

PART 3

COMMUNITY OPEN SPACE &
RECREATION MISSION

The Neighborhoods

Allston-Brighton

Back Bay/Beacon Hill

Central Boston

Charlestown

Dorchester

East Boston

Fenway/Kenmore

Hyde Park

Jamaica Plain

Mattapan

Roslindale

Roxbury

South Boston

South End

West Roxbury



PART 3 • COMMUNITY OPEN SPACE & RECREATION MISSION

THE NEIGHBORHOODS:

East Boston

THE SETTING

History

Originally a five-island group, East Boston was connected to Boston with the establishment of the first ferry in 1637. In the 1833, William Sumner established the East Boston Company to develop this area as one of the first planned communities in Boston.

From 1840 to 1865, East Boston began to expand rapidly, becoming a major site for the construction of world-famous clipper ships by well-known builders such as Donald McKay and Samuel Hall. Thus, East Boston became a significant transportation center and shipping port. Attracting a large number of immigrants seeking employment in the shipbuilding industry, its population began to grow dramatically. With the Cunard Line establishing a port of entry in the Maverick Square area by 1839, East Boston became the Ellis Island of New England.

In 1905, the first subway tunnel to downtown was opened. The development of Logan Airport in 1923, the Sumner Tunnel in 1934, and other transportation-related projects severely impacted the neighborhood. Local industrial facilities began to decline in favor of airport-related development and many families left for the suburbs.

Today, despite such pressures, East Boston has stabilized as a neighborhood and in the coming years will have many new investments geared toward public facilities. The new Third Harbor Tunnel (aka Ted Williams Tunnel) will help reduce

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East Boston Demographic and
Housing Profile

POPULATION	
2000 Census	38,413
1990 Census	32,941
1980 Census	32,178
Population Growth/Decline, 1990-2000	16.61%
Population Growth/Decline, 1980-1990	2.04%

airport-bound traffic on residential streets. East Boston enjoys an extensive waterfront that will provide redevelopment opportunities for maritime, industrial, commercial, residential, and open space uses.

DEMOGRAPHICS/HOUSING

While East Boston still maintains its Italian-American flavor and spirit with succeeding generations continuing to stay in the neighborhood, dramatic changes are taking shape. The Hispanic population of the neighborhood jumped from a mere 942 in 1980 to close to 6,000 (or 18% of East Boston's total population) in 1990, the largest increase in the Hispanic population of any neighborhood in the city during that period. Most of these new families have settled in the Maverick Square area. In 2000, the Hispanic population again increased dramatically to 14,990, or 39% of the neighborhood's total population.

The total population itself increased by 2% over the 1980 population to almost 33,000 in 1990, indicating signs of stability after three decades of steady decrease. The population grew 16.6% between 1990 and 2000 to 38,413, a significant jump.

AGE

2000 Census		
0-17 years	9,049	24%
18 and over	29,364	76%
1990 Census		
0-4 years	2,272	7%
5-9 years	1,909	6%
10-14 years	1,548	5%
15-17 years	963	3%
18-20 years	1,462	4%
21-24 years	2,668	8%
25-29 years	3,702	11%
30-34 years	3,090	9%
35-44 years	4,242	13%
45-54 years	2,874	9%
55-59 years	1,377	4%
60-64 years	1,567	5%
65-74 years	3,004	9%
75-84 years	1,733	5%
85 years and over	497	2%
Average Age (1990 Census)	37.3	

SOCIO-ECONOMIC/HOUSING/DENSITY

Population 16 Years and Older, by Employment Status	
(1990 Census)	%
Employed in armed forces	less than 1
Employed civilians	55
Unemployed civilians	7
Not in labor force	39
Median Household Income	\$23,568
(1990 Census)	
Occupied Units Ownership	
(1990 Census)	% Units
Owner occupied	30
Renter occupied	70
Number of Year Round Units in Structure	
(1990 Census)	% Units
Single units	12
Double units	19
3-9 units	57
10-19 units	5
20-49 units	3
50 or more units	3
All other	1
Single/Multiple Unit Ratio	0.14

Households by Age and Poverty Status

(1990 Census)	% Households
Above poverty, under age 65	60
Above poverty, age 65 and over	21
Below poverty, under age 65	14
Below poverty, age 65 and over	5

Household by Number of Vehicles

(1990 Census)	% Households
No vehicles	42
1 vehicles	44
2 or more vehicles	14

Population Density

	Persons per Square Mile
1980 Census	7,139.1
1990 Census	7,284.8
Density Change 1980 to 1990	145.7

