



**Downtown Waterfront Municipal Harbor Planning  
Advisory Committee Meeting**

Wednesday, May 22, 2013  
Boston Harbor Hotel, 70 Rowes Wharf

**Attendees**

**Advisory Group:**

Jack Hart, Vivien Li, Lorraine Downey, Joanne Hayes-Rines, Bob Venuti, Suzanne Lavoie, Bruce Berman, Joe Gambino, Cassius Cash, Louis Elisa, Rick Dimino, Lois Siegelman, Linda Jonash, Greg Vasil, Ann Thornburg, Jim Klocke, Eric White, Meredith Rosenberg

**City of Boston:**

Richard McGuinness, BRA; Lauren Shurtleff, BRA; Chris Busch, BRA; Stephanie Kruel, Boston Environment Department; Kristin Abbott, Councilor Linehan's Office; Gary Mendoza, Department of Neighborhood Development;

**Consultant Team:**

Matthew Littell, Utile; Tom Skinner, Durand & Anastas

**Government Representatives:**

Valerie Gingrich, CZM; Ronald Killian, MassDOT;; Hugh Hawthorne, NPS; Andrea Langhauser, DEP

**Members of the Public:**

Lara Rosenberg, , Sarah Walker, , Sy Mintz, Thomas Nally, Yanni Tsipis, Chris Fincham, Rob Cardad, Diane Rubin, Jane Stricker, Lana Brennan, Myra Zisk, Edward Cardinali, Steve Mitchell, James Freedy, Kitty Armstrong, Gisele Gagnon, Don Chiofaro Jr., Jon Crellin, Jim Duffey, Steve Reardon, Ann Lagasse, Dorothy Keville, Kate Lindsey, Julie Mallero, Linda Gotlieb, Doris Gordon, Peter Brill, Bill Zielinski, Pam McDermott, Tom Palmer

**Meeting Summary**

Richard McGuinness opened the meeting and noted that the MHPAC meeting schedule is available with meetings set through May of 2014 and no meeting scheduled for August of this year. He indicated that all Advisory Committee meetings would be open to the general public and there will be an opportunity for questions at the end of each meeting. He then thanked Boston Harbor Hotel for providing a venue for the meeting and noted all meeting notes and presentation materials are available though the BRA's project website. Reference was made to the Greenway Study Guidelines and the intent to codify the Guidelines through zoning; zoning for the Downtown Waterfront District will proceed after the MHP process. A summary of prior and current planning efforts, land use and public realm initiatives that relate to the Downtown Waterfront planning area was then provided.

Matthew Littell, Utile, provided an overview of the links between the Greenway Study Guidelines, the current planning process involving the development of the Waterfront Activation Plan and Municipal Harbor Plan, and new zoning for the Greenway District. Background on the transformation of the Central Artery corridor and the Greenway Study process was then given, and the framework for how zoning will be implemented to formalize the Guidelines. He noted the Greenway Study process focused

on appropriate development along the Greenway, how to improve upon the “rough edges” of the built infrastructure that currently face the Greenway and ways to activate ground-floor uses. The Study divided the Greenway into contextual subdistricts and reviewed all parcels that might be developed at some point in the future based upon two build-out scenarios to assess their impact upon the Greenway. Four primary themes were applied in the assessment, including urban design and form, environmental conditions including wind and shadow, program and use, and economic conditions.

He indicated the scenario study determined that the build out profiles and increased square footage would not add substantial new populations to the area, rather what is needed to further activate the area is improved connections between existing density and the waterfront and programming to draw people to the area. Final recommendations were developed for subdistricts and specific parcels within the study area and framed as building dimensional standards, ground-floor programmatic goals and connections between districts and surrounding areas. With regard to analysis of the area issues touched upon included discontinuities in the HARBORWALK around the bridges and along specific reaches of the waterfront. At the southern end of the planning area could be improved by reinforced and more numerous connections to the Greenway and ways to frame the connection at the Northern Avenue Bridge. Improved street walls and buildings oriented to the Greenway and the waterfront and enhance inactive areas. The Waterfront Activation Plan will attempt to address many of these issues.

Susanne Lavoie, Wharf District Council, asked why there is no focus on transportation and traffic other than water transportation? Richard McGuinness, responded noting that the current planning process is focused more on urban form and dimensional criteria. Transportation impacts are generally assessed as part of the development review process for specific projects. The current planning effort relates more to zoning than the Article 80 and MEPA processes which are project specific.

