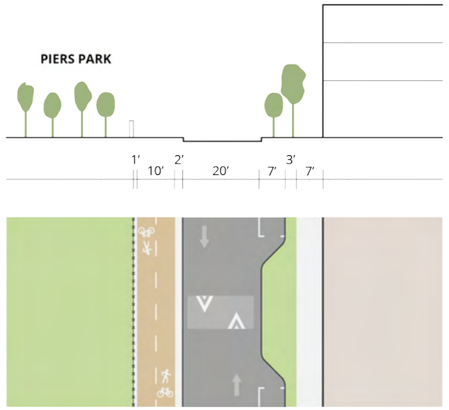


FIG 03-23 MARGINAL STREET SECTION - PROPOSED CONDITION FOR PUBLIC WAY
The Marginal Street public way vision concept prioritizes traffic calming and extension of the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway to create a family-friendly connection to Piers Parks and the Shipyard. Marginal Street is eligible for traffic calming.

Border Street and the Inner Harbor Waterfront

This subarea includes property primarily between Border Street and the Inner Harbor shoreline, from the terminus of New Street at LoPresti Park to the Condor Street Overlook. Many of East Boston's early industries, particularly shipbuilding, were located along Border Street. As maritime shipping demand declined and operations consolidated in the later twentieth century, many wharves were abandoned or put to non-maritime use. The legacy of these industries' economic boom and bust cycles is visible in the built form along Border Street, which is highly variable and includes vacant parcels, water-dependent industrial buildings, low-rise commercial buildings, and recently constructed mid-rise residential buildings. Uses here are similarly varied, including a Boston Public School (Mario Umana K-8) and several businesses that provide essential goods and services to the local community, including East Boston's only supermarket. Recent redevelopment activity in this subarea is limited to sites contemplated by the East Boston Municipal Harbor Plan Amendment (2008), including 6-26 New Street (The Eddy) and 102 - 148 Border Street (Boston East). Other redevelopment opportunities remain subject to regulations imposed by the East Boston DPA.

FIG 03-24 VACANT LOT AT 102 BORDER STREET. [TOP]
Atlantic Works building and former Cold Storage facility in background. (Date unknown) Image excerpted from Massachusetts Historical Commission survey of the East Boston Inner Harbor Industrial Area.
FIG 03-25 VACANT LOT AT 102 BORDER STREET. [BOTTOM]
Atlantic Works building and high-rise residential building at 2 - 10 New Street in background. (2023)

FIG 03-28 [TOP LEFT]
338 Border Street (2022) Surface parking lots and industrial operations associated with the BTT Marine Construction facility. Property is located within the East Boston Designated Port Area. Image accessed via Google Street View.
FIG 03-29 [TOP RIGHT]
Surface parking lots associated with 184 - 220 Border Street, known as Liberty Plaza. Many businesses in the plaza deliver essential goods and services to the neighborhood. Property is located within the East Boston Designated Port Area. (2023)

FIG 03-26 BORDER STREET LOOKING NORTH. (2022) [BOTTOM LEFT]
At right, construction of 301-303 Border Street, a mixed-use mid-rise project that includes 64 dwelling units and ground floor commercial space. At left, the Mario Umana Academy, a Boston Public School.
FIG 03-27 OPEN SPACE ALONG THE INNER HARBOR ASSOCIATED WITH 120 BORDER STREET (BOSTON EAST). [BOTTOM RIGHT]
Image accessed via www.maloneyproperties.com Harborwalk here is a notable exception to lack of public access to the elsewhere along Border Street.

Recommendations for Land Use and Built Form
Existing zoning in the area includes two Waterfront Commercial (WC) subdistricts, a Community Commercial (CC) subdistrict, two Maritime Economy Reserve (MER) subdistricts, a Waterfront Community Facility (WCF) subdistrict, a Waterfront Residential (WR) subdistrict, and a small Open Space Urban Wild (OS-UW) subdistrict. Mixed uses exist in this subarea already and benefit the East Boston community.

Consolidate parcels harbor-side of Border Street, from Sumner Street to Condor Street, into a single mixed-use mid-rise Waterfront subdistrict.
This subdistrict should allow residential, commercial, and institutional uses at heights and densities that reasonably address economic feasibility and respond to contemporary building types.

Incentivize preserving existing and expanding opportunities for commercial activity that delivers essential goods and services to the local community.
While zoning can allow a specific use, it cannot require it. For example, zoning can not require a supermarket in a specific location. Zoning incentives however, like the FRESH zoning incentives program in New York City, could give property owners the right to construct slightly larger buildings in mixed residential and commercial districts if they include a supermarket. This tool is also referred to as a density bonus.

Support adaptive reuse of existing structures.
Industrial buildings and infrastructure are an important part of East Boston's industrial heritage and should be preserved where feasible. Massachusetts Historical Commission included several properties primarily concentrated along Border Street between Maverick Street and Central Square in a 1997 survey of the "East Boston Inner Harbor Industrial Area."

Prioritize physical and visual access to the Inner Harbor waterfront and open space for redevelopment of any parcel west of Border Street.
No new street parallel to Border Street is proposed and any future motor vehicle access and loading to these parcels, should they redevelop, would occur via access drives perpendicular to Border Street. Relevant Urban Design priorities from Article 53-19 *Waterfront Development Review* include but are not limited to -

- Buildings and spaces to direct views and pedestrian movements toward the water.
- Inland buildings shall reinforce the City's street pattern and avoid continuous walls parallel to the water's edge by maintaining view and access corridors.
-

Pursue further review of the East Boston Designated Port Area.
Much of the area is subject to further regulation by the East Boston Designated Port Area. The City advocated for removing Border Street properties from the East Boston Designated Port Area during the most recent boundary review effort in 2022. Though the boundary review did not result in changes to this area, there remain other opportunities to do so. Redevelopment of these sites unencumbered by DPA regulations would remain subject to zoning and Chapter 91 requirements and would likely require a Municipal Harbor Plan.

FIG 03-30 EXISTING REGULATING PLAN FOR BORDER STREET AND THE INNER HARBOR WATERFRONT
Development proposals on parcels over an acre and located in Waterfront Commercial subdistricts are eligible to pursue zoning approval via Planned Development Area subject to dimensional regulations of an approved Municipal Harbor Plan.

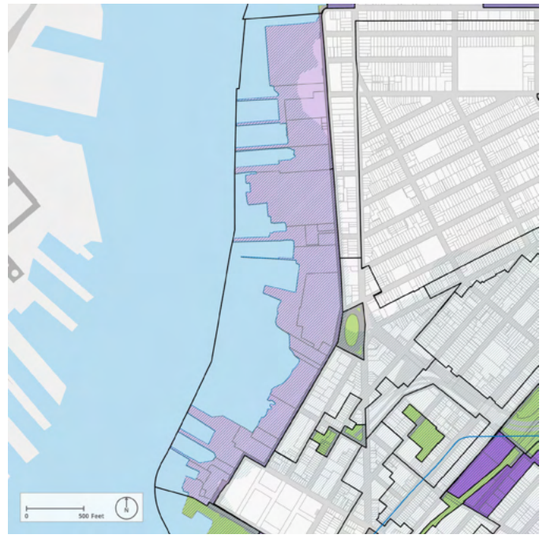


FIG 03-31 PROPOSED REGULATING PLAN FOR BORDER STREET AND THE INNER HARBOR WATERFRONT
Zoning should extend PDA eligibility to the proposed mixed-use Waterfront subdistrict.

