

FEASIBILITY AND ANALYSIS OF PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

EAST BOSTON MASTER PLAN- WORKSHOP 3

This document summarizes the preliminary results of the broad feasibility review of the various elements that comprise the draft Preferred Master Plan Alternative. The Preferred Alternative combines components of the three scenarios presented at the previous community workshop, based on comments received at and after that event. These plan components have been subjected to both qualitative and quantitative feasibility review, as appropriate, from the perspectives of urban design, transportation, regulatory, and economic development feasibility. The detailed feasibility analysis reviews for each discipline are being completed.

In this document, the key recommendations of the Master Plan, in many cases with a number of suboptions, have been structured into a proposed Action Agenda, organized around five main areas of activity that address the goals of the Master Plan. These are:

- ***Reviving the Waterfront***
- ***Celebrating Our Heritage***
- ***Strengthening the Neighborhoods***
- ***Enhancing East Boston's Economy***
- ***Making Transportation Work for the Community***

Within each of these broad areas, specific recommendations regarding land use, open space, transportation and traffic management, and economic development opportunities and concerns are identified, followed by analytic comments that summarize positive and negative feasibility factors. Issues requiring further study beyond the scope of the Master Plan are also noted.

REVIVING THE WATERFRONT

This action area includes a broad array of recommendations for a diversity of land use options, pedestrian and vehicular access, and open space opportunities along East Boston's waterfront, from the Massport Piers to Chelsea Creek. Recommendations include regulatory and urban design guidelines intended to protect the public interest in and access to these valuable waterfront resources.

1. DIVERSITY OF USES

Boston East -

Recommendations include:

- Extend Harborwalk through the site.
- Enhance view corridor of Decatur Street by forming a waterfront plaza at the end of the axis.

Option 1 -

- Develop medium density residential with a minor cultural use.
- Buffer residential development from adjacent marine industrial uses by developing a cultural use such as a small museum or open space/waterfront access.
- Reserve dock space for some layover berthing.
- Extend residential focus across the street to include redevelopment of adjacent blocks.
- Possibly market the larger area as the "Northpoint" artists' housing area, the new

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Fort Point.

Option 2 -

- Develop major cultural use with open space and marine industrial use.
- Museum would be conglomeration of all heritage efforts, to maximize potential attendance.
- Marine industrial would be port service related, requiring minor indoor space, mostly dock space.

Feasibility

- (*) DPA designation would need to be removed to accommodate Option 1, while Option 2 could exist within the regulations.
- (+) View corridor of Decatur Street would be established as part of any development.
- (+) Harborwalk and public access conform to both City of Boston zoning and State waterways regulations.
- (+) Redevelopment of adjacent sites would enhance development potential of Boston East site itself.
- (+) Cultural uses on the site are appropriate due to its historic significance on the waterfront.
- (-) Museums would need a major subsidy for construction and operation.
- (-) Active industrial businesses would have to be relocated; (Hess Oil site might be a possible relocation site).
- (-) Residential development would need to accommodate densities higher than those of the adjacent residential areas to make development feasible for any developer.

Liberty Plaza -

Recommendations include:

- Create a ferry terminal and landscaped pedestrian and vehicular approach along the waterfront.
- Expand waterfront plaza
- Provide right-of-way for expanded harborwalk.
- Maintain waterside activities with port services, such as layover berthing.

Option 1 -

- Maintain marine industrial activity conforming with DPA.
- Buffer the service activity of the plaza with increased landscape screening, perhaps a mural dedicated to maritime history.
- Develop minor retail space for restaurant/cafe on the waterfront adjoining ferry terminal area.

Option 2 -

- Redesign the plaza to allow visual connection and public access to the waterfront through center of site and to strengthen connection of retail to the street and Central Square.
- Pursue DPA designation removal.
- Develop retail opportunities on the waterfront side of the plaza.

Feasibility

(*) DPA designation

- (+) A ferry terminal and landscaped pedestrian and vehicular approach are required as part of the Chapter 91 license for the renovation of the retail complex already completed.

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- (+) Harborwalk has plenty of square footage to exist behind the plaza and connect to the current harborwalk.
- (+) Reconfiguration of vacant Woolworth's building as a market repositioning and physical opportunity.
- (+) Waterside access for port services is encouraged to make active use of the water sheet.
- (*) Retail opportunities along the waterfront would not directly compete with Central Square retail.
- (+) Traffic impacts from waterfront development would be minimal due to the amount of parking in the plaza, and considering improved pedestrian access.

Clippership Wharf –

Recommendations include:

- Preserve view corridors to the water.
- Encourage use of peripheral streets around Maverick Square, such as Bremen Street and Havre Street.
- Create new parks/plazas at water's edge, where setback is required.
- Design attractive landscaping for surface parking lots
- Provide vehicular access to connect Marginal Street to Sumner Street via Clippership Lane.

