

A new VISION for Boston

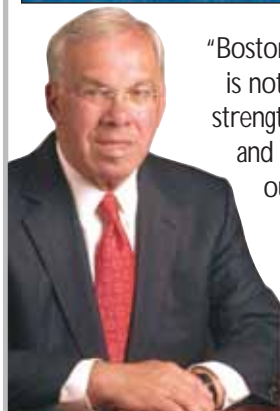
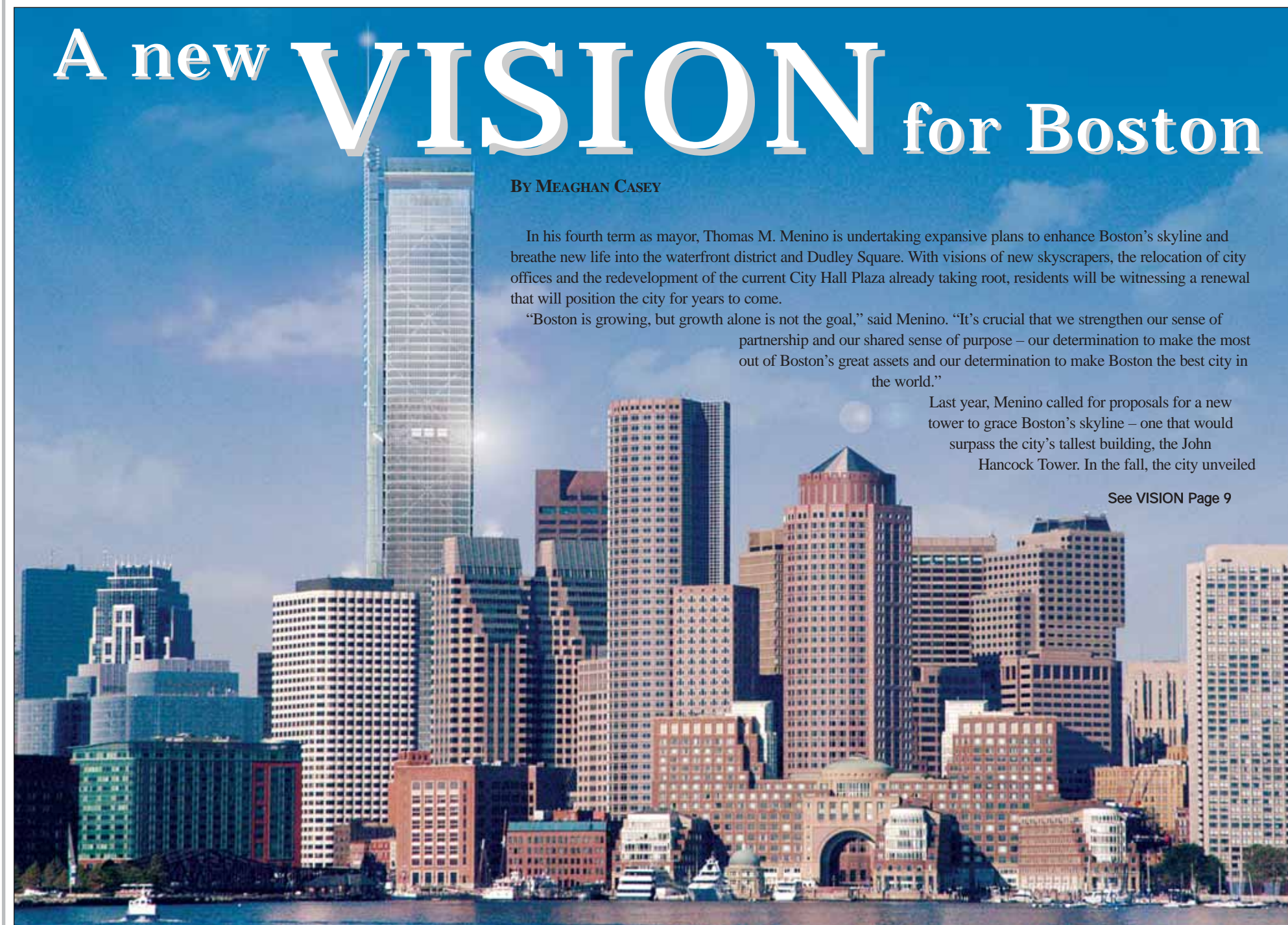
BY MEAGHAN CASEY

In his fourth term as mayor, Thomas M. Menino is undertaking expansive plans to enhance Boston's skyline and breathe new life into the waterfront district and Dudley Square. With visions of new skyscrapers, the relocation of city offices and the redevelopment of the current City Hall Plaza already taking root, residents will be witnessing a renewal that will position the city for years to come.

"Boston is growing, but growth alone is not the goal," said Menino. "It's crucial that we strengthen our sense of partnership and our shared sense of purpose – our determination to make the most out of Boston's great assets and our determination to make Boston the best city in the world."

Last year, Menino called for proposals for a new tower to grace Boston's skyline – one that would surpass the city's tallest building, the John Hancock Tower. In the fall, the city unveiled

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"Boston is growing, but growth alone is not the goal. It's crucial that we strengthen our sense of partnership and our shared sense of purpose – our determination to make the most out of Boston's great assets and our determination to make Boston the best city in the world."

Mayor Thomas M. Menino



A 1,000-foot tower that would greatly enhance the Boston skyline is illustrated at top. Above left, the new Institute of Contemporary Art on the waterfront and, above right, the new Hotel Dartmouth in Dudley Square. Pages 9-12.

Banking on Boston

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *The Boston City Communicator*, produced by the Boston Redevelopment Authority and funded by Eastern Bank and East Boston Savings Bank.

The Communicator highlights the initiatives

and programs that bolster the economic development of Boston's neighborhoods.

"It is important for us to communicate the progress that is enhancing the quality of life in our neighborhoods," said Mayor Thomas M. Menino. "We are fortunate to have institutions that are committed to our city's future."

"We see this as another investment in Boston, its neighborhoods and its residents," said Eastern Bank Chairman and CEO Richard E. Holbrook.

"Public-private partnerships fuel the economic growth that enriches us all," said East Boston Savings Bank President and CEO Robert F. Verdonck.

Eastern Bank

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YOU CAN ALWAYS GO DOWNTOWN

Initiative and marketing campaign boost Downtown Crossing

BY CAITLIN BOWLER

Street vendors, music shops, department stores, book stores, camera shops, sports stores, cafes and offices: Downtown Crossing, the lively commercial district on and around Washington Street, has them all. The street, which is home to a mix of Boston's oldest and newest architecture, is already one of Boston's most memorable, but under the direction of the Economic Improvement Initiative, launched by Mayor Thomas M. Menino in November 2004, this important economic engine is on its way to becoming a more vibrant and unified district.

Already some of the streetscape improvements suggested under the initiative, including hanging flowers baskets and coordinated banners, have been installed.

Other improvements such as double acorn light fixtures, new benches and trash receptacles are in the process of being installed. Additionally, the Public Works Department is coordinating sidewalk improvements.

The latest step came Sept. 7, when the BRA Board awarded Urban Marketing Collaborative (UMC) with a contract to create a branding and identity strategy for Downtown Crossing.

The BRA has committed \$250,000 in resources for the 6-9-month contract.

The UMC team demonstrated a complete understanding of the area and showcased a comprehensive approach to the identity and branding process, building upon its proven track record in other cities.

UMC carefully selected an international team of experts to provide creative, out-of-the-box thinking to address the challenges and opportunities in Downtown Crossing.

The team will respect the historical and cultural heritage of the area in its planning while providing tested, state-of-the-art solutions. Currently working with the BRA to collect community feedback and study the district, UMC plans to deliver its recommendations to the mayor in the spring.

"Downtown Crossing is one of Boston's beloved shopping districts, but it is in need of revitalization," said Menino. "Urban Marketing Collaborative will bring new energy, ideas and an exciting new brand to Downtown Crossing. We're looking for a Downtown Crossing that takes full advantage of its resources and includes a real mix of retailers."

Focus is being placed on five high-intensity pedestrian areas to make them more welcoming and user-friendly: the Old State House Plaza, the Irish Famine Memorial and Borders plaza, Filene's Park, the intersections of Washington, Summer, and Winter Street, and the Opera House at Avenue de Lafayette. Public-information kiosks are being designed that will be coordinated with the Mayor's Office of Arts, Tourism & Special Events and these areas will also feature specially designed cart vendor awnings.

Throughout the month of December, a series of special holiday programming events, dubbed

"Holi-Daily" festivities, ignited the Downtown Crossing streets. The celebration included daily musical performances on Summer Street by talented groups such as the Boston Conservatory Choir, Golden Tones, the Urban Nutcracker and the Barber Shop Quartet. The Boston Brand Pushcart initiative also showcased unique crafts and gifts of local artisans and businesses. The popular holiday retail window decoration contest and an appearance by the Red Sox first-baseman Kevin Youkilis attracted residents and visitors. The 25 days of programming were the result of a collaboration among the BRA, the Mayor's Office of Special Events and Tourism and the Mayor's Downtown Crossing Economic Improvement Initiative.

"Downtown Crossing is bustling on any day of the year, but the holiday season is when it comes alive with the spirit of the season," said Menino. "This year we planned a special month of seasonal offerings, and it couldn't have been more appropriate – the heart of our downtown is looking and feeling better than ever before."

Another successful programming attraction in the district is the Boston Art Windows (BAW), which was first implemented in April 2005 through cooperation with the Mayor's Office, the BRA, and the Collision Collective. BAW's displays of interactive modern artwork in the windows of vacant commercial property have given quirky life to empty storefront windows.

Through cooperation with Project Place, a non-profit organization located in the South End that assists homeless and low-income earners, the street has been cleaned five days a week for the past year and a half.

