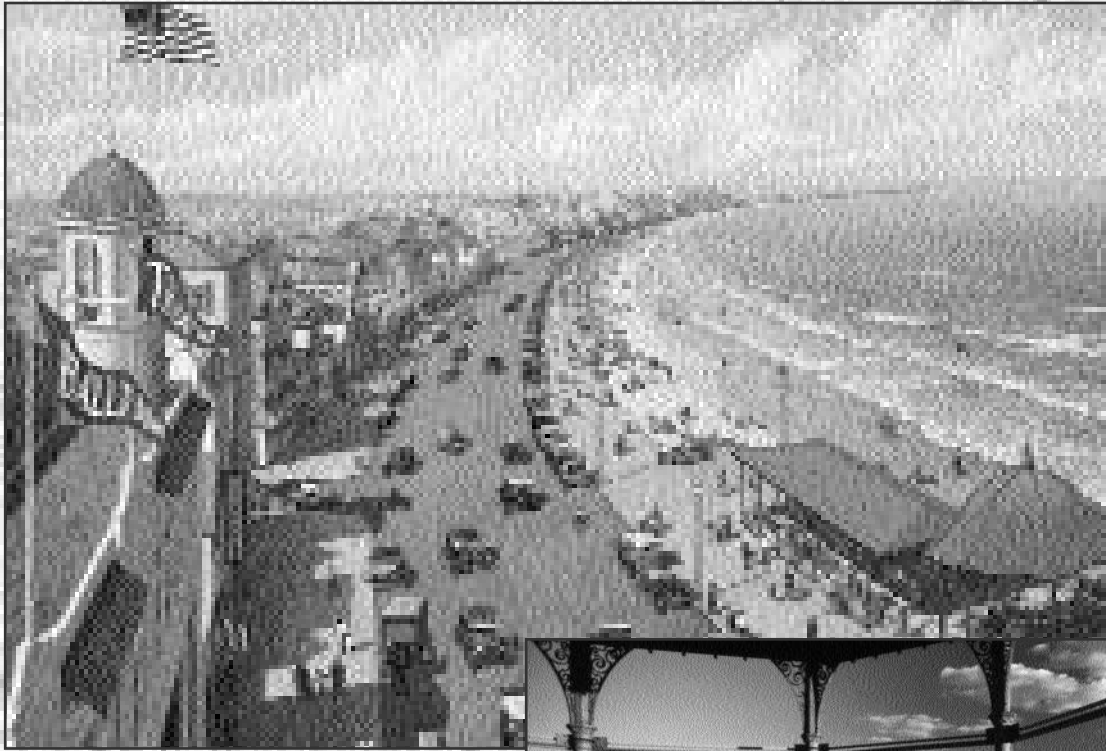


# REVERE BEACH



## A Superb but Underutilized Asset

Top: Revere Beach Boulevard in the 1930's (original artwork courtesy of Norman Gautreau)

Right: Revere Beach from the historic bandstand



Revere's crescent beach is a beautiful natural resource, rare for so urban an area. Half a century ago, Revere Beach thrived as a recreational hub. We believe that Revere Beach can once again be a regional recreational entity with the ability to attract people from afar. Imagine, in the place of the barren cement which now takes up much of Revere Beach, a clean stretch with an uninterrupted boardwalk and people boating, swimming, kayaking, and sailing. Raised-level cafes and playgrounds, volleyball courts and carousels would provide a variety of amusements.

The goal of this document is to set out a clear action plan for beach improvements based on the October 13th, 2001 Revere Beach Citizens Planning Charrette sponsored by the Campaign for the Water's Edge and the City of Revere. The first step in carrying forward a revitalization on Revere Beach is to clearly and explicitly establish the players involved and their respective responsibilities. We therefore recommend the following: **(1) The creation of a "Partnership for a New Revere Beach."** In the future, enhancement of the beach needs to be a




public/private partnership, which means getting residents involved and reinvigorating interest in Revere Beach. We would like to see the Mayor call for the creation of a “Partnership for a New Revere Beach” composed of a wide array of Revere committees and organizations, as well as a broad cross section of business leaders, elected officials, and local residents.

