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The Hess Site Re-Use Planning Project

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East Boston, Massachusetts



Project in Community Economic Development
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I) Abstract

The Hess Site Re-Use Planning Project was a community organizing and planning project the purpose of which was to maximize community control in the redevelopment of a former oil tank complex in East Boston, Massachusetts. The Project's sponsors sought to ensure that future economic activity on this currently abandoned site serves the community rather than harms it. The Project was part of an effort to shift the balance of power, with respect to land planning and use, from industrial and government actors to the people of East Boston. Project activities included an outreach campaign, background research, community meetings, and the creation of a Community Land Use Plan, which calls for development of the site that would serve the interests of the East Boston community.

The Project's goals were to: maximize community participation and control of redevelopment planning for the Hess Site; affect a power shift from the owners of capital to the community with respect to the Hess Site; and realize redevelopment and re-use of the Hess Site that serves the East Boston community. A significant degree of success in meeting these goals is demonstrated in this Report.

II) Summary

The Hess Site Re-Use Planning Project (the Project) was a community organizing and planning project the purpose of which was to maximize community control in the redevelopment of a former oil tank complex. The Project's sponsors sought to ensure that future economic activity on this currently abandoned site serves the community rather than harms it. The eight-acre site, formerly operated and still owned by the Amerada Hess Oil Corporation, is located between Condor Street and the Chelsea River (commonly referred to as the Chelsea Creek) in East Boston, Massachusetts.

The Project was a struggle for power – the power of a community to control large-scale economic development that, if devoid of such community control, would likely be at least partially harmful to the neighborhood's residents. The neighborhood's history gives rise to the need for such control and, more recently, demonstrates the power to achieve it.

The Project's sponsors were *Neighborhood of Affordable Housing* (NOAH), *East Boston – Chelsea Creek Action Group* (EB-CCAG), *CLF Ventures* (CLFV; affiliated with the Conservation Law Foundation), and *Urban Ecology Institute* (UEI). The Project was conducted from November 2000 to October 2001. The Hess Corporation was the primary funder of the Project. Additional funding was allocated from NOAH's operating budget. Matt Henzy, the author of this report, is the Senior Organizer in NOAH's Community Building and Environment Department.

East Boston is a City of Boston neighborhood with a population of 38, 413 persons (2000 US census). The neighborhood has an increasingly diverse population and its household incomes are lower than the city and regional averages. The East Boston economy is dominated by heavy industry and transportation including oil and gas shipping terminals, shipbuilding and marine maintenance, train and auto tunnels, and Logan International Airport.

From its origins, economic development in East Boston was planned and implemented to serve a wide region, not only greater Boston but also the entire Northeast United States. Private and public economic development in East Boston, related primarily to industry and transportation, has traditionally been controlled and implemented by corporate and government actors with minimal or no concern for community interests or participation.

Since 1997, Neighborhood of Affordable Housing and the East Boston Chelsea Creek Action Group (EB-CCAG) have worked together to try to create a voice for the community with respect to the Chelsea Creek area of East Boston. Together they seek to build public awareness, promote public access, and transform the Chelsea Creek and its East Boston shore into a recreational, educational, and economic resource for the community.

One of the industrial sites that NOAH and EB-CCAG have sought to transform in such a way is the Hess Site. The Hess Site is a former oil terminal complex that is currently vacant and contaminated with petroleum products and lead. The community created a track record of activism related to the site when public pressure resulted in removal of the oil storage tanks in 1998.

Without the Hess Site Re-Use Planning Project, redevelopment planning and implementation for the site would have occurred without consideration of the interests of the East Boston community and without resident participation. The Project, by maximizing community participation and control of the redevelopment planning for the site, sought to solve the problem.

The Project's goals were to: maximize community participation and control of redevelopment planning for the Hess Site; affect a power shift from the owners of capital to the community with respect to the Hess Site; and realize redevelopment and re-use of the Hess Site that serves the East Boston community. A significant degree of success in meeting these goals is demonstrated in this Report.

The Project activities included: a door to door outreach campaign; interviews with residents and other stakeholders; production of a regulatory analysis, an environmental analysis, and a market analysis; a series of three public meetings; and the creation, by the project participants, of a land use plan for the Hess Site. The Community Land Use Plan calls for an open space component, a cultural/historical component, and a small business component.

Today, EB-CCAG and other Project sponsors are working to publicize the Project and the resulting Community Land Use Plan. Additionally, they have teamed up with a major conservation organization with the hope of acquiring the site from the Hess Corporation and developing the Plan into reality.

The Hess Site Re-Use Planning Project established the East Boston community as an agent of the site's future, not just a passive recipient. Through community controlled land use planning processes like the Hess Site Re-Use Planning Project, people can take a greater part in shaping the future of land and resources in their own communities.