Downtown Crossing is enjoying the benefits of the initiative and visitors and businesses look forward to the additional planned improvements and integrating them visually into the street.



Downtown Crossing was bustling with activity during the holiday season.

PHOTOS: REBA SALDANHA



DORCHESTER DELIGHT



Improvement project returns grandness to Dorchester Avenue

BY RICH FAHEY

The five-year, \$5 million project to improve Dorchester Avenue, one of the city's most important and historic thoroughfares, is quickly moving ahead, according to Jeremy Rosenberger of the Boston Redevelopment Authority, the interim project manager.

The project is focusing on issues regarding transportation, neighborhood businesses, neighborhood housing, and streetscapes. Mayor Thomas M. Menino has made the project a priority, according to Rosenberger.

"The mayor wants immediate action, so we're hitting the ground running," Rosenberger said.

A consultant was hired last May to help determine what the new streetscape should look like, and what kind of infrastructure improvements are needed.

"There were questions such as 'If we plant trees, where should they go?'" said Rosenberger. "We don't want trees planted where they'll interfere with business signage."

The planners have also been looking at the issues of sidewalks, signage, paving, street lights, and public art.

An action plan is expected to be fomented by May or June of this year, and funds are expected to be allocated



Community workshops focused on neighborhood housing and streetscape.

shortly afterward, with an eye towards breaking ground sometime this fall.

With the multitude of infrastructure projects and issues affecting the street, it was clear that the avenue needed a proactive, concerted plan. In February 2005, the mayor called together an interagency team comprising all the related city departments that have a hand in Dorchester Avenue's future.



Mayor Thomas M. Menino addresses the Dorchester Avenue task force.

The mayor officially kicked off the Dorchester Avenue Project with a community meeting in March 2005. Community workshops were held to solicit input on transportation, neighborhood business, neighborhood housing and streetscape. The mayor appointed a 13-member task force to assist in the creation of an action plan for improvements along the avenue.

The task force is comprised of representatives from area civic groups, neighborhood businesses, institutions, neighborhood residents, and two youth representatives.

A community meeting was held to give the community an opportunity to meet the task force members, to update the community on current issues and for the task force to discuss its work to that point (November 2005). The project was originally conceived to include the entire length of the roadway from Andrew Square to Lower Mills, but has been narrowed to include the four miles from the intersection of Columbia Road/Route 93 to Lower Mills. The project will include improvements to two important intersections on Dorchester Avenue, at Freeport Street and Adams Street.

As part of the project, guidelines will be drawn up that will be in effect for the entire length of the roadway.

Nothing but positive developments

Bustling with growth and activity, Boston is an important global capital. Our competitive assets are varied and plentiful—beginning with the diversity of the city's economy and encompassing everything from the variety of our neighborhoods and an extensive public transit system to our cultural and academic institutions, accessible shopping districts, and a young, highly educated population that brings topnotch skills to Boston's businesses and industry.

With a population of 600,000 that doubles every day as workers enter the city from throughout the region, and some \$12 billion in projects in Boston's development pipeline, this is a vibrant city that is growing and will likely continue to grow for the next 20 years.

The Boston City Communicator will offer Boston's citizens an intimate glimpse into the work being done for the city and its residents on their behalf. We are grateful for the support of Eastern Bank and East Boston Savings Bank in producing this publication.

While we're all invested in Boston's success, there are hundreds of people working quietly through channels of city government, or in organizations City Hall supports, to improve the lives of Boston residents as the city continues to grow. Some keep the streets swept and restaurants clean. Others run literacy programs, organize cycling clubs and work to promote small businesses. And many more work tirelessly to improve neighborhoods and build new ones.

As my tenure as director of the Boston Redevelopment Authority ends, I would like to recognize all those public servants, especially those with whom I have worked at the BRA. I have been honored to serve Mayor Menino and all the citizens of Boston, and I am proud of what we accomplished.

Mark Maloney is director of the Boston Redevelopment Authority.



Mark Maloney

A Message from the Mayor

Communicating our good news

Welcome to the inaugural edition of *The Boston City Communicator*. Boston is a vibrant city, ever changing and growing as we invest in our neighborhoods, schools, businesses, parks and cultural attractions. I know this city. I love this city, and I am committed to making our city work for all Bostonians — residents, employees, families, tourists, students and elders.



Mayor Thomas M. Menino

A strong city depends on strong neighborhoods. Our focus is on strong business districts, cleanliness and beautification and quality of life. Eleven years ago, we established the Boston Main Streets program. Since then, 540 new businesses have opened, creating more than 3,600 new jobs. Storefront improvements and neighborhood beautification projects are on the rise. The annual city-wide cleanup, Boston Shines, draws more than 5,000 volunteers to pick up litter, sweep and plant flowers, making our city a cleaner and more attractive place to live, work and visit.

A strong city is also a healthy and safe

city. We are fortunate to have a hub of world-class healthcare institutions working with us to tackle some of the challenging public-health issues facing our city, such as childhood obesity, asthma, diabetes and cancer. Boston's firefighters, police, EMS and other emergency services workers are on the front lines everyday, helping to make our neighborhoods and streets more secure.

Our city's past, present and future are very much alive in each and all of you. I thank you for your support and your continued role in making Boston a city to be proud of.

Boston is at a Crossroads

Initiative to connect both sides of the Greenway

BY RICH FAHEY

Boston's Crossroads Initiative is designed to work hand-in-hand with the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway to connect people and destinations on both sides of the Greenway.

The 12 streets in question link the city to the Greenway and the Greenway to Boston Harbor. They also connect neighborhoods formerly isolated by the Central Artery — districts such as the West End, Bulfinch Triangle and the North End, as well as South Boston, Fort Point Channel, the Leather District and Chinatown.

The network and vistas these improved streets and the Greenway form will create new ways of navigating and understanding the city.

The first road to be redesigned as part of the project is Broad Street, slated to become an active contemporary place at the center of the historic financial district, strengthening the connection between State Street and harborside destinations.

The design is about 25 percent complete, according to Peter Gori of the Boston Redevelopment Authority, project manager for the Crossroads Initiative.

"We've just hired design firms for the second phase of the project," said Gori. The second phase will include Causeway, Summer and Congress streets and the South Boston Waterfront area. Design work on the second phase is expected to begin in January.

The other streets involved in the project are New Chardon Street, Salem and Hanover streets in the North End, State Street, Oliver Street, Essex Street, Beach and Kneeland streets.

Under the plan, Causeway Street would be transformed into a pedestrian-oriented boulevard, becoming the anchor for this business and entertainment district linking two of Boston's great neighborhoods — the West End and North End.

New Chardon/North Washington Street is slated to become a vibrant connector between Charlestown, the Bulfinch Triangle,



Government Center and Beacon Hill as new development emerges along either side on former Central Artery land.

Hanover and Salem streets, two principal streets of the North End, would become even stronger links as Crossroads stretches across the Greenway between Government Center and the waterfront.

State Street will become a Crossroads for celebrating Boston's connection to its harbor and the street's role in the city over the centuries. State Street is the most frequently traveled street downtown, where the paths of workers, residents and tourists cross day and night, year-round.

The Crossroads Initiative improves the main streets of neighborhoods old (Chinatown), revitalized (Leather District) and new (the future South Bay mixed-use development). Renovated Kneeland, Beach and Essex streets help Chinatown, the Theatre District, and the Leather District become a lively network of connections and activity, forming an exciting cultural gateway to downtown Boston.

Congress Street will become an inviting, pedestrian-friendly path linking South Boston and the Financial District while improving connections between important city destinations.

The Summer Street Crossroads will make the trip from Boston Common and Downtown Crossing to the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center (BCEC) friendly and inviting for people arriving by transit, on foot or by bicycle.

The historic Old Northern Avenue Bridge/Oliver Street will carry an emergent Crossroads from the Moakley Courthouse and the developing South Boston waterfront across the Fort Point Channel, past the New Center for Arts and Culture and into the heart of the Financial District.

Implementation of the project, which began in 2005, is expected to take between seven and 10 years.

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FULL HOUSE

East Boston development gets new name, new image

By PARKER ASHWORTH

The transformation of the Maverick Gardens housing development in East Boston over the past three years is remarkable.

Renamed Maverick Landing, a mix of smart brick and colorfully clapboard townhouses, a community center, and a mid-rise building that boasts innovative technology and spectacular views of Boston harbor, have replaced the sea of three-story brick buildings that dominated the waterside site for more than 60 years.

The historic streets that were eliminated in 1941 to create the 9-acre superblock that isolated Maverick Gardens from the surrounding area have been reinstated, parsing the site into five city blocks that integrate seamlessly into the larger neighborhood. Now, through streets and pedestrian pathways, the development and its neighbors to the northeast are once again connected to each other, the waterfront and Lopresti Park.

According to Lydia Agro of the Boston Redevelopment Authority, the project was completed “on time and on budget.” The development includes 396 units, 305 at market rate and the rest affordable housing. The units stand as testament to the possibilities created through innovative partnering between city and state agencies, non-profit organizations, private partners, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, whose \$35 million HOPE IV grant helped fund the project.

“Maverick Landing is an important part of the revitalization of East Boston,” said Mayor Thomas M. Menino. “This development will

ensure that affordable housing, both for renters and homeowners, will remain a part of the East Boston waterfront for years to come.”

One of the Boston Housing Authority’s (BHA) oldest developments, Maverick Gardens was built in 1941 and, though well known for its vibrant, tight-knit community, by the late 1990s its facilities were distressed. HOPE VI funding was critical to the redevelopment effort.

“Maverick Landing is yet another example of the transformative power the HOPE VI program has had on neighborhoods in Boston,” said Sandra Henriquez, BHA administrator. “The new design of the development opens it up to the surrounding neighborhood and integrates residents into the community.”

