

The city, state and Massport have spent fifteen years planning and building the infrastructure investments required to unlock this district. Thanks to the "Big Dig" project, the South Boston waterfront will soon enjoy direct underground expressway links to the interstate highway system and Logan International Airport. The surface roadway system is being completely restructured to create dedicated truck routes for the port area and an urban street grid for the mixed-use area. The Silver Line, an underground, high-capacity busway, will link the entire district to the downtown transit network and the airport. Thanks to Chapter 91, private developers will build and maintain water transit terminals capable of connecting significant volumes of people to the airport, the harbor, and the suburbs. Today, the South Boston waterfront contains some 14 million square feet of built space. Transportation planners believe that the infrastructure now planned and committed can accommodate an additional 17 million square feet – a generation's worth of new development.

In 1997, the city and state committed to one more public investment of transforming dimensions when they chose the South Boston waterfront as the site of Boston's new convention center. This \$695 million facility, with 600,000 square feet of contiguous exhibit space, is being built on a 60-acre site in the westerly, mixed-use half of the larger waterfront district. The Convention Center is expected to stimulate the development of several hotels and to help animate the entire mixed-use area.

Massport plays a major, multifaceted role in the South Boston waterfront, primarily as the largest landowner in the eastern half of the district and steward of the core facilities of the working port. By investing directly in these properties, protecting them from incompatible development and advocating for truck route capacity to serve them, Massport not only promotes the port economy but also helps legitimize non-maritime, mixed-use development in the area closer to downtown.

Massport is also the largest landowner in the mixed-use area, with approximately 60 acres in the section known as Commonwealth Flats. These holdings include Boston's World Trade Center (the redeveloped Commonwealth Pier), the Boston Fish Pier, and extensive backlands. It is here that private developers under lease from Massport have built the Seaport Hotel and the first of several planned office buildings. These Massport development initiatives are meant to blaze the trail for other private investment in the area, while raising revenue to defray the seaport budget. They have been well received by the public and the BRA.

Most of the time Massport and the BRA share a good working relationship. Massport stumbled only once in this regard, albeit dramatically, when in 1997 it attempted to locate a new football stadium for the New England Patriots on 60 acres of land east of D Street, in the working port half of the waterfront district. The South Boston residential neighborhood vehemently opposed this project for fear of the traffic and noise impacts, while the maritime community opposed the reallocation of a large piece of land assumed to be in maritime reserve to a permanent non-maritime use.

Mayor Thomas Menino sided with the stadium opponents, and the BRA made it clear that if Massport persisted, it would litigate the question of whether Massport's statutory exemption from local zoning applied to non-maritime, non-airport projects. Massport backed away from the stadium