- WATERFRONT COMMERCIAL
- WATERFRONT ECONOMIC
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREA
- OPEN SPACE SUBDISTRICTS
- COASTAL FLOOD RESILIENCE OVERLAY DISTRICT

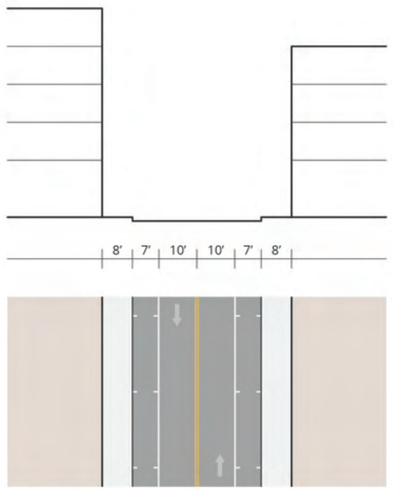
Recommendations for Transportation and Public Realm
Open space and waterfront access in this area is limited and disconnected. Public open spaces include LoPresti Park, Alfred L. Bertulli Park at Central Square, and recreational space associated with the Mario Umana K-8 School. Privately-owned public space delivered by residential development at 2 - 8 New Street (The Eddy) and 102 - 148 (Boston East) contribute to waterfront open space and the Harborwalk network.

Advance coastal resilience along the Border Street waterfront.
Given the near-term flood risk and extent of potential flooding in the area, developing actionable coastal resilience strategies for Border Street is a key next step in the implementation of the City's Climate Ready Boston initiative The vision as documented by *Coastal Resilience Solutions for East Boston and Charlestown* (Phase I) for a signature publicly-accessible open space near the Central Square waterfront and a continuous Harborwalk is challenged without regulatory changes to the East Boston DPA and further amendment to the East Boston Municipal Harbor Plan. The City will initiate a new design study to evaluate coastal resilience strategies along the Border Street waterfront as a key next step in the implementation of the City's Climate Ready Boston initiative.

Connect the Harborwalk with public rights-of-way.
Opportunities for pedestrian access to the waterfront is limited by industrial uses. Border Street has traditionally served waterfront industrial activity and is in the midst of a transition to more residential uses. The street connects to the Harborwalk in locations, but improvements to Border Street would contribute to a continuous Harborwalk condition where industrial uses preclude waterfront access. This strategy builds upon the ***East Boston Master Plan*** (2000), which proposed "Waterfront Way" to connect open spaces with consistent streetscape improvements.

FIG 03-32 CONCEPTUAL RENDERING FOR COASTAL RESILIENCE INFRASTRUCTURE AT CENTRAL SQUARE AND THE INNER HARBOR WATERFRONT INCLUDED IN *COASTAL RESILIENCE SOLUTIONS FOR EAST BOSTON AND CHARLESTOWN* REPORT (CITY OF BOSTON, 2017)
The City will engage with a stakeholder working group consisting of private property owners along the waterfront, community-based organizations, and the East Boston community more broadly to advance the design of flood protection strategies that were studied in the 2017 Climate Ready Boston plan, ***Coastal Resilience Solutions for East Boston and Charlestown (Phase I)***. The City intends to launch the design study in 2023.

BORDER STREET - Existing Condition



BORDER STREET - Proposed CONDITION
Green infrastructure and two-way separated bike lane

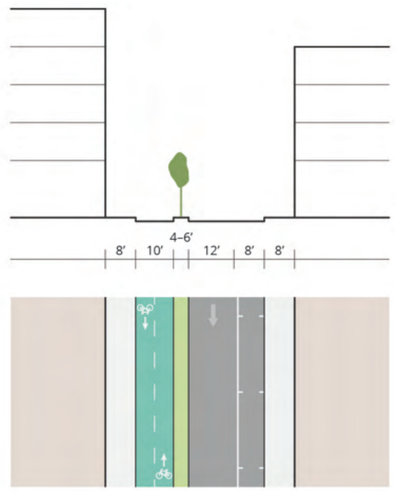


FIG 03-33 BORDER STREET FROM WHITE ST LOOKING SOUTH, 2020
The Border Street vision concept prioritizes flood protection and green infrastructure along Border Street. Green infrastructure helps manage stormwater by using plants, soil, and other natural materials to mimic nature. The result is streets that remove pollutants, drain better, and are more beautiful. The vision concept also prioritizes low-stress biking along Border Street instead of Meridian Street because of its flatter terrain, access to the waterfront, and fewer conflicts with turning vehicles and large vehicles.

Condor Street and the Lower Chelsea Creek Waterfront

This subarea includes property primarily between Condor Street and the Chelsea Creek shoreline, from the intersection of Condor Street and Border Street to the Chelsea Street Bridge. The Chelsea Creek waterfront was developed later than, and effectively in support of the Inner Harbor waterfront. Uses historically included manufacturing and energy infrastructure. However, as East Boston's maritime industrial economy waned, so too did demand for industrial manufacturing, and by the 1930s, many of these facilities were abandoned and the shoreline was given over to scrapyards. A 1931 report filed by the Boston Port Authority documented the "serious menaces to health and safety of East Bostonians caused by the ship graveyard along Condor Street. A careful survey of the hulk situation reveals a total of 79 wrecks in … a distance of three-quarters of a mile above the Meridian Street Bridge." Though the shoreline was eventually cleared of these hulks, scrapyards and energy infrastructure remain a common uses. Built form in this portion of the waterfront is somewhat variable, including an established group of low-scale residential buildings, several historic mid-rise commercial buildings, and low-rise industrial structures, including approximately 25 acres of fuel storage tanks. All property in this area is located within the Chelsea Creek DPA, with the exception of the Condor Street Urban Wild.

FIG 03-34 CONDOR STREET WATERFRONT (1962).
The Meridian Street Bridge (post-reconstruction) pictured in the foreground. Fuel storage facilities including the State Fuel Co. (later the Hess Oil Co.) feature prominently. Image accessed via Northeastern University Library, Archives and Special Collections

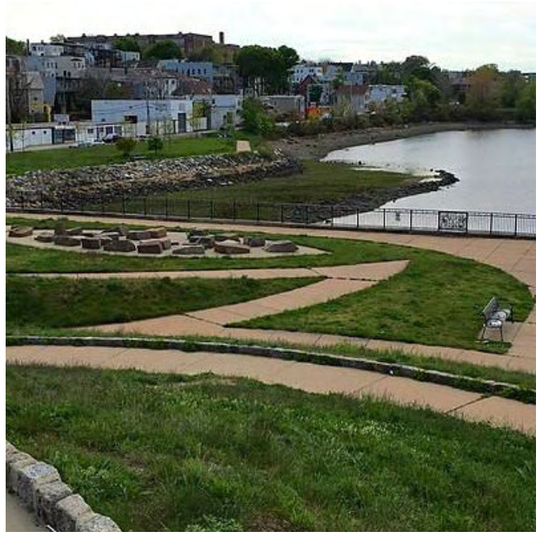


FIG 03-35 CONDOR STREET URBAN WILD (DATE UNKNOWN) [TOP LEFT]
The open space is owned and maintained by the City of Boston. The Urban Wilds Initiative transformed this urban brownfield into a publicly accessible natural area in 2003. The restored site now features walking paths, a boardwalk and viewing platform overlooking the Chelsea River, a salt marsh, meadow grasses, and other coastal habitat elements. Image accessed via City of Boston project website.

FIG 03-36 CONDOR STREET AND BROOKS STREET INTERSECTION (2002) [RIGHT]
The image features recent infill development at 101 Condor Street and a vacant commercial property at 100 Condor Street.

FIG 03-37 CONDOR STREET APPROACHING THE BORDER STREET AND MERIDIAN STREET INTERSECTION [BOTTOM LEFT]
The image demonstrates established residential uses along both sides of Condor Street. Properties north of Condor Street, including these low-scale residential buildings, are subject to regulation by the Chelsea Creek Designate Port Area.

Recommendations for Land Use and Built Form
Existing zoning in the area includes four Waterfront Manufacturing (WM) subdistricts, three Maritime Economy Reserve (MER) subdistricts, East Boston's only Local Industrial (LI) subdistrict, and an Open Space Urban Wild (OS-UW) subdistrict. Zoning should better transition the established residential subarea south of Condor Street with the industrial uses north of Nay Street.

Support adaptive reuse of existing structures.
Industrial buildings and infrastructure are an important part of East Boston's industrial heritage and should be preserved where feasible. Massachusetts Historical Commission included 84-92, 100, and 102-140 Condor Street in a 1997 survey of the Chelsea River Industrial Area.