Analysis

- (*) View corridors of Marginal Street, Clippership Lane, and Lewis Mall should be preserved to the water.
- (*) Traffic impacts would be minimal due to the proximity to public transportation and potential water transit service, as well as guidance to peripheral streets such as Bremen and Havre Street.
- (*) In the event that surface parking lots occur, trees and shrubs should be used to screen the parking lots.
- (*) Setbacks at the edge of the water should be designed as plazas or parks with street furniture and landscaping (consistent with Harborwalk standards), taking advantage of the waterfront views.
- (*) City service requirements (fire, schools, police, etc.) should be identified.

Massport Piers Plan –

Recommendations include:

- Preserve view corridors to the water, both north-south and east-west directions.
- Encourage use of Bremen Street as main access in and out of the Pier One development.
- Create new parks/plaza at water's edge, where setback is required.
- Limit industrial activity at the Shipyard to maritime industrial activities, maintaining the DPA designation.
- Program active recreation on proposed parks - Pier Three and Pier Five
- Remove parking on the south side of Marginal Street, allowing for safer two-way travel.
- Provide connection to the Greenway.

Analysis

- (*) Public access to the water's edge should be encouraged across Pier One as well as along the harborwalk.
- (+) Use of Bremen Street as a main access street would alleviate potential traffic on Maverick

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Square, a commercial and transit center.

- (+) **Limiting industrial uses at the Shipyard to marine industrial activity, as opposed to heavy construction activity, would reduce the amount of heavy truck traffic within adjacent residential areas.**

Maritime industrial

Recommendations include:

- Promote East Boston maritime industrial as a Harborwide Port Service Center with active port support industry and passive support functions.
- Encourage use of DPA sites as port service related activities.
- Discourage noxious uses immediately adjacent to residences within Boston Marine Shipyard.
- Encourage reuse of Hess Oil site for industrial/maritime industrial use with public access to the water, consistent with DPA regulations.

Analysis

- (+) **Port services are a vital sector within the harbor economy and could be concentrated in East Boston.**
- (+) **It is likely that all Designated Port Areas will not be needed for the foreseeable maritime growth, but some portions of the consolidation areas- if DPA areas are consolidated, with appropriate infrastructure and waterside characteristics, should be reserved for reasonable levels of expansion.**
- (+) **Waterside maritime industrial activities such as port services minimize the need for larger trucks, thus minimizing negative impacts on the adjacent neighborhoods.**
- (+) **As part of the Massport Piers Plan, the northern portion of the Shipyard is being proposed for office space instead of active industrial space, suggesting that other sites could accommodate industrial relocation or growth.**
- (+) **Public access at Hess Oil can be obtained, under current DPA regulations, along the waterside of the site, offering observation points.**

2. ACCESS

Harborwalk

Recommendations include:

- Extend harborwalk route from the existing walk to the Condor Street Park, wherever physically and functionally possible.
- Program the route as a part of new developments or renovations at the Navy Fuel Pier, Pier Five, Pier Three, Pier One, and Clippership Wharf, Boston East and Liberty Plaza, Shore Plaza East, Hess Oil, and Condor Urban Wild.
- Allowable pedestrian access would be defined through the Boston Marine Shipyard.
- Discourage interference within existing marine industrial uses, whenever public safety and industrial functions would have to be compromised.
- Identify access routes back to the community and important neighborhood resources such as the Greenway, commercial centers, historic buildings, churches, and parks.
- Incorporate heritage elements (discussed in Celebrating Our Heritage) along the Harborwalk illustrating the history of East Boston and its waterfront.

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Analysis

- (+) The Harborwalk already exists within four places: Jeffries Cove, Piers Park, Lopresti Park, and Liberty Plaza. A coordinated effort would connect these existing segments with new development and existing rights-of-way.
- (+) Proposed open space developments at the Navy Fuel Pier, Pier Five, Pier Three, and Condor Street Urban Wild could augment the walkway.
- (*) Renovation would need to occur at the Harborside Community Center site and the Shore Plaza East apartments. The Community Center should be provided with a better physical connection from the waterfront to Border Street. Shore Plaza East is an expiring Section 8 use development; possible renovation plans could include site improvements and better street to waterfront access.

Urban Design Guidelines

Recommendations include:

- Provide clearly defined public walkways on both waterside and landside.
- Identify functional zones of harborwalk including: waterside walkway, promenade zone, landside walkway and vehicular street consistent with citywide Harborwalk standards.
- Utilize materials and finishes which have a maritime theme to form the base palette for all designs within urban furniture such as benches, trash barrels, and drinking fountains.
- Develop unified and unique lighting and signage which celebrate East Boston's waterfront heritage consistent with existing Harborwalk elements.
- Maximize views by designating the walkway to be barrier-free, limiting fences only for safety reasons, and creating structures and shelters which are transparent and screen-like.
- Preserve view corridors and pedestrian access along existing rights-of-way.