III) Background

A) Community Profile

East Boston is a neighborhood of the City of Boston, across Boston Harbor from and north of downtown Boston. It is bordered on the north by the Chelsea River, on the west and south by Boston Harbor, and the east by Winthrop and Revere. Although the community has 7 miles of



Figure 3: Boston and environs road map

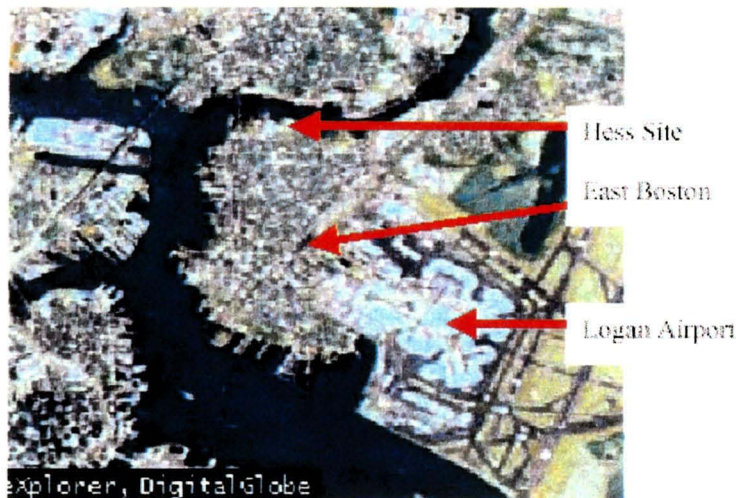


Figure 4: Aerial photo of East Boston

waterfront area, most of the water's edge is inaccessible.

Logan International Airport consumes the bulk of the land of the neighborhood.

East Boston is an increasingly diverse community with a population of 38,413 persons (2000 US census). Over the past

two decades, East Boston has experienced a dramatic demographic shift from a mostly Italian-American population to one increasingly comprised of Latino and other immigrants. The percentage of minorities (as defined by the US Census Bureau) rose from 4% in 1980 to

24% in 1990 to 50% in 2000. The Latino

population rose from 3% of the total in 1980 to 18% in 1990 to 39% in 2000. In 2000, for the first time there were slightly more "minorities" than there were whites in East Boston.

Figure 5: East Boston population table, by race/ethnicity. Source: US Census 2000

	1980		1990		2000	
White	30,839	96%	24,977	76%	19,078	50%
Black/African American	121	0%	702	2%	1,177	3%
Hispanic	942	3%	5,805	18%	14,990	39%
Asian/Pacific Islander	108	0%	1,260	4%	1,553	4%
Native American	46	0%	84	0%	71	0%
Other Single Race	122	0%	113	0%	440	1%
Multi-Racial	-	-	-	-	1,104	3%
Total	32178	100%	32,941	100%	38,413	100%
White	30839	96%	24,977	76%	19,078	50%
Minorities	1339	4%	7,964	24%	19,335	50%

Income in this working class neighborhood lags behind the City and regional figures. Median household income in 1989 (1990 US Census; 2000 neighborhood income data is not yet available) was \$22,925, or 79% of the Boston median of \$29,179. Between 1980 and 1990, East Boston's poverty rate rose from 15.1% to 16.4%, while, during the same time frame, the City's rate fell from 16.7% to 15.0% (1990 US Census).

B) Historical Context

The East Boston story is a classic example of large-scale macro economic development. From its origins, economic development here was planned and implemented to serve a wide region, not only greater Boston but also the entire Northeast United States (see Appendix 1: Historical Timeline). Private and public economic development in East Boston, related primarily to industry and transportation, has traditionally been controlled and implemented by corporate and government actors with minimal or no concern for community interests or participation. Government, in close collaboration with industry, zoned the area according to the needs of the developers and the regional economy. Today much of the East Boston waterfront, including most of the Chelsea River, is zoned a "Designated Port Area" which limits public access, instead providing access solely for industrial water-dependent uses. The population, primarily working class families drawn to the employment opportunities that the development created, has enjoyed those employment opportunities but has watched and suffered as development directly harmed their quality of life and health or literally resulted in the destruction of their community.

East Boston ... (was annexed) to Boston in 1636, making it one of the oldest neighborhoods of the City. Once comprised of five separate islands, the area supplied firewood and grazing lands throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries...

William Hyslop Sumner (who owned the main island at the time) incorporated the East Boston Company in 1833... The Company filled in the marshland (joining the islands)... shares were taken, lands were claimed, streets mapped out, and building sites sold...

...numerous manufacturing concerns eventually located along the ample waterfront... In 1860, East Boston had a population of 16,000 and contained twenty-four manufactories and mills, seventy-six warehouses, and one hundred and nine mechanic shops ...

The Atlantic Works on Border Street was the largest manufacturing concern in East Boston for over a century, specializing in marine work. Steel yachts, tugs, and various steam sailing crafts were built and launched here.

(Sammarco, 1997, pp. 7-8, 121)

In addition the industrial development described above, East Boston has experienced the development of and co-exists with massive transportation infrastructure. This includes shipbuilding, marine maintenance, and port operations; railroads; train and auto tunnels under Boston Harbor; and finally, Logan Airport.

East Boston's economic development could be seen as the American Dream – captains of industry and government working together to plan and create large-scale production, employing thousands of workers including recent immigrants looking to start a new life in America, while driving industrial output and the infrastructure necessary to accommodate it to unprecedented levels. But who benefited from such development? Did the beneficiaries include the residents of the very places where development occurred?

C) The Environment and Public Health

East Boston is home to 334 contaminated land sites, by far the highest of any of the neighborhoods (Indicators, p. 74). Most of these sites list oil as the chief contaminant. The airport's land takings have left East Boston has a dearth of open/green space - only 3.5 acres/1000 residents, the second lowest ratio in the City of Boston (Chacker, 2000).

The Chelsea River is the most polluted tributary to the Boston Harbor. Much of the land along the river houses oil tank farms, hazardous waste sites, abandoned lots, parking lots, and negligent businesses. Much of the land is abandoned, underutilized or contaminated; many call it an industrial waste-dump (Chacker, 2000).