RACE	1980 Census		1990 Census		2000 Census	
White	30,839	96%	24,977	76%	19,078	50%
Black	121	less than 1%	702	2%	1,177	3%
Hispanic	942	3%	5,805	18%	14,990	39%
Asian or Pacific Islander	108	less than 1%	1,260	4%	1,553	4%
Other	168	less than 1%	197	less than 1%	1,615	4%

HOUSEHOLDS

Households	
1980 Census	32,178
1990 Census	13,378
Household Growth/Decline, 1980-1990	3.77%

Population by Household Type	
(1990 Census)	% Persons
Family households	79%
Non-family households	20%
Group quarters	1%

Persons in Households		
(1990 Census)	Households	%
1 person households	4,399	33
2 person households	3,889	29
3 person households	2,158	16
4 person households	1,615	12
5 or more person hshlds	1,317	10
Average Persons per Household (1990 Census)	2.43	

Households w/ One or More Persons Under 18 Years		
(1990 Census)	Households	%
All households	13,415	100%
No one under 18	9,719	72%
One or more under 18	3,696	28%

Households with Children by Type	
(1990 Census)	%
Married couple families	55
Other family, male head	7
Other family, female head	37
Non-family	1

Family Type	
(1990 Census)	% Families
Married couple	62
Other family, male head	10
Other family, female head	29
Families as a % of All Households	60%

Looking at 1990 Census figures, the average age in East Boston is higher than that for the city, 37.3 years versus 34.6 years, respectively. This is largely due to the greater concentration of persons in the age category 45 and older in East Boston, with a pronounced peak in the 65-74 age group (9% in East Boston versus 6% in the whole city).

In 1990, the age group 0-9 years was 13% of East Boston's population versus 11% of the whole city. In 2000, youth under 18 years of age comprised 24% of the neighborhood population, compared to 20% of the city's population.

A majority of East Boston's housing stock is comprised of triple-deckers with little yard space. The Maverick and Orient Heights housing developments, along with the Heritage Housing complex at Maverick Square, make up the bulk of assisted rentals. Along with a median income lower than the city average, the neighborhood also has more households with no access to a vehicle compared to Boston as a whole, 42% versus 38%, respectively.

THE OPEN SPACE SYSTEM TODAY

Equity and Investment

East Boston has 230 acres of protected open space; total open space, both protected and unprotected, equals 371 acres. With a 2000 population of 38,413, East Boston has 5.98 acres of protected open space per thousand persons, only somewhat less than the citywide ratio of 7.43 acres per thousand.

Over 206 acres of open space in East Boston are located in two sizable saltwater marshes. However, there are increases in other types of open space taking place: there are 16 acres of new open space in both the Piers Park and the future Bremen Street park project. In addition, the East Boston Greenway, a new 3-acre linear park built on a former railroad right of way, is under construction, and when fully developed beyond the current construction project, will eventually link Piers Park with Belle Isle Marsh.

The Parks Department has invested more than seven million dollars in open space improvements through the city's capital plan (see table).

This extensive investment includes the restoration of a waterfront park (LoPresti), the creation of a new artificial turf soccer field and running track at Sartori Stadium, and the first phase of a regional greenway connecting East Boston's waterfront to its interior.

CAPITAL PROJECTS 1993-2000/ EAST BOSTON

American Legion Playground	\$ 208,160
Brophy Park	\$ 100,000
Central Square	\$ 110,160
Cuneo Park	\$ 225,000
East Boston Greenway	\$ 615,800
East Boston Stadium	\$ 2,216,000
LoPresti Playground	\$ 3,505,000
Noyes Playground	\$ 116,382
Paris Street Playground	\$ 306,000
Total	\$7,402,502

Assessment

East Boston can be divided into four distinct geographic areas:

Eagle Hill

Bordered by the Chelsea River, the Inner Harbor, and the McClellan Highway, this is a primarily residential area with some abandoned industrial uses along the waterfront. Small open spaces like Prescott and Putnam Squares are located at street grid corners. American Legion Playground accommodates active recreation needs. The area is one of East Boston's most stable sections, with many of the homes here having been occupied by the same families for generations.

This area, while rich in history and future potential, is currently lacking in the availability of diverse recreational and passive open space resources. This is especially true for the densely residential streets between Central and Day Squares, with the nearest ball field being at American Legion. The Chelsea River (aka Chelsea Creek) and Inner Harbor edges also remain generally inaccessible and undeveloped. This will change

in part with the development of an accessible natural area at Condor Street Beach. New vitality has been brought to the Inner Harbor shore with the recent development of a skateboard facility at the Umana-Barnes schoolyard. The City also hopes that its proposed re-use of the MBTA Car Barns site will include a recreational facility with potential waterfront access onto Chelsea Creek.