Convert the Local Industrial subdistrict to a mixed-use mid-rise subdistrict.
The subdistrict is separated from Waterfront subdistricts by Nay Street, a public right-of-way. Residential uses and a daycare facility already exist in the subdistrict and are consistent with uses elsewhere along Condor Street.

Consolidate the boundaries of Maritime Economy Reserve (MER) subdistricts and the Waterfront Manufacturing (WM) subdistrict west of Putnam Street into a single subdistrict. Simplify Waterfront industrial zoning intended to "protect the working waterfront."
Allowed uses in Waterfront Manufacturing ("WM") subdistricts are unclear, as *TABLE C - East Boston Neighborhood District - Waterfront Manufacturing Subdistricts, Waterfront Service Subdistricts, Waterfront Commercial Subdistricts, and Maritime Economy Reserve (MER) Subdistricts - Use Regulations* does not include a column for Waterfront Manufacturing ("WM") subdistricts. Dimensional requirements, recorded in *TABLE H - East Boston Neighborhood District - Maritime Economy Reserve (MER), Waterfront Manufacturing WM), Waterfront Service (WS), and Waterfront Commercial (WC) Subdistricts* are similar.

Pursue further review of the Chelsea Creek Designated Port Area.
Much of the area is subject to further regulation by the Chelsea Creek Designated Port Area. In 2022 Coastal Zone Management administered a boundary review of the Chelsea Creek Designated Port Area and which did not consider property south of the Chelsea Street bridge.

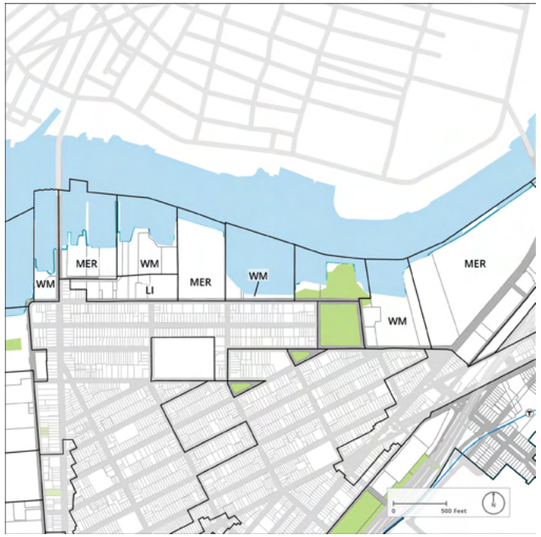


FIG 03-38 EXISTING REGULATING PLAN FOR CONDOR STREET AND THE LOWER CHELSEA CREEK WATERFRONT E

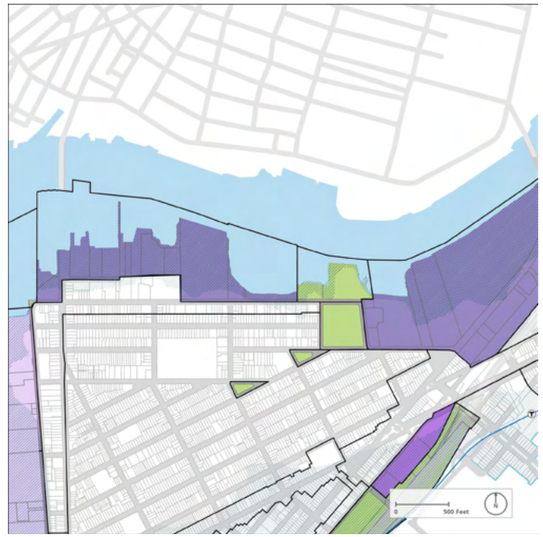


FIG 03-39 PROPOSED REGULATING PLAN FOR CONDOR STREET AND THE LOWER CHELSEA CREEK WATERFRONT

WATERFRONT COMMERCIAL
WATERFRONT ECONOMIC
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREA
OPEN SPACE SUBDISTRICTS
COASTAL FLOOD RESILIENCE OVERLAY DISTRICT

Recommendations for Transportation and Public Realm
Open space in the area is concentrated at the eastern end of Condor Street and includes the American Legion Playground and the Condor Street Urban Wild. The industrial street network in the area is unresolved, requiring large vehicles to operate on the largely residential Condor Street.

Expand the Condor Street Urban Wild.
Waterfront parcels dimensionally unsuited for development may present opportunities to expand the Urban Wild westward. City-owned property may present opportunities to expand the Urban Wild eastward.

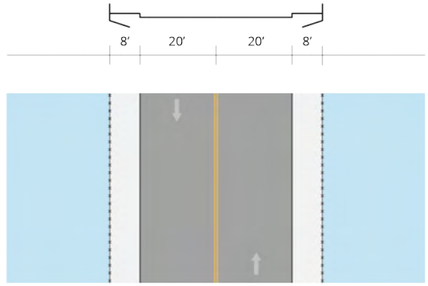
Connect East Boston and Chelsea with a safe, family-friendly bikeway and address safety concerns at the Meridian Street / Condor Street intersection.
The Boston Public Works Department will rehabilitate of the McArdle Bridge, with construction activities beginning as early as 2027. The bridge, constructed in 1954 and refurbished in 2002, is in poor condition and requires a full deck replacement and rehabilitation of other elements, including the moveable span. This project will include separated bike lanes with a smoother surface to enable the connection between the Border Street vision concept, as shown in the Squares and Corridors chapter, and the City of Chelsea's growing bike network. Safety improvements are warranted at the Meridian Street / Condor Street intersection, one of the neighborhood's most severe crash hot spots.

FIG 03-40 NAY STREET, LOOKING TOWARD MERIDIAN STREET

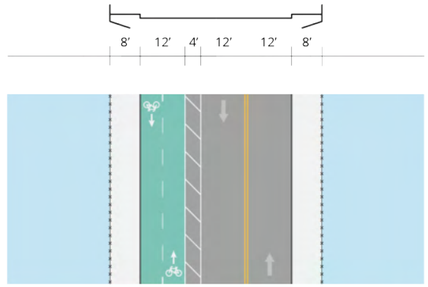
Formalize and extend Nay Street with a new intersection at Condor Street.
A Nay Street extension could help divert truck traffic away from Condor Street west of Putnam Street, allowing for a Condor Street redesign that more closely follows a Neighborhood Residential street type.

Redesign Eagle Square and Lexington Square from the ground up to resolve safety and accessibility challenges and create new public realm and green infrastructure.
Eagle Square is frequently traversed by large trucks passing through or parked in the public right-of-way to serve abutting industrial sites. Lexington Square, one block west, features excessive pavement and confusing operations for everyone. In 2022, the City implemented an interim solution in Eagle Square in advance of planned utility work in the area, which will disrupt the streets until completion in 2025. This interim solution used signs and roadway striping to route East Eagle Street around parked trucks. However, the City will develop a holistic design solution for both squares to address issues and opportunities.

FIG 03-41
Within Eagle Square, truck drivers park their vehicles for extended periods of time within the public right-of-way, creating safety challenges and accessibility barriers. The new police substation, adjacent to Eagle Square, opened in 2023.



MCARDLE BRIDGE - EXISTING CONDITION



MCARDLE BRIDGE - PROPOSED CONDITION

Today, the McArdle Bridge deck includes two travel lanes wide enough for four travel lanes, creating an environment of uncertainty and enabling aggressive maneuvering. The moveable span surface is composed of a metal grating, which is uncomfortable for people traveling by bike. The McArdle Bridge concept maintains two travel lanes and introduces a two-way separated bike lane on the west side of the span. The proposed condition would enable needed on-street vehicle access for employees accessing the bridge house. Bus priority should be investigated for the sources of recurring delay, which are the Meridian / Condor / Border Street intersection in East Boston and the Pearl / Williams Street intersection in Chelsea.

