

Fort Point Channel

Watersheet Activation Plan



Boston Redevelopment Authority
in partnership with
The Fort Point Channel Abutters Group
and
The Fort Point Channel Working Group



CITY OF BOSTON
Thomas M. Menino
Mayor

Boston Redevelopment Authority
Mark Maloney
Director

May 2002





Dear Friend of the Fort Point Channel:

It brings me great pleasure to present this Watersheet Activation Plan for the Fort Point Channel – the next great place in the City. This community-based plan, developed in partnership with the property owners along the Channel, provides a catalogue of public benefits that will significantly improve the public's use and enjoyment of the waters of the Channel.

The vision for the Channel is comparable to that of the Harbor Islands and the waterfronts of East Boston, Charlestown, North End, South Boston and Dorchester – to provide truly public and enjoyable destinations for families and residents in the Boston area.

The Fort Point Channel's many attributes combine to provide unlimited potential for the City: proximity to diverse neighborhoods including Chinatown, South Boston, the South End, and the workforce of the Financial District; proximity to public transportation; a waterway that is protected from the elements; unique historic and industrial character; and cultural and educational anchors including the Children's Museum and the Boston Tea Party Ship and Museum.

I wish to thank the Fort Point Channel Abutters Group for partnering with the City on this planning effort. Their support of this process remains essential to transforming the vision into reality.

I also extend my thanks to the Fort Point Channel Working Group. This group, chaired by Save the Harbor/Save the Bay and comprised of residents, artists, business and civic organizations, elected officials, and harbor advocates, has provided invaluable advice and guidance in this planning effort.

Finally, I wish to thank the Fort Point Channel Management Committee comprised of Save the Harbor/Save the Bay, the Children's Museum and The Boston Harbor Association for their long hours and enthusiastic encouragement.

Connecting neighborhoods to the waterfront, creating an interface between land and sea, and providing year-round activity are core themes of this plan. I look forward to continuing our work together. Our next step to implementation is to establish a more formal organization to advance the plan and to coordinate Channel programming and promotion.

Please remain involved in this important process. Your participation will insure the development of this public resource that will be enjoyed by all, now and in the years to come.

Sincerely

Thomas M. Menino
Mayor of Boston

Fort Point Channel
Watersheet Activation Plan
Management Committee

Dear Friend of the Fort Point Channel:

It's an exciting time for our city and our waterfront. After decades of neglect, Boston Harbor is on the rebound, and with it comes new opportunity - on the watersheet and at the water's edge.

This Fort Point Channel Watersheet Activation Plan is the result of a unique planning partnership between residents, abutters, civic, community and corporate partners, advocates, activists and the Boston Redevelopment Authority. Working together we have created a powerful plan, with tremendous potential to reconnect our city with the sea while creating new recreational and economic opportunities for our citizens.

But the plan isn't the goal. It is a critical first step on the path towards the goal. Over the next months and years our success will be measured by how well we do what we set out to do, to activate the Fort Point Channel, and enhance its value to abutters, for all Bostonians, and for visitors as well.

As the Management Committee of the Fort Point Channel Working Group, we want to thank Mayor Menino and the BRA Director Mark Maloney for their confidence in our ability to lead the effort. We would also like to thank the Fort Point Channel Working Group and the Fort Point Channel Abutters Group for their willingness to invest the time and resources necessary to do the job right.

We particularly want to thank Linda Haar, Nancy Tentindo, Richard McGuinness and the staff at the BRA, as well as the Waterfront Center and the team from Goody, Clancy and Associates for their fine work on the plan.

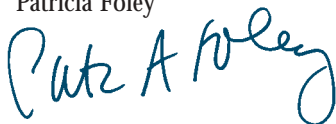
We also want to thank those individuals - artist, residents and others who participated in this public process and gave their valuable time to help create a shared vision for the Channel. We could never have done it alone and frankly, we won't be able to implement the plan without your help.

We urge you to stay involved and help insure that the Fort Point Channel Watersheet Activation Plan serves as a blueprint for a better Boston.

Sincerely,

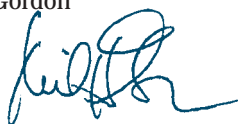
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development of the Fort Point Channel Watersheet Activation Plan has been a collaborative effort between the Boston Redevelopment Authority, The Fort Point Channel Abutters Group and The Fort Point Channel Working Group. We would like to thank the following individuals and organizations who have contributed to the process and many other residents, advocacy groups and business representatives who have contributed their time toward this Plan. Many of your ideas and guidance are incorporated into this Plan and it is a better Plan because of your efforts.

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Boston Public Library, *p. 2*

Boston Transportation Dept., *p. 10, 11*

Fort Point Cultural Coalition, *p. 18, 34*

Boston Redevelopment Authority, *p. 32*

FORT POINT CHANNEL WATERSHEET ACTIVATION PLAN

BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

FORT POINT CHANNEL ABUTTERS GROUP

FORT POINT CHANNEL WORKING GROUP

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GOODY, CLANCY & ASSOCIATES

I. INTRODUCTION

Fort Point Channel can become Boston's central park, its defining public space of the new century, connecting the city's future to its seaport history. Larger than Boston Common, its fifty acres of quiet water are being newly discovered within the heart of downtown. As the South Boston waterfront emerges as the city's newest neighborhood and development frontier, the Fort Point Channel waterway, long forgotten, is springing back to life.





Fort Point Channel in 1870.



Fort Point Channel at the Congress Street Bridge in 1929.

Once viewed as an edge location, the Fort Point Channel now stands at center stage, linking the waterfronts of downtown and South Boston—the seam between the Financial District and the emerging South Boston Waterfront. As a clean Boston Harbor brings the entire waterfront back to life, the City of Boston has joined with the Channel's neighbors and waterfront advocates in shaping a plan for a new kind of public park. Not since the early 20th century reclamation of the Charles River Basin from an industrial swamp has there been such an opportunity to create an urban waterfront destination on such a scale. Fort Point Channel can become Boston's "Next Great Place."