Analysis

- (*) Design of standard Harborwalk elements could be adapted to contain special and distinct East Boston character.

Water Transportation

Recommendations include:

- Disperse water transportation facilities (such as public ferry terminals for scheduled services, water taxi/cultural loop, and charter use) at key sites along the waterfront.
- Key sites include the expanded Logan South, existing Lewis Mall, and a new terminal at Liberty Plaza/Central Square waterfront.
- Provide space for public landings for small vessels at ferry terminals.
- Develop docks and landings for smaller water taxis and small boats at several existing and new locations.
- Provide space for vessel support services and layover berthing along the waterfront.

Analysis

- (-) Commuter shuttle services may be added from Lewis Mall and Liberty Plaza at such time as new residential development, such as Clippership Wharf and Pier One, combined with existing neighborhood work trips, increase substantially over current volumes. At present, demand levels are too low to make such services viable.

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- (+) Existing docks with low freeboards exist at Boston Marine Shipyard and at the Piers Park sailing center. Additional sites may be added as part of new development at the Clippership development, Boston East site, and at the MBTA Car Barn site in Chelsea Creek. Such docks would provide touch and go landings for smaller private and commercial vessels.
- (+) Vessel support servicing and layover berthing at a variety of East Boston pier sites, particularly including ship repair and maintenance services, would add incrementally to the East Boston economy by providing maritime employment.

Street Improvements

Recommendations include:

- Unify streetscape elements along the waterfront streets: Marginal, Sumner, New, Border, and Condor Street.
- Identify segments where truck access should be limited.
- Follow urban design guidelines for waterfront vehicular street.
- Widen sidewalks on New Street and Sumner along the harborwalk path.

Analysis

- (+) Streetscape elements such as signage, lighting, pavement, sidewalk widths, landscaping, etc. should be designed to be a unified system.
- (+) Condor Street already limits truck access and parking, while future uses of the Shipyard should require less heavy truck traffic.
- (*) Design guidelines for the waterfront vehicular street should be based on and consistent with the Harborwalk design guidelines.
- (*) The street widths of Sumner Street from Maverick Square to New Street are excessive and could be reduced, scaling down the street by enlarging sidewalk widths.
- (*) The west side of New Street is poorly designed for any pedestrian circulation and should be upgraded to include viable sidewalk widths to continue up to Border Street.

3. OPEN SPACE

Pier Five -

Recommendations include:

- Develop a new park as allowed under legislation
- Incorporate heritage elements within harborwalk segment.

Analysis

- (+) The park could contain a significant heritage elements, such as an interpretive kiosk or playground as described later, since the program for the open space is not clear at this time.

Condor Street Urban Wild + American Legion Playground

Option 1 -

- Develop new passive park at Condor Street Urban Wild with waterfront access and restoration of native vegetation as proposed by the Parks and Recreation Department preliminary concept.

Option 2 -

- Close Condor Street around the American Legion Playground to vehicular traffic.
- Combine both open spaces to form one large park.
- Allow waterfront access and harborwalk connections to the ball fields.

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- Increase parking for the park within closed street segments.

Feasibility

- (+) The Urban Wild is currently being transferred to the City of Boston's Park and Recreation Department, allowing for possible alterations to their original concept of creating a separate park.
- (+) Traffic impacts of closing this segment of Condor Street would be minimal, due to the current truck restrictions on Condor Street and the proposed relocation of automobile parking to inside the park.

Small parks/plazas along Harborwalk

Recommendations include:

- Designate parks and/or plazas in areas where setbacks are required such as at the end of piers at Clippership Wharf and Pier One.
- Designate parks and/or plazas at the end of important view corridors or key observation points such as the Decatur Street terminus on Boston East and Liberty Plaza landing (possible water transit node).

Analysis

- (+) Public spaces along the harborwalk where users could sit and rest, observe the views, and potentially learn about East Boston's history would reinforce attraction of a Harborwalk.
- (+) Meets Chapter 91 requirements for development on the waterfront setbacks from the water's edge.
- (+) Development of attractive open space on-site would not be a financial burden upon developers, since waterfront plazas should be viewed as marketable amenities to residential units.

Hess Oil Site

Option 1 -

- Reserve the site for a State Heritage Park

Option 2 -

- Develop the site as neighborhood waterfront park.

Option 3 -

- Maintain the site as an industrial use with limited pedestrian access along the waterfront and a landscaped buffer along Condor Street to enhance development potential and minimize impact on neighborhood across the street.