McClellan Highway Economic Development Area and the Upper Chelsea Creek Waterfront

This subarea includes property between the Route 1A and the Chelsea Creek shoreline, from the Chelsea Street Bridge to the Revere town line, and the McClellan Highway Economic Development Area zoning subdistrict. The land in this subarea was historically an intertidal salt marsh connecting the Chelsea River (now called Chelsea Creek) to Winthrop Bay. Over time landfill, including dredged material and illegal dumping of household refuse, disconnected the two waterways, resulting in, according to a 1931 Boston Globe article, "a very decided odor of stagnation and decaying matter in both sections" when referring to the shorelines of Breeds Island and Noddle Island. Soon thereafter, the Boston Port Development Company made significant investments in land "reclamation" and developed the area for fuel storage. Though the tank structures no longer exist on these sites, the high-impact use has had long-term and deleterious effects, contributing to subsequent cycles of harmful land uses and ecological degradation. Much of the area is remains underleveraged, including several acres of surface parking and vacant property. Development activity has been limited and, until recently, was concentrated in the Economic Development Area, including a hotel expansion project at 100 Boardman Street and a midrise multifamily residential project at 144 Addison Street. However, recent property assemblage along Chelsea Creek presents a significant development opportunity.

FIG 03-42 CHELSEA CREEK WATERFRONT ALONG ROUTE 1A / MCCLELLAN HIGHWAY FROM THE MAVERICK COTTON MILLS FACILITY TO ORIENT HEIGHTS (1940).
Fuel storage infrastructure transformed coastal landscapes along the Chelsea Creek.

FIG 03-43 225 WILLIAM F MCCLELLAN HWY (2021). [TOP RIGHT]
Surface parking and inaccessible sidewalk conditions at the Courtyard Marriott Airport Hotel.
FIG 03-44 605 CHELSEA STREET (2021). [LEFT]
Surface parking, inaccessible sidewalk and conditions and publicly inaccessible and ecologically degraded shoreline conditions at historic East Boston Steam Sewerage Pumping Station.
FIG 03-45 144 ADDISON STREET (2020). [BOTTOM RIGHT]
Recent midrise multifamily residential development in the McLellan Highway Economic Development Area adjacent to existing residential uses along Saratoga Street.

Recommendations for Land Use and Built Form
Development in the area presents significant opportunity for growth connected to the needs of the community.

Relax allowed uses in both subdistricts to create greater opportunity for employment-focused development.
Existing use regulations identify commercial uses like "general office," educational uses like "professional school" and "trade school," community uses like "adult education center" and "community center," cultural uses like "production studios" and open space uses like "recreational facilities" as either conditional or forbidden uses in both subdistricts. These uses directly contribute to essential economic activity and should be allowed by-right.

Increase allowed height and density for Planned Development Areas in the McClellan Highway Economic Development Area.
The stated purpose of establishing areas within which a PDA may be permitted is to "provide for a more flexible zoning law," however, dimensional regulations in Section 53-45 limit allowed FAR for PDAs to 2.0, which is the same as allowed FAR in the underlying subdistrict. Flexibility is needed to leverage private development for the delivery of public improvements such as district-scale flood infrastructure, public rights-of-way, and open space amenities.

Study opportunities for and the potential impacts of residential growth in the McClellan Highway Economic Development Area.
The McClellan Highway EDA was established to encourage "environmentally sound" economic growth and the "development of retail, office, research and development, and light industrial and manufacturing uses which benefit from the area's proximity to the City, the international airport, and major highway access." The subdistrict was not planned for residential use, and significant investment in public infrastructure, including district-scale flood protection, and the creation of a local street network would be needed to accommodate those uses. However, the subarea presents an important opportunity to address housing demand while connecting established residential areas.

Study potential "supporting DPA uses" and "temporary uses" in the Chelsea Creek Designated Port Area.
In 2022 Coastal Zone Management administered a boundary review of the Chelsea Creek DPA and removed approximately 23 acres from the Chelsea Creek DPA. That property is now subject only to Chapter 91 regulations and zoning. Approximately 51 acres of land remain subject to further regulation by the DPA which requires "water-dependent industrial use" as defined in the state's Waterways Regulations (310 CMR 9.12(2)(b)). A DPA Master Plan could provide for limited exception to that requirement by identifying "supporting DPA uses" and "temporary uses."

FIG 03-46 EXISTING REGULATING PLAN FOR MCCLELLAN HIGHWAY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREA AND THE UPPER CHELSEA CREEK WATERFRONT
Existing zoning in the area includes two large subdistricts - the Upper Chelsea Creek Waterfront Manufacturing subdistrict, and the McCLellan Highway Economic Development Area subdistrict. A portion of the Upper Chelsea Creek Waterfront Manufacturing subdistrict remains subject to further regulation by the Chelsea Creek Designated Port Area.

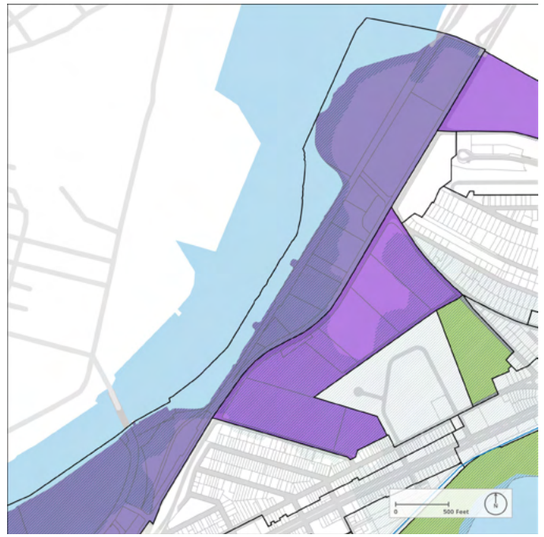


FIG 03-47 PROPOSED REGULATING PLAN FOR MCCLELLAN HIGHWAY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREA AND THE UPPER CHELSEA CREEK WATERFRONT
Preserving the separate subdistricts is appropriate. Consistent with the recommended boundary change proposed in the Neighborhood Residential section, the portion of the McLellan Highway EDA which extends across Addison Street should be removed from the EDA and included in a Neighborhood Residential zoning subdistrict.

WATERFRONT COMMERCIAL
WATERFRONT ECONOMIC
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREA
OPEN SPACE SUBDISTRICTS
COASTAL FLOOD RESILIENCE OVERLAY DISTRICT

Recommendations for Transportation and Public Realm
The subarea lacks publicly accessible open space and public access to the waterfront. The area also lacks basic infrastructure, is isolated from the neighborhood, and cannot be reached by transit. It is bisected by Route 1A, a major barrier with regional, high-speed traffic, poor sidewalks, and few crossings.

A new local street network is needed on both sides of Route 1A to connect to existing neighborhood streets, facilitate waterfront access, and create a walkable block structure that supports evolving land uses compatible with East Boston's fabric.

Redesign Route 1A as "McClellan Boulevard" to slow speeds and expand transit access.
It should include at-grade intersections and crossing opportunities at regular intervals, and a dedicated transitway to enable new and extended frequent bus service to directly serve growth areas and relieve the Blue Line and local bus routes.

The City, City of Chelsea, MassDOT, and MBTA should advance the introduction of a two-way separated bike lane and bus priority on the Chelsea Street Bridge. *Go Boston 2030* and the Day Square vision concept, as presented in the Squares and Corridors chapter, envision a family-friendly Green Links connection on the Chelsea Street bridge to connect the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway and Chelsea Greenway, and dedicated bus lanes on Chelsea Street. The bridge is owned by MassDOT. Intersection modifications on both sides of the bridge should be investigated to accommodate safe and logical points of connection to existing street and path networks.

FIG 03-48 [ABOVE]
Route 1A pedestrian crossing at Addison Street intersection. (2021) The intersection is not signalized.

FIG 03-49 [TOP, OPPOSITE]
The Route 1A Corridor is most constrained by Chelsea Creek and abutting land uses near its intersection Addison Street. The parallel rights-of-way for McClellan Highway and the rail parcels converge at this location for a combined XX-foot right-of-way.

