



LATINO FUTURES FOR CONDOR STREET

Welcome! Come along with us as we unfold histories of resistance and solidarity on Condor Street in the Eagle Hill neighborhood. We hope that by exploring this industrial waterfront together, we can create a vision for spaces that welcome all.

SOLIDARITY AND RESISTANCE IN EAGLE HILL: LATINO FUTURES

This pamphlet is one of four documents created by graduate students in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at MIT. These pamphlets can be read alone or together. They discuss East Boston's power and decision making processes, offer storytelling as a way to understand East Boston's past and future and propose new visions for Condor Street in Eagle Hill and HarborView in the Belle Isle Marsh.

We acknowledge Indigenous Peoples as the traditional stewards of the land, and the enduring relationship that exists between them and their traditional territories. The land of East Boston and the land on which this project was produced is the traditional unceded territory of the Wampanoag Nation and Massachusetts Peoples. We acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced occupation of these territories, as well as the ongoing processes of colonialism and dispossession in which we and our institution are implicated.

Beyond the stolen territory which we physically occupy, MIT has long profited from the sale of federal lands granted by the Morrill Act, territories stolen from 82 Tribes including the Greater and Little Osage, Chippewa, and Omaha Peoples. As we honor and respect the many diverse Indigenous peoples connected to this land from time immemorial, we attempt to deconstruct Western knowledge and ways of doing urban planning by drawing from Indigenous and Black planners. - Adapted from MIT 11.S938 Indigenous Environmental Planning course.

Eagle Hill -- and Condor Street in particular -- has been the site of intense contestation in recent years. Locally-led resistance has formed in response to key threats to local health and well-being including deportation, displacement, and environmental injustices. East Boston, a state-designated Environmental Justice Community, is a community that is 64 percent people of color and 54 percent immigrants. This designation means that a community's income is less than the state's median income, at least a quarter of the population identifies as a race other than white and about a quarter of the community experiences some form of isolation from the English language. This area faces a variety of environmental hazards, such as noise and air pollution from Logan International Airport, traffic congestion, highways, storage of fuel, manufacturing processes, as well as storage of road salt and sand along the Chelsea Creek.



Eversource Substation

An electrical substation which the utility Eversource is proposing for a flood-prone area near Chelsea Creek has drawn protest from neighbors worried about flood risk and safety. Eversource says their project -- across the street from a popular playground and near tanks of jet fuel for Logan Airport -- poses little risk to the public. Because substations can catch fire and explode, some neighbors are trying to stop it. In May 2021, Acting Mayor Kim Janey publicly joined the long battle environmental justice advocates have taken on by calling on the utility to either justify or cancel its plans.

Police Station

Despite decreasing crime rates citywide over the last five years as well as in East Boston, city officials broke ground in East Boston on a \$30 million police station — the first new police facility in almost a decade.

This decision seemed at odds with public Black Lives Matter marches of thousands of Bostonians calling for abolition or defunding of the police throughout 2020.



“Those who are undocumented are especially left out of public meetings and neighborhood planning. As the head of a community organization in East Boston described [2019]: ‘There are people in the immigrant community that are afraid to speak up ... putting their name to something or appearing at a public meeting will put them at risk ... There have been people in this community arrested or picked up by ICE for really not valid reasons at all ... there are people who will not come to a public meeting ... for fear that ICE will be there.’ At the end of the hearing, residents and organizers will chant **‘cuando luchamos, ganamos!’** into the emptying auditorium, meaning **‘when we fight, we win.’**”

-Excerpt from Saritha Ramakrishnan’s 2019 Master’s Thesis

Luxury Condos, Rising Rents, Displacement

According to a 2020 study by the study by the National Community Reinvestment Coalition, East Boston was deemed one of the neighborhoods in the city most susceptible to gentrification. The construction of luxury apartments and condominiums is displacing the present immigrant community in East Boston, said Gloribell Mota, co-director and lead coordinator of Neighbors United for a Better East Boston. **“They’re not marketing to the families that live here,”** Mota said. In Feb. 2020, People United for East Boston Liberation and Organizing Coalition led over 50 protesters in a march from Maverick Square to Central Square Park.



Find out more about how East Bostonians have interacted with these changes and advocated for their own visions of the future in the companion toolkit, HISTORIAS.



SOLIDARITY AGAINST DISASTER

COVID-19 Hit Where it Hurt

Why did East Boston and surrounding communities have coronavirus infection rates that were frequently much higher than the rest of Boston at several points throughout the pandemic? According to State Rep. Adrian Madaro, residents of East Boston are more prone to COVID-19 due to preexisting health conditions that are the result of longstanding environmental burdens. Eastie neighbors have long suffered from elevated rates of respiratory illnesses like asthma, a legacy of living next to an international airport and a major highway. These communities have been systemically made more vulnerable to the spread of this disease.



**DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC,
WHAT HAVE BEEN YOUR MOST
IMPORTANT SOURCES OF SUPPORT?**

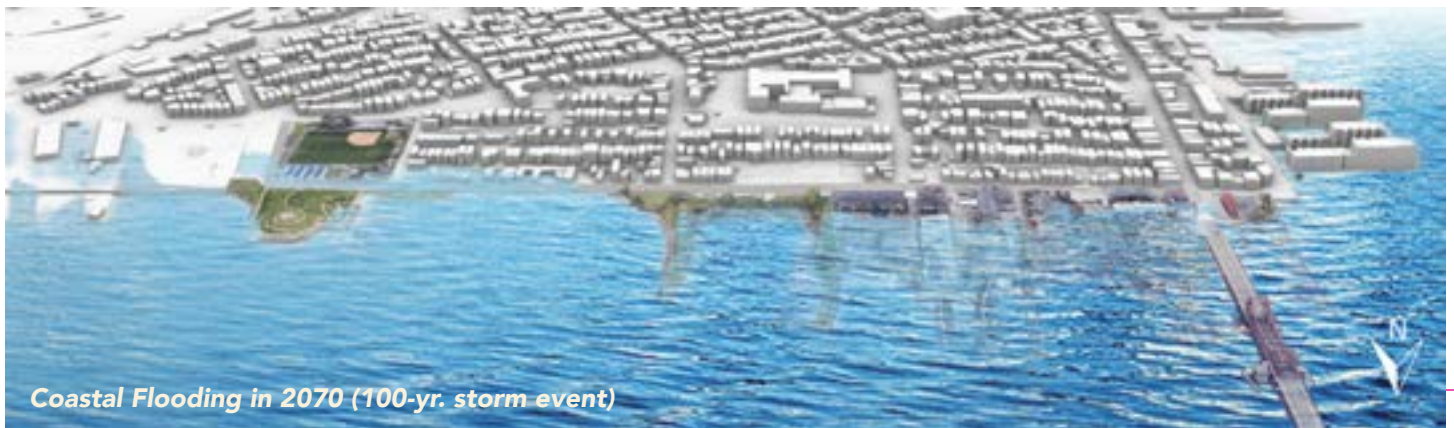
my family

my friends & community

the government

my employer

IC: Adrien Coquet



But the community built bridges in response, like it always has and will in the future

“The COVID-19 crisis disturbed the community of East Boston. At first it was very siloed, and people didn’t interact much because everyone was scared. Then we began to see how our neighbors were doing and built bridges to help them with things they needed, people we previously didn’t know or talk to. Eastie Farms started by finding people who needed food and delivering food to them. Instead of highlighting prejudices, the human network became more cohesive during the pandemic. Thinking about storms and floods, it will be the human connections we have with neighbors that will help people when their home gets flooded and they need somewhere to stay. What helps us get through the disaster is the bridges of community we have built with our neighbors — bridges we are able to traverse in a time of crisis.” - Kannan Thiruvengadam, Director of Eastie Farms

What’s the forecast for Condor Street?

Fill to Flood, Seas to Rise, Storms to Surge

The land Condor Street sits on was built by humans! We filled in parts of Chelsea Creek and Boston Harbor and built upon that new land. In the future, the water threatens to reclaim many of those areas as sea levels rise and storms cause additional surges: some modeling shows that a 100-year storm in 2070 with 36 inches of sea level rise threatens to put parts of the proposed substation site under a foot or more of water.

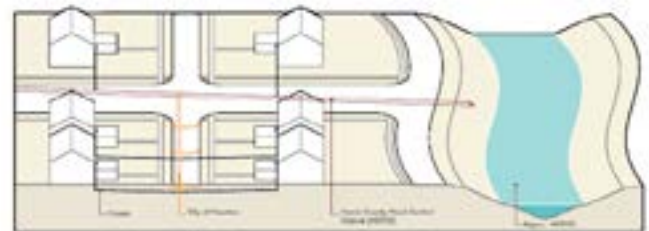


Figure 3 Water Storage Facilities IC: Harris County

In Other News, Expect More Rain

Precipitation that falls on Eagle Hill can also cause flooding in the streets. Parts of Condor Street already flood a few times a year during heavy rainstorms, and the problem will likely worsen because of climate change. When sewers back up with all of this water, they overflow, dumping raw sewage into Chelsea Creek.



FREEDOM AND STABILITY

Freedom and stability became much more loaded concepts during a global pandemic and ensuing recession. For the Latino community in East Boston, we ask whether freedom may not just be about one's ability to access well-maintained public spaces, but also that right to stay home from work, retain your economic stability, and avoid catching a deadly virus.

Latino communities are disproportionately represented in so-called "essential" work settings such as healthcare facilities, food production, farms, processing, grocery stores, and public transportation. People who work in these settings have more chances to be exposed to COVID-19 because these types of jobs require frequent or close contact with the public or other workers, involve activities that cannot be done from home, and may lack benefits such as paid sick days. Did Latino neighbors volunteer to expose themselves and their families to contagion every day on the "frontlines," or was it the only choice available to them?