Fort Point Channel was originally a natural waterway linking Boston Harbor to South Bay, its western side lined by wharves, its eastern edge formed by tidal flats. As the tidal flats were filled over the course of the nineteenth century, the South Boston Waterfront was formed. For most of the nineteenth century Fort Point Channel was a vital, crowded, and busy waterway providing access to industry in South Bay. But with the dawn of the twentieth century, vessel activity within the Channel declined as it increasingly came into conflict with vehicular traffic crossing the Channel's operable bridges. By the mid twentieth century, almost all vessel traffic within the Channel had ceased. For the last 50 years, the waterway has been severely underutilized.

Fort Point's character is defined by a diverse mix of uses and structures.



Today, Fort Point Channel is again undergoing dramatic change. And its underutilized waterway is providing a unique opportunity to create a special public place. This Plan defines a vision for bringing new vitality to the water-sheet that can serve to enrich the public environment that surrounds the Channel.



Water-dependent industrial uses such as The Gillette Company, Hook Lobster and Neptune Marine Services are a vital part of the Channel's present and future and provide over 2,600 jobs within the area.

Each section of the Fort Point Channel waterway presents distinctly different but complementary opportunities for future water-based and waterside uses as further described in this Plan.



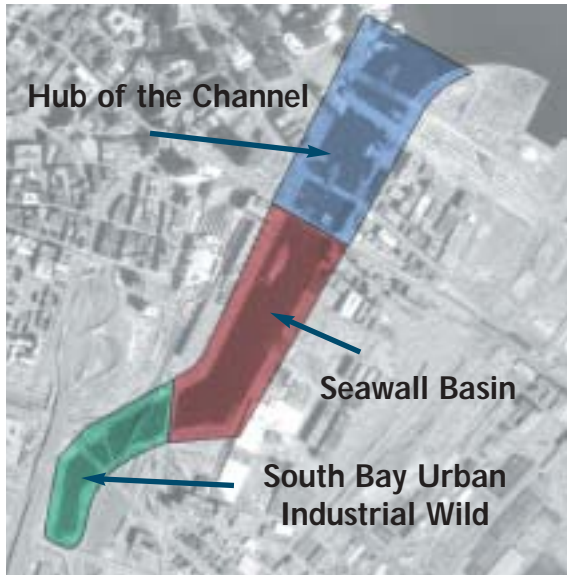
Hub of the Channel, extending from Boston Harbor to the Summer Street Bridge, is an extension of the harbor, a new gateway to citywide water transportation, providing docking space for transient vessels, and hosting visiting and historic vessels that can negotiate the vertical clearances of the Evelyn Moakley Bridge. Floating walkways lining the Channel will provide access to vessels, inviting the public to the water's edge. Floating classrooms can extend the Children's Museum educational and environmental programs out onto the water. A new public space, Children's Park, will create a waterside destination for special events and performances. Substantial extensions of Harborwalk and other new open spaces will provide public viewing areas for watersheet activities. The area also hosts the Boston Tea Party Ship and Museum including its proposed expansion. An Art Basin between the Congress Street and Summer Street bridges will provide an on-the-water area for floating art that can be experienced from land or from the water.



Seawall Basin, extending from the Summer Street Bridge south to the new Dorchester Avenue Bridge, provides a protected environment that can sustain a rich mix of public boating activities for exercise, recreation and education with row boats, canoes and kayaks. This magnificent basin can match the Charles River for public boating events, art and music on the water, neighborhood celebrations, and races on and around the waterway. With the opening of a major new segment of Harborwalk along the Gillette property as part of the Central Artery/Tunnel Project's mitigation, the future South Bay Harbor Trail will link the Channel to the city's inland neighborhoods.



South Bay Urban Industrial Wild extends south from the Dorchester Avenue Bridge to the West Fourth Street Bridge. It provides a unique opportunity to explore the city's industrial and environmental heritage and transportation history from within a small boat, reclaiming a forgotten section of the Channel. This area will soon benefit from new waterside parkland created by the Central Artery/Tunnel Project, establishing links among surrounding neighborhoods.



By 2004, there will be a fivefold increase in public access to the Channel's edges. Almost a mile of new public promenade will be added linking the waterfront to inland neighborhoods via the South Bay Harbor Trail. Fort Point Channel will no longer be Boston's best kept secret.

Substantial public investments by the Central Artery/Tunnel Project, the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority, the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority and the Massachusetts Highway Department are setting the stage for the revitalization of the Channel area. The additional funding now required to capture the Channel's full potential as a public destination can be mostly secured from the private sector as a part of landside development projects now in the planning stages. But a continuation of the public/private partnership that has advanced this Plan is essential to successful implementation of this new vision for the Channel.

This document describes a detailed step-by-step approach to implementation. Key elements of this strategy include:

- ◆ Build on the vision outlined in this Plan
- ◆ Extend the role of the partnership made up of the City, abutters and waterfront advocates that came together to develop the Plan to support its implementation
- ◆ Continue to work with permitting agencies to link current planning to future permitting of landside projects
- ◆ Coordinate efforts to advance legislation necessary to implement the Plan
- ◆ Establish a water quality task force to continue efforts to enhance water quality to standards consistent with uses envisioned within the Plan

The Channel's neighbors, including the Children's Museum, the Boston Tea Party Ship and Museum, and the Fort Point Arts community, have a unique capability to bring new life, creative energy, and artistic talent to making the Fort Point Channel one of the city's most loved places. Together with other landowners, neighborhood residents, and harbor advocates, they share a vision of the Channel that is outlined in this Plan. In partnership with the City, they are committed to making this vision a reality. Fort Point Channel is poised to be reborn as a great new fifty acre public park on the water. Affordable, accessible and diverse, with public boating programs, concerts, special events and floating performances, it will be "Boston Common on the Water."

II. PLANNING PARTNERSHIP AND PROCESS



Charrette #2

Planning Partnership

The Fort Point Channel Watersheet Activation Plan is the result of collaboration between the Boston Redevelopment Authority and its partners, the Fort Point Channel Abutters Group and the Fort Point Channel Working Group. This partnership was formed as an outcome of the recent South Boston Municipal Harbor Plan process. Planning for the Fort Point Channel watersheet was initially incorporated in that process but the participants believed that additional analysis and planning was essential to capture the Channel's full potential. In February 2001, the BRA, in conjunction with the Abutters Group and the Working Group, selected a consultant team for the Fort Point Channel Watersheet Activation Plan. The team is led by Goody, Clancy & Associates (GC&A). The GC&A team began its work in March 2001. The preparation of this Plan was funded jointly by the BRA and the Abutters Group.