Public health data for East Boston demonstrate high rates of cancer, heart and lung disease, infant mortality, asthma, and other health complications. No evidence is offered here of a causal link between the industrial development described above, its environmental impacts, and the health status of the community. Studies of such causality are currently under consideration. Individually, many residents have indicated on NOAA-sponsored environmental surveys that they believe that such a causality exists, and many have spoken publicly about their belief that friends have suffered disease and death due to the East Boston environment.

D) Resistance and Activism

Wood Island Park was beloved and well-used by East Bostonians, and its loss in 1966 to the expanding Logan Airport was, and still is, keenly felt by those residents who knew it.

“A lot of us felt very bad about the way Wood Island Park was taken over. They closed off the entrance. It was done during the middle of the night”... “We were heartbroken when the Port Authority and the state took Wood Island Park”... “The saddest day of all was when we looked out to Wood Island Park... they had cut down every tree...”

(Narrative and quotes from “East Boston Memories”)

During the 20th century residents of industrialized areas increasingly recognized that macro economic development may have harmful effects on their environment and on their health. “Urban neighborhoods feel that patterns of technological development neglect to consider local needs, and as a result (development activities) give rise to dramatic expression of community discontent. Thus, we see diverse groups form coalitions around various issues in an effort to force authorities (or private companies) to be more responsive to their needs” (Nelkin, page 2).

For East Bostonians, there is no better example of the above than that of Logan Airport. The history of the community’s struggle to resist the Massachusetts Port Authority (Logan’s owner/operator) land takings and the environmental impacts from Airport operations is fascinating and well documented (but not a focus of this Report). Airport related community organizing set the example for an alternative economic development in East Boston – one in which the community demands and implements a voice in economic development planning and decision-making, in effect, shifting the balance of power from large, outside economic actors to themselves.

The work of NOAH and the East Boston Chelsea Creek Action Group is squarely in the emerging tradition of community control with respect to land use and development in East Boston.

E) NOAH and EB-CCAG

NOAH is a locally governed community development corporation serving East Boston since 1987¹. In 1997, NOAH's Community Building and Environment Department, under the leadership of Department Director Stacey Chacker, began organizing the East Boston Chelsea Creek Action Group (EB-CCAG). EB-CCAG is a group of East Boston residents, businesspeople and others concerned with the Chelsea Creek and its East Boston shore. EB-CCAG's goal is to build public awareness, promote public access, and transform the Chelsea Creek and its East Boston shore into a recreational, educational, and economic resource for the community (Chacker, 2000).

EB-CCAG meets monthly on the third Wednesday of the month. The whole group or ad-hoc sub-committees meet as needed in between regular meetings. The Executive Committee of EB-CCAG is comprised of residents Lucy del Muto, Anna Maria Gomez, Vinny Ieni, and Nancei Radicchi. The Urban Ecology Institute² (UEI), an environmental law organization, serves as a technical advisor and partner to EB-CCAG and NOAH.

To date, EB-CCAG's major focus has been to see that the Hess Site and the "Condor Street Urban Wild" are properly cleaned-up and that their re-uses are amenable with community desires. Together the sites comprise over 12 acres of almost adjacent waterfront property and are contaminated and unusable for either recreational or economic purposes. In their current condition, both of these sites represent a risk to the environment and to human health and safety (Chacker, 2000). EB-CCAG is also working to promote the clean-up of other smaller sites along the river; to monitor the response to and the clean-up of a major oil spill that occurred in the river in

¹ NOAH has been serving East Boston, MA since July, 1987. We are an organization of local residents working to improve the quality of life for our community, while maintaining a focused commitment to rehabilitate, stabilize, and preserve East Boston's housing for homeowners and renters, for long time residents as well as newer arrivals (NOAH web site).

² The mission of the Urban Ecology Institute (formerly the Watershed Institute) is to promote the health of urban ecosystems through research, education, and advocacy. The Institute studies the new field of urban ecology to help urban residents understand the natural resources in their communities and take action to protect them (UEI web site).

June 2000; and to improve the practices of the oil companies and other businesses along the river.

F) The Hess Site

The site is an 8.34 acre peninsula of land located 146-172 Condor Street in East Boston. The site is bordered by the Chelsea River to the north, by the Chelsea River and by wetlands to the east, by Condor Street to the south, and by an adjacent industrial property and the Chelsea River to the west. The property includes a small vacant lot across Condor Street to the south. The property is subject to a complex set of zoning and regulatory designations including Maritime Economy Reserve District (City), Chapter 21E (state environmental law), Chapter 91 (state waterfront law) and Designated Port Area (state). See Appendix 5: Regulatory Analysis.



Figure 6: Aerial photo of Hess Site

Since the 1930's the property has served as a bulk oil storage facility of varying capacities. The above ground storage tanks (AST's) and associated infrastructure were used primarily in the storage of fuel oil and gasoline. In 1979 all materials in ten existing tanks were removed. The tanks themselves were removed in 1998. Today the site is a large urban wasteland. Hess has no plans to use

the property for its business operations. The property has been on the market for sale since the summer of 2000.

The site is contaminated with petroleum products and lead. Hess is currently conducting a Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MADEP) mandated environmental remediation (clean up) to remove the most contaminated soils. NOAH and EB-CCAG, with the help

of an environmental consultant, are monitoring the remediation project. See Appendix 6: Environmental Analysis.

The Hess tanks were an eyesore, a source of contamination for the river and had been empty for 19 years. Hess' decision to remove them was in direct response to community demands for a cleaner, more attractive environment.