Jack Hart, Chair, emphasized that the transportation issue is an important question to ask. He noted If transportation is not covered under this process the matter should be reviewed with the City and a determination made as to how best to approach the topic.

Bruce Berman, Save the Harbor Save the Bay, noted that done correctly, water transportation can have a real impact on landside traffic conditions. Water transportation needs to be viewed as part of the solution, and not just a component of waterfront activation.

Ann Thornburg, Harbor Towers, inquired as to whether there was a preferred option for the two Greenway Study development scenarios. Matthew Littell, noted that that the point of the scenario exercise was not to follow a specific option, rather to show what the scenarios mean in the way of population dynamics. The scenarios informed the conclusion that more than just additional floor area is needed to activate the area.

Jack Hart, commented that MBTA service requires substantial public subsidies for every line. With regard to water transportation and public transportation options need be developed for how to pay for and subsidize the additional service necessary to relieve traffic congestion .

Rick Dimino, A Better City, noted that Atlantic Avenue is a regional transportation corridor and the need to differentiate between local traffic impacts and the regional component.

Linda Jonash, Greenway Conservancy, referenced the importance of the planning effort accommodating shared spaces within the planning area that can accommodate transportation and the public realm.

Chris Fincham, Harbor Towers resident, inquired as to whether any documents had been provided showing how the Atlantic Wharf project was reconciled in relation to the Chapter 91 performance Standards. Richard McGuinness, noted that a pdf file of the harbor plan applicable to Atlantic Wharf is now on the BRA's webpage which provides a good example of the analysis that goes into a harbor plan and the details of parcel specific offsets and substitutions.

Rick Dimino, indicated that the transportation component of the planning process should address connectivity, public realm and urban form as it relates to pedestrian access and noted the need to be mindful of the scope of the municipal harbor plan as it relates to larger, regional traffic issues.

Ann Thornburg, inquired as to whether future traffic impacts could be reviewed as part of the Northern Avenue Bridge discussion as the bridge serves as connection to the South Boston Waterfront and adjacent to the Hook Lobster site. Richard McGuinness, responded that part of the Northern Avenue Bridge project involves a needs assessment and a transportation engineering consultant has been hired to review existing and proposed conditions in the area. The Northern Avenue Bridge discussion will be a good time to review area traffic issues.

Jack Hart, inquired as to who owns and maintains the bridge. Richard McGuinness, noted that the city owns the bridge but the state permits and oversees bridge rehabilitation projects.

Bruce Berman, spoke of opportunities to enhance water transportation and options to build in subsidies through transit related to tourism.

Jack Hart, Inquired about traffic with the full build of the South Boston Waterfront. Richard McGuinness referenced new developments that are moving forward with reduced parking ratios and less of an emphasis on parking and car dependent transportation, which will help alleviate traffic congestion. He further clarified that there is no transportation analysis as part of the scope for the municipal harbor planning effort and the transportation concerns will be raised with the City's Chief Planner and Transportation Commissioner.

Ann Thornburg, inquired on the role of the waterfront programming subcommittee and how it relates to the Waterfront Activation Plan that is being developed. Richard McGuinness, noted that there will be three subcommittees convened, related to climate change, water dependent uses and programming. The programming subcommittee will work within the context of the Waterfront Activation Plan and inform that effort.

Bruce Berman, inquired on efforts to include a younger demographic in the planning process. Richard McGuinness responded that the BRA sponsored a ONEin3 charrette the prior week focused on young professionals and what they would like to see more of on Boston's waterfront.

Lorraine Downey, asked about what ideas were raised at the ONEin3 charrette. Matthew Littell, noted that a lot of the same issues were raised at both charrettes with interest in making HARBORWALK more legible, more restaurants on the water and a mixes of uses. He also indicated with the younger

demographic there was less of an interest in macro planning issues and more of a focus on creating a few great destinations to draw people and differentiate the waterfront.

Chris Busch noted that the next two meetings will be held at Atlantic Wharf, 290 Congress Street, and a harbor tour is scheduled for June 12<sup>th</sup>. He also noted a draft Request for Notice to Proceed, which is a required filing as part of the MHP process, would be provided to committee members for review prior to the next meeting.

City Councilor Sal Lamattina, noted his appreciation of everyone's involvement in the process.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 4:10 p.m.