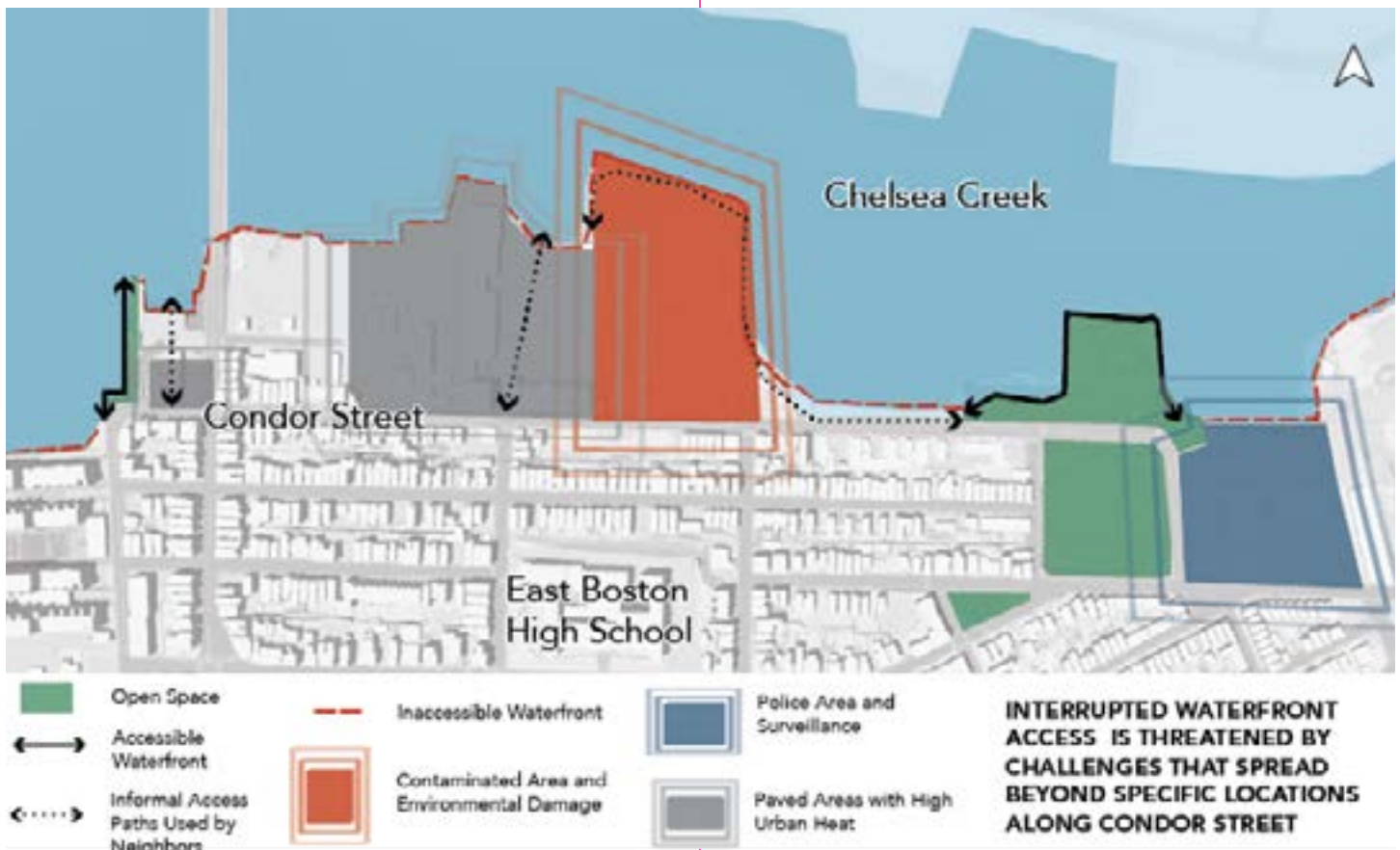
In addition, many East Boston workers live in multigenerational apartments or share rentals with multiple roommates. Sometimes whole families share bedrooms. This means that when a worker gets sick, they have nowhere to quarantine, putting the rest of their household at a higher risk of contracting COVID-19. Research indicates that this kind of "family spread" is one of the top ways the coronavirus is spreading in East Boston.



Rendering of the East Boston Police Station

All of these systemic barriers related to race, gender, income and immigration status have implications for the built environment. For East Boston, stripping communities from the decision-making processes related to planning resulted in the contamination of vulnerable areas, an excess in the use of asphalt as a primary material of placemaking, and high levels of surveillance. The latter is particularly concerning given the different types of immigration status in the neighborhood and the past instances of collaboration between Immigrations Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Boston Police. It was only three years ago that a student of East Boston High School was detained through a partnership between the school district and the police to target undocumented immigrants.

Beyond the health outcomes connected to each factor, the community is now in a place to repair the wrongdoings of the past, regardless of whether neighbors were directly involved in these decisions.



A LEGACY AS A WORKING WATERFRONT



As home to oil tanks fronting Chelsea Creek in the 20th century and to auto body shops and marinas today, Condor Street has a long history of hosting industry at the water's edge. The distance between the East Boston and Chelsea waterfronts is 550 feet on some stretches of Chelsea Creek, 1,000 feet in others. Salt to thaw Boston's roads in winter, oil for heaters and fuel for the jets at Logan Airport have flowed on barges and ships between the two waterfronts, as have pieces of pottery and shipbuilding materials. Simultaneously an employment hub and a site of pollutants, the land between Condor Street and Chelsea Creek has long attracted industry and concerned neighbors monitoring industry's impact on neighbors' health.

A legacy of creativity and providing essential goods for the region is apparent today through the physical landscape on the Condor Street waterfront, even if some of its historical uses are long gone. From the mid-1800s to 1914, a pottery operated at the former brownfield site at 146 Condor St., creating dining ware and porcelain goods like toilets. The site would later serve as a bulk petroleum storage facility including 10 above-ground storage tanks, which were removed by Hess Oil in 1998 and subsequently cleaned for industrial use. A short walk to the west at what is currently an auto body shop at 80 Condor St. was the Boston Electric Light Co. building as far back as 1886 before the company was acquired by Boston Edison. The Condor Iron Foundry assumed operations at the building in 1902 and, in 1904, the Gibby Foundry Company took over and produced guide sheaves and bollards.