FIG 03-50 [BOTTOM, OPPOSITE]
A "McClellan Boulevard" would maintain existing McClellan Highway capacity but be redesigned with a 25 mph City-standard speed limit. This concept reserves the railroad ROW for waterfront access, recreation, and coastal resilience infrastructure. With the generous right-of-way, McClellan Boulevard would include accessible sidewalks, green inrastructure and street trees, additional intersections with crossing opportunities, a two-way separated bike lane, and a dedicated transitway for high-frequency crosstown bus service. Setbacks may be needed along abutting properties north of Addison Street where the rights-of-way for McClellan Highway and the rail parcels diverge.

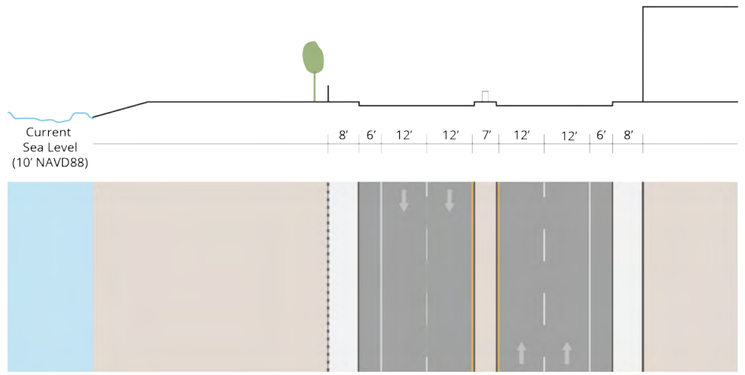


FIG 03-51 EXISTING SECTION OF ROUTE 1A CORRIDOR AT ADDISON STREET

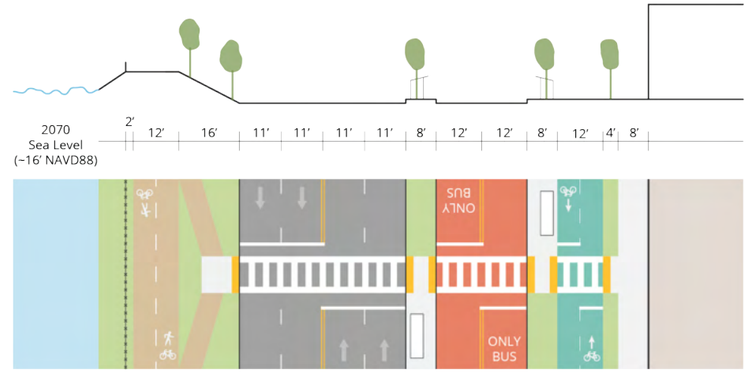
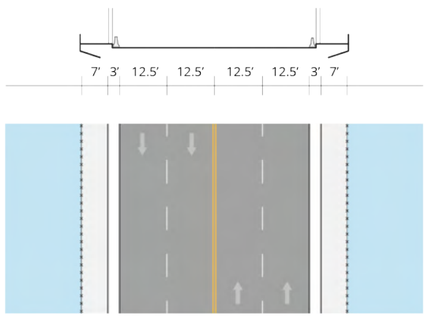
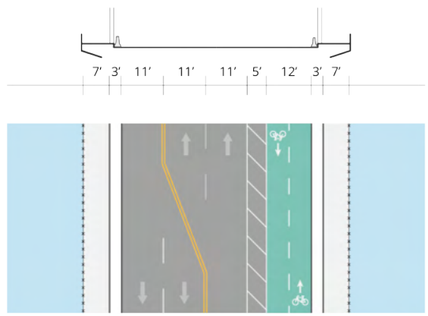


FIG 03-52 PROPOSED SECTION OF ROUTE 1A CORRIDOR AT ADDISON STREET



CHELSEA STREET BRIDGE - EXISTING CONDITION



CHELSEA STREET BRIDGE - PROPOSED CONDITION

Policy Considerations for the Route 1A Corridor

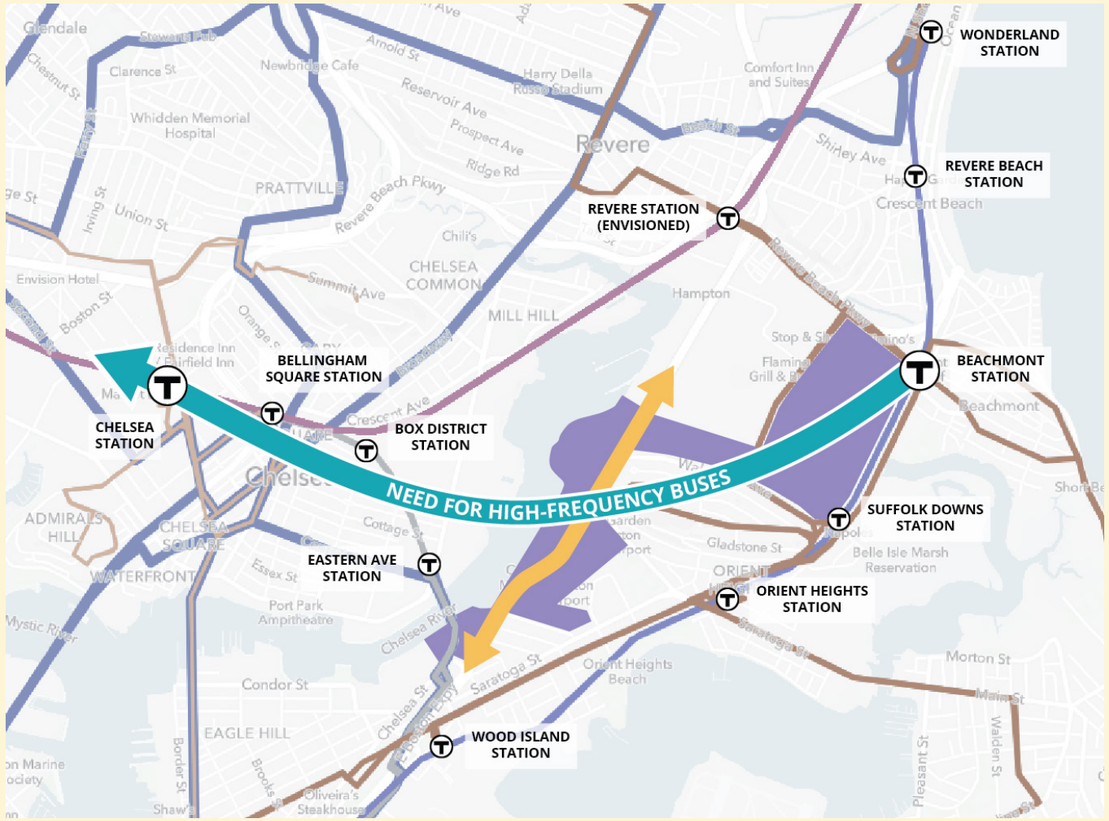
Regional infrastructure is a physical barrier for East Boston but also an opportunity to invest in new jobs, mobility options, and an accessible and resilient Chelsea Creek waterfront.

For generations, planning for East Boston's waterfront has prioritized regional needs of industry and infrastructure. McClellan Highway, built in 1938 to funnel North Shore residents to and from Boston, is today traveled by tens of thousands of daily drivers. The adjacent unused rail right-of-way is under assessment by MassDOT's *Route 1A Corridor Study* for truck-only operations to accommodate proposed freight warehousing and off-site airport parking uses. Public and private investment in the Route 1A Corridor, encompassing both McClellan Highway and the rail right-of-way, should support development of new job opportunities, expansion of sustainable transportation networks, and a publicly accessible and resilient waterfront.

The McClellan Highway EDA and Upper Chelsea Creek Waterfront area is East Boston's largest "transit desert." New high-capacity, crosstown bus service and regional rail service are needed to reduce transfers, limit additional congestion on McClellan Highway and East Boston streets, and support growth areas along and near the Route 1A Corridor, including the 16.2 million square feet of residential, office, lab, retail, and community uses planned at the Suffolk Downs Redevelopment. The MBTA's *Bus Network Redesign*, however, did not propose new transit connections that use the Route 1A Corridor.