Now, the development is attractive and livable, reflecting the city’s increasing commitment to making publicly-funded projects more environmentally sensitive. The array of photovoltaic panels atop the roof of the mid-rise is the most visible element of sustainable technology. Other elements include a highly efficient gas absorption chiller-boiler and high-performance building envelope in the mid-rise, Energy Star-rated lights and appliances, partly-recycled materials, such as concrete, steel, and carpeting.

Designers also ensured improved indoor air quality through the use of carpeting, floor finishes, and paints low in volatile organic compounds, using materials in wet areas that minimize mold growth, and ventilating each unit beyond code requirements. These measures will help to improve the health of residents, many of whom suffer from asthma.



The new Maverick Gardens housing development in East Boston features a stunning view of the Boston skyline.

PHOTO: LUCY CHEN PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY OF ICON ARCHITECTURE

Homeland security office aims to keep city safe

By CAITLIN BOWLER

Mayor Thomas M. Menino established the Mayor’s Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management (MOHSEM) in the spring of 2004 to enhance the region’s capacity to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive attacks.

The MOHSEM will coordinate strategic priorities across first-responder agencies and throughout the nine communities that comprise the Metro Boston Homeland Security Region (MBHSR): Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Quincy, Revere, Somerville and Winthrop.

Given the close geographic proximity to each community within the region and the

state assets that are located in the Metro Boston area, MOHSEM works closely with state partners including the MBTA, Massport, Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency, Executive Office of Public Safety, Massachusetts State Police, Massachusetts Department of Public Health and other state partners to ensure coordination with local/state homeland security initiatives.

During the course of the past two years, MOHSEM and its partners have undertaken a number of major projects that address homeland security and emergency preparedness.

The Communications Interoperability Project is a major initiative whose

objective is to maintain data and voice interoperability amongst different agencies by developing a set of equipment standards that ensures first responders from different departments are using compatible equipment. The standards also apply to future investments, so that future equipment meets regional interoperability requirements.

The MBHSR’s Community Outreach and Awareness Programming is designed to educate the public on terrorism prevention and preparedness. Sara Philips, assistant director of the Homeland Security Division, said the P3 Program: Prevent, Protect, Prepare, provides three unique yet related curriculums that address the

citizen’s role in prevention, protecting one’s community, and preparing one’s family and neighborhood for a disaster.

Through completion of the P3 Program, participants in the region will know how to recognize and properly report suspicious behavior to law enforcement officials. The program also serves to educate call takers to whom residents report suspicious behaviors. Training curriculum also provides residents with information on developing family emergency disaster and communication plans, and important knowledge regarding what steps to take in the event of a natural or man-made disaster.

Universities Step UP for Boston schools

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

In a unique collaboration between Boston's universities and its public schools, Step UP (University Partnership) is offering students a \$10-million boost and the stepping stones for success.

Through the new partnership, five of Boston's largest universities have committed \$10 million in funds and services to 10 of the city's low-performing public schools. The universities — Boston College, Boston University, Harvard University, Northeastern University and Tufts University — will provide teacher training, lend curriculum and instructional support and assist in school readiness, family engagement and student support. The universities will also help with student-wellness issues, such as nutrition, dental and general health screenings and a food-service program.

"Our local colleges and universities have been strong partners with the Boston Public Schools for many years," said Mayor Thomas M. Menino. "This initiative will take that partnership one step further by directing key resources of some of Boston's top universities to support select

// We look forward to drawing on our expertise and experience to meet specific needs identified by the schools. //

Robert A. Brown
Boston University president



schools. I want Boston students to have the best education possible and these universities are offering significant resources and expertise to help our children reach their full potential."

A five-year plan, Step UP is a result of several meetings between Menino and the university presidents. The goal is to help the selected schools improve their MCAS scores and increase the number of students going to college.

"Our universities are dedicated to improving the quality of education for all members of the community, and we look

forward to drawing on our expertise and experience to meet specific needs identified by the schools themselves," said Robert A. Brown, president of Boston University, speaking on behalf of all the university partners.

The following schools were chosen to take part in this initiative: Agassiz Elementary, Mary Curley Middle and English High in Jamaica Plain; Chittick Elementary and Lewenberg Middle in Mattapan; Marshall, Russell, Trotter and Winthrop elementary schools in Dorchester; and Elihu Greenwood Elementary in Hyde Park.

Boston Public Schools is hiring a full-time program director to coordinate the planning and programming between the colleges and the schools.

"We're delighted," said Superintendent Michael G. Contompasis. "We have a valuable resource in the colleges and universities here in Boston, and with their help, our schools will succeed in closing the achievement gap and ensuring every child performs at the highest level."

In addition to the five universities participating in Step-UP, other colleges and universities have assisted and will continue to assist Boston Public School students.

Y/BPS educates families about schools

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

The City of Boston is home to 145 public schools, serving nearly 60,000 students. Each January, families must wade through the options of exam schools, pilot schools, small learning communities, K-8 schools and alternative programs, among others, to determine the best fit for their children.

To help families become better consumers of the city's numerous school choices, Y/BPS is taking out some of the guess work. A joint collaboration between the YMCA of Greater Boston and the Boston Public Schools, Y/BPS is designed to help families answer the question: "Why should I consider the Boston Public Schools for my child's education?"

"When I was choosing schools years ago, all of my friends said, 'You need to go to a pilot school because they're new and different. You need to go to a charter school because they're new and different,'" said Laurie Sherman, policy advisor for Mayor Thomas M. Menino. "I wanted to find a traditional, old Boston public school with great learning going on. That was my quest, and I found that school (Manning Elementary) and it has been amazing. I am so inspired by the strength of the curriculum and the talent of the staff in this district."

Supported with funding from the Boston Foundation, Y/BPS has placed three BPS parents at YMCA branches to offer workshops to parents in Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, West Roxbury and Roslindale. Since its founding in 2003, the program has united staff members with thousands of families, helping them to navigate the school choice process and plan their children's education process. Parents are

able to share their own positive experiences with other parents and offer candid and personal information about individual schools.

"It's your child, your flesh and blood, and you don't really know what it's going to be like until they're there," said parent Hoong Wei Speicher, who has sent her three sons through the BPS. "When my son started school and we were actually experiencing it, it was a relief. It was a validation that when I visited these schools and found positive things, my instincts were right on target."

Speicher credits the BPS for embracing

tradition while also looking forward to new innovations. She also praises the district for exposing her children to diverse faces, languages, curriculum, learning styles and extracurricular activities.

"The more things you're exposed to, the broader your horizon is," said Speicher. "The BPS gave my kids the opportunity to try things as far-ranging from cello to football. Those two things you don't usually put together in one child, but it was actively encouraged and he has the best of both worlds."

In addition to connecting with families, Y/BPS also provides outreach grants and staff assistance to schools that apply for aid in reaching parents who have not yet registered for the BPS. Those schools, such as the Nathan Hale Elementary School, have seen a marked increase in popularity. A very small and not previously well-known school, the Nathan Hale used its grant money to invite community members and prospective parents to school events such as math nights, principal coffee hours and literacy family nights.



Michael Ejim and his classmates are glad they chose the Hurley School.

ReadBoston drives for literacy



Mayor Thomas M. Menino distributes free books along with ReadBoston Executive Director Theresa Lynn.

Celtics urge Boston kids to score with reading

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

Stepping off the court to take on the role of storytellers, Boston Celtics forwards Ryan Gomes and Leon Powe took two dozen Charlestown students on the ride of a lifetime.

In November, the players took a historic trolley tour with students from the Harvard/Kent Elementary School as part of the Celtics Read to Achieve program. While visiting Boston's most historic sites, the players discussed their favorite books and the importance of reading in their lives.

"Encouraging children to embrace the love of reading is very important," said Gomes. "It's a skill they'll use for the rest of their lives. Reading helps us expand our horizons, and enables us to learn about and experience many different things."

Working in partnership with ReadBoston — a nonprofit children's literacy program — the Read to Achieve program is designed to help young people develop a lifelong love for reading and encourage adults to read regularly with children. Over the past four years, players, coaches, media and members of the All-Star Reading Team have reached out to more than 14,000 children at 45 local schools, while donating 13,000 books.

Launched by Mayor Thomas M. Menino

in 1995, ReadBoston strives to have every child reading at grade level by the end of third grade, through family involvement in reading and quality literacy instruction. Since its inception, more than 600,000 books have been donated to children, families and educators.

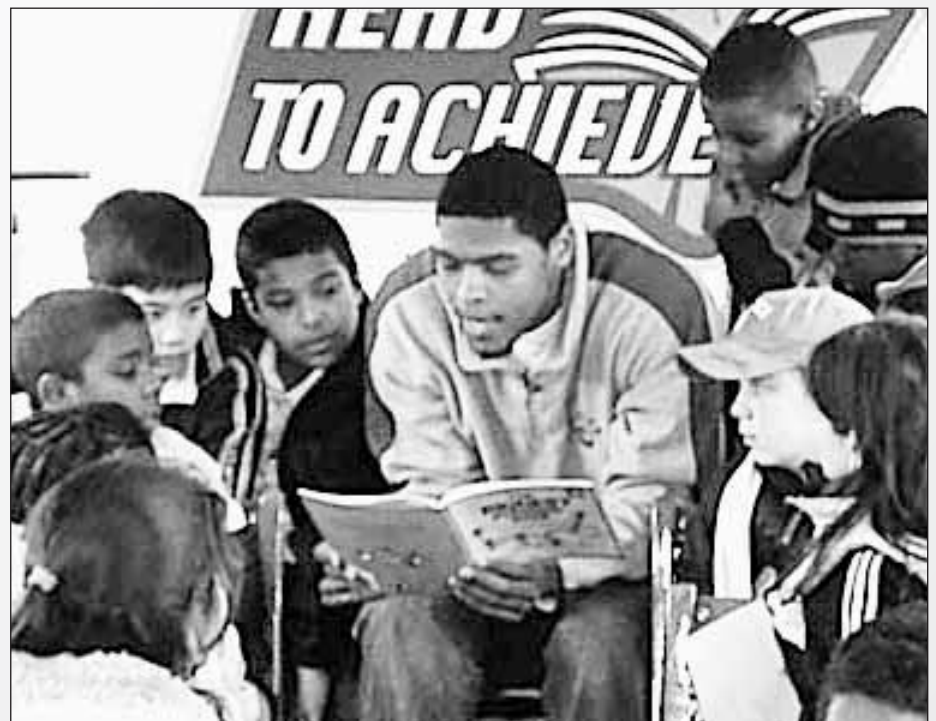
"As we continue to strive to make sure every child in Boston has the opportunity for a good education, literacy is the foundation of it all," said Menino. "We've accomplished a lot in the past decade. ReadBoston's goal is to make sure every child reaches grade level by the third grade, and we're making those gains every year in our schools."