Feasibility

- (-) Option 1: The official State Heritage Park program is no longer in existence, forcing Option 1 to be in need of unique State funding for the development of a State Heritage Park. Also requires the elimination of the DPA designation on the site.
- (-) Options 1 and 2: The DPA designation on the site is a major constraint due to its size and strategic location on the Chelsea Creek waterfront, where significant public investment (such as the Chelsea Creek dredging initiative and Chelsea Street bridge renovation) has been directed to upgrade the waterway shipping capabilities of the Creek.
- (+) Option 3: Public access along the waterfront, especially the east side of the site, could offer valuable observation points and a continuation of the Harborwalk along the Chelsea Creek.

CELEBRATING OUR HERITAGE

The following recommendations represent an incremental strategy to build a “heritage infrastructure” into the redevelopment of East Boston’s waterfront and adjacent historic neighborhoods. They are arrayed not as alternatives, but as a series of steps, from a minimum public investment approach to more substantial investment requirements, that will provide for incorporation of East Boston’s historic and cultural heritage into future public realm improvements and private development.

EAST BOSTON HERITAGE NETWORK

Recommendations include:

- Use the Harborwalk as the main spine of pedestrian and vehicular circulation.
- Promote a series of incremental components toward an interpretive heritage infrastructure, which are described below:

Heritage Trail Expansion (Minimum Investment)

Step 1 -

- Develop interpretive signage and/or kiosk system along the Harborwalk at numerous points which would tell the history of East Boston’s waterfront.

Step 2 -

- Designate a branch-route off the Harborwalk to pass through Eagle Hill Historic District and reconnect back to Harborwalk at Condor Street. A more elaborate branch-route would visit various East Boston historic places, especially those identified in the Boston 400 packet.

Feasibility

- (+) **Step 1 could be tied into the original design of the Harborwalk system, funded by private development occurring on the waterfront as well as public funds.**
- (+) **Step 2 is a low cost solution, similar to the Freedom Trail, which would highlight lesser known historic places.**

Educational Interpretive Opportunities (Mid-range Investment)

- Create waterfront playgrounds at 4-5 harbor points with different heritage themes, illustrating different elements of East Boston’s history, providing some minor indoor space at one or more locations for teaching opportunities.
- Develop indoor exhibition space along the waterfront, which could serve as educational facilities for classrooms teaching local history, as part of new development public accommodation requirements, similar to the North End Historic Piers program.

Feasibility

- (*) **Option 1 would allow unique educational opportunities, potentially involving the Schools Department for minor funding.**
- (*) **Option 2 would require private developers to allocate first-floor space for exhibition use by the community. A similar effort is being launched in the North End.**

Museum/ Visitor Center (Full Range Investment)

- Develop small museum or interpretive facility with visitor services at Boston

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East as part of residential development.

- Develop medium sized museum at Boston East as main attraction adjacent to a working maritime industrial use.
- Develop a small museum or interpretive facility with visitor services at Pier One/Clippership Wharf as part of a joint public accommodation concession on ground floor of new development.

Feasibility

- (-) While strong community desire for museum exists, the ability to draw substantial attendance from other locations is untested.
- (-) The potential for draw would be enhanced by affiliation or connection to other users/uses (Piers Park, Freedom Trail, Harbor Islands National Park, etc.)
- (-) Feasibility for capital investment and operations will require mixed subsidy, including public funding support, private fundraising, land-write down, grants, below-market-rate financing, etc.
- (-) Success will require relatively experienced, sophisticated, and deep-pocketed sponsors.
- (+) Likely to work best if undertaken in small stages, emphasizing programming and interpretive exhibits first, with more ambitious built spaces following after the drawing power of the concept is better understood.

Conclusion:

- Base Case is most feasible
- Mid-range provides greater educational opportunity but will require public and/or private investment.
- Full range is the least feasible because of capital and operational demands which will require subsidies (public and/or private).

STRENGTHENING THE NEIGHBORHOODS

The recommendations in this Action Area seek to ensure that public investment is directed not just to facilitating new waterfront development, but to improving the quality of life throughout East Boston's existing residential neighborhoods and commercial districts, and along the streets that connect them. It includes recommendations for smaller scale housing and commercial development opportunities throughout the community, as well as the creation of additional buffer areas to protect residential neighborhoods from adjacent development sites and the airport.

1. PUBLIC REALM -

Triangular Intersections

Recommendation:

- Create attractive small plazas over existing middle-of-the-street parking at various triangular intersections.
- Locate opportunities for off-street residential parking lots.

Feasibility

- (+) Case study of White Square in Jeffries Point was tested. Public and private owned vacant lots were identified within a one and half block radius.
- (+) The number of off-street parking spaces, including about 8-10 new curbside spaces, exceeded the current number of vehicles which park illegally daily.
- (-) Other sites might not contain the nearby vacant lots which exist in this particular area; however, creative parking policies, such as user sharing of school parking lots, should be explored.
- (+) This type of urban design solution has been implemented elsewhere in East Boston, particularly on Meridian Street, where excess pavement was eliminated resulting in better pedestrian circulation.

