

East Boston, the home of Logan International Airport, has a long maritime history, including the yards where Donald McKay built America's greatest clipper ships. Today, obsolete wharves and piers, some of which have deteriorated to mere pile fields, dominate three sides of East Boston. The most attractive and intact segment of the East Boston waterfront is the one that faces across the Inner Harbor to downtown. Massport owned this segment, once a row of grain terminals and shipyards. In the 1990s Massport made an important decision to retain viable maritime operations – a ship repair yard and a tugboat terminal. However, in partnership with the city and community, it would redevelop the bulk of the piers and adjoining backlands. Today, part of the site has become one of Boston's most spectacular waterfront parks, and a private developer will build housing on the remainder.

The Charlestown Navy Yard has operated continuously since the late 1700s, and is still home to the USS *Constitution*, the world's oldest commissioned warship and flagship of the Atlantic Fleet. In 1974, the Navy closed virtually the entire yard. The BRA purchased it shortly thereafter and set about creating a redevelopment plan, reinventing the infrastructure, and recruiting developers. A blend of historic preservation and new construction, the reuse of the Navy Yard is one of the most extensive mixed-use urban renewal projects ever undertaken in the US. For the last decade, an approved Municipal Harbor Plan, in conformity with Chapter 91, has guided the process.

The total buildout potential for the Navy Yard is 4.3 million square feet. Today about half of the yard has been redeveloped, including the adaptive reuse of twenty historic buildings. Some 1.2 million square feet of office and medical research space and 1,250 housing units have been produced, along with marinas, restaurants, and another of the city's signature waterfront parks. Over the next twenty years, the BRA anticipates additional development in each of these categories, as well as a major hotel and civic facility.

### **The challenge of the South Boston waterfront**

As important as each of these three districts is to the future of Boston Harbor, none is as complex, as challenging, as promising, or as controversial as the South Boston waterfront. Recognized two decades ago as Boston's urban development frontier, this 1,000-acre swath of filled tidelands borders the downtown financial district, the Inner Harbor, and the South Boston neighborhood.

Although the entire district was originally filled for maritime use, planners have long understood that the South Boston waterfront is really two worlds. Roughly speaking, the eastern half is and must remain the heart of Boston's long-term seaport economy. This area is home to Boston's principal container, mixed cargo support, ocean cruise, fish processing, and dry-dock facilities and has a critical mass of industrial infrastructure in place. The western half, which is within walking distance of the financial district and bustling South Station, is a mix of historic loft buildings along Fort Point Channel and long-vacant railyards along the Inner Harbor. This area represents a unique regional opportunity for mixed-use, transit-oriented development in a dramatic waterfront setting.