The partnership’s goal would be to build financial, grassroots and political support for the revitalization of Revere Beach. Working with the City of Revere, the partnership would set goals for improvements, review development planning proposals, sponsor/publicize events, and develop creative ways to work with the MDC to make Revere Beach a common priority in a time of diminished resources (this may mean the creation of a joint City/MDC Task Force). Most importantly, the partnership would act as a single coalition to whom developers, business leaders, and elected officials could turn to make the planning process smooth and efficient. \*

**(2) The approval of a comprehensive plan of action.** We need a clear plan with which the City of Revere can approach the federal government, legislature, governor, MDC, foundations, and private donors to develop support for a beach revitalization. This should be worked out between the newly-formed partnership and the City.

**An Action Plan Which Can Be Implemented in the Near Term**

As a general approach we suggest starting with small feasible steps, tackling three select areas of the beach (at



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*Early Action Items*

major entry points) for early actions to upgrade. Tackling a three-mile beach at once is a daunting task. Mayor Ambrosino defined at least two improvements that can be done in the short term and at very little cost. They are:

**Flower Plantings**  
The plantings can be done by an existing volunteer organization or by a new Revere Beach Beautification Committee.

**Vendors**  
Vendors can be contracted through the City and the MDC. Upscale kiosks, pushcarts, and concessions if tastefully done would add to the attraction of the beach as a destination. The City should work in conjunction with the MDC in defining standards for pushcart and kiosk design.

Other immediate action-items which need to be addressed include:

\* Some conference attendants also mentioned the idea of a new position - the Revere Beach Planning and Development Coordinator - to be paid jointly by the City, the MDC, the hospital, and local businesses. Another idea was to create a non-profit community development corporation [CDC] as a logical outgrowth of the Partnership for a New Revere Beach and explore the idea of a multi-party task force to oversee beach area redevelopment.



### **Algae Bloom**

There is a good deal of concern that about once a week or so during the summer a seaweed type algae washes up on the beaches. It is not dirty or contaminated, but it is aesthetically unpleasant to swim, walk, or play in, and it takes the MDC weeks to clean up. To tackle this problem we need to test water quality and publicize the results, perhaps with the help of local schools and/or universities. The Partnership for a New Revere Beach should research university interest in studying the red algae phenomenon.

### **Beautification**

Aesthetics was another big issue. In addition to flower plantings we recommend that the City and the Partnership involve the local artistic community in developing colorful signage to attract and direct visitors, art pieces, mosaics, murals, and other visuals, perhaps with historic themes. Other ideas include more intensive plantings such as trees, shrubs, and hanging plants to outline the promenades, pedestrian corridors and parks/gardens, and improved trash signs and covered receptacles. Currently there is no sense of ownership of the beach and people litter and don't clean up after their dogs. Someone mentioned a beach in Florida that posts signs that say "Pelican Pete says: this is my home – keep it clean". Other signage might include a sign at Carey Circle (and Revere St. and Eliot Circles) saying "America's first public beach – keep it clean." Charette attendees also mentioned the possibility of establishing a private sector Adopt-A-Beach program and fixing up the green space between Boulevard and Ocean Avenue.

### **Parking**

The traffic/parking problem at the beach was one of the biggest concerns. Revere is a transportation hub for its residents and for people from surrounding towns – it becomes congested and residents can't park along the boulevard to get to the beach. Some want a parking garage for commuters and restricted parking along the beach. Pollution due to traffic is also a problem – air, water, as well as noise pollution – and wasted space. Some suggestions were

- Less auto clutter on beachfront, cars should park on far side of the road
- Finish dealing with the commuter parking problem
- Emphasize use of MBTA parking areas
- Increase the number of parking lots
- No parking before 10:00 a.m. (currently there is no parking before 9:30 AM)
- Parking meters or limited time parking

### **Business Involvement**

We need to increase business responsibility for cleaning and maintaining their parts of the sidewalk/seafront. Additions to beachfront commerce – stores, restaurants, and boat/bike/water activity rentals – would improve the vitality and life of the beach, as well as the variety of business opportunities and revenue for the area.