Maverick Square

Roughly the triangular area between Maverick Square, Central Square, and LoPresti Park, Maverick Square contains a mix of residential and industrial uses. Central Square itself is a center for neighborhood commerce. LoPresti Park, located next to the 1,500-resident Maverick public housing development, has ball courts and access to the water. Traffic arteries and commercial users dominate both Central and Maverick Squares.

The “walk-to-the-sea” mall from Maverick Square suffers from inattention and lack of development. As development proceeds over time along the piers in this area, with the consequent extension of Harborwalk in this area, the “walk-to-the-sea” mall will increase in importance as a gateway for the interior of this neighborhood to its greatest regional open space asset.

Jeffries Point

A largely residential area to the south of East Boston Memorial Park, Jeffries Point has a long waterfront directly facing downtown Boston. While some piers have maritime uses, most are underutilized or abandoned. This is one of the oldest and most densely settled areas of the neighborhood, dominated by triple-decker rowhouses. Brophy Park has a small passive area. The rest of the open space facilities are dominated by ball courts and sitting areas. Porzio Park provides access to the water along with Piers Park, completed several years ago.

This area remains relatively isolated from active recreation facilities with airport-related highway ramps separating the residents from Memorial Park. The first segment of the East Boston Greenway will connect this area to East Boston Memorial Park and Piers Park. The latter is a relatively new asset for both Maverick Square and Jeffries Point residents.



LoPresti Park, East Boston

Orient Heights/Harborview

This northernmost area of Boston has the Orient Heights public housing development as well as a number of single-family homes (the rest of East Boston has multiple-family homes). It is characterized by hills gently sloping up from the water with the housing situated on well-defined terraces.

Available open space facilities have a rich diversity and include a large playground (Noyes), saltwater marshes, Constitution Beach, a cemetery, and small play areas. However, Wood Island, a 65-acre Olmsted-designed park was taken from this neighborhood several years ago to make way for an airport runway.

Thanks to the Joint (City-State) Commission on the Boston Harbor Beaches, the MDC has responded with an extensive reinvestment in Constitution Beach. However, pedestrian and bicycle connections between different facilities in the Orient Heights area are lacking and many of the natural areas are unprotected.

East Boston Greenway

A regional linkage of old and new parks is being created in East Boston. Thanks to strong community advocacy by long-standing local neighborhood groups and the East Boston Greenway Coordinating Council, a vision of a continuous series of waterfront and inland parks and open spaces is being realized. The technical assistance of the Boston Natural Areas Network, supported by the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, has provided guidance to both the community groups and city officials.

These community groups and city officials in turn have made significant progress toward realizing this 3-mile urban greenway in the heart of one of the densest neighborhoods in the city. The Boston Parks and Recreation Department, making the first use of the Mayor's Open Space Acquisition Fund, acquired the first section of the East Boston Greenway in 1998. The Department has undertaken a design process with community input for this first section of the greenway, located between Jeffries Point and Maverick Square, and near the East Boston waterfront close to Piers Park. The federal ISTEAs Enhancements program has helped support design and construction funding for this project. At this time, construction is substantially complete. Passive areas are mixed with a walking/biking trail in this grade-separated abandoned rail corridor in the heart of a dense residential East Boston neighborhood.

Eventually, the East Boston Greenway will extend from the Piers Park area past East Boston Stadium and the proposed Bremen Street Park to its northern terminus at the Belle Isle Marsh Reservation. This will thus benefit many sub-neighborhoods in East Boston.



Condor Street Beach, East Boston

THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

While a combination of transportation facilities and industrial uses have severely impacted the quality of life in East Boston, the coming decade promises to reverse this trend if new proposals focus on the strengthening and interlocking of two latent open space systems. First, the creation of buffers along proposed transportation corridors for coordinated open space use; and second, the extension of such buffer corridors to parks, beaches, and designated walkways along the harborfront. Such a framework would be considerably enhanced by the integration of a third component, access to the vast salt marshes that can be found in the area. In combination with other public realm improvements advocated by the BRA *East Boston Master Plan*, this program would realize the broadly held vision of East Boston's inherent livability.