In addition to the Read to Achieve program, ReadBoston runs a family literacy program in 62 of the city's public schools and has after-school programs at 22 sites, including schools, community centers, churches and YMCAs. A highlight of the organization is its summer Storymobile, which visits 75 sites throughout the city, equipped with a professional storyteller, books and literacy activities. Last summer, more than 25,000 children came out for the Storymobile events, receiving new, free books and celebrating the joy of reading.

To highlight and raise funding for its

programs, ReadBoston has hosted a number of events throughout the city, uniting local celebrities and community members in celebration of reading. The Celebrity Author Series kicked off in 2003 with chef Todd English and sports columnist Dan

Shaughnessy. Other local celebrity authors have included novelist Dennis Lehane, fashion designer Joseph Abboud and business executive Jack Welch, each of whom has highlighted his works and shared why literacy is so important.



Boston Celtics forward Ryan Gomes reads to students from Harvard/Kent Elementary School in Charlestown.

Taking a shine to Boston

Residents hit the streets to help keep their neighborhoods clean

BY KAITLIN RAHL

Residents young and old from all over Boston have taken to the streets to help beautify their neighborhoods. Their hard work and dedication made the annual Boston Shines citywide cleanup a major success.

"Boston Shines is a great example of a public/private partnership that helps to make the city look its best. This event has become an annual tradition that keeps getting bigger and better every year," said Mayor Thomas M. Menino. "The more involvement we have from the business community and our public-sector partners, the more we can really make Boston shine."

On Corporate Clean-Up Day, a number of companies dedicated the day to clean-up efforts in their communities. Thousands of volunteers from Brighton to Charleston to Hyde Park raked leaves, planted flowers, spread mulch, swept sidewalks, and picked up trash in city parks, playgrounds, and squares.

Boston Shines crews also cleaned hundreds of sites, removed tons of trash, towed abandoned cars, spread mulch, planted flowers, and cleaned vacant lots.

In April 2006, Menino and NSTAR Chairman, President and CEO

Thomas May announced that a former substation site would be turned into useable open space for the Dorchester neighborhood.

"NSTAR has a long history of community service," May said. "Every year, our employees volunteer their time to help Boston Shines, but this year we wanted to do more."

In the weeks leading up to Boston Shines, area residents in the Bowdoin/Geneva section of Dorchester worked with the mayor's office and NSTAR to enhance access to and organize a major clean-up of the NSTAR site and the adjacent Geneva Cliffs Urban Wild. One of the largest natural areas in Northern Dorchester, the Urban Wild is a 1.8-acre plot owned by the city's Conservation Commission.

Menino presented the Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corp. with a \$25,000 grant to fund the community-planning process for the future care and use of the combined sites.

"I'm pleased to be able to give this money to the community so they can decide for themselves how best to use this site," Menino said. "This is a perfect example of how businesses and community groups can work cooperatively to better the condition of our neighborhoods."



Mayor Thomas M. Menino observes a demonstration of a Green Machine on Beacon Hill.

Got a question? Constituent Services has the answer 24/7

BY PARKER ASHWORTH

Ever wonder whom to contact about the pothole down the street, or the flickering streetlight? Or, have a question about rubbish collection?

The Mayor's Office of Constituent Services (OCS) is a special department structured as a call-in center, with staff at the 24-hour hotline (617-635-4500) available to help constituents navigate and coordinate with city departments to obtain answers to those kinds of questions.

The staff of 15 has previous experience in a number of departments, including Inspectional Services, Transportation, Environmental, City Council, community centers, and possess a wealth of

information on procedures for addressing constituents' service requests and each department's personnel. The staff knows the system from the inside out, which allows them to quickly coordinate each request with the most appropriate person in the appropriate department.

Janine Coppola, OCS director, said the department is viewed as a "valuable information resource both inter-departmentally as well as by residents and visitors to Boston alike. It is designed to be a one-stop shopping source for city services within the neighborhoods."

In its first year of existence, the 24-hour hotline logged an average of more than 110 calls per day, a figure that does not

include calls made for general information or for specific people, according to Coppola. Most logged calls come in over the telephone, but requests made through e-mail, the Web-based complaint form, U.S. mail, and even walk-ins are also recorded.

Staff members are constantly working to improve the continuity and accuracy of communication channels between themselves and city departments, so that requests are addressed and residents can be kept abreast of the progress.

"The mayor is committed to strengthening the successful Constituent Services department by advocating for more widespread and sophisticated

technology systems so that the staff in the department can more quickly and effectively respond to requests and be able to notify constituents of completion of those requests as soon as possible," Coppola said.

Staff members are in the process of reviewing several companies that develop customer relations management programs that could handle more data more efficiently, allowing OCS to provide constituents with better and quicker service.

Coppola has been the director of OCS since 2004. Prior to that she worked for seven years in the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services.



NEW VISION FOR BOSTON

SQUARE DEAL



Mayor Thomas M. Menino cut the ribbon on the new Hotel Dartmouth in Dudley Square, shown at right.

In Roxbury, Dudley revival in full swing

BY CAITLIN BOWLER

In the past two years Dudley Square has experienced the beginning of what the city hopes will be a sustained period of renewal for one of Roxbury's historic commercial hubs.

The Central Boston Elderly Services' new 25,000 square-foot headquarters across from Dudley Station opened in June of 2005.

In the fall of 2005, renovations to the historic Second Empire Dartmouth Hotel were completed, along with a new addition, that created 66 units of mixed-income housing.

Last April, the completion of the Palmer Street Development, a three-story office and retail building, was celebrated as the first new private commercial construction project in Dudley Square in 40 years.

In December, Mayor Thomas M. Menino announced plans for a new police station in Dudley Square. In another major step forward,

the Boston Redevelopment Authority announced the acquisition of Dudley Square's historic Ferdinand Building.

"Today we are one step closer to the goal of re-energizing Dudley Square and restoring the historic Ferdinand Building," said Menino. "It has always been the community's vision to see a vibrant Dudley Square, bustling with activity. The construction of this new office building in the heart of the square will help make that vision a reality, spurring new economic opportunities for Roxbury."

The BRA will now issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for an engineering consultant team to assist the BRA with demolition and clean-up of the site as well as an architectural and design team for the construction of the new office building.

The historic facade of the building will be incorporated into the new office building, but the remainder of the site is in disrepair and



PHOTO: LUCY CHEN PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY OF ICON ARCHITECTURE

requires demolition.

The BRA worked to acquire the 33,000-square-foot site, which consists of the vacant, five-story Ferdinand Building, a vacant eight-story building known as the Guscott Building, and a vacant lot at the corner of Washington and Warren streets.

The community has desired this kind of revitalization for years. But it was not until 2004, when the Mayor's Office released its Strategic Master Plan for the neighborhood and announced that it would develop seven large, publicly-owned parcels of land in Roxbury, that momentum picked up.

BRA Senior Planner Hugues Monestime said, "The unveiling of the RFP really opened the door to development."

The announcement that the city would renovate the Ferdinand Building and relocate several city agencies to act as anchor tenants further increased attention.

The ownership of the seven parcels was discovered in the mid-1980s when the city began revising the neighborhood's zoning, which was outdated by more than 40 years. This roused the interest of the community and discussions about how the parcels should be developed made it clear that the neighborhood needed a master plan.

As it pertains to Dudley Square, the plan seeks ways to infuse life and vitality back into the area. Planners have since thought about the Dudley Street Municipal Plaza and how it could be made safer through street reconstruction.

They have considered Dudley's gateways to determine how effective they are at drawing business to the square and how it would be possible to draw Bartlett Yard into the Dudley Square commercial district to increase its overall vitality.

It took four years and dozens of community meetings to put together the master plan.

A new vision for Boston

VISION: Continued from Page 1

a proposal of developer Stephen Belkin, which, if approved, will create 1.3 million square feet of office space and public parks on both the ground and roof levels.

The tower is one of a series of projects being proposed by the city. The redevelopment of the 1.2 million square-foot Filene's complex in Downtown Crossing, which is expected to begin

in June, will consist of office and retail space, condominiums and a hotel. In December, the Boston Redevelopment Authority approved a 26-story, 350,000-square-foot, mixed-use complex in the Theater District, which will include a hotel, condos and 12,000 square feet of restaurant, spa and retail space. The \$200 million project, developed by SW Boston Hotel Ventures, is expected to create more than 300 permanent jobs.

"We're creating new space across all types of uses to meet the demands of our growing economy," said Menino. "Our development pipeline contains \$12.5 billion of investment — about 47 million square feet of building space. To

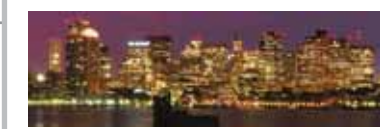
fuel economic growth that continues for our future, we must maximize all of the city's resources."