### **Revere Beach Slogan and Publicity**

Throw open to the public (via newspaper, TV) the design of a new logo/slogan for Revere Beach. Make it a contest.



## **Events**

There is a large interest in increasing the special/public events on the beach. The MDC runs a few programs during the summer, but there is a lack of marketing and outreach, so not a lot of people are aware of these events. The Partnership could take up the slack in this area by publicizing existing events (through local radio stations, flyers, and web sites like [reverebeach.com](http://reverebeach.com)) and sponsoring new events. The beach should be inviting to everyone in the community – more fun for the children, more structured in terms of activities and events, and more of something for each age group.

As far as events programming goes, there could be an entertainment tent set up for summer activities/events such as paid concerts or for use as a community Play House and center for dances, cultural festivals, and beach programming. We would like to see fireworks on the 4th of July and other summer nights, and to take advantage of the diverse population of Revere Beach and have more cultural events. Other ideas include:

- Revere Heritage weekend
- More band concerts and dances along the beach
- Temporary exhibits (such as Boston's First Night)
- Beach-wide volunteer cleanup in the spring and fall, followed by a party
- Recreation and on the water activities
- Sand-building contests for kids
- Summer-long kayak rentals
- Children's programs (environmental, education, art, etc.),
- 50's car show
- Swim events
- Chowderfest
- Beach ball and volleyball tournaments
- After-work events on weekdays or on Fridays
- Artistic Heritage Program, artifact displays
- Theme weekends/evenings
- Temporary and/or seasonal vendors on Revere Street south to Beach Street

## **Pedestrian Access**

One of the biggest problems facing Revere Beach right now is its inadequate pedestrian access. To increase accessibility, we recommend public investment be made to:

- Begin extending the sidewalk north of Oak Island Street (talking to affected businesses first and perhaps changing head-in parking to parallel parking or eliminating it entirely)
- Inaugurate traffic taming devices north and south of the closed Revere Beach Boulevard section (see below) using traffic tables
- Improve pedestrian access from the MBTA stations. Public transit access is unique to Revere Beach, but it is very hard to cross the road at Wonderland. There should be a pedestrian light at Chester and Ocean Streets, as well as safe pedestrian access across Revere Beach Boulevard. Pedestrian walkways could allow new venues for boardwalk type vending and concessions. (The original master plan for Revere Beach called for a pedestrian overpass, with proposed development at the overpass level.)
- Connect the school with the beach to create a transition/gateway for kids.



### **Promenade**

We endorse the idea of permanently closing Revere Beach Boulevard from Shirley Avenue to Revere Street, though tactically it may be better to start with weekends only (or even Sundays only as in Cambridge) and converting the road into a pedestrian/mixed-use promenade/boardwalk. The City and the Partnership should be sure to schedule events such as craft fairs and concerts along the newly-closed section.

In the long run a permanent closing of this section of Revere Boulevard would shift the main thoroughway to Ocean Avenue, drastically improving the situation of Ocean Avenue store and building fronts which would then open directly onto Revere Beach, and allowing the addition of concessions, kiosks, and possibly additional bath houses/body/foot showers/benches along the new boardwalk. We would like to build a bike/blading/walking path, using natural material differentiation to create natural lane dividers, to run the length of the beach as well.

### **Gain Control of Developable Parcels of Land**

Having gained control of major developable parcels of land, the City of Revere will begin seeking out quality developments. The Mayor has negotiated with the MDC to secure the North Lot which enables the City of Revere to seek out development proposals. The City is also working with the MBTA on negotiating an agreement for development ground rights for parcel H.