Chocolate Pot made by the New England Pottery Company, 1889-95



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CONNECTIVITY AND INDUSTRY ON CONDOR STREET

Condor Street's long history with industry has earned it placement as one of the Massachusetts' Designated Port Areas, which have been created under a set of regulations aimed at preserving water-dependent industrial uses. Chapter 91, a state licensing program aimed at promoting access to waterways, comes into conflict with DPA zone regulations at sites like Condor Street, where the DPA zone has historically overridden waterfront access rights. There is potential for the Condor Street community to weigh in on these uses through the ongoing East Boston DPA Boundary review process, Climate Ready East Boston planning process and PLAN East Boston process.



Map of Waterfront Regulations

Source: BPDIA

- Designated Port Area (DPA)
- Municipal Harbor Plan Area (MHP)
- Chapter 91 Boundary
- East Boston Harborwalk
- PLAN: East Boston Boundary

Find out more about overlapping boundaries and their impact on various East Boston jurisdictions in the companion toolkit. PODER.



TENSIONS BETWEEN DIFFERENT NEIGHBORHOOD AREAS



- Open Space
- Mostly Residential Area
- Mostly Commercial, Office or Industrial Area
- Public Pathways where Neighbors are not always Prioritized
- Neighborhood Area Border

Situated between the McArdle Bridge and the Chelsea Street Bridge, the half-mile of east-west road Condor Street provides is at the nexus of industry, neighbors and recreation. Ownership of the properties fronting Chelsea Creek is largely private and the owners have favored industrial and maritime uses such as a private harbor and auto repair businesses. However, the Boston Planning and Development Agency owns the 8-acre brownfield site formerly owned by Hess Oil. On Condor Street's eastern end, the public is the steward of the Condor Street Urban Wild and a small site at the west end of Condor Street called the Condor Street Overlook is also publicly owned.

A CONDOR STREET FOR ALL

1 HARBOR WALK

On one hand we have the DPA zone's goal of preserving industrial space and on the other, Chapter 91's charge to increase public waterfront access. This tension gave rise to our concept to extend Boston's Harborwalk on and around Condor Street. This proposed path will connect the Condor Street Overlook on the eastern end of the street to the Condor Street Urban Wild on the street's western end. Neighbors can be guided on the path with a series of signs and stretches of boardwalks to invite them to the water's edge. In recognition of the concerns about opening up access to privately-owned, industrial lots, we envision the portions of the path with boardwalks will largely be focused on the BPDA-owned parcel at 148 Condor St. Stretches of Condor Street and roads, such as Nay Street, may not be directly on the water for neighbors working, living and visiting the Eagle Hill neighborhood.

It's clear neighbors are already accessing the former brownfield site at 148 Condor St. by foot. We are suggesting a boardwalk lining the waterfront edges of that property that allows for safe access to those sites with educational signs explaining the site's history. These signs could discuss the site as an extension of the natural land mass, its role as a petroleum storage site and the habitat the site has supported since oil tanks were removed. Some lots, such as the privately-owned harbor to the west of the brownfield site, have maritime uses that would disrupt this suggested public access. Here we propose a walkway marked with signs that direct pedestrians back to Condor Street when needed before they walk back out to Chelsea Creek to access a bridge that goes under the McArdle Bridge.



2 INDUSTRIAL BUILDING REUSE

98-100 CONDOR STREET



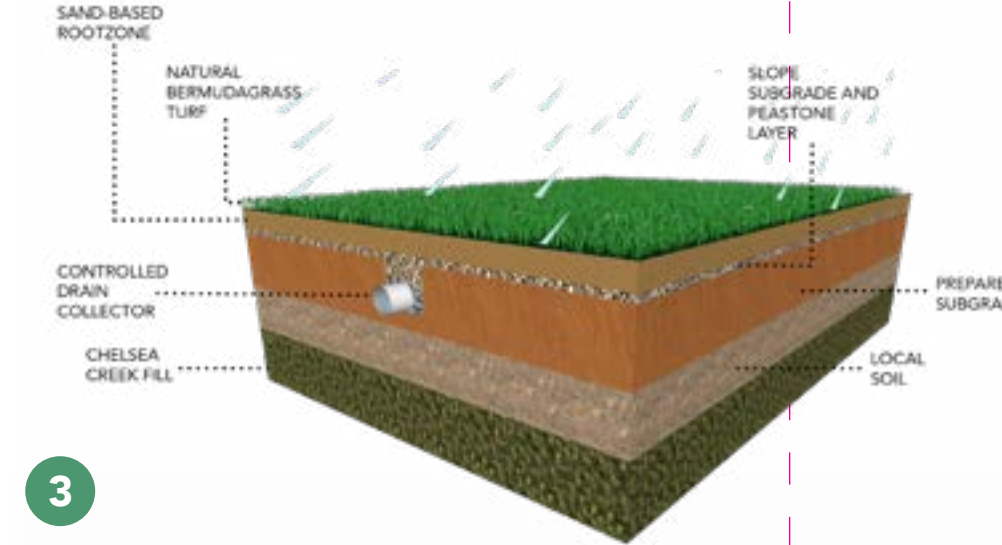
IMMIGRANT LEGAL SERVICES AND OFFICES
COMMERCIAL KITCHEN
COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