To do so, Menino has proposed a new City Hall be built on the South Boston waterfront. He has also pledged to relocate city agencies to the soon-to-be reconstructed Ferdinand Building, located in Dudley Square and recently acquired by the city.

"From an economic perspective, creating two new outlets — on the waterfront and in Dudley — and bringing in thousands of public workers will really boost the revival of those two areas," said Economic Development Director Thomas Miller.

The movement of city employees to Roxbury and South Boston would not only unite the public and private sectors in those growing neighborhoods, but would free up prime real estate in downtown.

Boston's office space vacancy rates are at their lowest in five years and the demand for downtown development is stronger than it has ever been. Because the city owns a parcel of land along the edge of the Boston Harbor, there would be no acquisition costs for the new City Hall. The sale of the current City Hall would provide the city with income to develop two modern and visually-appealing buildings.



On the waterfront



City Hall: today and tomorrow



Under a plan announced by Mayor Menino in December, Boston City Hall would move to the waterfront, in a new building at the site where the Bank of America Pavilion now sits, below.



PHOTOS: REBA SALDANHA

Things are looking up in South Boston

By CAITLIN BOWLER

The South Boston waterfront has undergone a dramatic transformation in the last 20 years, highlighted by the development of projects such as the World Trade Center, the Joseph J. Moakley U.S. Courthouse, the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, and the new Institute of Contemporary Art, which opened in December.

Under a plan announced in December by Mayor Thomas M. Menino, a new Boston City Hall would be built on the waterfront, relocating the seat of government and spurring further development in the area.

"The new City Hall will create a new momentum on the waterfront," the mayor said.

A stroll down the Fort Point Channel Harborwalk from the Gillette World Shaving Headquarters to the Moakley Courthouse gives visitors magnificent views of the Federal Reserve, Fort Point Channel, and the downtown financial district and harbor.

From the Harborwalk, visitors will also see evidence of the city's ongoing commitment to developing the waterfront through the creation and expansion of cultural attractions.

The Harborwalk, an attraction that features seating areas, lighting, and gardens, also represents the city's

commitment to providing public access to the waterfront as part of the Boston Harbor clean-up project and Central Artery/Tunnel Project.

The MBTA park next to the Children's Museum and the interim Harborwalk at Fan Pier were both built as part of this effort. A sewer-separation system is also planned for the district, which would ultimately allow for boats to enter Fort Point Channel, as well as floating art and cultural shows.

Already, interpretive panels and ship silhouettes, which present the history of Fan Pier and Boston Harbor, are situated on the Harborwalk approaching the Moakley Courthouse. Once at the courthouse, visitors can view several exhibits and commissioned permanent works by noted artist Ellsworth Kelly.

The area, home to a rich history and artists' community, is rife with cultural development. The Institute of Contemporary Art is perhaps the most visible addition to the waterfront and to the city's cultural landscape.

The Children's Museum is scheduled to open an expansion this spring. The Tea Party Museum, a past fixture in the area that has been closed due to a fire, will resume operations this summer. The museum will be open year-round and will include a tea room open daily, ensuring that the museum is both a destination

and an attraction for locals.

As it finalizes the Master Plan of the 86-acre district just east of the Fort Point Channel that is home to many artists, the city is "working to preserve and enhance the community," according to Rich McGuinness, Deputy Director of Waterfront Development.

Other major stakeholders in the area, including convention center representatives, "see the benefit of a true neighborhood," and are committed to developing the area with the sensitivity to the existing residential communities in mind, McGuinness said.

"We're creating a new neighborhood within the district, building upon existing residential enclaves."

In part, this means that in the approximately 5.9 million square feet of new development that will include residential, research and development, and commercial space, the city plans to secure inclusion of artist live/work space. The city is also working with the community to determine open space uses most appropriate for area residents.

The larger efforts to build on public investments in the waterfront and civic and cultural spaces also include a commitment to connecting the South Boston neighborhood to these assets. A vibrant cultural district connected to residents throughout South Boston would benefit both communities.



Top, the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) opened on Dec. 10. Above, the entrance to the museum boasts the same contemporary style as the artwork inside. Right, Mayor Thomas M. Menino took a tour of the museum while it was under construction.




**NEW VISION
FOR BOSTON**

For Boston, the sky is the limit



A rendering of a street-level view of the 1,000-foot tower to be built in Winthrop Square.

GRAPHIC COURTESY OF RENZO PIANO BUILDING WORKSHOP

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

The City of Boston is taking towering steps to add a new jewel to its skyline.

In November, the city unveiled a proposal from developer Steve Belkin which includes a bold design by renowned Italian architect Renzo Piano for a downtown skyscraper that would rise 1,000 feet. The proposed building would enhance the city's stunning skyline and make a statement to the world about the prominence of Boston.

The Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) formally requested development proposals in May for the city-owned Winthrop Square parcel, located at 115 Federal St. Belkin, who owns the mid-rise building adjoining the site, was the only developer to come forward and meet the Nov. 13 deadline. The city hopes a high quality, mixed-

use tower is constructed to replace the existing underutilized parking garage.

"The BRA was looking for proposals that symbolize the full scope of this city's greatness," said Mayor Thomas M. Menino. "With this asset, we are insisting on bold vision and world-class architecture – in short, a stunning statement of our belief in Boston's bright future."

"The mayor has recognized the need for Boston to be well-positioned in a global economy and has raised the bar in asking for architecture that reflects the Boston of the future," said Belkin, chairman of Trans National Properties.

The proposed 75-floor glass and steel tower would surpass the city's tallest building, the 60-story John Hancock Tower. The most recent office towers to open in the city – the State Street

Financial Center near Chinatown and 33 Arch Street building near Downtown Crossing – are 36 and 33 floors, respectively.

The new skyscraper represents a trend in Boston development for bigger, bolder designs and increased economic opportunities. The demand for office space in Boston is at a high, according to Economic Development Director Thomas Miller.

"We're seeing a change in attitude in terms of density and height," said Miller. "There's a need for these tall buildings. For offices above the 20th floor, there's a separate market in itself."

If approved, Piano's design would create 1.3 million square feet of office space, with a mix of retail and restaurant space on the lower floors. A one-acre park would be built at ground level,

with more public space on the building's roof.

Located in the heart of the Financial District, the Federal Street parcel is less than a block away from the Boston Stock Exchange and major banks and financial institutions. It is also convenient to the MBTA and to the shops and restaurants of Downtown Crossing. The building will sit in the triangular Winthrop Square, which is bounded by Devonshire Street, Otis Street and 1 Winthrop Square – an attractive five-story office building with a brick plaza in front of it.

The BRA will continue to review Belkin's proposal to determine the feasibility, the appropriateness of the total development plan and the benefits to downtown and the city of Boston as a whole before the final building design is approved.

City Hall to be centerpiece for revitalized waterfront

BY RICH FAHEY

At the center of Mayor Thomas M. Menino's plan for a revitalized South Boston waterfront is a proposed new City Hall.

The mayor is calling his new project The Gateway to Boston at the Harborside, recalling the city's maritime history. The new building would be located on a parcel of city-owned land at Drydock Four, which is rented to the Bank of America Pavilion concert facility. The site is accessible via the Silver Line bus from South Station.

"This new building will bring together the city's past and its future, at a site that unites the history of our harbor with the

promise of tomorrow's Boston," said Menino.

Menino hopes that 1,200 city employees converging daily on the new site would continue to revive the waterfront business district, which has been buoyed by such projects as the Seaport Hotel and the World Trade Center. The area, once known for its warehouses and long-abandoned railroad yards, is also now home to the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, the city's federal courthouse and a series of law firms and popular restaurants.

"Until 10 years ago, the waterfront was the greatest untapped asset in this city," said Menino. "Today, it's booming and expanding our downtown. The bustle of the new City Hall will increase the activity of those new blocks, creating the vitality

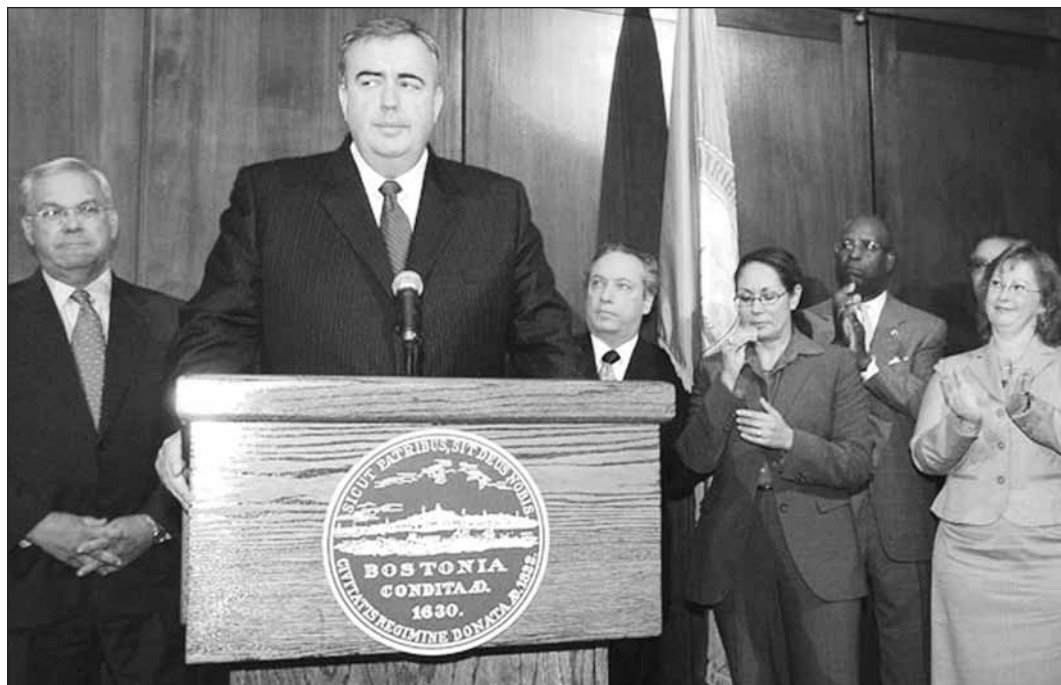
we envisioned not so long ago, when the waterfront was still just a string of parking lots. Our new City Hall will be a resounding declaration that this new building and the future it represents belong to all Bostonians."