The **Boston Redevelopment Authority** (BRA) has recently advanced major planning efforts around the Channel. In addition to the South Boston Waterfront Municipal Harbor Planning process, these include the Seaport Public Realm Plan, the Inner Harbor Passenger Water Transportation Plan and the ongoing Fort Point District planning process. The BRA is currently initiating a new round of Municipal Harbor Planning that will focus on the downtown side of the Channel.

The **Working Group** is chaired by the advocacy group Save the Harbor/Save the Bay and is an informal coalition of groups and individuals with an interest in the future of the Channel. It consists



Charrette #1

of representatives from a variety of state and local government agencies, advocacy organizations, neighborhood and arts organizations, and private firms with an interest in the future of the Fort Point Channel, and is open to any member of the general public.

The **Abutters Group** is comprised of representatives of property owners with land abutting the Channel who provided funding support for preparation of the Watersheet Activation Plan. This group is chaired by The Children's Museum.

Public Process



Charrette #1

The process of preparing the Fort Point Channel Watersheet Activation Plan has provided extensive opportunities for public input. The process was extensively publi-

cized on a citywide basis with advertisements of major meetings and events in neighborhood newspapers across the city. The process is more fully described below.

WORKING GROUP

Monthly meetings of the Fort Point Channel Working Group have provided a public forum for discussion of issues associated with preparation of the Watersheet

Activation Plan. These meetings have provided an opportunity for input by agencies, abutters, neighborhood participants, harbor advocates and the wider public. Working Group meetings that followed public Charrettes described below were held in the evening to facilitate wider public participation in the planning process.

CHARRETTES/PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

The consultant team facilitated two daylong Charrettes, or brainstorming sessions, to provide further opportunities for direct public involvement in shaping the Plan.

- ◆ **Charrette #1** was held on March 31, 2001 at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. Participants discussed issues related to potential uses of the watersheet, design of the public realm, and the economics of waterfront destinations. This charrette culminated in the preparation of three vision plans for the Channel by teams of charrette participants. Following the charrette, these plans were consolidated into a single vision plan by the consultant team. This plan was presented to the Working Group at a public meeting in April 2001.
- ◆ **Charrette #2** was held on June 9, 2001 at the Children's Museum. This charrette focused on a discussion of market opportunities for water-based activities and on discussion of an emerging plan for the Channel that reflected the work undertaken in the first charrette and subsequent public comments. Based on input at the charrette, the plan was modified and became the Emerging Vision plan that was presented to the Working Group on June 28, 2001.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

The consultant team conducted approximately 30 interviews with representatives of stakeholder groups, agency representatives and other interest groups. Interviews provided an opportunity to identify specific areas of concern to the various groups with an interest in the revitalization of the Fort Point Channel area. Information gathered from the interviews provided background for the two charrettes, and allowed the development of a detailed existing conditions plan identifying projects currently under design or construction, and their anticipated dates of completion.

REVIEW OF WATERFRONTS ACROSS THE WORLD

The Waterfront Center, based in Washington, D.C., is a nationally-known non-profit organization dedicated to the creation and revitalization of vibrant, publicly-accessible and economically vital waterfronts around the world. The Waterfront Center participated as part of the consultant team, and provided insights and information about recent initiatives and experiences in waterfront cities worldwide. As part of Charrette #1, Ann Breen and Dick Rigby, founders of the Waterfront Center, gave a slide presentation on March 30, 2001 at the Boston Public Library in Copley Square documenting several successful waterfront initiatives. The Waterfront Center played a leading role in facilitating the two charrettes described above.

PROJECT WEBSITE



The consultant team developed and hosted a project website (www.gcassoc.com/planning/fpc) as a tool for disseminating information and as an interactive discussion forum. The website went on-line immediately before the first charrette, and various work products and schedule updates have been posted there.

III. PLANNING GOALS

Early in the planning process, the Boston Redevelopment Authority and its partners established a set of nine goals for the Watersheet Activation Plan that have guided this planning process. These goals are as follows:

- ◆ To preserve and enhance existing water-dependent uses such as The Gillette Company, Hook Lobster, and Neptune Marine Services;
- ◆ To enhance Fort Point Channel for a variety of water-dependent uses, such as water transportation, recreational boating, and as a safe refuge for boats;
- ◆ To activate Fort Point Channel and its edges and provide for special destinations so as to attract the public and generate public activity on a year-round basis;
- ◆ To enhance public access (pedestrian, transit, bicycle, water) from all Boston neighborhoods and from the downtown to Fort Point Channel;
- ◆ To enhance the civic role of the Channel in connecting to other public venues, such as Harborwalk, the planned Rose Kennedy Greenway and Massachusetts Horticultural development, Dewey Square, South Station, Chinatown and the South Bay Harbor Trail;
- ◆ To create land or water connections to existing and planned open spaces, such as the Fan Pier Cove; the park at the Federal Courthouse; the MBTA's "Children's Park" adjacent to the Evelyn Moakley Bridge; Museum Wharf; a planned Fort Point Avenue connecting the Fort Point Channel to West Service Road and the new Boston Convention & Exhibition Center; and Cabot Cove Park and Vent Building Park at the southern tip of the Channel;
- ◆ To preserve and enhance the historic character of Fort Point Channel, such as its historic seawalls and the historic Boston Wharf Company district;
- ◆ To establish strong connections between Fort Point Channel, Harborwalk and other waterfront attractions and destinations; and
- ◆ To develop a detailed and realistic implementation strategy for the Watersheet Activation Plan.

IV. PLANNING AND REGULATORY CONTEXT



Major infrastructure projects are setting the stage for enhanced public access to Fort Point Channel.

Planning Context

Several major public projects and planning efforts have specific relevance to the Fort Point Channel Watersheet Activation Plan.