Building wealth in this community is a key concept we landed on to serve Latino futures on Condor Street -- not just by reducing unemployment, but by offering career and business development opportunities that allows the current neighbors of East Boston and Eagle Hill to enter better-paying, more accommodating positions. To model how redevelopment along Condor Street might serve this goal, we are suggesting an alternative design for 98-100 Condor St., an industrial building that is currently vacant. Next door to the East Boston Headstart and Early Intervention program, this part of Condor Street is already a destination for parents of growing families. Another key audience is students from East Boston High School two blocks away, who currently only have limited access to facilities for Career Technical Education programs such as machine shops or commercial kitchens.

We suggest converting the first floor of this building into a machine shop or makerspace. Autobody work is a common industry along Condor Street, but mechanics must take classes or apprentice in order to get into higher paying positions. On the second floor, we envision a commercial kitchen for local food businesses and culinary arts classes. On the top two floors, we imagine meeting rooms and computer labs that can be reserved for immigrant legal and social services, programming classes, and studying.

3 SOCCER FIELD AND STORMWATER RETENTION

The existing slope of the neighborhood means high water speeds during a rain or storm event. Luckily, the former Hess oil site provides a valuable opportunity to capture much of that runoff. We propose biodetention on the former Hess oil storage site at 148 Condor St. to capture contaminants without significantly altering the ecology of Chelsea Creek and the neighboring ecosystems of the local mud flats. This also provides a space for gathering that can flood if and when it is needed. All of the materials used in the construction would either be permeable or partially porous. This would allow the site's slope to guide the construction process.



Our team suggests the development of a new soccer field for Eagle Hill. This opportunity matches the lack of appropriate cultural amenities in the area with opportunity of an undeveloped city-owned lot at 148 Condor St. This idea would not only serve the needs of recreation in the community, but it would also work as an extension of East Boston High School given that it lost part of its access to a local soccer field now shared with Suffolk University.

For neighbors concerned about police surveillance, this location may be protected from immigration enforcement as a "sensitive location" due to its connection to the East Boston High School. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's current policy designates some sites as sensitive locations, which prohibits enforcement in areas connected to public schools. In addition to the soccer field, the site can promote economic activity within the community through the establishment of a market controlled and managed by neighbors.

4 A STREET TO SERVE EVERYONE



In conjunction with expanding the sets of uses that may serve Latino futures on Condor Street, we are suggesting an alternative design for the street itself that considers the confluence of recreational, residential and industrial needs already being met there. Wider, 7-foot sidewalks shaded by trees in the parking lane can shade parents walking with their children to the early childhood services at 130 Condor Street. Sidewalk extensions into the parking lane can provide visual cues to drivers to slow and stop at key crosswalks, such as the one outside the industrial building where we envision an expanded set of community uses. The 11-foot shared lanes allow larger vehicles and bicycles to share the road as they travel to and from the McArdle Bridge or Chelsea Street Bridge. Preserving street parking and integrating a tree canopy on both sides of the road may bring the growing number of residences on the street's southern side into a conversation with the evolving set of industrial uses on the north side of the street while also ensuring those using both sides have space and safety.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SEE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD?

Mark the edge that you're most interested in on this collage and use the space below to describe and draw your vision for this place.



Check out an approach to reconnecting and reimagining the edge conditions in East Boston's Harbor View neighborhood in the companion toolkit, CRITTERS AND MAPS ALONG THE EDGE.

1 HARBORWALK 2 INDUSTRIAL BUILDING 3 SOCCER FIELD 4 STREETScape



WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE PLACES?

NOW WHAT?

Join the conversation on social media! Grab a snapshot of your favorite place to take a break, and/or your vision for Condor Street and share using #condorvision

MORE INFORMATION

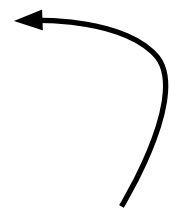
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Cover Photo Credit: Tesoritos Market
Back Photo Credit: Queens Night Market

ABOUT US

This fold-out experience was produced by Miguel Dávila Uzcátegui, Osamu Kumasaka and Anna Schuessler as part of the MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning practicum course in Spring 2021.

We'd like to thank our wonderful teaching team: Eran Ben-Joseph, Mary Anne Ocampo and Tanvi Sharma. We would also like to thank the many EB community partners who helped advise on this project as well as our colleague Okki Berendschot.



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The deindustrialization of the waterfront and the enduring relationship that exists between them and their traditional territories. The land of East Boston and the land on which this project was produced is the traditional unceded territory of the Wampanoag Nation and Massachusetts Peoples. We acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced occupation of these territories, as well as the ongoing process of colonialism and dispossession in which we and our institution are implicated.