The mayor told business leaders he would like to break ground within 18 months.

Economic Development Director Thomas Miller said siting City Hall on the waterfront is about more than geography.

"There's a lot happening along the waterfront," said Miller. "More and more restaurants and businesses are opening up, and as part of all of this development, the whole area's going to be raised up. It would be an ideal location for City Hall."

New faces in Boston



Police Commissioner Edward F. Davis III speaks at his swearing-in ceremony as Mayor Thomas M. Menino, left, and others look on.

Boston's new top cop building relationships

BY RICH FAHEY

The distance from Lowell to Boston is only 31 miles, but Edward F. Davis III has come a lot further.

That's why Boston's new police commissioner likes to get out of his car often while driving around the city and introduce himself to officers on the beat. "I'm trying to meet as many of them as I can face-to-face," he said. "I like to let them know I've walked in their shoes. I've had experiences similar to theirs."

Davis, 50, who served as chief of police in Lowell for 12 years, has been meeting with just about everyone since being appointed by Mayor Thomas M. Menino on Oct. 23 to replace the departing Kathleen O'Toole. He officially took over the 2,174-member department on Dec. 1.

As someone coming into the Boston Police Department from the outside, he has been making a special effort to establish relationships with members of the command staff, union officials, and members of the community, hoping to build the faith and trust necessary to help him do his job well.

Davis said working his way up through the ranks in an urban police department has helped him to understand what the life of a big-city cop is all about. His career in Lowell began in 1978 as a patrol officer; he also served as a detective sergeant and lieutenant, before being promoted to captain in 1992 and chief in 1994.

"Ed Davis is a man with stellar public-safety credentials and is highly respected by many in the law enforcement community. During his 12 years as head of the Lowell Police Department, Lowell has seen a dramatic decrease in crime," Menino said.

Davis said one of the biggest challenges ahead of him is gaining the trust of the community as a whole, so that those who are victims of violent crime or

those who witness such crimes will readily come forward.

"There are limits to what police can do to solve crimes," he said. "We need the help and trust of the public to prosecute crimes and make arrests ... In the final analysis, people have to stand up and take a position against violence. Sometimes it takes courage, but that's the only way our justice system works."

Davis said his Lowell experience prepared him well for the job in Boston, with some exceptions. "Urban policing both inside and outside the country is extremely similar. You have a higher volume of serious crime and that translates into a higher level of intensity when it comes to media coverage," he said.

Davis, who earned a bachelor's degree from New Hampshire College and a master's in criminal justice from Anna Maria College, said today's police officers are better trained and better equipped to do the job than when he began his career.

"I was a member of the first police academy class mandated by the state. I trained with men who were police officers at the time who had no training. We've changed procedures dramatically since then. The overall professionalism has increased dramatically."

Davis learned a lot from his late father, Edward, also a Lowell police officer. "He was my role model and very much a community police officer," Davis said. "He put keeping the peace ahead of arrest and prosecution. He taught me that everything isn't always black and white; it took me a long time to learn that."

Davis says he defines the concept of community policing as "not a program, but a philosophy. You have to try and solve the underlying problem when you see it, or you'll be going back again and again."

BPS makes super choice

BY PAUL HALLORAN

The next superintendent of Boston Public Schools is keenly aware that it is not exactly a restoration project he is taking on.

"The system has been improving and it is at a very good point as far as urban school systems go. We're not going to have to start from scratch," said Dr. Manuel J. Rivera, who takes over in Boston on July 1, 2007.

"There are many successful programs and practices," Rivera added. "Boston is much further ahead in some areas."

Now, for the rest of the story.

"At the same time, there are challenges that the Boston Public Schools are facing that need to be addressed," he said, quickly listing a few: "to eliminate the achievement gap; reduce the dropout rate; have highly effective high schools across the city; address the needs of English Language Learners; reduce the number of students referred to special ed."

His background indicates that Rivera is the right man for the job. A veteran educator with more than 30 years' experience, Rivera, 54, is in his second stint as superintendent of Rochester (NY) Public Schools. Last April, he was named National Superintendent of the Year by the American Association of School Administrators. He has drawn widespread praise for improving student achievement and an inclusive leadership style.

Rivera was chosen in late September by a search committee co-chaired by School Committee Chair Dr. Elizabeth Reilinger and Cleve Killingsworth, president and CEO of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. The School Committee unanimously approved the recommendation Oct. 4.

Rivera said the School Committee's willingness to wait until July for him to start was very important in his decision to seek and, ultimately, accept the job. "I was not ready to leave Rochester right away," he said. "But if they were willing to wait and I would have a chance to exit gracefully and return to a great city, I decided this was the right move for me."

Two meetings with Mayor Thomas M. Menino helped convince him. "I found the

mayor has an incredibly genuine commitment to public education," Rivera said. "What better situation to be in than to have a mayor like him."

After the original search process stalled when a Boston newspaper published a story — identifying finalists — that included

inaccurate information, according to several people involved with the process, the committee went back to work and focused on Rivera. Some questioned the lack of public input in the process, but Rivera said, though he would have been happy to participate, it isn't necessarily the best way to go about it.

"A process that yields 2-3 candidates can potentially be divisive. Factions can develop before someone

starts," he said.

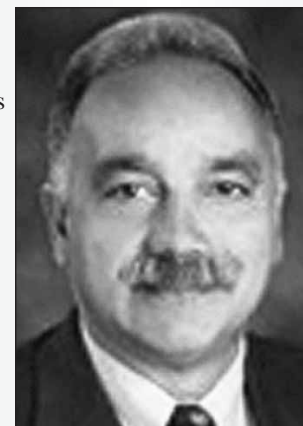
Rivera has had a few opportunities to meet with Boston students, parents, administrators and community members. "I have been so keenly impressed with the enthusiasm and excitement about Boston Public Schools and what has been accomplished and the belief in what can be done in the future," he said.

Dr. Thomas W. Payzant has been credited with bringing Boston Public Schools to a new level in his 11-year tenure, which culminated with Boston winning the Broad Prize this year as the top urban school system in the country. Michael G. Contompasis has stepped in to guide the system through this transition period and, by all accounts, it has not missed a beat. Rivera is aware that the bar has been set very high for the next leader.

"There are very high expectations and in a way that does create an even bigger challenge," he said. "What are we going to do different that's going to take student performance to another level? It's going to mean breaking new ground in some areas."

Rivera, a Brandeis graduate who earned a master's and doctorate at Harvard, is up to the task. "We need to do whatever it takes to make Boston the first district to eliminate the achievement gap. I want to see Boston be the place that everyone in the country wants to see how we have made a difference serving all children regardless of their race or economic status. The pressure and expectations are high."

And he can't wait to get started.



Dr. Manuel J. Rivera

Breathing a bit easier

Health commission gets grant to fight asthma

By KAITLIN RAHL

The Boston Public Health Commission received a three-year, \$2 million grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to reduce asthma triggers for residents living in public housing. The money will be used primarily to combat pest infestation and encourage safe and effective methods of pest control.

"This is really exciting from a public-health standpoint, a resident standpoint, and a Boston Housing Authority standpoint," said Margaret Reid, director of the asthma prevention and control program at the Boston Public Health Commission.

The long list of the commission's partners includes the Boston Housing Authority as well as Boston's two public-housing resident organizations, the Committee for Boston Public Housing and the West Broadway Tenants Task Force.

The centerpiece of the Safe Pest Control Initiative will be intensive work in 18 public-housing developments in Boston. The commission will hire and train 10 residents as integrated pest management health advocates whose role will be to educate their neighbors about safe and effective pest control and other asthma triggers.

The resident health advocates will use kits that include educational materials as well as supplies to ward off cockroaches and mice, such as trash-cover bolts, plastic food containers, and materials to cover holes in the walls.

"Cockroaches are a very serious risk factor for the development of asthma and a huge issue in any public housing," said Reid. "They are a quality-of-life issue for residents and a source of endless frustration for staff."

Although many of the biggest changes will be made in the 18 developments at the center of the initiative, its impact will be felt throughout Boston's public-housing developments. The commission plans to launch a public-awareness campaign about safe and effective pest control, as well as a pesticide buyback program. Twice a year, residents of any Boston housing development will be able to turn in their pesticide containers in exchange for supplies to help them with safer pest-control procedures.

The grant money will also support two additional BHA staff, both of whom will focus entirely on pest control. One new staff member will coordinate with the resident health advocates to ensure that the building maintenance and vendor components of the program are addressed. The other will ensure that safe and effective pest control procedures and policies are both widely implemented and sustainable beyond the initial project period.

// This is really exciting from a public-health standpoint, a resident standpoint, and a Boston Housing Authority standpoint. **//**

Margaret Reid
Boston Public Health Commission



Members of the Centurion Cycling Club head out for a ride.

Boston Police log miles for charities

By PARKER ASHWORTH

At the Boston Police Department, officers have combined their commitment to community and enthusiasm for sport and wellness by forming the Centurion Cycling Club — a group of more than 20 officers, their families, friends and law enforcement colleagues that participates in charity bike rides for a variety of causes.