Figure 7: Site photo from the west

IV) The Proposed Project

A) Project Origin

In addition to monitoring the clean-up of the site, EB-CCAG and NOAH, beginning with the February 2000 EB-CCAG meeting, began to discuss the future of the site. Discussion centered on what people in the neighborhood wanted to see on the site. With the addition of



Figure 8: Site photo from the Chelsea Creek

CLF Ventures¹ to the situation, the opportunity to carry out a full planning project for the site arose. At the time, CLF Ventures (CLFV) was introducing a program called “Brownfields to Greenfields”, in which CLFV would conduct research and planning on specific environmentally contaminated land, on a fee for service basis, with the fee being paid by the landowner. CLFV was marketing the program as beneficial to the property owner in that the eventual land use plan created under a “Brownfields to Greenfields” process would be responsive to regulatory, environmental, market, and community factors; and that owners and developers that ignore research and planning are far more vulnerable to neighborhood and political opposition and regulatory mistakes.

¹ CLF Ventures is a Conservation Law Foundation affiliate that develops business and financial strategies to protect the environment and conserve natural resources. The Conservation Law Foundation works to solve the environmental problems that threaten the people, natural resources and communities of New England (Conservation Law Foundation web site).

In the Fall of 2000, Jim Hamilton and Scott Darling for CLFV, Matt Henzy and Stacey Chacker for NOAH, the Executive Committee of EB-CCAG (Nancei Radicchi, Lucy del Muto, Vinny Ieni, and Anna Maria Gomez), and Aaron Toffler for UEI, began to discuss a partnership for the purpose of conducting the Project. CLFV secured a contract with the Hess Corporation for the project, with NOAH and UEI as sub-contractors.

The organizations coalesced into a collaborative for the purpose of carrying out the Project, and work began in earnest in November 2000. A Memorandum of Understanding was created and agreed to by all the parties (see Appendix 2: MOU). The MOU spelled out the workplan and delineated roles and responsibilities. Two other organizations and one individual were recruited by the collaborative to carry out certain aspects of the project on a fee for service basis. The following table indicates the role of each party for implementation of the Project.

Figure 9: Project Roles Table

NOAH/EB-CCAG*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach and publicity in the community • Design, arrangement, and implementation of public meeting series
CLFV*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall project management • Recruitment and hiring of outside services • Production of project report to the Hess Corp • Primary communicator with Hess Corp
Urban Ecology Institute*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory analysis
Mt. Auburn Associates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market analysis
Roberts Consulting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental analysis
Hubert Murray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning facilitator in public meetings
<i>*Project Collaborative partners</i>	

B) Problem Statement

The history and the current physical condition of the Hess Site represent the physical results of macro economic development as described in the historical context section above. The site served the Northeast by storing vast quantities of oil and gasoline for many years. Most East Boston residents, particularly low to moderate income households and immigrants, were excluded from planning and implementing the use of the site (except as laborers). Today, the land is abandoned, underutilized and contaminated. It does not serve the surrounding neighborhood nor does it serve

the City or the region. The site lacks public access to the waterfront and contributes to the poor air, ground, and water quality in East Boston.

The cause of this problem is the historical domination of economic development planning and practice by industry and government actors and the corresponding exclusion of most residents from economic development planning and practice. In short, the cause is the historical imbalance of power favoring the owners of capital over the East Boston community.

Without the intervention of the Project, redevelopment planning and implementation for the site would have occurred without consideration of the interests of the East Boston community and without resident participation. The site would continue to be a prime example of industrial wasteland.

The Project, by maximizing community participation and control of the redevelopment planning for the site, sought to solve the problem.

C) Goals

The immediate goal of the Project was to maximize community participation and control of redevelopment planning for the Hess Site. A mid-term goal was to affect a power shift from the owners of capital to the community with respect to the Hess Site. The long-term goal of the project is the realization of redevelopment and re-use of the Hess Site that serves the East Boston community.

D) Objectives

The Project's objectives at initiation were:

- Implementation of an outreach campaign, with at least 100 personal interviews conducted, at least 5 volunteer interviewers, thousands of fliers distributed, four newspaper advertisements purchased, hundreds of phone calls made.
- Implementation of a series of three public meetings, with a total attendance of at least 150 and a total number of participants of 100.
- Consistent press coverage of the project.

- Creation of a Community Land Use Plan for the site by Summer 2001.
- Completion of the following reports: environmental analysis, regulatory analysis, market analysis.
- Completion and submission of CLFV's Report to the Hess Corporation.
- Widespread dissemination of the Community Land Use Plan and/or CLFV's Report to the Hess Corporation to local residents and businesses, community-based organizations, and public officials.
- No sale of the site to a developer that refuses to recognize the Community Land Use Plan.
- Identification of parties that would develop the property appropriately, consistent with the Community Land Use Plan, and with community participation.

VI) Results

A) Chronology and Timeline

Completed Activity

- Creation and management of contact list: December 2000 through end of Project.
- Outreach and Publicity: December 2000 through end of Project.
- Completion of regulatory analysis, environmental analysis, and market analysis: April 2001.
- Public Meeting Series: April 18, May 5, May 23, 2001.
- Completion of Community Land Use Plan: May 2001.
- Completion of CLFV's Report to the Hess Corporation: August 2001.
- Dissemination of Community Land Use Plan and CLFV's Report to the Hess Corporation: July through October 2001.
- Initiation of dialogue with TPL regarding acquisition and development of the site: September 2001.
- Request for "endorsements" of Community Land Use Plan by community based organizations and public officials: October 2001.