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IC: Adrian Coquet



Coastal Flooding in 2020 (100-yr. storm event)

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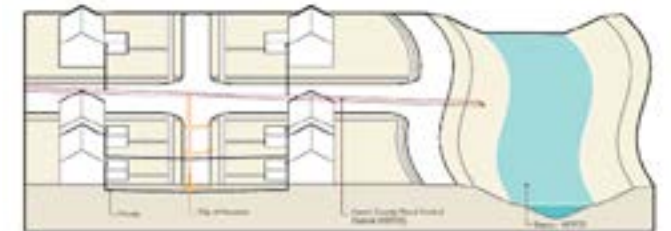


Figure 2 Water Change 1-Building. IC: Harris County

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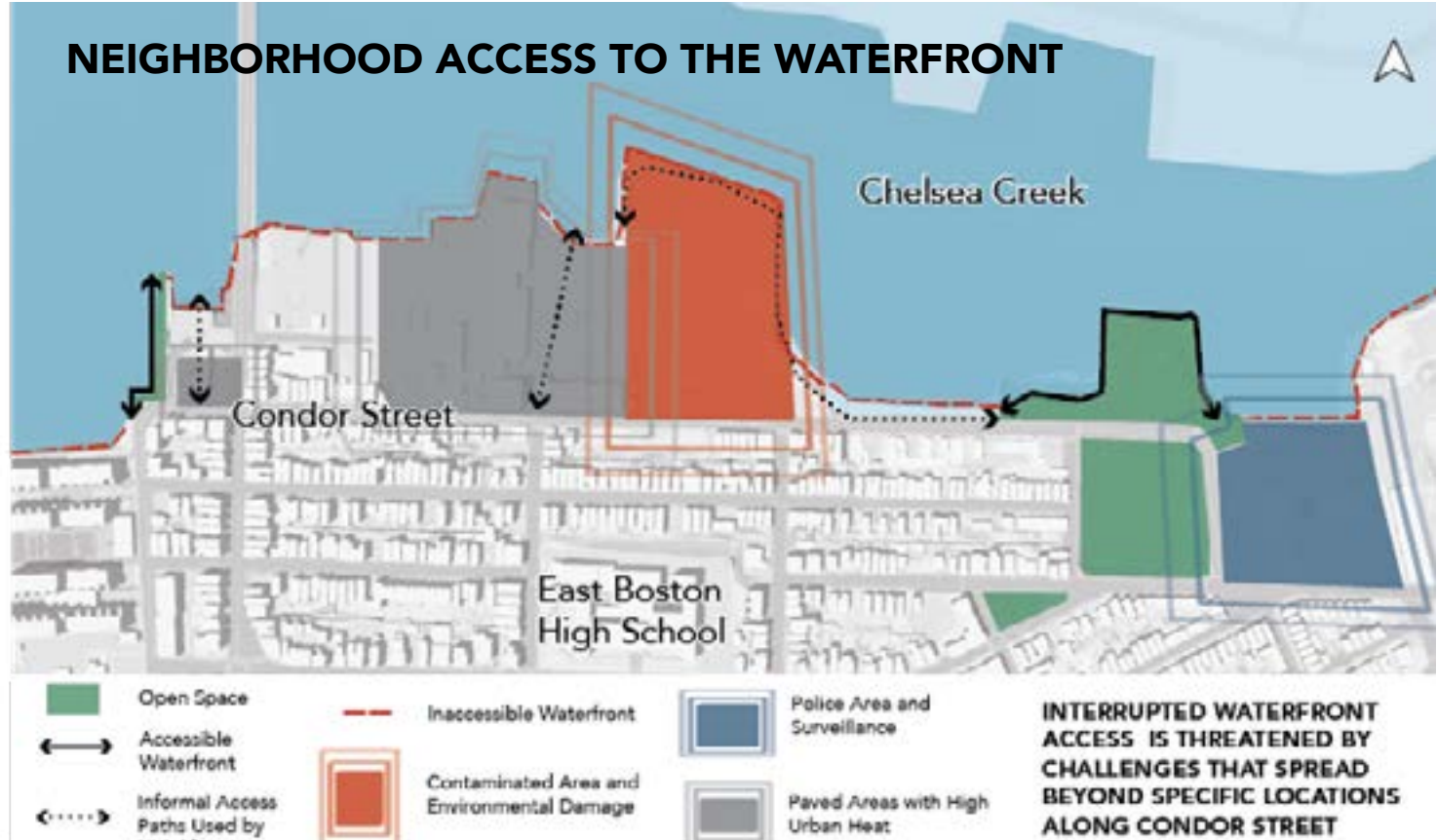
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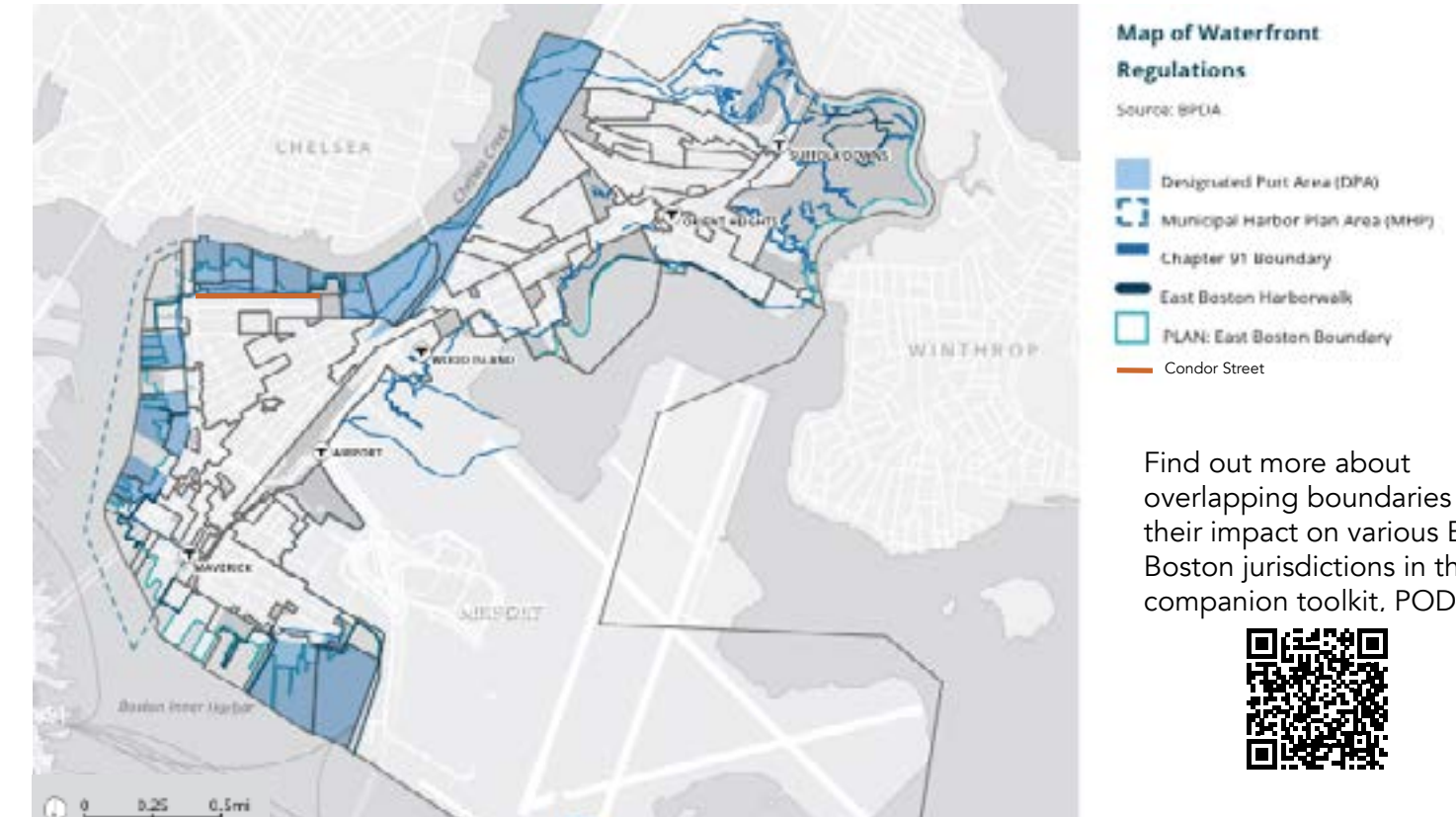
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Find out more about overlapping boundaries and their impact on various East Boston jurisdictions in the companion toolkit, PODER.