Opportunities

- Create a continuous Harborwalk from Porzio Park at Jeffries Point to LoPresti Park in the Maverick area through private developments' compliance with Chapter 91. Expand Harborwalk to stretch from the Harborside Hyatt Hotel to the Condor Street Overlook with key nodes at Clippership Wharf and the Boston East site.
- Enhance the natural resources along East Boston's waterfront through natural area restoration under the Parks Department Urban Wilds Initiative and similar restoration programs of the MDC. Include a strategy to save unprotected urban wilds. Complete the Condor Street Beach restoration project.
- Promote overall streetscape improvements to all of East Boston's squares.
- Make special provisions for the elderly in all open space improvements.

Eagle Hill

- Mitigate CA/T improvements to the McClellan Highway through the redevelopment of the Park and Fly parking lot into the Bremen Street Park. Determine the appropriate party to manage this new park.
- Develop new waterfront open space at the old MBTA Car Barns site that extends access to Chelsea Creek.
- Investigate further potential open space at the vacant Hess Oil site. Explore connecting the Hess Oil site with the Condor Street natural area and the future open space at the MBTA Car Barns site.

Maverick Square

- Promote the inclusion of a much-needed passive open space for the Boston East site. Develop the site to educate citizens about the historical and cultural importance of the clipper ship industry of years past. Initiate a clean-up of the hazardous waste on the site.
- Support efforts by the Boston Housing Authority to link and integrate green spaces around the Maverick Gardens housing development as that facility is redeveloped.

Jeffries Point

- Enhance access to Sartori Stadium/Memorial Park facilities from the Jeffries Point area in conjunction with the CA/T project's proposed expansion of Memorial Park.
- Complete construction of the first segment of the East Boston Greenway on the former Conrail tracks between Marginal and Porter Streets, linking the Airport "T" Station and Maverick Square with East Boston's waterfront.
- Develop additional parkland adjacent to Piers Park that will complement that park and turn another dilapidated dock into green space (Piers Park Phase II and Pier 5). Provide support for the proposed Citizens Advisory Committee to oversee the project.
- Promote pedestrian connections within the Southwest Service Area corridor, from Maverick Street to East Boston Stadium, as part of Airport Edge Buffer Program.

Orient Heights/Harborview

- Promote the extension of the East Boston Greenway from the future Bremen Street Park to Belle Isle Marsh Reservation.
- Explore the abandoned railroad right-of-way at the northern end of the Chelsea Creek shore as a potential opportunity to extend the East Boston Greenway.
- Advocate for a pedestrian/bicycle connection between the BIFCO (Belle Isle Fish Company) site (a city-owned urban wild under Conservation Commission jurisdiction adjacent to Belle Isle Marsh) and Winthrop, using remains of the former Belle Isle Bridge. Create a unique civic design element upon entry from Winthrop via Saratoga Street that could be tied into the East Boston Greenway.
- Connect Constitution Beach and the East Boston Greenway to Noyes Playground and Orient Heights by improving the streetscape elements along Bennington Street near Saratoga Street, allowing for better pedestrian circulation.
- Explore access to the Wood Island Marsh via the north service area as part of airport edge improvements.



Sartori Stadium/Memorial Park

Community Priorities

- Evaluate the need for street trees to green the neighborhood.
- Provide programs and facilities for informal sports to encourage group activities for teenagers such as volleyball, frisbee, paddleball, and touch football.
- Evaluate the demand for street hockey at public housing developments.

Eagle Hill

- Evaluate the future of the field house at American Legion Playground.
- Analyze vacant land in the Eagle Hill area, especially at street intersections, for new open space similar in scale to those at Prescott and Putnam Squares.
- Seek the nomination of Putnam Square for inclusion in the National Register for Historic Places. Support the upcoming Browne Fund/Public Works Department reconstruction of Putnam Square.

Maverick Square

- Stabilize the piers of LoPresti Playground to allow for small scale water access for the neighborhood.
- Support the Massachusetts Turnpike Reclamation Project plans to improve parcels at Decatur, Havre, and Porter Streets adjacent to the tunnel portals.

Orient Heights/Harborview

- Install new playground equipment at Noyes Playground. Meet the demand for a field house through increased access to the Orient Heights Recreation Center or through a new facility.