For 12 years, officers in the department participated with colleagues from police departments from across the country in a 6-day, 500-mile ride from Boston to Washington, D.C. as part of National Law Enforcement Officer Week. Riders raised money to benefit the Massachusetts Law Enforcement Memorial Fund for the planning, design, and construction of the Massachusetts Law Memorial, which was unveiled at the State House in 2004.

Superintendent John Gallagher, a member of the club who participated in the Boston-D.C. ride six times, said, "The D.C. ride generated so much enthusiasm within the department. Once the memorial was built, we decided to redirect our efforts to support other projects."

Officers Stephen Green and Cecil

Jones, both instrumental in the work of the Massachusetts Law Enforcement Memorial Fund, launched the Centurion Cycling Club in 2005 to promote health, wellness, and camaraderie among members, by participating in rides that raise funds for various charities.

The club participated in a number of rides last year, and raised more than \$10,000.

Gallagher said the highlight of last year's cycling was the Face of America 2006 ride, where seven officers traveled to Gettysburg, Penn., to ride along with 35 disabled servicemen and women who returned from duty in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The two-day, 110-mile journey, which crossed historic countryside, was organized by World T.E.A.M. Sports, in association with Walter Reed Army Hospital and the National Naval Medical Center.

"This was a truly inspiring and rewarding experience," said Gallagher. "We found ourselves in awe of the determination and grit of the disabled soldiers and sailors impaired by serious injury, who completed the ride with us in modified cycles."

The club raised \$5,000 in support of the servicemen and women.

Members also rode in Reid's Ride, the Rodman Ride for Kids, and the New York City Police Department's Tour de Force, which commemorates those who died in the September 11 tragedy.

In Boston, members participated in the first Hub on Wheels Bike Festival, a ride sponsored by Mayor Thomas M. Menino that took cyclists through nearly every neighborhood of the city.

"The Centurion Club is a chance for officers to get together in a different kind of setting, with a family-type atmosphere where they can enjoy riding and its health benefits," said Gallagher.

The club originated in the police department, but, Gallagher pointed out, it is independent of the department and open to everyone. Friends and colleagues from the greater Boston area have joined club members on rides throughout the Northeast and new riders are always welcome to join. Any fundraising it does is not on behalf of the police department.

The club maintains a Web site at www.centurioncycling.com, which includes a list of upcoming rides. Contact the club by e-mail at centurioncyclingclub@aol.com.

SECOND CHANCES

Project gives homeless a place where they can be productive

BY KAITLIN RAHL

Successful partnerships between the city's public and nonprofit sectors make it possible to get a second chance in Boston.

Since 1999, Mayor Thomas M. Menino has worked with Clean Corners...Bright Hopes to hire 24 formerly homeless men and women to work for the Department of Public Works and the Parks Department.

The Clean Corners...Bright Hopes outdoor maintenance service is one of three small businesses run by Project Place, a nonprofit agency that serves homeless men and women in the Boston area. These businesses help those in need of obtaining on-the-job training while simultaneously stabilizing their lives.

"Mayor Menino supports the program and hires the graduates, so it is a two-tiered partnership," said Project Place Executive Director Suzanne Kenney. "He has also supported us by opening doors."

Employees of Clean Corners...Bright Hopes are responsible for trash and graffiti removal, seasonal planting, sweeping sidewalks, and event set-up in 12 neighborhoods and business districts throughout Boston. The program graduates

who eventually go on to work for the city do similar kinds of work on a broader scale.

During the six months that they are paid employees, Clean Corners...Bright Hopes participants work up to 40 hours a week and receive services that include on-the-job training and supervision, case management, weekly recovery and life-skills groups, job-search training and placement, and after-care support.

Project Place opened its doors in 1967 in order to provide a safe haven for runaways and drug-addicted teenagers. As Boston's needs changed in the 1980s, the agency shifted its focus from young people to adults who are motivated to make the transition to self-reliance and re-establish themselves in society with dignity.

The men and women who arrive at Project Place often face such obstacles as insufficient education, domestic violence, health problems, poverty, debt, addictions, a limited work history, and a lack of job skills.

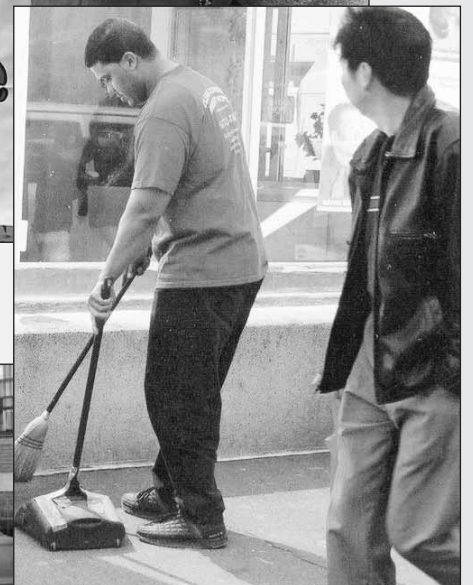
Project Place programming addresses these issues by coordinating an extensive system of services designed to help clients build the skills and confidence necessary to find employment and an affordable place to live.

Menino's commitment to Project Place and its graduates helps Boston's homeless men and women find the work they need to rebuild their lives.

"The mayor is a big proponent of granting second chances," said Kenney. "Hopefully his leadership in hiring our graduates will act as a catalyst to encourage others to do the same."



A worker in The Clean Corners...Bright Hopes program, run by Project Place, serves Mayor Menino a hot dog.



Above, a worker keeps the sidewalks clean. At left, a Project Place staffer transports equipment for the Home Plate stand.

The city is at your service

Inspectional Services ensures Boston stays up to code

BY PARKER ASHWORTH

The energy and excitement of urban life are unparalleled, but enjoying the city is possible only when residents and visitors are confident that the restaurants, buildings, and public places where they dine, work and live are healthy and safe.

In Boston, the Inspectional Services Department is the agency that maintains these standards, enforcing sanitation, building, housing, and health and safety codes.

Dan Prendergast, a longtime resident of the city and 11-year veteran of ISD, is one of 18 Health Inspectors in this department of 210. Prendergast, 37, has 21 years experience in food service, having worked in several establishments, most recently at the Hebrew Rehabilitation Home for the Aged in Roslindale as assistant director of food service, prior to joining ISD. In a typical day Prendergast will complete between five to six sanitary inspections of restaurants and other facilities, including swimming pools, health clubs, funeral homes, day care centers and summer camps. These inspections generally last from 45 minutes to an hour, and the inspectors are always accompanied by the designated person-in-charge responsible for the sanitation protocol of the businesses.

When he returns to the office in the afternoon and before he begins inspections the next morning, Prendergast and the other inspectors

spend several hours recording the results of their inspections into a database that feeds results of restaurant inspections onto the Web site www.mayorsfoodcourt.com. The Web site allows consumers in the region to view each restaurant's most recent inspection results. The results of this program have been recognizable.

"The Mayor's Food Court has dramatically helped the overall level of sanitation seen throughout Boston's eateries. Businesses are aware of www.mayorsfoodcourt.com, and how accessible it makes information about specific eateries to the public. It hasn't changed how I do my job, but this program has definitely improved the levels of compliance throughout the city."

Inspectors such as Prendergast also aid restaurateurs having difficulty meeting code requirements using an approach dubbed "compliance through assistance." In addition to providing owners with the necessary

information and paperwork to understand code, inspectors work with owners directly to help them determine what steps they need to take to comply with regulations.

According to Prendergast, one of the biggest challenges of the job, but also one of its most rewarding aspects is helping some of the smaller business with fewer resources available meet the more stringent federal food code regulations, that include both tougher physical standards and increased certification among employees.

"The ISD takes great pride in its contribution to the City of Boston. It's worth it, working with restaurants to achieve compliance so that the constituents of Boston have clean, safe establishments to go to throughout the city."

Prendergast, who lives with his wife and two children in West Roxbury, is a real asset to the department. "I really enjoy my job and enjoy working for the public," he said.

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Education is path to American dream

International Institute of Boston gives immigrants essential tools to succeed

By PARKER ASHWORTH

In March of 2004, after winning a lottery visa through the Moroccan government, Touriya Kebass left her home and administrative position in Casablanca at the age of 32, determined to fulfill her dream of coming to this country and making a life.

After six months living in Connecticut and studying English, she moved to Boston to work at a restaurant near Downtown Crossing, where she learned about the International Institute of Boston and the educational opportunities it offers. The International Institute, a fixture in the city since 1924, was founded to provide comprehensive services that foster the success of refugees and immigrants in the social, economic, and political life of the region, and continues its mission today, in part through educational programs.

The institute's Hospitality Training Program, one of its most popular, is a six-week program offered four times a year that prepares eligible students for a career in Boston's hospitality and service industry by orienting them to the industry and customer service, teaching English and basic computer skills, providing job shadowing and on-site hotel training, and assisting with job placement.

After contacting the institute and learning more about the program from a counselor, Kebass decided to enroll. In Morocco she had done secretarial and accounting



Many immigrants take advantage of the International Institute's educational offerings.

work, but was willing to try this new path and believed she could succeed.

"I'm usually an optimist," said Kebass. "I saw Spanish, Japanese, and Indians in the program and thought, 'Why not?'"

After graduation she was hired by the Doubletree Hotel in downtown Boston as a buffet server and was quickly promoted to the front desk.

As a Doubletree employee Kebass now participates in the Hotel Career Center, which provides workers on-the-job opportunities to build on skills and competencies first mastered in the Hotel Training Program.

A member of the Boston Workforce Development Coalition (BWDC), the International Institute developed the initiative using BWDC's Career Ladders publication to help design the Hotel Career Center, and launched it two years ago through funding from the Skillworks Initiative in collaboration with the Hilton Hotel Corporation.