### **Enhance Climate for Investment**

Designate Revere Beach as an Economic Target Area. This offers incentives to businesses the City couldn't offer before the designation in May, 2001. The City of Revere can utilize this designation to attract new businesses to Revere Beach.

### **Gateway Arches and Signage**

There are currently no gateway signs for the beach. Mass Pike Tourism funds may be available for the installation of such gateways (recalling earlier designs) at Eliot Circle, Revere Street, Shirley Avenue, and Carey Circle. If not, fundraising for the new gateway arches could be a community-wide event.

### **Safety and Policing**

Safety needs improvement along the beach so that it's no longer dangerous to walk along the beach at night. That means increased policing both day and night (especially in the summer when the beach is used most heavily) and possibly safety phones and lighting. We also need better enforcement of litter laws – if people know they will get a ticket for littering/not cleaning up after their dog, cleanliness will improve.

### **MDC Early Action Items**

- Better, seagull-proof covered trash cans, more frequent emptying of trash.
- More beach cleaning and general maintenance
- Take steps to keep the sand on the beach from blowing off the beach and onto sidewalks. If possible stop the practice of sweeping sand back off of sidewalks, where it mixes with litter, and dumping it back onto the beach.
- The beach and bathhouses should be cleaner, better kept
- Initiate RFP for vendors, concessionaires (will produce income, adds to safety and liveliness)



- Mark off volleyball areas at either end of the beach.
- Nightly cleaning of the beach to eliminate algae and also daily litter and trash
- Possibly MDC-organized water safety programs and swimming lessons for kids (by existing lifeguards?)

### **Kid's Programs**

Residents also said they would like to see boating programs, water shuttle/taxi service and water activities for children implemented. These programs would make Revere Beach a special destination for families of Revere as well as surrounding towns. Revere Cares ran a sea kayaking program for a week this past summer for kids, and the community would like to see that occur throughout the entire summer. The residents want to take advantage of the beach as a resource for educational programming for children – to teach them about the marine environment/ecology.



*There needs to be a continued strategy to encourage good development on Revere Beach, particularly on land in the public domain...Little things can make a big difference.*

### *A Plan for Tomorrow*

#### **Long-Term Development**

There needs to be a continued strategy to encourage good development on Revere Beach, particularly on land in the public domain. The City should keep in mind the following design and planning considerations:

- Buildings should be attractive and unique with a traditional, nautical feel. They should NOT be cookie-cutter designs. Mix of residential can still have continuity (repeats of materials, details)
- Little things like awnings can make big difference
- Continuity with surroundings. Take clues from residential, commercial areas and utilize what's there (pavilion, bandstand)
- Tall buildings – because private money will fund the beaches, construction must be economically viable and that means building up. Current zoning allows 12 stories, which will allow them to shield wind in winter. We would also want to set them back to compromise their height. Build buildings that will take advantage of the view but not cast tall shadows.
- Develop mid-rise neighborhood North of Revere Street as permitted by zoning
- Develop upscale neighborhoods along the beach and create more continuity (right now there are distinct sections)
- Landscape the greenspace between the Boulevard and Ocean Avenue so that it gives a view of the water.
- Do not depend on hotels for development. There need to be enough residents and workers to make dining, museums, etc. viable.
- Train tracks limit access to beach to specific areas.



### **Enhance the transportation network in and around Revere Beach**

- Blue line expansion. This would reduce commuter parking along the beach.
- Commuter Rail station. A station somewhere in the wonderland area could deliver some of the North Shore labor market to the Revere Beach area, thereby enhancing commercial development.
- Structured parking location. A parking location in the Wonderland area would provide parking for development in and around Wonderland as well as replacement parking for Revere Beach and its commuters.
- To make the beach more accessible to people who need to drive, we might also want to implement a shuttle or trolley service implemented to take people to the beach and back to their cars at a central location (therefore a parking garage would have to be built).
- Work with surrounding communities to make the "Bikeway to the Sea" a real alternative to driving.