Bennington Street

Recommendation:

- Improve streetscape by consolidating curb cuts, adding street trees, and utilizing signage promoting commerce in Orient Heights, particularly south of Orient Heights Square.
- Designate Bennington Street corridor as a Corridor Enhancement Subdistrict.

Feasibility

- (+) While existing auto-dependent businesses rely heavily on immediate street access, consolidating curb cuts to two or three curb cuts could add substantial aesthetic value to this commercial center.
- (+) The existing businesses on Bennington Street south of Orient Heights Square mainly occupy a few blocks, thus reducing the need for numerous curb cuts.
- (+) The renovation of Constitution Beach and its pedestrian bridge over the Blue Line to Bennington Street would benefit from an enhanced pedestrian environment.
- (*) Designation as a Corridor Enhancement Subdistrict could give Bennington Street more attention for funding street improvements and guarding against future expansion of auto-dependent uses.

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Maverick Gardens

Recommendation:

- Rebuild pedestrian ways or streets through the Maverick Gardens complex to allow for more efficient vehicular and pedestrian access, and to restore sight lines from London and Border Streets to the water.

2. TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT/ TRAFFIC CALMING

Recommendations include:

- Extension of Meridian Street intersection improvements at Sumner Tunnel access streets to Havre Street.
- Continuous strict enforcement of the Massport gate closing at Jeffries Street to all but local residents from 3-6 PM to prevent cut through traffic in Jeffries Point.
- Further study of options to handle Neptune Road Bypass Traffic and prevent undesirable use of local streets.
- Make Maverick Street “officially” two ways between Chelsea and Meridian Streets as part of MBTA Maverick Square improvements.
- Limit left turns westbound on Saratoga Street at morning rush hour to reduce traffic cutting through Bayswater neighborhood.

3. NEIGHBORHOOD PARKING

Recommendations include:

- Utilize some vacant lots for residential parking.
- Improve existing parking lots to become more welcoming for residential and commercial areas, as well as for improving public access.
- Identify existing parking lots for split-user(day/night) opportunities.

Analysis

- (+) Vacant lots in Jeffries Point could be developed to minimize parking demand.
- (+) Promote neighborhood parking with landscaping as a potential reuse for vacant City-owned parcels up for redevelopment through the Department of Neighborhood Development Real Estate Disposition Initiative program, such as several parcels on Ardee Street in Jeffries Point currently up for disposition.
- (+) Existing parking lots could be enhanced and/or enlarged to attract more users off the street. The parking lot at Bremen and Prescott will be at the end of the Bremen Street Park and would benefit the nearby Day Square retail center by being enlarged and made more welcoming. The Harborside Community Center parking could be redesigned to be more efficient and allow better public access to the waterfront.
- (*) Split-user or shared parking would create more spaces during peak demand hours for a secondary user, which would occur during non-peak primary user hours. For example, in Eagle Hill, the East Boston High School parking lot is generally filled during the day and empty by evening, which is the time when nearby residents could occupy some of the spaces until the morning.

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- (+) The schoolyard at the Kennedy School near Day Square is a potential candidate for renovations under the City's Boston Schoolyards Initiative. As part of such renovations, parking could be reoriented to have its main egress on Prescott Street, allowing for shared parking with nearby businesses during evening hours.
- (+) Shared parking has been used elsewhere within the City of Boston where off-street parking is at a premium, such as at the Haley School in the South End

4. RESIDENTIAL BUFFERS

Southwest service area

- Provide pedestrian connection from Maverick Street to Memorial Park along a dedicated pedestrian right-of-way adjacent to the proposed Embassy Suites Hotel..
- Create new passive park and some residential parking mid-way along the connection.

Madonna Hill

Recommendations include:

- Secure the sloped landscape to eliminate further erosion.
- Upgrade the existing park at the end of the intersection to include better landscaping and sitting areas for observation.
- Construct viewing deck along the sidewalk with interpretative signage depicting the development of the immediate neighborhoods.

Analysis

- (*) As an Urban Wild, Madonna Hill is an important natural resource to Orient Heights and should be taken care of by correcting erosion hazards.
- (+) The existing small park, which owned by the Boston Housing Authority, could be upgraded as part of the additional funds which were designated for renovations at the Orient Heights Overlook Terrace development.
- (*) A small observation deck along the sidewalk could offer educational interpretative opportunities.

Hess Oil Site

Recommendations include:

- Establishing a landscape buffer along Condor Street to separate maritime industrial use from existing and potential new residential development across the street, and to extend the linear green space from the Condor Street Urban Wild area.