TENSIONS BETWEEN DIFFERENT NEIGHBORHOOD AREAS



Situated between the McArdle Bridge and the Chelsea Street Bridge, the half-mile of east-west road Condor Street provides is at the nexus of industry, neighbors and recreation. Ownership of the properties fronting Chelsea Creek is largely private and the owners have favored industrial and maritime uses such as a private harbor and auto repair businesses. However, the Boston Planning and Development Agency owns the 8-acre brownfield site formerly owned by Hess Oil. On Condor Street's eastern end, the public is the steward of the Condor Street Urban Wild and a small site at the west end of Condor Street called the Condor Street Overlook is also publicly owned.

A CONDOR STREET FOR ALL

1 HARBOR WALK

On one hand we have the DPA zone's goal of preserving industrial space and on the other, Chapter 91's charge to increase public waterfront access. This tension gave rise to our concept to extend Boston's Harborwalk on and around Condor Street. This proposed path will connect the Condor Street Overlook on the eastern end of the street to the Condor Street UrbanWild on the street's western end. Neighbors can be guided on the path with a series of signs and stretches of boardwalks to invite them to the water's edge. In recognition of the concerns about opening up access to privately-owned, industrial lots, we envision the portions of the path with boardwalks will largely be focused on the BPDA-owned parcel at 148 Condor St. Stretches of Condor Street and roads, such as Nay Street, may not be directly on the waterfront but could still provide a connection to the water for neighbors working, living and visiting the Eagle Hill neighborhood.

It's clear neighbors are already accessing the former brownfield site at 148 Condor St. by foot. We are suggesting a boardwalk lining the waterfront edges of that property that allows for safe access to those sites with educational signs explaining the site's history. These signs could discuss the site as an extension of the natural land mass, its role as a petroleum storage site and the habitat the site has supported since oil tanks were removed. Some lots, such as the privately-owned harbor to the west of the brownfield site, have maritime uses that would disrupt this suggested public access. Here we propose a walkway marked with signs that direct pedestrians back to Condor Street when needed before they walk back out to Chelsea Creek to access a bridge that goes under the McArdle Bridge.