### **Revere Beach Museum / Visitor's Center**

Continue discussion about converting either the MDC Captain's House or the Police Station into a Revere Beach Museum (with a police office) and/or visitor's center/heritage center/state police building. Expand efforts to locate funding.

### **Upgrade Beach-Area Businesses**

The City and local financial institutions should work with beach-area businesses to encourage upgrades to properties as public investments into Revere Beach begin. Perhaps offer low-cost loans or other incentives in conjunction with concentrated code enforcement.

### **Carousel**

Everyone liked the idea of a carousel. Historic most desirable, but new OK. Would be another community-wide fundraising effort. Here perhaps a major donor could be sought with naming rights. With organ?

### **Recreation**

Participants discussed a number of ideas, among them the following:

- Small amusement park for kids
- Street performers
- Work with NEAQ to form educational programs
- Cafes and outdoor restaurants
- Performance venues, gazebos, use bandstand more
- Ocean pier for transportation
- Construction of a place like Piers Park
- Miniature Golf / Waterpark / Bowling Alley
- Fountains (usable spraying fountain which kids can play in)
- Walking tour/education element/history. Interpretive plaques along the pedestrian mall, field trips for school students, history awareness.
- Tennis Courts / Sunbathing / Rollerblading
- Skateboarding area. There was some concern about prior issues with skateboarders. There was once a designated skateboarding area, but that has since been taken away because it was disruptive to others.
- Community Sailing / Kayaking / Windsurfing

There would also be a 'recreation zone' south of the Revere Beach T stop, where volleyball nets,



beach games and parasailing activities will take place. A hotel would be built opposite the recreation zone on Ocean Avenue, along with new restaurants and shops, to bring visitors down to the water and increase the City's revenue.

### **Enhanced Revere Beach Reservation Area**

The City needs to work with the MDC to enhance funding for the reservation.