McClellan Highway corridor

Recommendations include:

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

5. HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

Infill Opportunities on Vacant Lot

- Jeffries Point lots
- Condor Street lots

Feasibility

Small-scale Infill Residential New Construction- Market-Rate Rental.

- (+) Strong market for moderately-priced rental apartments.
- (+) Positive, though somewhat thin financial feasibility.
- (-) Feasibility is especially sensitive to land acquisition pricing.
- (-) Works better in an owner-occupied model similar to the prior scenario.

Maverick Gardens

Recommendations include :

- Continue landscaping improvements to better fit in with adjacent neighborhoods.
- Reconnect one or more pedestrian way or streets through the site (Border and/or London Streets) to provide better visual connection between the existing neighborhood and the waterfront and better vehicular and pedestrian circulation along the waterfront.

Analysis

- (+) Current site improvements should improve physical connections allowing at least better pedestrian access.
- (*) Reconnecting streets through the site is dependent upon long term goals of the BHA for the site.

Commercial Infill

Recommendations include:

- Develop mixed-use development with retail and residential on vacant parcel on Meridian Street half block south of Central Square.
- Maverick Square – mixed use retail with residential above.
- Border Street/Decatur Street – new infill residential.

Feasibility

Small Scale Owner-Occupant Rehab (3 Decker Type) – Market Rate Rental and Ownership

- (+) Strong market for moderately price ownership and rental apartments.
- (+) Positive financial feasibility for rehab.
- (+) Rental units help to cross-subsidize home ownership by moderate income households.

Small Scale In-fill Residential New Construction – Market Rate Rental

- (+) Strong market for moderately priced rental apartments.
- (+) Positive, though somewhat thin financial feasibility.
- (-) Feasibility is especially sensitive to land acquisition pricing.
- (-) Works better in an owner-occupant model similar to the prior scenario.

Small scale In-fill Retail/Residential Rehab – Market Rate Rental

- (+) Strong market for both neighborhood retail and upper floor rental apartments.
- (+) Positive financial feasibility for rehab.
- (+) Retail use on the ground floor is able to help cross-subsidize the rehabilitation of moderately priced rental units on the upper floors.

Shore Plaza East

Recommendations include:

- Redesign exterior public access and landscaping to allow for waterfront access as part of the Harborwalk.

Feasibility

- (+) The development is an expiring use property and is a candidate for renovations as part of refinancing, whether under existing or new management, allowing an opportunity to improve the design the exterior of the site to allow for better public access to and along the waterfront.

Waterfront

Recommendations include:

- New housing at Clippership Wharf, Pier One, and possibly Boston East site.

Feasibility

Large Scale Residential New Construction – Market Rate Rental

- (+)Strong market for high end rental apartments
- (+)Positive, though somewhat thin financial feasibility
- (-)Feasibility is especially sensitive to land acquisition pricing, parking costs (cannot afford to do structured parking) and other development cost premiums (waterfront foundations, public amenities, etc.)
- (-)Works best in lower density, lower height configurations

Large Scale Residential New Construction – Market Rate Condominium

- (+)Works best as potential future development phase following after successful rental development
- (-)Pioneering market for high end condominiums in East Boston
- (-)Cost of development likely to exceed current end-unit pricing potentials
- (-)Feasibility is especially sensitive to land acquisition pricing, parking costs (cannot afford to do the structured parking which condos require) and other development cost premiums (waterfront foundations, public amenities, etc.)

6. NEW K-8 SCHOOL IN NORTH ZONE

Recommendations include:

- Review of potential school siting opportunities in light of new policy favoring establishment of “walk-in” schools. This may make previously infeasible sites such as renovation of the historic Barnes School viable, as major bus access would not be required.

ENHANCING EAST BOSTON'S ECONOMY

This Action Area focuses on market opportunities and functional improvements for East Boston's neighborhood commercial centers, as well as opportunities for additional development along the McClellan Highway corridor. It includes recommendations related to the continuing importance of marine industrial activities, such as the important port service area, along East Boston's waterfront.

1. NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL CENTERS

Expansion of Main Streets Program

Recommendations include:

- Extending the Main Streets program from the Central Square-Meridian Street-Maverick Square corridor to Day Square and Orient Heights Square as well.

Feasibility:

- (-) **Requires additional public resources.**

Maverick Square

Recommendations include:

- Develop infill commercial with residential above to add a residential presence in this activity node and shore up blighted space in the street wall.