MUNICIPAL HARBOR PLANNING-SOUTH BOSTON AND FORT POINT DOWNTOWN

The South Boston Waterfront Municipal Harbor Plan, submitted by the BRA to the Secretary of Environmental Affairs in July 2000, addresses areas subject to the jurisdiction of the state's Waterways Regulations along the eastern side of Fort Point Channel, from Fan Pier south to the end of the Channel at West Fourth Street. The Secretary approved the South Boston Waterfront Municipal Harbor Plan in December 2000. This plan is seen as a primary vehicle for implementing the BRA's Public Realm Plan for the area (described below). One key provision of the Municipal Harbor Plan is a restriction on permanently moored vessels within the Channel that are not public in nature (museums, educational, historical). The BRA is currently initiating the Fort Point Downtown Municipal Harbor Plan process that will provide a framework for future development on the west side of the Channel

between Hook Lobster and the U.S. Postal Service facility. The Watersheet Activation Plan establishes both an overall vision for the Fort Point Channel watersheet as well as a series of infrastructure improvements and programming recommendations that can serve as a "menu" of elements to fulfill Chapter 91 and Municipal Harbor Plan (MHP) requirements. Elements of the Activation Plan may be provided in fulfillment of baseline Chapter 91 requirements as well as amplifications provided through the MHP and as one source of MHP offsets.

PUBLIC REALM PLAN

In February 1999, the Boston Redevelopment Authority issued the Seaport Public Realm Plan following a period of public consultation. The Public Realm Plan establishes objectives for the development of the public realm in the South Boston Waterfront that includes the Fort Point Channel, including: connecting the Seaport with Boston Harbor and encouraging people to experience the water; preserving and enhancing the industrial port; "creating a vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood in the Seaport district"; developing the Seaport District "within the economic context of the rest of Boston"; and ensuring that the residential neighborhood benefits from the development of the Seaport District. The Public Realm Plan identifies the potential of Fort Point Channel as one of the "special places" in or near the Seaport District. For the area of the Channel north of Summer Street, the plan recommends "a wide range of 'floating' public uses, piers, docks and landings." South of Summer Street, the plan suggests that small boats and recreational space are most appropriate. The plan provides a context and framework for ongoing planning in the South Boston Waterfront and around Fort Point Channel.

BOSTON INNER HARBOR PASSENGER WATER TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The BRA issued this plan in January 2000. The plan establishes a framework for an expanded harborwide water transportation network including water transportation facilities within Fort Point Channel. The plan includes the

development of a new ferry terminal at the 500 Atlantic Avenue site by the Central Artery/Tunnel Project with construction scheduled to commence in 2003. This terminal, once completed, will be turned over to the MBTA for contracted ferry service and will provide an important intermodal link between water transportation and South Station's commuter rail, bus and MBTA Red Line service. In addition to this facility, the Water Transportation Plan supports the creation of a public landing at Children's Wharf that would support water taxi, cultural loop service, transient vessel tie up, and additional water transit uses.

CENTRAL ARTERY/TUNNEL PROJECT

Central Artery/Tunnel Project construction work is currently underway in and around Fort Point Channel. Upon completion, this project will greatly improve regional highway access to the South Boston Waterfront. Through its environmental permitting commitments, the Central Artery/Tunnel Project has committed to developing a number of pedestrian and open space improvements around Fort Point Channel. These include development of a 2,500-foot-long pedestrian walkway on the east side of Fort Point Channel along the Channel frontage of the Gillette Company's property. Additional improvements include construction of a water transportation terminal and open space at 500 Atlantic Avenue, development of a new Harborwalk segment along Russia Wharf and the edge of Dorchester Avenue opposite the Federal Reserve Bank, and development of public open space and parkland at various locations at the southern end of the Channel including the future Cabot Cove Park and Vent Building Park.

BOSTON HARBOR PROJECT/FORT POINT CHANNEL CSO PROJECT

The \$3.8 billion Boston Harbor cleanup project advanced by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) is now drawing to a successful completion. This project has resulted in dramatically cleaner water throughout most of the harbor and has increased public awareness of the harbor as the region's premier public space, environmental resource and recreational amenity. The project has already led to improved water quality in Fort Point Channel; planned Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) improvements



The South Boston Piers Transitway will open in 2003.

currently in design by the MWRA will further improve Channel water quality. Initial improvements will be in place by early 2005 with additional improvements scheduled for 2007. These improvements can set the stage for unlocking the true potential of Fort Point Channel as further discussed within this document.

SOUTH BOSTON TRANSPORTATION STUDY

The Boston Transportation Department (BTD) issued this study in July 2000. The study provides a comprehensive overview of transportation issues and options for the South Boston Waterfront District. Key issues that are directly relevant to Fort Point Channel include BTD's support for future opening of Dorchester Avenue to vehicular traffic along the western side of the Channel should the U.S. Postal Service facility be relocated; and support for a reorientation of transit access to the Fort Point Channel area, including enhanced access to the Red Line platform that extends below Summer Street towards the Channel.

SOUTH BOSTON PIERS TRANSITWAY ("SILVER LINE")

Construction of the South Boston Piers Transitway is currently underway within Fort Point Channel. The Transitway will provide service between South Station and the South Boston Waterfront District. Between South Station and D Street the system will be located within a tunnel. A station will be located on Seaport Boulevard (formerly New Northern Avenue) near the Channel serving the area near the Federal Courthouse and the Fan Pier; a second station will be located by the World Trade Center



The new Boston Convention & Exhibition Center will open on Summer Street in 2004.

(WTC) and will serve WTC and the new Boston Convention & Exhibition Center. The Transitway is designed as one segment of a broader transit line connecting Dudley Square in Roxbury to Logan Airport known as the Silver Line. The Transitway will use mixed-mode (electric and natural gas) articulated buses. As part of the environmental commitments made during the permitting of the Transitway project, the MBTA is reconstructing Tufts Wharf between the Congress Street Bridge and the edge of 470 Atlantic Avenue, and Children's Wharf between the Congress Street Bridge and the Evelyn Moakley Bridge. The MBTA will also create a new park on land adjacent to the Children's Museum. This new city park will be operated and maintained by The Children's Museum under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the museum and the City of Boston Parks and Recreation Department.