### **Highlight Green Space**

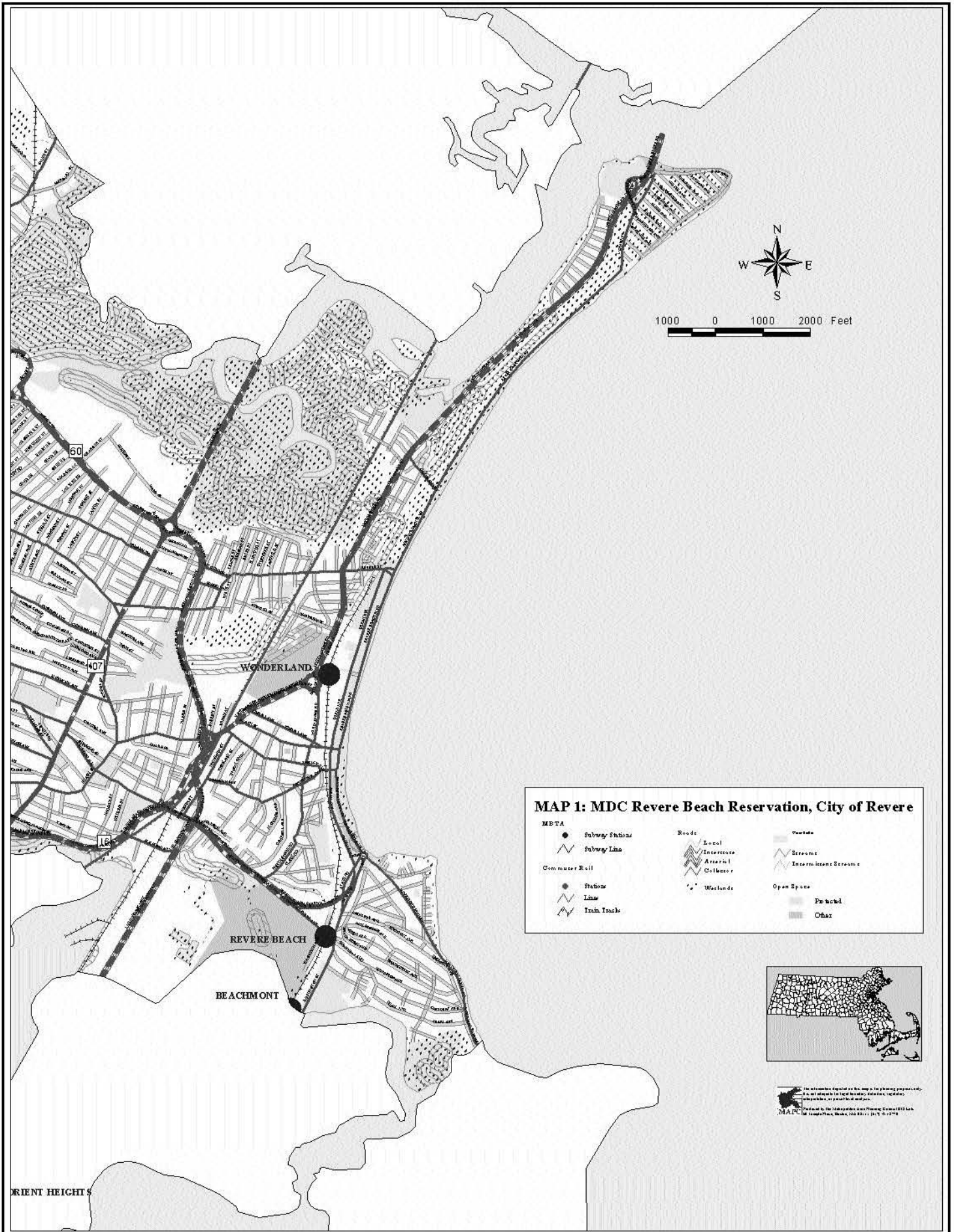
Revere Beach has a lot of promising green space which could be made more attractive. One possible improvement would be to level the slope between Boulevard and Ocean Avenue, which currently tilts toward Ocean Avenue, to give a view of sea as anticipated in the master plan. That green space could then be developed to include a serpentine walking path and possibly 3 or 4 gazebos with Revere Beach history carved/painted into the columns, as well as a renovated comfort station with restrooms and a bathhouse. Other ideas included an amusement park for kids here, near Wonderland, a "Children's Wonderland."

The linear park extending from the Revere Beach T stop and the End of Ocean Avenue provides a barrier between the street and the beach, and allows for the implementation of various structures: public restrooms (there is only one that currently exists), a gazebo (for weddings, special occasions), and a community center/function room. There would also be indentations in the sidewalk/bike path for vendors to set up their carts. There would also be ornamental lighting and benches along the length of the beach, with plenty of trash receptacles. Trash pickup will need to be more frequent in the summer months and will need to be coordinated with the MDC. The linear park could also be the location for historical/interpretive signage along the beachfront.