Investments in the Route 1A Corridor should be considered through an environmental justice lens and should seek to reduce reliance on motor vehicles, minimize pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, and increase access to walking, biking, and transit options. East Boston residents bear the burden of excessive pollution, speeding, crashes, and physical barriers associated with today's McClellan Highway configuration. Increasing the number of travel lanes along McClellan Highway, a commitment of the Suffolk Downs Redevelopment project, would exacerbate existing public health and equity issues and preclude other multimodal uses that could better accommodate growth areas while also mitigating their impacts on the transportation network.

Chelsea Creek is already vulnerable to coastal flooding and near-term flood pathways are projected to cross over the Route 1A Corridor by the 2030s. Climate Ready envisions public waterfront access, ecological restoration of the coastline, and coastal flood protection enabled through implementation of a landscaped berm along the Chelsea Creek waterfront. Waterfront access to East Boston residents can be increased with new north / south pedestrian connections that are safe, comfortable, and connect directly to existing streets and paths.



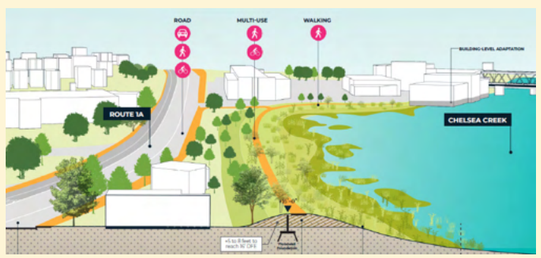


FIG 03-53
The envisioned "McClellan Boulevard" transitway would enable new, high-frequency crosstown bus service to better connect high-growth areas in East Boston, Chelsea, and Everett, including Suffolk Downs. A new Regional Rail station in Revere would connect to MBTA-proposed crosstown bus route 119 and the envisioned Chelsea Creek shared-use path network.

FIG 03-54
Conceptual rendering of Route 1A and the Chelsea Creek waterfront facing southwest included in ***Coastal Resilience Solutions for East Boston & Charlestown (Phase II)*** Climate Ready report (2021).

Saratoga Street Economic Development Area and the Belle Isle Marsh Waterfront

The Saratoga Street EDA stretches from Saratoga Street near the Winthrop town line to Bennington Street. It extends up Walley Street and Bennington Street to the boundary of the Suffolk Downs EDA. The area has significant frontage along the Belle Isle Marsh, the largest remaining salt meadow, tidal flats, and other critical habitats. Like elsewhere along East Boston's waterfront, land in this subarea is primarily the product of artificial fill that significantly altered the Belle Isle Marsh geography and hydrology starting in the late 1800s. Plans to extend buildable land to Beachmont required significantly more fill than what was ultimately undertaken and were abandoned sometime after 1922. The subarea primarily comprises MBTA-owned land, including the Orient Heights MBTA station, surface parking lots, and rail yards, but also includes light industrial buildings and low-density commercial buildings.

FIG 03-55 EXCERPT FROM MAP PRODUCED BY WALK LITHOGRAPH & PUBLISHING COMPANY (1922).
Image accessed via the State Library of Massachusetts.

FIG 03-56 1141 BENNINGTON STREET (2012) [TOP LEFT]
New England Casket Company (former BRB&l carhouse) and Blue Line tracks before the facility was was destroyed in a fire and subsequently demolished in 2019. Image accessed via Wikimedia Commons.
FIG 03-57 1188 - 1208 BENNINGTON STREET (2023) [TOP RIGHT]
FIG 03-58 BELLE ISLE MARSH (2023) [BOTTOM LEFT]
FIG 03-59 2 SHAWSHEEN ROAD (2023) [BOTTOM RIGHT]

Recommendations for Land Use and Built Form
From Article 53-24 *Establishment of Economic Development Areas*, the Saratoga Street EDA was intended as a "focal point for environmentally sound economic growth and development of retail, office, research and development, and light industrial and manufacturing uses." However, few of these uses exist in the subdistrict today.

Allow residential uses in the Saratoga Street EDA.
The area is well-served by transit and is immediately adjacent to established residential areas. There are relatively few parcels likely to develop (the MBTA is the most significant land owner in the subdistrict) so allowing residential uses by-right would have a more limited cumulative impact when compared to residential growth opportunities in the McClellan or Suffolk Downs EDAs.

Adjust dimensional regulations related to Planned Development Areas in the Saratoga Street EDA.
Development proposals on parcels over an acre and located in the Saratoga Street Economic Development Area are eligible to pursue zoning approval via Planned Development Area. However, despite the stated purpose of establishing areas within which a PDA may be permitted to "provide for a more flexible zoning law," dimensional regulations for PDAs in the Saratoga Street Economic Development Area (Section 53-45 Table 3) are nearly the same as underlying dimensional regulations in the subdistrict (Table L). For example, PDA-enabled height in the subdistrict is 45' which is only 10' taller than what is allowed by the underlying dimensional requirement. Flexibility is needed to leverage private development for the delivery of public improvements such as district-scale flood infrastructure and improvements to the local street network.

Development should facilitate visual, and where feasible, physical connections to the Belle Isle marsh.
The subdistrict is effectively a Waterfront district (though the EDA nomenclature does not acknowledge this condition). Relevant Urban Design priorities from Article 53-19 *Waterfront Development Review* include but are not limited to -

- Buildings and spaces to direct views and pedestrian movements toward the water.
- Inland buildings shall reinforce the City's street pattern and avoid continuous walls parallel to the water's edge by maintaining view and access corridors, especially at cross-streets.
- Building elements on a site shall generally step down in height toward the water's edge.

FIG 03-60 EXISTING REGULATING PLAN FOR SARATOGA STREET ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREA AND THE BELLE ISLE MARSH WATERFRONT

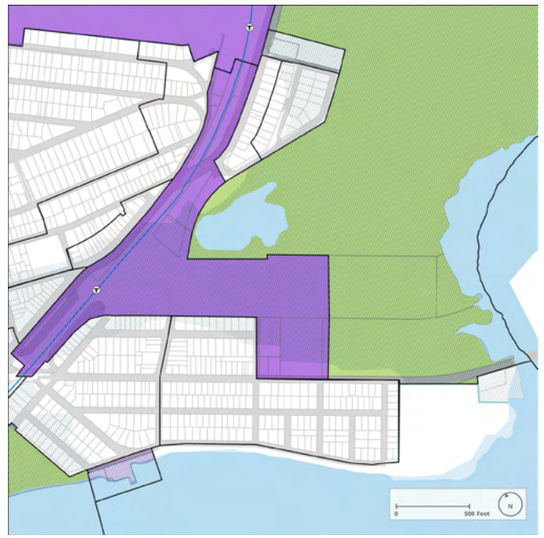


FIG 03-61 PROPOSED REGULATING PLAN FOR SARATOGA STREET ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREA AND THE BELLE ISLE MARSH WATERFRONT

WATERFRONT COMMERCIAL
WATERFRONT ECONOMIC
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREA
OPEN SPACE SUBDISTRICTS
COASTAL FLOOD RESILIENCE OVERLAY DISTRICT

Recommendations for Transportation and Public Realm Owned and managed by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), the Belle Isle Marsh is an important natural resource and recreation space for East Boston and surrounding communities. Given the threat imposed by climate change and sea-level rise, interventions to restore the Belle Isle Marsh will be necessary to preserve the health of the marsh and the benefits it provides to the region.

Implement district-scale flood protection infrastructure identified by Climate Ready.
Coastal Resilience Solutions for East Boston and Charlestown (Phase II) envisions resilient infrastructure focused on the southeast side of Bennington Street along the Belle Isle Marsh. Representatives from the City of Boston, City of Revere, Town of Winthrop, DCR, MassDOT, MBTA, The Nature Conservancy, Friends of the Belle Isle Marsh, Mystic River Watershed Association, Woods Hole Group, and HYM Investments participated in a multi-year study of the Belle Isle Marsh funded by the State's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) grant program. The MVP grant was successfully awarded in 2023, which will enable the cities to advance the design of coastal resilience strategies extending along Bennington Street in East Boston and Frederick's Park in Revere.