SOUTH BAY HARBOR TRAIL

The South Bay Harbor Trail is a joint initiative of the City of Boston Office of Environmental Services, the South Bay Harbor Trail Coalition, and Save the Harbor/Save the Bay. This 3.5-mile pedestrian friendly bicycle trail will extend from Melnea Cass Boulevard in Roxbury to Fan Pier in South Boston, utilizing the new Harborwalk on the eastern side of Fort Point Channel to connect from Broadway Bridge to Fan Pier. Travelling through Lower Roxbury, the South End, Chinatown, Fort Point Channel and South Boston, the Harbor Trail will connect inland and upland communities historically cut off from Boston Harbor with the growing amenities of this valuable resource. The

Harbor Trail will create linkages between neighborhoods and to existing bike trail networks throughout the city. Through these connections, the Harbor Trail will provide the citizens of Boston with additional recreational and educational opportunities and an alternate way to commute to work. Residents of South Boston will have increased access, via the Broadway Bridge, to Fort Point Channel, the Emerald Necklace, the Arnold Arboretum and the Museum of Fine Arts. When completed, the South Bay Harbor Trail will serve as an attractive access alternative for inland communities and provide greater access to Boston Harbor for citizens throughout the City of Boston.

REGULATORY CONTEXT

Future uses and structures associated with activation of the Fort Point Channel watershed will be subject to various review and permitting requirements under federal, state and municipal jurisdictions. The programs that are most directly applicable to the watershed are listed below. Additional information on these programs is provided in an Appendix to this Plan.

Federal

The following federal laws establish specific requirements applicable to "waters of the United States" and authorize the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to regulate activities within these waters:

- ◆ Section 10 of the Rivers & Harbors Act (1899)
- ◆ Section 103 of the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act (1972)
- ◆ Section 404 of the Clean Water Act

Additional Federal

- ◆ Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (implemented through state permitting undertaken by DEP)

State

- ◆ Chapter 91 of the Massachusetts General Laws
- ◆ Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act-Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 131, Section 40 (implemented through municipal permitting undertaken by the Boston Conservation Commission)

Municipal

- ◆ Article 80, Boston Zoning Code
- ◆ Boston Harbormaster 10 A Permits
- ◆ Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (administered by the Boston Conservation Commission)

V. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



Fort Point Channel is the seam between Downtown and the South Boston Waterfront.

Over the last decade, improved harbor water quality, the establishment of the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area, and the dramatic growth of water-based transportation has reestablished Boston Harbor as the region's premier environmental and recreational resource and as an important part of the regional transportation network. These changes within the harbor have provided additional momentum for Boston's 20-year effort to reshape its waterfront edge and reconnect the city to Massachusetts Bay. Two decades of sustained effort has reopened the downtown waterfront to the public, creating an extensive Harborwalk promenade that now links Waterfront Park, Long Wharf, the New England Aquarium and Rowes Wharf. Now the combined presence of the Moakley Federal Courthouse and the planned development around Fan Pier Cove including the future Institute for Contemporary Arts have the potential to establish the South Boston waterfront as an equally rich and diverse waterfront environment. The Fort Point Channel, a mile-long underutilized waterway, can become the vital link in the chain connecting these distinct waterfront segments. But with its unique mix of destination uses, new open spaces, improved water quality, and excellent access to the region's transportation hub at South Station, Fort Point Channel can become much more. Fort Point Channel has the potential to become Boston's "Next Great Place." The success of Fort Point Channel as a public destination can contribute to the unity and cohesiveness of the entire waterfront experience within the city.

Fort Point Channel's potential as a citywide destination has increasingly been recognized over the last 25 years. The Children's Museum relocated to the Channel in 1975, leading the way for other cultural and institutional investment. The Boston Tea Party Ship and Museum, one of Boston's most popular tourist destinations, has been providing its unique mixture of history and entertainment within Fort Point Channel for almost 30 years. The Fort Point Channel artist community has grown steadily since the early 1970s, as the original industrial and warehousing users of the large buildings east of the Channel moved elsewhere in the region and artists and designers moved in, drawn by the low rents, high ceilings, large windows, and the industrial character of the former warehouses. The mix of existing artist work space, living space, and galleries continues to enrich the area and additional artist housing is currently being proposed. Approximately 400-500 artists live and/or work in the Fort Point Channel area today, together with approximately 500 other residents. In the early 1980s, Russia Wharf and Boston Wharf Company buildings began to emerge as office locations, initially attracting professionals in design fields drawn by the quality of the building's spaces and the district's creative community. In recent years, projects such as 470 Atlantic Avenue have involved extensive reinvestment in existing buildings that have added substantially to the district, while other former warehouses house more modest space with a tenant mix that contributes greatly to the area's attractiveness and diversity.

Fort Point continues to be a neighborhood of exciting contrasts hosting uses such as the Gillette Company's major manufacturing and research operations, the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston and a growing residential community.

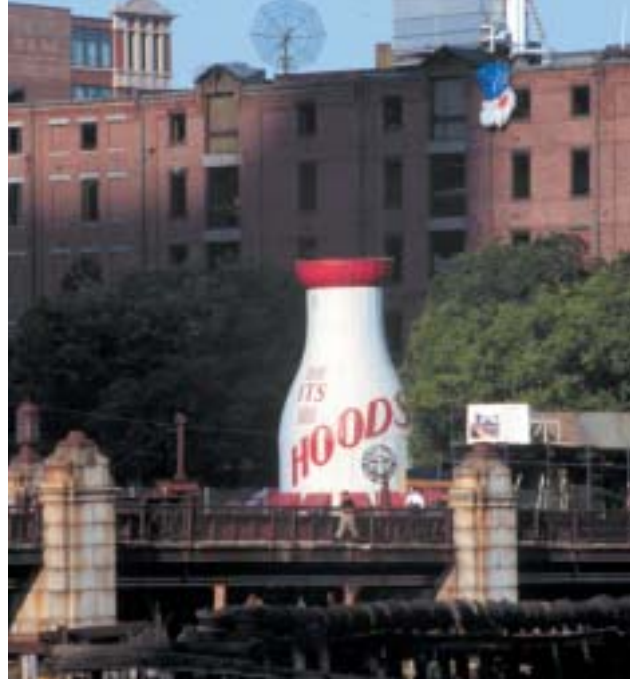


The Fort Point Channel can become the vital link in the chain connecting distinct waterfront segments.