### **Pier**

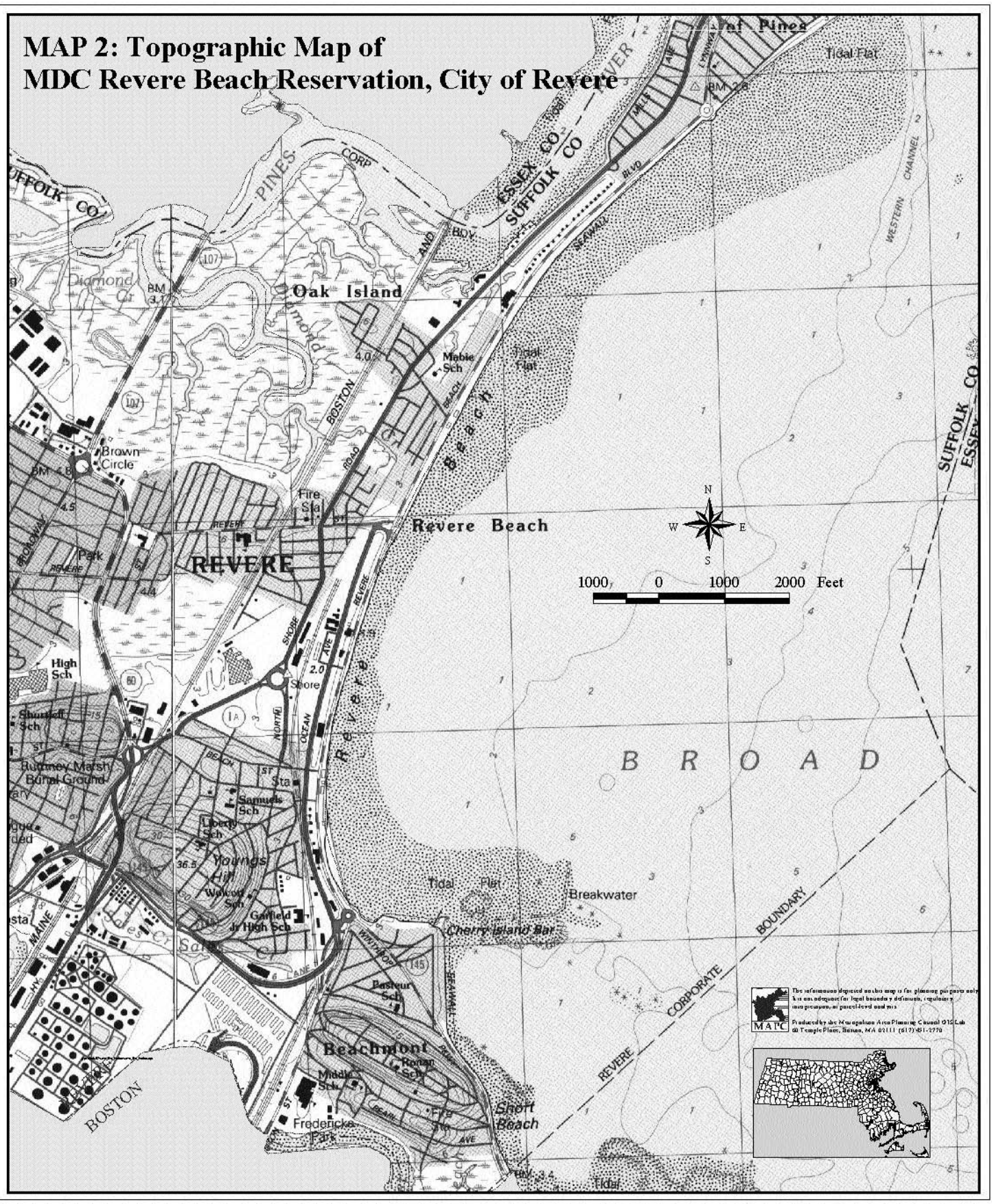
A pier needs to be created to serve the beach area. The strategic placement of the pier will provide people with the opportunity to walk out and view the three-mile stretch of beach from the water. The pier could also be a center for water activities such as boating, fishing, sailing, and kayaking, which would in turn generate revenue for the city through fees and equipment rental. Other uses include restaurants/cafés, kiosks, a police station, and a classroom/learning center, possibly with an Aquarium display and information about Revere Beach's History.

There were discussions about both a permanent pier (similar to the previous one) as well as a proposal for a floating, seasonal pier, which could be disassembled in the winter months or bad weather. Both plans called for similar types of mixed used activities on the pier.



MDC Revere Beach Reservation, City of Revere (Map courtesy of MAPC)

# MAP 2: Topographic Map of MDC Revere Beach Reservation, City of Revere



Topographic Map of MDC Beach Reservation, City of Revere (Map courtesy of MAPC)

The information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. It is not intended for legal boundary definition, engineering, or other purposes, as permitted and used.

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