2 INDUSTRIAL BUILDING REUSE

98-100 CONDOR STREET



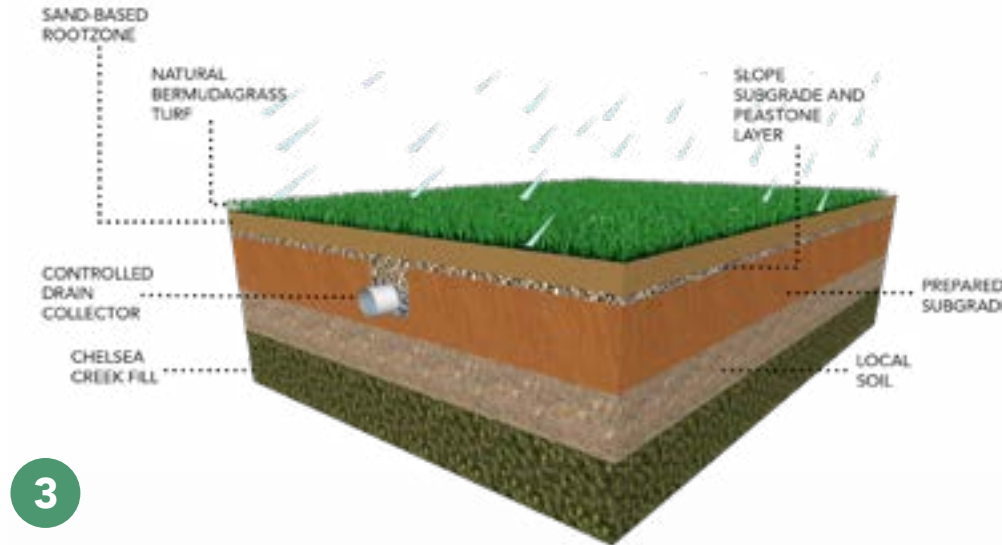
IMMIGRANT LEGAL SERVICES AND OFFICES
COMMERCIAL KITCHEN
COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

Building wealth in this community is a key concept we landed on to serve Latino futures on Condor Street -- not just by reducing unemployment, but by offering career and business development opportunities that allows the current neighbors of East Boston and Eagle Hill to enter better-paying, more accommodating positions. To model how redevelopment along Condor Street might serve this goal, we are suggesting an alternative design for 98-100 Condor St., an industrial building that is currently vacant. Next door to the East Boston Headstart and Early Intervention program, this part of Condor Street is already a destination for parents of growing families. Another key audience is students from East Boston High School two blocks away, who currently only have limited access to facilities for Career Technical Education programs such as machine shops or commercial kitchens.

We suggest converting the first floor of this building into a machine shop or makerspace. Autobody work is a common industry along Condor Street, but mechanics must take classes or apprentice in order to get into higher paying positions. On the second floor, we envision a commercial kitchen for local food businesses and culinary arts classes. On the top two floors, we imagine meeting rooms and computer labs that can be reserved for immigrant legal and social services, programming classes, and studying.

3 SOCCER FIELD AND STORMWATER RETENTION

The existing slope of the neighborhood means high water speeds during a rain or storm event. Luckily, the former Hess oil site provides a valuable opportunity to capture much of that runoff. We propose bioretention on the former Hess oil storage site at 148 Condor St. to capture contaminants without significantly altering the ecology of Chelsea Creek. Allowing the space to flood and drain slowly with the addition of a berm, or a raised bank, prevents the further erosion of Chelsea Creek and the neighboring ecosystems of the local mud flats. This also provides a space for gathering that can flood if and when it is needed. All of the materials used in the construction would either be permeable or partially porous. This would allow the site's slope to guide the construction process.



Our team suggests the development of a new soccer field for Eagle Hill. This opportunity matches the lack of appropriate cultural amenities in the area with opportunity of an undeveloped city-owned lot at 148 Condor St. This idea would not only serve the needs of recreation in the community, but it would also work as an extension of East Boston High School given that it lost part of its access to a local soccer field now shared with Suffolk University.

For neighbors concerned about police surveillance, this location may be protected from immigration enforcement as a "sensitive location" due to its connection to the East Boston High School. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's current policy designates some sites as sensitive locations, which prohibits enforcement in areas connected to public schools. In addition to the soccer field, the site can promote economic activity within the community through the establishment of a market controlled and managed by neighbors.

4 A STREET TO SERVE EVERYONE



In conjunction with expanding the sets of uses that may serve Latino futures on Condor Street, we are suggesting an alternative design for the street itself that considers the confluence of recreational, residential and industrial needs already being met there. Wider, 7-foot sidewalks shaded by trees in the parking lane can shade parents walking with their children to the early childhood services at 130 Condor Street. Sidewalk extensions into the parking lane can provide visual cues to drivers to slow and stop at key crosswalks, such as the one outside the industrial building where we envision an expanded set of community uses. The 11-foot shared lanes allow larger vehicles and bicycles to share the road as they travel to and from the McArdle Bridge or Chelsea Street Bridge. Preserving street parking and integrating a tree canopy on both sides of the road may bring the growing number of residences on the street's southern side into a conversation with the evolving set of industrial uses on the north side of the street while also ensuring those using both sides have space and safety.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SEE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD?

Mark the edge that you're most interested in on this collage and use the space below to describe and draw your vision for this place.



Check out an approach to reconnecting and reimagining the edge conditions in East Boston's Harbor View neighborhood in the companion toolkit, CRITTERS AND MAPS ALONG THE EDGE.

1 HARBORWALK 2 INDUSTRIAL BUILDING 3 SOCCER FIELD 4 STREETScape