By the late 1980s Fort Point Channel was beginning to be recognized as a modest seasonal destination. The combined offerings of the Children's Museum, the Computer Museum, the Boston Tea Party Ship and Museum and five waterfront restaurants contributed to the creation of a low-key, off-beat and interesting alternative to Boston's more established entertainment and recreational venues. Throughout the summer period, the wharf outside the Children's Museum was a popular lunchtime destination for area office workers. The watersheet itself supported a limited number of marine services businesses, and a floating restaurant moored adjacent to the Congress Street Bridge. While the Channel area lacked the critical mass necessary to establish it as a major public place, the eclectic mix of historic structures, a waterfront setting, landmark bridges and unique uses highlighted its longer term potential as an important waterfront public place.

Over the last 15 years, planning efforts undertaken by the City for the South Boston Waterfront have contributed to a surge of interest in the area. The development of the Moakley Federal Courthouse (containing significant public art by Ellsworth Kelly), the current development of the new Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, and the Silver Line Transitway have underscored this potential, lending dramatic new significance to the mile-long body of water separating the Financial District from the South Boston Waterfront. While the Channel has been a construction zone for much of the 1990's to the present, preventing any significant activity on the watersheet, as construction associated with the Central Artery/Tunnel Project and the Transitway approaches completion, the stage is set for a new era in the Channel's history. This long-overlooked waterway now has the potential to serve as a catalyst for the creation of a unique and special public destination, linking other public places and waterfront destinations.

However, despite these positive developments, the results of sustained efforts by the public and private sectors, significant challenges to achieving the Channel's true potential remain. Until these challenges are resolved, the Channel will fall short of its potential to contribute dramatically to the vitality



Structures such as the Milk Bottle are part of the Channel's unique landscape, animating the wharf outside the Children's Museum and serving affordable food.

of surrounding neighborhoods and the city as a whole. The challenges that are most pressing can be categorized broadly in eleven thematic areas; the particular challenges of individual locations may span one or more of these areas.

COORDINATED PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING OF THE WATERSHEET

Given the large number of abutting landowners with varying goals, and the complex city, state and federal regulatory environment, without coordinated planning and an overarching vision, it will be difficult to achieve the full potential of the Fort Point Channel watersheet. Without coordinated planning and programming, there is great potential for conflicting proposals and piecemeal solutions, with individual sites planned and permitted in isolation from one another. In addition, while several Fort Point Channel abutters have advanced constructive concepts for providing public access to the Channel and its watersheet, others have limited ability to develop the kinds of infrastructure and programming that will help the Channel achieve its potential.



Sections of Harborwalk such as that at 255 Summer Street need improvement to make them fully accessible to all members of the public, and at all time periods.

The public-private partnership established for this planning process among the City, abutters and waterfront advocates, represents the most effective way to create a coherent plan for the Channel watersheet that protects the public interest and provides for a fair and equitable participation of stakeholders while advancing the entrepreneurial aims of surrounding landowners. In order to be fully successful this partnership will need to be sustained and broadened from the current planning phase into future design and implementation phases.

ENHANCED PUBLIC ACCESS TO EDGES OF THE CHANNEL

Completion of Harborwalk around every side of the Channel is a major goal of this Plan and is required to capture the waterway's full potential as a public place. The wave of construction activity now underway will dramatically increase public access. New sections of Harborwalk have been added or enhanced at the Children's Museum, 303 Congress Street and 470 Atlantic Avenue. Planned improvements to the Channel's edges will substantially increase the degree of public access to the edge of the waterway by 2004. For more than a decade, only about one-tenth, or one thousand linear feet, of the Channel's

water edge has been publicly accessible on land. With the completion of current construction projects in the Channel area by the Central Artery/Tunnel Project and the MBTA, over 3,500 linear feet of additional public access will be added. Perhaps most significantly, access along the eastern side of the Channel across the properties owned by the Gillette Company will open the way to a meaningful connection between the Channel and inland city neighborhoods via the planned South Bay Harbor Trail. This improvement perhaps more than any other will increase the public visibility and awareness of the waterway. With the potential future development of the U. S. Postal Service property on the western side of the Channel, over 2,000 additional linear feet of public access could ultimately be added. As new segments of Harborwalk are added, upgrades to several existing segments are also needed to provide barrier-free access for all members of the public, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

While access to the edge of the water is a crucial first step in establishing the Channel as a public destination, public enjoyment of the Channel will continue to be limited if a diverse range of public amenities and open spaces are not provided along the water's edge. These amenities are essential to attracting the public to the Channel, as are well-developed, extensive and attractive connections to surrounding neighborhoods.

ENHANCED PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE WATERSHEET

Active public use of the watersheet for transportation, recreation and education purposes will require the development of new access points and docking facilities that reflect today's needs. Physical access to the Fort Point Channel watersheet is currently very limited. The sole (non-construction related) access point to the watersheet is behind the Barking Crab Restaurant, at the Neptune Marine Services dock adjacent to the Evelyn Moakley Bridge. The Central Artery/Tunnel Project's water transportation terminal at 500 Atlantic Avenue will enhance water access, but without substantial additional improvements public access

to the water will continue to be restricted. Without the development of an extensive network of new access points along and across the watershed, it will remain little more than a visual amenity, a reflecting pool mirroring surrounding activity rather than a dynamic source of life and activity. When local artists installed floating art works on the Channel recently, these had to be transported by road from Fort Point Channel to Charlestown and then towed back across the harbor to Fort Point Channel because of the absence of suitable access points to the watershed within the Channel today. To capture the full potential of the Channel as a recreational and cultural amenity for the entire city, enhanced public access to the water in every basin of the Channel will be required. The Channel's ten-foot tidal change also presents a challenge in trying to provide public access to the watershed. To provide full handicapped accessibility, ramps down to docking structures must be at least 120 feet long at low tide with one or more switchback landings, or 200 feet long without landings. Ramp riders or other mechanisms may be considered in areas where there is limited physical area to accommodate these ramps.

PRESERVATION OF THE UNIQUE ELEMENTS OF FORT POINT'S BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The built environment of Fort Point Channel is among the most evocative in Boston. Fort Point's vitality is characterized by a diverse mix of old and new structures that in combination create economic opportunities that can facilitate implementation of this Plan. Formed on one edge by the Financial District and on the other by South Boston, it is not the Boston of Beacon Hill or the Back Bay, nor is it the pastorally serene water of the Charles River Basin. Rather, it is one of the few places in Boston where visitors can truly experience Boston's industrial heritage in close proximity to many of its newest structures and attractions.