The center offers a variety of skill-based classes, including English for Advancement, specialized computer workshops, and professional skills workshops, all of which are held during working hours and include pay.

Career counseling, which involves monthly half-hour sessions with a career coach from the institute, is another important element of the program.

Asimina Patzakas, a career coach and instructor, said, "The counselor's role is to help the client think about and articulate his or her educational or professional goals. We advise them and let them know about different programs that are available."

Counselors also work to instill confidence in their clients, a quality crucial for success in a second language, and act as a liaison between the client and human resources.

The highly-motivated Kebass has made the most of these opportunities. Excelling in her work at the front desk she has already been named Employee of the Month and has won Doubletree's customer-nominated Catch Me at My Best honor twice.

Residents get a good taste of city's neighborhoods

By CAITLIN BOWLER

With more than 300 restaurants, cafes, or diners to choose from, eating out in Boston can bring your taste buds to any number of places across the globe or satisfy them with tasty dishes created a little closer to home.

Either way, chefs and their establishments throughout the city's neighborhoods have much to offer, thanks in part to two programs - Dining on Main Streets and the Neighborhood Restaurant Initiative - whose complementary objectives of promotion and development have elevated the profile of many restaurants and helped others surmount the startup hurdle on their way to culinary success.

Dining on Main Streets is a promotional program intended to increase the profile of eateries throughout the city by encouraging residents to take a closer look at the dining options available in their own neighborhoods. Developed under the umbrella of the Boston Main Streets program, Dining on Main Streets uses the parent organization's online network to promote individual restaurants and cafes within any of the Boston Main Street districts.

The Neighborhood Restaurant Initiative works with entrepreneurs early in the development process, helping to bring new, quality sit-down restaurants to all of the city

neighborhoods' commercial districts.

"A new restaurant attracts customer traffic, encourages people to stop and sit down in their neighborhood business district, and helps build a comfort level for many people who may have a predisposition to go downtown or to the suburbs to do their dining and shopping," says Department of Neighborhood Development Director of Communications DeWayne Lehman.

The problem, Lehman explained, is that "restaurants are high-risk businesses. Some studies say that half of newly opened restaurants fail in the first year. Our initiative can help bridge the gap between traditional lending sources and the necessary funding needed to start up or expand a restaurant. More importantly, often our mere involvement with the restaurateur provides a level of assurance to lenders that encourages them to commit the level of resources needed."

Boston Main Streets Director Emily Haber said, "Boston Main Streets and NRI work closely together when the restaurant being assisted is in a Boston Main Street district. The restaurant being assisted will be highlighted on the Dining on Main Streets Web site as one of the rotating featured restaurants."

Working in tandem, these two programs



Mayor Thomas M. Menino dines at a sushi restaurant.

have helped restaurants struggling to get off the ground achieve both operational stability and increased visibility in the neighborhood and the city.

Ka' Carlos, located at 33 Hancock St. in Dorchester, is a member of the Uphams Corner Main Streets district and a great example of the success that such partnerships can achieve. Working at various times with

both the Neighborhood Restaurant Initiative and Boston Main Streets over the course of six years, Ka' Carlos received financing guidance and a Boston Main Streets Storefront grant and the restaurant, which serves traditional Cape Verdean and Portugese dishes, is now a lively fixture in the area.

"The restaurant is a neighborhood jewel," Haber said.

BRA draws plan for an artsy city

By CAITLIN BOWLER

Boston is known worldwide as an incubator for creativity, a city that hosts a thriving creative sector that attracts highly skilled workers trained in film, media, arts, music, business and technology, provides 30,000 jobs, and generates \$10.7 billion in annual revenues.

In an effort to help the creative sector continue to grow in the city, Mayor Thomas M. Menino joined with the Boston Redevelopment Authority and the arts community in May of 2005 to launch Create Boston, a program designed to provide a one-stop shop for companies to access city resources, including assistance with site location and permitting, low-interest loans and financing, workforce development opportunities, and business advocacy.

The program targets companies that produce and distribute goods and services rooted in the creative sector, and includes art galleries, graphic designers, musicians, publishers, artists, architects and writers.

The program has identified six disciplines that comprise the city's creative industries: media, design, film, music, performance art, and crafts. It is supported by a 20-member advisory committee with representation from all six of the disciplines, including academics and cultural nonprofits.

Many businesses in the creative sector have fewer than 20 employees, and those companies benefit not only from the resource clearinghouse, but also from the networks of contacts and other creative enterprises in the city. These connections alone can be an invaluable tool for building a business.

Menino has long realized the significant contributions the creative sector makes to the city's economy, its cultural fabric and its quality of life. Collectively, these individuals and enterprises can revitalize neighborhoods and ultimately make the city a better place to live and work. Neighborhoods such as the South End and Fort Point Channel have been revitalized by artist communities.



Create Boston was launched by Mayor Thomas M. Menino and the BRA to offer the creative community easier access to city resources.



Mass General Hospital's Yawkey Center for Outpatient Care features a green roof.

BOSTON ROOFTOPS ARE GOING GREEN

By CAITLIN BOWLER

Being green isn't easy. But it is worth it. In another sign of the city's commitment to innovation in sustainable design, Boston hosted the fourth annual Greening Rooftops for Sustainable Communities Conference Awards and Trade Show, a conference sponsored by Green Roofs for Healthy Cities that brought together close to 1,000 professionals to discuss innovative technologies in green roof design that will reduce environmental impacts.

Jim Hunt, City of Boston chief of environment and energy, and keynote speaker at the conference, was enthusiastic about the conference's ability to spread the word about the benefits of green roofs and raise the technology's profile among both building professionals and the greater public.

During the course of two busy days, participants had the opportunity to listen to more than 50 speakers addressing such topics as living walls and vertical gardens; selecting plants for peak performance and functionality; and the optimization of energy performance.

Green roofs employ plant life and gardens; they are known for their many environmental benefits and attractiveness and are sprouting up all over the city, at both city-owned and private buildings.

The city started a green roof at the Josiah Quincy School in Chinatown and has several more planned for other city-owned projects. Private buildings in the city with green roofs include the West Podium Park at the World Trade Center, Shaw's Supermarket at the Prudential Center, the Yawkey Center at Mass General Hospital, and the Manulife Financial building in the Seaport District.

Green roofs can have beneficial effects when it comes to storm water, air quality and urban heat island effects.

This recent support of green roofs is part of a larger strategy by the city to make Boston a leader in green building, a movement to promote sustainability by making environmentally friendly

choices in building new structures.

In June 2003, the mayor assembled a Green Building Task Force consisting of public and private professionals experienced in every field related to the financing, design, construction, management, and maintenance of buildings. The group was charged with helping the city navigate the waters of environmental and high performance building, with the goal of laying the groundwork for policy initiatives that would lead to a greener Boston. The Green Building Task Force Report solidified the city's commitment to sustainable design by establishing the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver rating as the goal for all city-owned building projects, and pushing for LEED certification for all large projects built in Boston.

In December, the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) board voted to add LEED rating as a requirement of Article 80, the section of the city's zoning code that requires the BRA to review the design of proposed developments and their effect on the surrounding area and the city as a whole.

The LEED Green Building Rating System is a national green building standard developed by the U.S. Green Building Council. The city has since awarded a number of Green Building feasibility study grants that have allowed project managers to incorporate green features into their buildings at an early stage in the planning and design process. The most recent recipients of the \$20,000 grants are Mattapan Community Development Corporation, Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology, and North Star Management.

The grant has allowed Mattapan CDC to explore solar hot water and solar photovoltaic technology for the 63-unit, mixed income home ownership project they are developing in Neponset Fields.

The Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology used the grant to investigate green technology, including renewable energy systems, as part of a major historic renovation of the original building, which dates to 1908.

PARKING IS HER LOT



Lifelong Boston resident Debbie Marra loves her job as a Parking Meter Supervisor.

PHOTO: REBA SALDANHA

Supervisor says there's more to the job than writing tickets

BY CAITLIN BOWLER

Debbie Marra, a lifelong resident of Hyde Park and 15-year veteran of the Boston Transportation Department, loves Boston and the role her job allows her to play in the city's life. Marra is a Parking Meter Supervisor — a job which, as she sees it, is about much more than simply parking.

Dispersed daily throughout all of the city's neighborhoods, uniformed officers such as Marra have a visibility and availability that make them ideal sources for information and help.

"It's a good thing we're out here," says Marra. "We help people all the time, finding cars and finding lost children. We've even helped people find lost dogs."

And in districts that attract high numbers of tourists, this visibility makes them even more valuable to the city.

"We're the ambassadors," says Marra. "We're in

uniform, so tourists approach us for information all the time. And that's the fun part about the job. We're meeting people from all over the world, right here in Boston."

"And then, of course," says Marra, "there's the really important stuff, like making sure fire hydrants aren't blocked. And keeping crosswalks clear to maintain accessibility."

The people she meets make the days interesting, but the city itself and its various neighborhoods can be a source of pleasure, even in the most inclement of weather.

"Being outside, makes me appreciate the city. It's even fun sometimes, being in the city during a storm when the snow is coming down and it seems like I'm the only one out there. It can be quiet and beautiful."

After 15 years with the Boston Transportation

Department, Marra says the department is like a family. When she was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2001, with the constant support of her colleagues, she continued working while undergoing treatment.

"The department really rallied behind me. I wouldn't have been able to get through it without my job, my coworkers, and my family. Work especially kept me focused," she said.

Now in remission, Marra donates some of her spare time to breast cancer research and participates annually in the Walk for Strides event, held each October. With her parents close by, two cats, and a fiancé, her life outside work remains busy. But she plans to keep working for the Transportation Department for the long haul.

"I'm committed to the city," she said. "I'm committed to any job that I do. Plus, you're always helping someone."