Projected Future Activity

- Obtain "endorsements" of Community Land Use Plan from community based organizations and public officials.
- Continuation of dialogue with Trust for Public Land (see explanation below) regarding acquisition and development of the site.
- Dialogue with any prospective buyer of the site. Such dialogue may be in a positive form (for buyer/developers that plan to adhere to the Community Land Use Plan) or in a negative form (for buyer/developers that plan to ignore the Community Land Use Plan).
- Review of any proposed development plan, with a focus on measuring such plan with the Community Land Use Plan.

Possible Future Activity

- Enter into a development partnership with Trust for Public Land; acquire and develop the site consistent with the Community Land Use Plan.

Figure 10: Activities Timeline

		2000		2001												2002	
		N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D		
Completed Activities																	
Compile and manage master list	NOAH																
Outreach Campaign	NOAH, CCAG, CLFV																
Regulatory analysis	Watershed						x										
Environmental analysis	Roberts						x										
Market analysis	Mt. Auburn						x										
Community workshops held	Team						x	xx									
Community Land Use Plan done	Team							x									
Community Land Use Plan distributed, endorsement sought	NOAH, CCAG																
Final Report to Hess	CLFV, Team									x	x						
Response from Hess	Hess										x						
Explore development partnership w/ TPL	NOAH, CCAG																

Projected Activities		2000		2001												2002	
		N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D		
Community Land Use Plan distribution and endorsements	NOAH, CCAG																
Continue TPL partnership discussion	NOAH, CCAG																
Acquisition and development	TPL, NOAH																?
Community Participation in development by other party	CCAG, NOAH																

B) Activities Narrative

1) Contact Management

In early December, Henzy compiled a project outreach list from a variety of sources. This list represented the starting point for community outreach efforts related to the project. The list included EB-CCAG contacts, community organizations, businesses (including abutters), residents (including abutters), advocacy organizations, and government. The initial list contained 174 household contacts and 36 organization contacts for a total of 210, and was added to as outreach workers went door to door in the neighborhood. The list, compiled in the Access database program, proved to be an invaluable resource throughout the project. See Appendix 17: Master List.

2) Outreach and Publicity

On December 8, 2000, Henzy mailed out the first piece of publicity announcing the project. A leaflet was prepared which explained the project and asked people to begin thinking about the site. See Appendix 4: Fliers. The flier was mailed to the outreach list and was placed as paid advertisements in two neighborhood newspapers. Henzy also wrote a "Hess Site Fact Sheet", with basic information about the site and about the Project. The Fact Sheet was not widely distributed, but was available for persons that asked for more information about the site and/or about the project. See Appendix 3: Fact Sheet. Henzy created new fliers in advance of each of the three public meetings (Appendix 4). They were used as outreach tools and placed as paid

advertisements in the neighborhood newspapers in advance of each meeting. Articles about the Project were placed in NOAH's newsletter and in Chelsea Creek Currents, the newsletter for the Chelsea Creek Action Group.

In January 2001, Henzy and a group of outreach workers⁴ began an intensive outreach campaign. The centerpiece of the outreach was direct, personal contact with persons in the target area. Outreach workers walked the streets of Eagle Hill, knocking on doors, approaching people on the sidewalk, and visiting people in their homes and businesses. NOAH and EB-CCAG recognized this component of the Project as the most important. Without reaching people in the target area directly and getting them to participate, the project would be a failure. In each instance of personal contact, the outreach worker explained who they were, what the purpose of the visit was, and asked the person what they thought about the future of the Hess Site. The respondent was asked if they would attend informational and planning meetings about the site, and if so what times were convenient for them. They were also asked for their contact information so that NOAH could keep them informed about the project. All the information was recorded and was transferred by Henzy to the "masterlist". In all, outreach workers interviewed persons in the target area on 24 different days from January 2 to May 10. These 24 days included afternoons, evenings, and two long sessions on Saturdays. Appendix 17 (Master List) includes the entire outreach list and all interview responses.

3) The Project Team and Affiliates

The Project Collaborative (NOAH, EB-CCAG, CLFV, UEI) met and communicated constantly throughout the life of the Project. The "Team" meetings generally involved a review of workplans and timelines, as well as the management of relationships between the parties. There was occasional tension within the Team, as the parties tried to hold each other accountable (see evaluation).

⁴ The outreach team consisted of Henzy, David Holtzman (a part-time temporary NOAH employee hired on March 28, 2001 specifically to help with the project), David Norman (a NOAH employee at the time who assisted on one day of outreach), Vinny Ieni, Maddy McComiskey, and Anna-Maria Gomez of EB-CCAG, Scott Darling of CLF Ventures, and several teen leaders from the East Boston Community Center.

Hess did not send a representative to or participate in Team meetings. CLFV relayed communications back and forth between the Team members and Hess, sometimes causing delays (see evaluation).

The Team needed outside help to provide certain services for the Project. Nancy Roberts of Roberts Consulting provided the environmental analysis of the site (appendix 6) and gave a presentation on this topic at Meeting 1. Peter Kwass of Mount Auburn Associates conducted a market analysis of the site (appendix 7) and also presented his findings at Meeting 1. Hubert Murray, a private design and facilitation consultant, was hired to be the facilitator at Meeting 2.

4) Background Reports

The Project Collaborative and its affiliates produced three informational reports before the meeting series began. These reports were valuable tools for the Project Team and for Project participants to educate themselves about the Hess Site.