Feasibility

- (+) **Small scale In-fill Retail/Residential Rehab – Market Rate Rental;**
- (+) **Strong market for both neighborhood retail and upper floor rental apartments.**
- (+) **Positive financial feasibility for rehab.**
- (+) **Retail use on the ground floor is able to help cross-subsidize the rehabilitation of moderately priced rental units on the upper floors.**
- (+) **One such project – the NOAH development — is already in the pipeline.**

Central Square

Recommendations include:

- Improve traffic and pedestrian circulation by establishing a counter clockwise traffic pattern, making Saratoga Street one-way westbound around “north” Central Square while “south” Central Square would be made one-way east-bound.
- Improve pedestrian environment by widening sidewalks, reducing crosswalk lengths and enlarging current traffic islands.
- Develop infill commercial with upper floor residential on vacant land abutting Meridian Street.

Analysis

- (+) **Small scale In-fill Retail/Residential Rehab – Market Rate Rental.**
- (+) **Strong market for both neighborhood retail and upper floor rental apartments.**
- (+) **Positive financial feasibility for rehab.**
- (+) **Retail use on the ground floor is able to help cross-subsidize the rehabilitation of moderately priced rental units on the upper floors.**

Day Square Parking Expansion Opportunities

- Reorient Kennedy School parking lot to have frontage on Prescott Street, promoting user-shared parking which is school use during the day and Day Square customer use in the evening and weekends.
- Enhance the appearance and double the capacity of existing parking lot at Bremen Street and Prescott Street which is used currently for customers and employees of the Square, but in the future will have increased demand from Bremen Street Park users.
- Reserve the parking lot under the McClellan Highway along Bennington Street as parking for Day Square employees, freeing up spaces within the Square.

Feasibility

- (*) **Kennedy School could be developed under or in conjunction with the Boston Schoolyards Initiative through the Department of Neighborhood Development and the Schools Department.**
- (*) **Parking lot at Bremen/Prescott Streets should be promoted as additional parking for customers and employees, and be enlarged to handle both Day Square and Bremen Street Park users.**
- (*) **Parking under highway exists today as a parking lot, but could be upgraded with attractive landscaping providing a better physical connection to Day Square.**

Orient Square

Recommendations include:

- Relocate eastbound approach of Saratoga and Bennington Street to Trident and Bennington Street, making Saratoga Street one-way westbound from Bennington Street to Trident Street. Trident Street is also made one-way from Saratoga to Bennington.
- Maintain all existing parking within Orient Heights Square.
- Reduce the length of crosswalk of Saratoga Street at Bennington Street, enhancing the pedestrian environment.

Analysis

- (+) **This configuration being considered by the Boston Transportation Department would eliminate troublesome vehicle conflicts at the intersection of Bennington and Saratoga Street.**
- (+) **The crosswalk at Saratoga and Bennington would be minimized allowing for better pedestrian circulation.**
- (+) **The number of parking spaces would not be reduced.**
- (+) **As part of the streetscape improvements allocated to Orient Square, efforts should be made to improve pavement features, landscaping, distinctive lighting and street furniture.**

2. WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT

Recommendations include:

- Focus marine industrial activities on Boston Harbor side as Port Service such as layover berthing, pilots, tugs, etc. Chelsea Creek should continue as heavier marine industrial facilities.
- Modify DPA to eliminate areas which do not meet criteria of predominant industrial character.
- Layover berthing and servicing facilities at a variety of East Boston pier sites, particularly including ship repair and maintenance services. These add incrementally to the East Boston economy by providing maritime employment.

FEASIBILITY AND ANALYSIS OF PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

EAST BOSTON MASTER PLAN- WORKSHOP 3

Feasibility - Marine Industrial

- (+) Static market, but not one that can easily afford to pay high rent or high purchase price
- (*) Not much market support for development of more maritime facilities (except for large scale cargo facilities which are not viable in East Boston, i.e. Conley Terminal)
- (-) Needs subsidy to make financially feasible (City, State, or Private)
- (-) Has expensive waterside infrastructure needs (piers, etc.)
- (*) Suggests focus on preservation of facilities for users be forced out of other parts of the Harbor or other industrial sites.
- (+) Valuable limited resources.
- (+) Important to city and region, especially for fuel transfer.
- (-) Environmental impacts.
- (-) Potential conflicts with abutting residents.

Feasibility - Port Services

- (+) Many such activities already located in East Boston.
- (+) Proximity to Harbor.
- (+) Deep water.
- (+) Moderate land-side needs.
- (+) Limited impacts on residential/commercial abutters.
- (-) Needs to be consolidated where appropriate to create coherent planning unit.

3. McCLELLAN HIGHWAY

Option 1 -

- Promote big-box retail users within the corridor.