The City, MBTA, and Trails Team, an interagency initiative between MassDOT, DCR, and the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, should advance design and implementation of the connection of the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway and Winthrop Greenway within the Orient Heights Station area.
The area is envisioned as the nexus of the shared-use path network. Path alignments proposed in the East Boston Master Plan (2000) were refined in the Orient Heights Square and Suffolk Downs Square vision concepts, as presented in the Squares and Corridors chapter. The vision incorporates the preferred Winthrop Greenway alignment along the Orient Heights Station parking lot as well as improvements to Bennington Street.

The MBTA's Bus Network Redesign proposes Winthrop-bound bus routes to extend into East Boston and Revere. With these routes no longer terminating at Orient Heights Station, the redundant south bus loop parallel to Barnes Avenue should be repurposed to connect the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway and Winthrop Greenway to each other and the Blue Line. Implementation of a Pedal & Park facility and bikeshare station would expand station-access options for MBTA passengers.

HYM, the Suffolk Downs Redevelopment proponent, will fund the design and implementation of the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway extension from its current terminus at Constitution Beach to Suffolk Downs via the Orient Heights Station area, Saratoga Street, and Bennington Street.

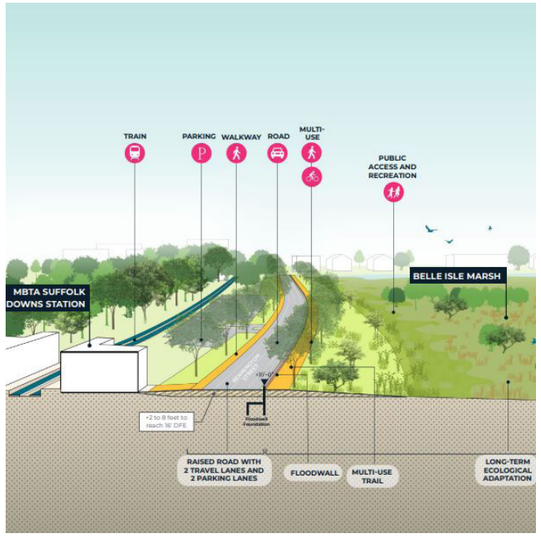


FIG 03-62 CONCEPTUAL RENDERING BENNINGTON STREET INCLUDED IN *COASTAL RESILIENCE SOLUTIONS FOR EAST BOSTON AND CHARLESTOWN PHASE II* REPORT (CITY OF BOSTON, 2022)
Climate Ready envisions resilient infrastructure focused on the east side of Bennington Street along the Belle Isle Marsh. The preferred concept would raise Bennington Street and implement a sloped berm, living levee, or pile-supported walkway to realize ecological restoration of the marsh and protect from coastal flooding. These improvements would provide opportunities for public access and prioritize active transportation uses.

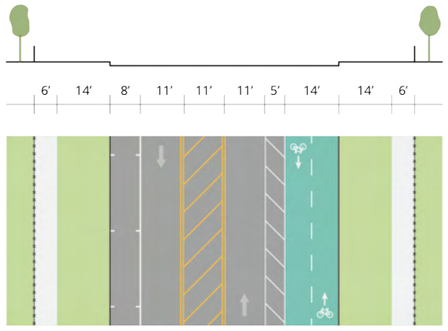


FIG 03-63 SECTION OF BENNINGTON STREET ALONG THE BELLE ISLE MARSH
In 2023, MassDOT, in partnership with the City, City of Revere, and DCR, will implement changes to Bennington Street to reduce speeding, upgrade pedestrian crosings, and close gaps in the Commonwealth's Priority Trails Network Vision. About 77 percent of drivers on Bennington Street south of Everard Street speed. This project will better link East Boston to the Belle Isle Marsh and ongoing walking and biking investments in Beachmont, along Ocean Avenue, and the Revere Beach Boardwalk. This project is an interim st

Policy Considerations for Blue Line Transformation

The essential nature of the Blue Line can lead to overcrowding. Despite being the backbone of the East Boston transit network, the Blue Line is the least connected rapid transit line to other rapid transit and commuter rail services.

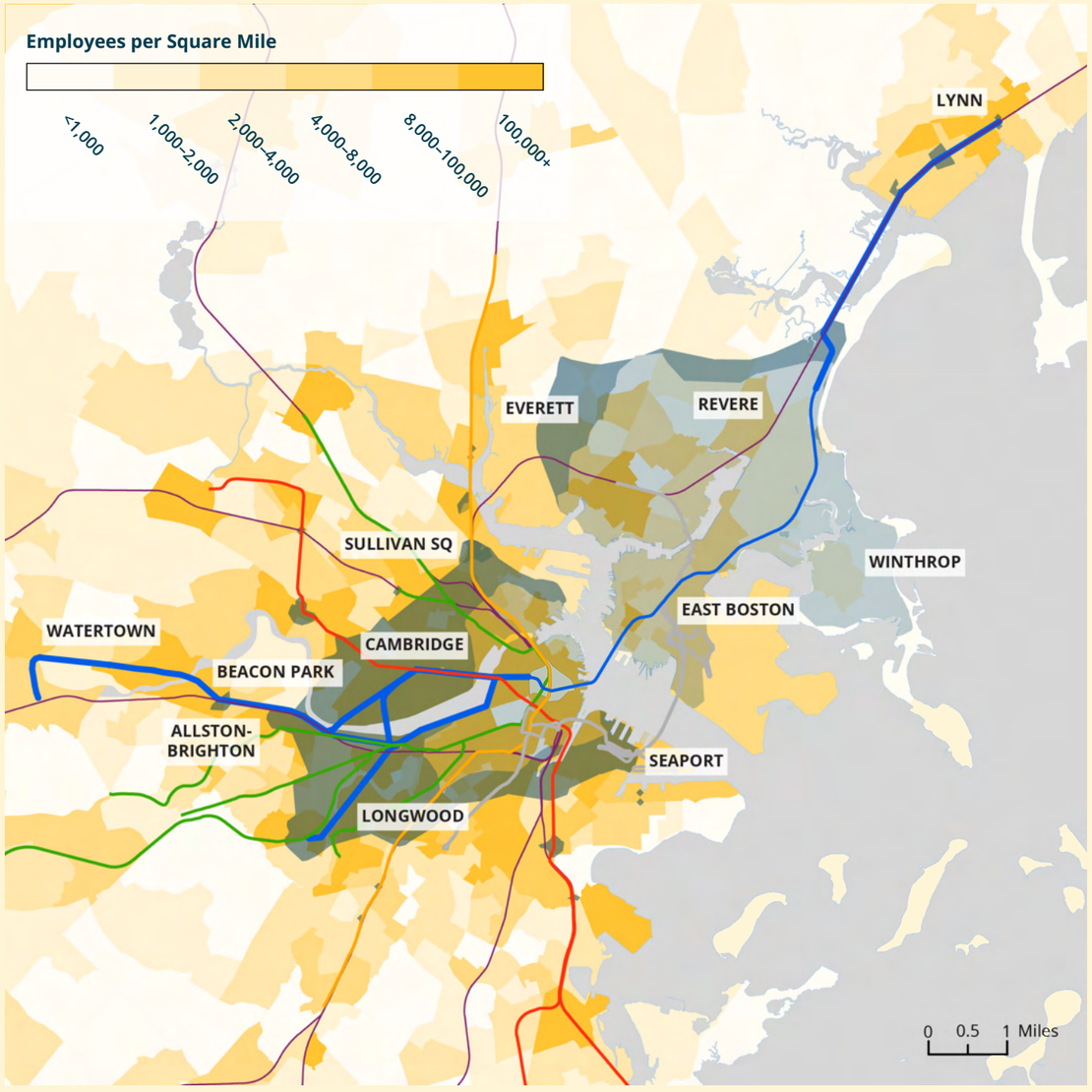
Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Blue Line trains exceeded passenger capacity at peak hours and late at night. Growth in East Boston, notably the waterfront and Economic Development Areas, will increase the need for more Blue Line capacity over time. The Suffolk Downs Redevelopment alone will increase total daily Blue Line ridership by more than 40 percent compared to 2019 levels.