Aaron Toffler, an environmental lawyer with the Urban Ecology Institute, wrote the regulatory analysis. Toffler found that the site is subject to a complex set of waterfront regulations including: City of Boston Zoning Code (the Site is in a Maritime Economy Reserve Subdistrict); Massachusetts Law Chapter 91 (a law regulating tidal shore areas); Designated Port Area (as established by the State of Massachusetts); and Massachusetts Law Chapter 21E (clean-up of environmental contamination). See Appendix 5.

Nancy Roberts of Roberts Environmental Consulting wrote the environmental analysis. Roberts drew on the technical reporting provided by Hess for its MADEP mandated clean-up operations, on independent sources, and on her own analysis of these reports. Roberts reported that the ground and the groundwater are contaminated with fuel oil residuals, lead, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH). The likely source of these contaminants was the operation of the above ground storage tanks on the site, transfer of fuel (from ships to tanks and from tanks to trucks), and from contaminated fill that was used on the site. Roberts concluded that the site presents a definite risk of human exposure, both for environmental workers on the site and for the users of any

eventual end use. The level of environmental remediation required varies according the end use. See appendix 6.

Peter Kwass of Mount Auburn Associates conducted a market analysis. The purpose of this analysis was to evaluate likely private sector interest in the site, without regard to government involvement or community participation. The market analysis would serve as a “reality check” for community planners by describing how the market would likely respond to community plans or other development scenarios. Kwass looked at marine related uses, industrial uses, commercial uses, and residential uses. Kwass concluded that private sector actors would most likely be interested in a marine cargo operation or in low to moderate income residential development. See appendix 7.

5) Press

The Project was almost devoid of a press component. The Hess Corporation stalled on approving press releases and ultimately never approved any press release at all. The Project Team considered implementing a press strategy without the approval of the Hess Corporation but decided against it. The only presence in the press that the Project had was paid notices and advertisements in the local newspapers.

6) The Public Meeting Series

The centerpiece of the Hess Site Re-Use Planning Project was the public meeting series. The three meetings were held at East Boston High School on White Street. This location is just a few blocks from the Hess Site itself and was very convenient for local residents. The High School was recently renovated and is a clean, comfortable venue for public forums. NOAH provided food and refreshments, childcare, and Spanish translation for all the meetings. CLFV provided the Powerpoint machine and produced copies of all the literature that was provided at the meetings. Total attendance including repeaters was 128. Total number of participants was 60. Comparing these two numbers means there was a lot of continuity. The participant list is included in appendix 17 (Master List), and the agenda of each meeting is provided in appendix 8.

Meeting 1 (April 18) was an opportunity for all participants to learn more information about the site. Site maps were presented, the history of the site was discussed, and the environmental, regulatory, and market analyses were presented.

Meeting 2 (May 5) had the highest degree of public participation. There was an open brainstorming session in which all ideas were recorded on flip pads. There was also a small group exercise in which three groups came up with desired land uses and then reported them back to the whole. It was from this content that the Community Land Use Plan was created.

Meeting 3 (May 23) was an opportunity to reflect the Community Land Use Plan back to participants and to evaluate it with respect to the environmental, regulatory, and market analysis



Figure 11: Public Meeting, May 23, 2001

tools. Ultimately, Meeting 3 did not result in any substantial revisions to the Community Land Use Plan. Meeting 3 also featured the presence, for the only time during the Project, of a representative of the Hess Corporation. Alex Sagebien of Hess attended the entire meeting and spoke at its conclusion. Sagebien praised the effort of the participants and expressed the

desire of the Hess Corporation to abide by the outcomes of the Project.

7) EB-CCAG

As the resident leadership group for the project, East Boston Chelsea Creek Action Group provided guidance, decision-making, and volunteer work. EB-CCAG approved the project in principal at its September 2000 meeting, and subsequently met monthly throughout the life of the project, from December 2000 through October 2001. The meetings were held on the third Wednesday of each month and typically were attended by 15-25 EB-CCAG members. The portion of the minutes of each relevant EB-CCAG meeting which deals with the Project are attached as Appendix 9.

Despite the position of CLFV as the primary contact with the Hess Corporation itself, EB-CCAG asserted its power to communicate with Hess directly regarding the project on two occasions. At the group's December 2000 meeting members raised the distinct possibility that Hess could sell the land while the project is underway. They decided to write to Hess immediately demanding that they not sell the property while the project was underway (see Appendix 10). Hess did not respond. EB-CCAG also wrote Hess directly in July 2001, this time to present the Community Land Use Plan and to make the direct request that Hess donate the land to the community (appendix 11). This letter did receive a response from a Vice President of Hess (appendix 12). Hess refused to donate the land, but did commit to calling the attention of prospective buyers to the Community Land Use Plan.

8) Community Land Use Plan and CLFV's Report

The results of Meeting 2 were written by CLFV, with review from Project partners and meeting participants. Subsequently, Henzy distributed this document, the Community Land Use Plan (Appendix 13) to all meeting participants and everyone on the Project outreach list. From NOAH and EB-CCAG's perspective, the Community Land Use Plan is the centerpiece product of the Project, as it communicates clearly what the community expects regarding development of the site. The Plan calls for: an open space / waterfront public access component; a cultural / historical component such as a maritime heritage museum; and a small, neighborhood-friendly business component.

CLFV compiled all the information produced as part of the Project and wrote a Project Report for the Hess Corporation, which was a key "deliverable" under the Hess/CLFV contract. The report was reviewed and revised by Project partners and meeting participants, and was delivered to the Hess Corporation in August 2001. The Executive Summary of CLFV's Report is attached here as Appendix 14.