The unique elements in and around the Channel should be preserved to maintain the delicate balance that now exists between Boston's past and its future. The seawalls stand as



Fort Point Channel is a story of dramatic contrasts between old and new.

a silent reminder of the four centuries of human effort required for Boston to try to tame the sea for its own uses, and of the land that was created where once there was ocean. And many of the buildings around the Channel, particularly the splendid examples of industrial architecture on the South Boston side of the Channel, speak to earlier times in Boston's history.

ENHANCED PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ACCESS AND PARKING

Enhanced public transportation including water transit is an essential ingredient of the future success of the Channel area. Parking availability also represents a problem for key anchors of activation in the Channel area including the Children's Museum and the Tea Party Ship and Museum. Area parking is fully utilized in the mid-morning period with very few if any spaces available in the 14 parking facilities located close to the Channel. Also, overall transportation access including pick-up/drop-off and layover parking for tour and trolley buses remains a problem throughout downtown Boston. Further study of public access and transportation options



The Fort Point Channel watersheet with construction underway in 2001. This underutilized waterway presents an opportunity to create a unique public space in the heart of the city.

and amenities is needed. This effort should ensure that adequate signage is provided for pedestrians between transit and Channel destinations and that information is provided on water transit services in the Channel, at Fan Pier and throughout the downtown waterfront.

The City of Boston Transportation Department has formed the Tourism Transportation Task Force that will guide planning aimed toward coordinated transportation access with the needs of the tourism industry. One expected element of the plan is a proposed network of pick-up/drop-off locations and layover sites for all modes that responds to the interests of vehicle operators and tourist destinations, and that minimizes the adverse impacts on city street and communities. The results of this process should benefit several anchor attractions in the Channel area.

Public parking in the Channel area has diminished with the reduction of garages and lots and will be less available as the

area is further developed, although new development in the area may provide additional off-peak options for parking. Public transit is not generally an option for families with young children. Furthermore, weekday off-peak public transit is often not an option due to full parking lots at originating locations. Future improvements to public transportation including the addition of the Silver Line and a new water transportation terminal in the Fort Point Channel will greatly improve access to the area for some visitors.

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH OF EXISTING ANCHORS

The major Fort Point Channel attractions together with the New England Aquarium and the proposed Institute of Contemporary Art at the Fan Pier represent some of the most significant attractions, existing or planned, for the downtown waterfront. The continued growth and success of existing Fort Point Channel attractions are essential to



View from the Federal Courthouse towards the Children's Museum. The Museum is considering a major expansion of its facilities.

the future success of the district. The Children's Museum, the Boston Tea Party Ship and Museum and the Fort Point Arts community are unique sources of programming that will be essential to sustaining the vitality and diversity of the area. Public spaces and exhibit areas in the Federal Courthouse and Federal Reserve Bank provide additional opportunities for public use. Fort Point Channel attractions face a number of physical and economic challenges that must be overcome if they are to contribute fully to creating Boston's "Next Great Place."

The Children's Museum is considering a major expansion of its facilities. The Museum, one of the key anchors of activation in the Fort Point Channel area, provides a unique destination for residents of Boston and beyond. With its expansion it will remain a significant presence in the Channel area. The expansion, combined with active programming of the water's edge and the management of the future Children's Park between the Museum and the Evelyn Moakley Bridge,

has the potential to substantially increase attendance at the Museum and enable it to expand its public and educational programming. However the Children's Museum reports that even under current conditions, the success of the Museum is hampered by the limited availability of parking for its visitors in key time periods and pick-up/drop-off facilities for tour and trolley buses. Unlike other major cultural and educational attractions within the city including the Museum of Science, the New England Aquarium and the Museum of Fine Arts, the Children's Museum has no dedicated parking and pick-up/drop-off area to serve its visitors.

Reports detail that Children's Museum visitors are being lost to suburban museums or other attractions that currently provide better transportation amenities. Currently almost 70% of museum visitors drive, a profile similar to comparable attractions in other cities. While the use of alternative transit options is promoted by the Museum, it is important to recognize that these transit options do not fully meet the needs of



This postcard was issued by the Fort Point Cultural Coalition to promote its very successful public art program on the Channel in 2001. This program highlighted the waterway's potential as an artistic destination.

the Museum's key audience, children 0-6 and their adult companions, in terms of access, ease or desirability.

The Children's Museum states that a long-term solution to peak period parking will be required if it is to be fully successful in contributing to the success of the Channel as a destination. The Museum is currently investigating parking options that align with its master planning efforts and the Watersheet Activation Plan. The Museum, working with others in the neighborhood, is seeking to develop parking solutions that will serve visitors of the Museum and provide a necessary ancillary amenity to Channel users.

The Boston Tea Party Ship and Museum is also planning a major expansion within the Channel area that will add two vessels and incorporate expanded support facilities. The timing of the facility's expansion is linked to reconstruction of the Congress Street Bridge that is scheduled to commence in 2002. Timely completion of the bridge project will enable the expansion of this important attraction.

The Fort Point Arts Community is in a unique position to contribute to the success of the Channel area by providing creative arts programming on the Channel watersheet and along its edges. Fort Point artists have undertaken floating art exhibits and performances around the Channel waterway, and several Fort Point groups work collaboratively with youth programs in neighborhoods citywide. However, real estate pressures in the district are potentially endangering the near-term viability of the district for many segments of the resident arts community. The Fort Point Cultural Coalition has identified the need for 500,000 square feet of space including 50,000 square feet of exhibit/performance space in the district to address the community's needs. The stability and participation of the surrounding arts community is integral to the success of Fort Point Channel as a unique destination. The City is committed to sustaining a vibrant arts community. The BRA has engaged a specialist on staff to address the need for artist live/work and work only space citywide and a cultural facilities planner.

ENHANCED VISIBILITY OF FORT POINT ARTS COMMUNITY AROUND THE CHANNEL

The Fort Point Channel has the potential to be one of the most visible arts destinations in the city, building on the strengths of

the resident arts community while enabling it to forge partnerships with citywide, regional and national partners.