Initiate a "Blue Line Transformation" program to increase service and passenger capacity.
Blue Line cars are small, exacerbating overcrowding. Each Orange and Red Line car can hold 64 and 90 percent more people than a Blue Line car, respectively. Their size is limited by the historic East Boston Tunnel and Downtown tunnel, which were originally designed for trolleys.

In the nearer term, a transformation program should prioritize expanding the Blue Line fleet through procurement of additional trains, hiring more operators, and expansion of the Orient Heights Yard. Over the longer term, a transformation program should identify and address physical changes to tracks, tunnels, stations, and signal and power systems to accommodate larger train cars, similar to the Green Line Transformation program. Ideally, bigger Blue Line cars would be identical to Orange Line cars to streamline procurement and maintenance.

Extend the Blue Line to allow passengers to reach more destinations—and for the region to reach East Boston—reliably and with fewer transfers.
Even with more capacity, residents will still have limited access to the Longwood Medical Area, Lynn, and other employment centers by rapid transit. The Blue Line does not connect to the Red Line, commuter rail, or reliable crosstown bus service, resulting in long travel times that often require multiple transfers.

The MBTA is advancing the "Red-Blue Connector" to directly connect the Red and Blue Lines at Charles/MGH Station. At a minimum, the design for this extension should future-proof opportunities for further westward Blue Line extensions. Focus 40, the MBTA's 2040 investment plan, recommends advancing the long-discussed Blue Line extension to Lynn and studying an extension to the Longwood Medical Area. Such a study should evaluate additional destinations for Blue Line service, for example Allston-Brighton and Watertown, to connect to existing rapid transit or commuter rail stations and to serve growing employment areas.



If the Blue Line was extended, how many more existing jobs could an East Boston resident reach within the 31-minute average commute time?
+ 25% more jobs with a Lynn extension
+ 31% more jobs with the Red-Blue Connector (RBX)
+ 43% more jobs with RBX & Allston / Brighton / Watertown extension
+ 55% more jobs with RBX & Longwood / Brookline Village extension
Growth in emerging job centers, like Sullivan Sq, Beacon Park Yard, and Watertown, and established job centers will increase these percentages.

EXISTING TRANSIT ACCESS WITHIN 31 MINUTES
TRANSIT ACCESS WITHIN 31 MINUTES WITH BLUE LINE EXTENSIONS
EXISTING BLUE LINE
BLUE LINE EXTENSION

Policy Considerations for Equitable Harbor Crossings

More than one-third of East Boston households do not have access to a motor vehicle, yet direct, year-round, all-day infrastructure to cross the Inner Harbor is only available to those who travel by car.

East Boston and connecting municipalities need a wider range of transportation options to support cross-harbor connections. What people pay to cross the Inner Harbor varies by travel mode, and these relative costs are misaligned with City and State goals.

Expand Blue Line service hours and work toward achieving all-day service.
Transit schedules limit when East Boston residents can cross the Inner Harbor. More than one-third of East Boston's working population commute during non-traditional hours when MBTA service is infrequent or not running. Though late night service has been previously tested, East Boston's geography and the presence of Logan International Airport create a unique, heightened need for all-day, year-round, direct transit service.

Pilot shared bus- and high-occupancy vehicle-only lanes in the Ted Williams Tunnel.
Transit routes limit how East Boston residents can reach the South Boston Waterfront. The SL3 is often unreliable with long travel times due to operation in mixed traffic. Dedicated lanes within the Ted Williams Tunnel for buses and high-occupancy vehicles should be explored to enable faster, more reliable service for the Silver Line and Airport shuttles.

Explore transit fare reductions for East Boston residents to create parity between travel modes.
Existing toll and transit prices are misaligned and create inequitable access for people crossing the Inner Harbor. Per trip, the Blue Line ($2.40) costs East Boston residents up to 12 times as much as a tunnel toll ($0.20). A ferry trip ($9.75) costs East Boston resident nearly 50 times as much as a tunnel toll. With reduced fare tolling available to East Boston residents, reduced fare transit should be studied.

Expand Lewis Terminal ferry service and study the feasibility of an Inner Harbor walking and biking tunnel.
Walking or biking between East Boston and Downtown requires a six-mile diversion through Chelsea, Everett, and Charlestown. Over time, bicycle trips funneling into the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway will grow with investments that expand and connect the network of North Shore paths and bike lanes. But these trips will continue to lack a reliable and direct way to cross the Harbor once they arrive at the Greenway's waterfront end point. In the near-term, year-round ferry service between East Boston, Downtown, and the South Boston Waterfront should be provided to allow walking and biking trips to continue uninterrupted and relieve the Blue Line. The City and MassDOT should study longer-term options for a walking and biking connection across the Inner Harbor, for example a dedicated tunnel.

FIG 03-68 COMPARISON OF INNER HARBOR WALKING AND BIKING TUNNEL TO INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC EXAMPLES

TUNNEL	LOCATION	LENGTH (FT)	CROSSING	ACCESS TYPE	NOTES
Boston	Inner Harbor	2,000-3,000	Ocean	To be determined	To be determined
San Sebastian Bicycle Tunnel	San Sebastian, Spain	2,800	Terrain	At-grade portal	Refurbished rail tunnel
Tweede Heinenoordtunnel	Heinenoord, Netherlands	3,000	River	At-grade portal, escalator, elevator	Created with tunnel boring machine
Maastunnel	Rotterdam, Netherlands	1,900	River	Escalator, elevator, stairs	Two levels for bicycle and pedestrian use alongside two vehicle tunnels
Fyllingsdalstunnelen	Bergen, Norway	9,500	Terrain	At-grade portal	Includes art installations, security cameras and phones, and benches
Sint-Annatunnel	Antwerp, Belgium	1,900	River	Escalator, elevator	Pedestrian and bike tunnel
Mount Baker Tunnel	Seattle, WA	1,300	Terrain	At-grade portal	Parallel to Interstate tunnel through mountain
Staple Bend Tunnel	Mineral Point, PA	900	Terrain	At-grade portal	Repurposed rail tunnel
Snoqualmie Tunnel	North Bend, WA	12,100	Terrain	At-grade portal	Repurposed rail tunnel

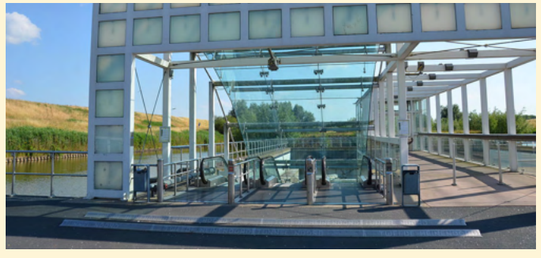


FIG 03-64 [TOP LEFT] Maastunnel, Rotterdam, Netherlands (source: Jaris, CC BY-SA 4.0)
FIG 03-65 [TOP RIGHT] Mount Baker Tunnel, Seattle, Washington (source: Robert Ashworth, CC BY 2.0)
FIG 03-66 [BOTTOM LEFT] Escalators to access Tweede Heinenoordtunnel in Heinenoord, Netherlands (source: Steven Lek, CC BY-SA 4.0)
FIG 03-67 [BOTTOM RIGHT] Sint-Annatunnel, Antwerp, Belgium (source: Paul Hermans, CC BY-SA 4.0)

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE TUNNELS EXAMPLES
An Inner Harbor pedestrian and bicycle tunnel would be comparable in length, depth, and scope to existing pedestrian and bicycle tunnels in the United States and abroad that were designed to span waterways and steep terrain. Between East Boston and Downtown, a tunnel could range from around 2,000 to 3,000 feet in length. A tunnel could be as short as 1,400 feet if connecting East Boston to Charlestown. The tunnel would reach a depth of around 100 feet below the surface. It could use elevators and escalators for access, allowing users to avoid long and steep ramps, and to reduce overall project scope and costs.