9) A Chance for Site Control

EB-CCAG had always expressed the desire to get control of the Hess Site and to control its development. But EB-CCAG had no organizational capacity to acquire and develop the land. Members had indicated government (City and State) as possible developer of the site. Interestingly, members had not suggested that NOAH position itself as developer, even though NOAH is the 'parent' organization of EB-CCAG and is in the business of real estate development. Henzy and Chacker had never proposed NOAH as developer. On the contrary they had expressly separated NOAH staff's role as organizers from any interest NOAH might have as developer.

That dynamic changed in late August, as an opportunity for NOAH to step in as co-developer presented itself. The Trust for Public Land (TPL) approached NOAH with the suggestion of creating a development partnership that would acquire and develop the Hess Site in a manner consistent with the Community Land Use Plan. TPL is a highly recognized national non-profit conservation organization.⁵ TPL's model is the acquisition of vulnerable open spaces and the establishment of permanent conservation through transfer of ownership to an entity that will maintain conservation, usually government. A strength of TPL is the fact that they have sufficient investment capital and real estate capacity to acquire significant tracts of land. The emergence of TPL provided a real hope that development of the Hess Site could be completely controlled by the community.

⁵ Founded in 1972, the Trust for Public Land is the only national nonprofit working exclusively to protect land for human enjoyment and well-being. TPL helps conserve land for recreation and spiritual nourishment and to improve the health and quality of life of American communities (TPL web site).

C) Inputs and Outputs

Figure 12: Inputs and Outputs Table

Inputs	Expected	Actual
	480 work hours from NOAH staff	500 work hours from NOAH staff
	500 hours of NOAH volunteer time	100 hours of NOAH volunteer time
	? work hours from other Project partners	383 work hours from other Project partners
	\$47,677 fee payments from Hess	\$43,787 fee payments from Hess
	\$7,000 NOAH grant funds allocation	\$7,020 NOAH grant funds allocation
Outputs	Expected	Actual
	100 people interviewed	75 people interviewed
	5 volunteer interviewers	4 volunteer interviewers
	Series of three public meetings, with a total attendance of at least 150 and a total number of participants of 100	Series of three public meetings Total attendance: 128 Total participants: 60
	Completion of Community Land Use Plan	Completion of Community Land Use Plan
	Completion of environmental, regulatory, and market analyses.	Completion of environmental, regulatory, and market analyses.
	Completion of Final Project Report to the Hess Corporation	Completion of Final Project Report to the Hess Corporation
	Recognition and endorsement by Hess Corporation of the Community Land Use Plan	August 14, 2001 letter from Hess recognized and supported Community Land Use Plan
	Dissemination of the Community Land Use Plan and/or Report to Hess to at least 200 local residents and businesses, community-based organizations, and public officials	Community Land Use Plan and/or Report to Hess disseminated to Project outreach list in May and July 2001 and to 36 community-based organizations and public officials in October 2001

D) Budget

Hess Site Re-Use Planning Project - Project Budget November 2000 to October 2001

	Committed	Rcvd/Paid	Balance Due
Revenue			
Hess Contract Payments	\$43,787	\$20,000	\$23,787
NOAH Grant Funds Allocated*	\$7,020	\$7,020	\$0
Incidental expenses reimbursement from Hess	\$2,734	\$0	\$2,734
Total	\$53,541	\$27,020	\$26,521
Expenses			
Services (personnel and overhead) paid by Hess			
CLFV	\$27,107	\$3,320	\$23,787
Urban Ecology	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$0
NOAH	\$4,480	\$4,480	\$0
Mt. Auburn Associates	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$0
Hubert Murray - meeting facilitator	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$0
Services paid by NOAH grant allocations			
NOAH Personnel and overhead	\$6,020	\$6,020	\$0
Roberts Environmental Consulting	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$0
Incidental Expenses**	\$2,734	\$0	\$2,734
Total	\$53,541	\$27,020	\$26,521

*Sources: Merck, United Way, Greater Boston Urban Resource Partnership, Mass Dept of Environmental Protection

**refreshments, childcare, translation, postage, advertising, etc.

The Hess Corporation was the primary funder of the Project. Hess still has a payment due of \$26,521, although no difficulty is anticipated in receiving that payment. CLFV, as the Project manager and chief liaison with Hess, ensured that all the other parties were paid, while holding the remaining account receivable with Hess.

NOAH was the sole Project partner that supplemented the Project with its own organizational funds. NOAH Community Building and Environment Department Director Stacey Chacker felt comfortable in making the necessary grant funds allocations since the Project was consistent with the Department's mission and workplan.

E) Information Technology

Information technology was an important tool in the implementation of the Project. Word processing, the Access database program, desktop publishing, PowerPoint presentations, and email were all used extensively. Minutes of EB-CCAG meetings were posted monthly on the East Boston On Line web site. The Southern New Hampshire University, School of Community Economic Development practitioner web-based caucus center was used extensively for reporting and feedback within the CED program.

F) Monitoring

The Project Team monitored the inputs and outputs throughout the duration of the Project. Team meetings were an opportunity to take stock of the Project status and to emphasize tasks that needed attention. In addition, the Project was discussed each month at the monthly EB-CCAG regular meeting. EB-CCAG members offered suggestions, commitments of time, and approvals as the Project progressed. Abridged minutes of these meetings are provided in Appendix 9.

G) Evaluation

1) Participant Evaluation

There were many positive comments at the end of Meeting 3. People were happy with Hess for being present and for supporting/funding the Project. People are also happy with the Community Land Use Plan and expressed desire to work on implementation.