FACILITIES

EAST BOSTON

Malls, Squares & Plazas

Site Name	Acreage	P	Ownership	BB	SB	LL	FB	SC	BK	TN	SH	PL	WS	CS	CR	FH	FN	HB	HS	LC	PA	PK	RG	VB	AR	CG	NT	Other
Bonito (Walley) Square	0.06		COB/PWD																									
Central Square	0.92	•	Parks																			1						
Mendoza Square	0.70		MBTA																									
Prescott Square	0.28	•	Parks																			1						
Putnam Square	0.27	•	Parks																									
Scarmella/Maverick Square	4.39		COM																									

Parkways, Reservations & Beaches

Site Name	Acreage	P	Ownership	BB	SB	LL	FB	SC	BK	TN	SH	PL	WS	CS	CR	FH	FN	HB	HS	LC	PA	PK	RG	VB	AR	CG	NT	Other
Belle Isle Marsh Reservation	143.50	•	MDC																		1	1					X	Observation Tower
Constitution Beach	25.36	•	MDC				1		1.5	2		1						2			4							Beach, Bathhouse, Ice Rink
East Boston Greenway	3.22	•	Parks																		1							Ped/Bike Paths, Caboose
Massport Harborwalk	3.50		Massport																		1				1			

Parks, Playgrounds & Athletic Fields

Site Name	Acreage	P	Ownership	BB	SB	LL	FB	SC	BK	TN	SH	PL	WS	CS	CR	FH	FN	HB	HS	LC	PA	PK	RG	VB	AR	CG	NT	Other
American Legion Playground	3.38	•	Parks			1			2.0			1				1					1							
Brophy Park	0.69	•	Parks																		1							
Cuneo Park	0.23	•	Parks									1																
Decatur & Meriden Park	0.30	•	Parks																									
Dom Savio Athletic Field	3.10		Private																									
East Boston Memorial Park	17.67	•	Parks	1	1	1	1	1				1	1	1						1	1	1						Running Track
East Boston Piers Park	5.87		Massport									1													1			
Festa Field	0.90		Massport																									
Golden Stairs	0.30	•	BCC																		1							Scenic Overlook
London Street Play Area	0.13	•	Parks						1.0			1									1							
LoPresti Park	10.67	•	Parks						2.0		1	1	1								1							
McLean Playground	0.43	•	Parks						1.0												1							
Noyes Playground	8.31	•	Parks	1	1	1			1.0			1																
Paris Street Playground	1.27	•	Parks						1.0			1									1							
Porzio Park	2.38	•	Parks						1.0	1	1	1	1								1							
Suffolk Downs Infield	28.33		Private																									
Sumner & Lamson Sts. Playground	0.48	•	Parks						1.0		1	1	1								1							
Umana-Barnes School Park	2.38		COB/BPS																									Skateboard Facility

Cemeteries & Burying Grounds

Site Name	Acreage	P	Ownership	BB	SB	LL	FB	SC	BK	TN	SH	PL	WS	CS	CR	FH	FN	HB	HS	LC	PA	PK	RG	VB	AR	CG	NT	Other
Bennington Street Cemetery	3.62	•	Parks																									
Temple Ohabei Shalom Cemetery	2.30		Private																									

Legend

P	Protected	TN	Tennis Court	FN	Fountain	VB	Volleyball Area
BB	Baseball Field	SH	Street Hockey	HB	Handball	AR	Artwork/Monuments
SB	Softball Field	PL	Children's Play Lot	HS	Horseshoes	CG	Community Garden
LL	Little League Field	WS	Water Spray Feature	LC	Lacrosse	NT	Nature Trail
FB	Football Field	CS	Concessions	PA	Passive Area		
SC	Soccer Field	CR	Cricket Field	PK	Parking Area		
BK	Basketball Court	FH	Field House	RG	Rugby Field		

Community Gardens

Site Name	Acreage	P	Ownership	BB	SB	LL	FB	SC	BK	TN	SH	PL	WS	CS	CR	FH	FN	HB	HS	LC	PA	PK	RG	VB	AR	CG	NT	Other
Eagle Hill Memorial Park Garden	0.20		COB																							1		
Joe Ciampa Community Garden	0.26	●	BNAN																							1		

Urban Wilds & Natural Areas

Site Name	Acreage	P	Ownership	BB	SB	LL	FB	SC	BK	TN	SH	PL	WS	CS	CR	FH	FN	HB	HS	LC	PA	PK	RG	VB	AR	CG	NT	Other
Bayswater Street	1.70	●	Massport																								1	
Belle Isle Fish Company	1.65	●	BCC																								1	
Condor Street Overlook*	11.36	●	BCC																									
Condor Street Marsh (Beach)	3.74	●	BCC																	1							1	
Don Orione	4.70		Private																									
The Rockies	0.70	●	Parks																									
Wood Island Bay Edge (MBTA Ext.)	3.37		Massport																									
Wood Island Bay Marsh	68.11		Massport																									

* Lands under water: not included for purposes of calculating open space per thousand ratio.



Mayor Menino at a Mother's Day gathering in Cuneo Park, East Boston