Feasibility

- (+) Traffic impacts from the corridor would be minimized with the proposed plan to widen the highway to three lanes each way and provide a grade separated interchange at Boardman Street. This plan would reduce the traffic back up on East Boston streets and reduce standstill traffic on the highway during rush hour within East Boston.
- (-) There is a limited market for new development in East Boston.
- (-) Positive financial feasibility for new construction, if a viable market opportunity were identified.
- (-) Needs large site area – 10.0 acres $\pm\pm$, which currently does not exist within current development opportunities along the East Boston segment of the McClellan Highway.
- (*) Typical building area – 100,000SF to 200,000SF
- (+) Needs excellent accessibility and visibility, which McClellan Highway would have with the planned roadway improvements.

Option 2 -

- Promote commercial/industrial uses within the corridor.

Feasibility

- (+) Strong market for new development
- (+) Positive financial feasibility for new construction
- (-) Needs large site area – 5.0 acres $\pm\pm$
- (-) Typical building size – 100,000SF to 200,000SF

Conclusion:

Commercial/industrial is most feasible economically.

MAKING TRANSPORTATION WORK FOR THE COMMUNITY

This Action Area includes both near-term recommendations, including actions to enhance traffic circulation and parking, to improve vehicular access to the Orient Heights T station with less impact on adjacent residential areas, the implementation of the Truck Bypass, and East Boston's role in the harborwide water transportation system, and the long-range goal of depressing the harbor tunnel portals and ramps to reknit the divided Havre Street neighborhood.

1. TRUCK BYPASS ROUTE/GREENWAY COMPATIBILITY

Recommendations include:

- Create truck bypass route from Logan Airport to Chelsea Street Bridge to alleviate truck traffic in and around residential and commercial areas.
- Design intersections to not conflict with future expansion of the Greenway.

Analysis

- (+) Bypass route would alleviate East Boston streets of truck traffic which congests local commercial centers such as Day Square.
- (+) The route would consist of an abandoned rail right-of-way in an existing industrial area, thus not impacting residential neighborhoods.
- (*) Future design of the bypass should be done in conjunction with the expansion of the Greenway, so as to not physically conflict with the future route of the Greenway

2. HARBORWIDE WATER TRANSPORTATION

Recommendations include:

- Develop East Boston's role in a Harborwide transit system.
- Multi-purpose terminals are proposed to be located at Liberty Plaza/Central Square (new), Lewis Mall (existing), and Logan South (expanded).
- Logan South to serve as the primary site in East Boston owing to the diversity of services using the terminal. Indirect benefits include reduction of through auto and taxi trips.
- New shuttle services to Downtown, Charlestown, and South Boston hubs potentially like East Boston to other recreational and transit ferry services such as the Harbor Islands Park via Long Wharf and North Station via Pier 4 and Lovejoy Wharf.
- Commuter shuttle services may be added from Lewis Mall and Liberty Plaza at such time as new residential development combined with existing neighborhood work trips increase substantially over current volumes. At present, demand levels are too low to make such services viable.
- Intermodal links are needed to the residential neighborhoods and Blue Line by an improved Harborwalk, sidewalk connections, and shuttle buses.

Analysis

- (+) The revitalization of East Boston will depend on improved intermodal public transportation linkages including integral ferry connections.
- (*) Ferry terminals and water taxi docking facilities are needed at key waterfront locations to serve existing neighborhoods as well as those adjacent to anticipated new residential, commercial and recreational (East Boston Greenway) development.

FEASIBILITY AND ANALYSIS OF PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

EAST BOSTON MASTER PLAN- WORKSHOP 3

- (+) **As a community which was once totally dependent on ferry links to downtown Boston and other cross harbor destinations, East Boston can benefit from having expanded and new terminal locations at strategic points.**

3. SARATOGA STREET IMPROVEMENTS

Option 1 -

- Relocate Orient Heights T-station parking lot entrance to a new right-of-way along the Osco Drug Store property.

Option 2 -

- Post “No Left Turn 7-9AM” signs on westbound Saratoga Street at Annavoy Street, Teragram Street, and Shawsheen Road.

Feasibility

- (+) **Option 1 would relieve the adjacent residential area of commuters, mostly from Winthrop, by allowing traffic to access the T-station parking lot prior to the residential area.**
- (+) **Option 1 could be explored further during the approaching redesign process of the Orient Heights T-station as part of the Blue Line Modernization Program.**
- (+) **Option 2 would limit through traffic bypassing Saratoga Street east of Orient Heights Square on Bayswater Street and Goldwater Street, thus mitigating negative impacts during rush hours when vehicles use these residential streets as high-speed shortcuts.**

4. PORTAL DEPRESSION

Recommendations include:

- Depress the tunnel portals and ramps, and move the toll plaza further up Route 1A alongside the Bremen Street Park.
- Rebuild Bremen and Chelsea Streets (now under the highway) and reconnect Paris and Havre Streets.
- Create a green east-west link from Central Square to Bremen Street Park, the Greenway and the Memorial Stadium Park area.

Analysis

- (*) **Several previous plans to accomplish this exist at various stages of concept design.**