EB-CCAG members were asked for feedback on the meeting series during the July 18, 2001 monthly meeting. The following comments were recorded:

Gail Miller: The process allowed neighbors to become stakeholders in the planning, and it was particularly positive to have a representative from Hess there – it put everyone on the same page.

Fran Riley: While the meetings were well done, Hess needs to have a more active presence in the process. We should recognize the bulk of the work, which happened between the larger planning meetings.

Edith DeAngelis: It was a good illustration of how businesses can take responsible steps, if nudged by the community.

Nancei Radicchi: People were satisfied by the process but it is not complete until we have a chance to review the draft report which is being written by CLFV.

Henzy mailed out an “outcome measurement” survey to Project participants in late October 2001. The results indicate a high degree of belief in the power of the community to control the future of the Hess Site. They also indicate participants’ belief that the Project was an effective way for them to exercise that power. See appendix 16: Survey and Results.

2) Practitioner Analysis

The meeting series had 60 participants. While this is not a large number compared to the overall neighborhood population of 38,000, it is significant. The validity of the Community Land Use Plan will be increased as the Plan is disseminated and endorsed by residents, businesses, and public officials from the neighborhood.

The diversity within the 60 participants did not reflect the demographics of the neighborhood, which is now 39% Latino. This under representation of Latinos is typical in most East Boston community organizations. We did the basics - outreach material was in Spanish, outreach workers and volunteers were almost all Spanish speakers, and about 10 of the door to door interviews were conducted in Spanish. But we must continue to analyze how we can diversify the base of people active on the Hess Site project and in the work of the East Boston Chelsea Creek Action Group.

The Collaborative approach was effective in implementing the Project. The various players all contributed their particular strengths. However, the Project Team did experience some dissention. Specifically, NOAH and Watershed directed some frustration at CLFV in the weeks prior the first public meeting. They felt that CLFV was not monitoring the overall project or making sure that all necessary steps were being taken to ensure a successful meeting series. At a Team meeting in March, NOAH staff brought a project management chart, which specified what had to be done, by

when, and by whom. NOAH and UEI felt that this was actually CLFV's role but that they were not doing it. After that point, relations improved and the parties worked more cohesively.

For NOAH, the elimination by Hess of a press strategy was a major blow. NOAH, like all community based organizations, sees press as a vital method of publicizing its work and of building credibility in the community and in the broader world of organizations, funders, and government. Coverage in the neighborhood newspaper would have been an important contribution towards the widespread recognition and endorsement of the Project and the Plan that the proponents are now seeking.

The specific objectives of the Project were largely completed as scheduled (see input/output chart above). Of the Project goals, community participation and control of redevelopment planning for the Hess Site was clearly achieved. The Project also met its mid-term goal - the shift of power from the owners of capital to the East Boston community by asserting community control of economic development. With the Community Land Use Plan the community asserted that power. The Plan can be wielded as a positive, collaborative way, such as in the proposed partnership with Trust for Public Land, or in a negative, adversarial way, by opposing and fighting proposed development that is contrary to the Plan. As far as the long-term goal of redevelopment and re-use of the Hess Site that serves the East Boston community as well as the eventual property owner, this remains to be determined. But NOAH and EB-CCAG have an opportunity to realize that scenario by working with TPL and acquiring and developing the land.

VII) Conclusion and Recommendations

Land use planning and land use itself often reveal the power dynamics of a particular place. In the case of 'brownfields' and industrial sites, industry and government typically call the shots, and decisions are typically made to serve the interest of those parties. The Hess Site Re-Use Planning Project demonstrates that residents and their allies can promote their interests regarding land, and can seek to balance those interests with the interests of other stakeholders. To be successful, residents must:

- Recognize their commonality of interest
- Create a common land use vision or plan through a fair, open, democratic process
- Promote, protect, and ultimately seek to implement that vision, even with the presence of opposing forces.

The following recommendations are offered to any community or organization that plans to organize community controlled land use planning:

- Research and learn everything possible about the site(s) and about the parties that consider it valuable.
- Reach out to as many residents as possible, with an emphasis on the streets closest to the site.
- Partner with friendly organizations (environmental lawyers, community planners, etc); but establish a clear understanding of the nature of the collaboration and the roles and responsibilities of each member.
- Don't promote a vision for the site(s) based on assumptions. Create a fair, open, democratic process to determine a collective vision for the site(s) in question.
- Get buy in and support from the property owner, government, other sectors of the community.
- Be prepared to publicize and "sell" the vision. Look for ways to implement it (with a community developer) and be prepared to use it to oppose unwanted development.
- Keep resident leadership at the forefront. Don't become a hollow advocacy group fighting your fight in the newspaper with no real base.

The Hess Site is still a vacant, contaminated industrial site. The future of the site is unclear. But through the Hess Site Re-Use Planning Project and the ongoing work of EB-CCAG, the East Boston community established itself as an agent of the site's future, not just a passive recipient. Community controlled land use planning, whether or not it leads to community ownership, is a powerful application of the Community Economic Development model. Despite an economic culture that places legal ownership as superior to all other interests in property, communities can

assert some level of control or at least strike a balance. Through community controlled land use planning processes like the Hess Site Re-Use Planning Project, people can take a greater part in shaping the future of land and resources in their own communities.

VIII) References

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This grant proposal and others written by Ms. Chacker with the assistance of other staff at NOAH serve as excellent overviews of the local context that surrounds community efforts to revitalize the Chelsea Creek. For more information contact: Stacey Chacker, NOAH, 22 Paris Street, East Boston, MA 02128; 617-569-0059 x13.

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