CREATION OF NEW PUBLIC SPACES AND PUBLIC ATTRACTIONS AROUND THE CHANNEL AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

While the continued vitality and growth of the Children's Museum, the Boston Tea Party Ship and Museum and the Fort Point Arts community are very important to the success of the district, over the longer term additional major public uses including civic and cultural destinations will need to be added along the waterfront to further enhance its contributions to the life of the city and the region. These attractions will need to be a part of major new developments around the Channel. In particular the provision of a major public destination, or interior cultural or civic spaces that can support staging of major festivals and activities or special events is one element that can contribute to making Fort Point Channel a year-round public destination.

CONTINUED EFFORTS TO ENHANCE CHANNEL WATER QUALITY WITH A RENEWED FOCUS ON STORMWATER

The strong interest in providing for recreational boating and other similar public uses within the Channel will require a continuing commitment to enhanced water quality within the Channel. Although the Boston Harbor Cleanup has substantially improved water quality in Fort Point Channel over the last decade, water in the Channel today often falls short of appropriate water quality standards associated with active recreational uses, largely due to

MWRA Fort Point Channel CSO Improvement Program		
	Current	2005-07
CSO Outflows (million gallons/yr)	142	76
Treated Flows (million gallons/yr)	0	71
Untreated Flows (million gallons/yr)	142	5



Fort Point Channel near the Broadway Bridge. A major combined sewer outfall currently discharges over 142 million gallons annually into this basin. With implementation of MWRA's CSO improvement project, untreated discharges will be reduced by 97% in 2005, substantially improving water quality in the Channel.



The 16-foot vertical clearance of the fixed Evelyn Moakley Bridge at Mean High Water (MHW) is the limiting factor for vessels seeking to enter the Channel.

the presence of numerous Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO) and stormwater outfalls. The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority's program of improvements to CSOs will substantially improve conditions in the Channel starting in the spring of 2005, with additional incremental improvements planned in 2007. This project will eliminate approximately 95% of current untreated sewer outflows. Untreated CSO outflows into the Fort Point Channel will be reduced from 142 million gallons to less than 5 million gallons annually. Overall volumes will be reduced from 142 million gallons of flow to 76 million gallons of which, 71 million gallons will be disinfected and dechlorinated. Under this MWRA program, CSO discharges from seven outfalls within Fort Point Channel will be reduced in number from 76 events per year to 29 events. The improvements that contribute most directly to this change are scheduled to be in place by early 2005 following completion of the Union Park Pump Station in the South End that has an outfall adjacent to the West Fourth Street Bridge. The remaining improvements are associated with a conduit to be constructed between Washington and A

Streets that is scheduled to be completed in early 2007.

Improvements that will result from the proposed development of the Union Park facility will have particularly beneficial effects on the southern end of the Channel where current water quality conditions are very poor following any storm event. However, while the MWRA's project will virtually eliminate untreated sewer outflows into the Channel except in the most extreme storm events, stormwater flows will need additional attention to provide sustained improvements in Channel water quality over time. Upon completion of its CSO improvements, MWRA estimates that stormwater flows through approximately 12 outfalls to Fort Point Channel will account for approximately three times the flows associated with CSOs and consequently efforts to enhance water quality associated with these flows has special importance. Achieving continued improvement in Channel water quality will require ongoing cooperation between City and state agencies including the Boston Water and Sewer Commission, the Boston Department of Public Works, the MWRA, and other stakeholders.



An abandoned water line between Congress Street and Summer Street will be removed as part of the Congress Street Bridge reconstruction. This improvement will enhance the overall identity of the waterway and open the way for productive use of this section of the Channel. A new Harborwalk segment at 303 Congress Street recently opened.

MATCHING PROGRAMMING WITH PHYSICAL CONSTRAINTS ON WATERSHEET USE

The primary physical factor influencing potential watersheet uses is the vertical clearance provided by Channel bridges. While the Channel's operable bridges initially provided very limited restrictions on use of the watersheet, even by the late 19th century the disruption to landside activity caused by bridge openings was presenting a challenge. Today, all of the Channel's bridges except the Old Northern Avenue Bridge are inoperable; the vertical clearance below fixed bridges defines what types of activity are viable within each basin of the Channel. The 16-foot vertical clearance of the fixed Evelyn Moakley Bridge at Mean High Water (MHW) is the limiting factor for vessels seeking to enter the Channel. This clearance will accommodate most water transportation shuttles operating in the harbor, together with water taxi and other small and mid-sized powered vessels but will not accommodate large ferries or masted vessels. The Congress Street Bridge further limits vessel size with a vertical clearance of approximately 6 feet at MHW, effectively limiting

Fort Point Channel Fixed Bridge Clearances

at Mean High Water	
Evelyn Moakley Bridge	16 feet
Congress Street Bridge	6 feet
Summer Street Bridge	4 feet
Dorchester Avenue Bridge	5 feet
MBTA Railroad Bridge	6 feet
Wye Connector Bridge	2.5 feet
Broadway Bridge	20 feet

Note: for clearance at Mean Low Water add 10 feet.

scheduled water transportation services from extending past this bridge, but can accommodate water taxi service in certain segments of the tidal range. The Summer Street Bridge has a vertical clearance of approximately 4 feet at MHW resulting in similar constraints. The new Dorchester Avenue Bridge, the MBTA Rail Bridge, the Wye Connector and the Broadway Bridge have clearances at MHW of 5 feet, 6 feet, 2.5 feet, and 20 feet respectively and together pose similar constraints for vessel operations at the southern end of the Channel.

Current water depths in most areas of Fort Point Channel north of the Dorchester Avenue Bridge are generally in the 12-30 foot range at Mean Low Water (MLW), sufficient to support the full range of potential waterborne activity in all tidal conditions. The exceptions to this general rule are certain portions of the western edge of the Channel along Russia Wharf, between the Congress Street and Summer Street bridges and along the frontage of the U.S. Postal Service property. The Channel bottom is exposed in these areas at low tide. Over the longer term it may be desirable to consider limited dredging programs in these areas to facilitate enhanced watersheet use along the western edge of the Channel. Under current conditions with public access severely limited on the west side of the Channel, dredging is not considered a priority. However, as public access is provided to this edge over time, dredging may be merited in order to enhance use of the watersheet in this area. South of the Dorchester Avenue Bridge, the waterway is very shallow at low tide limiting potential uses to small craft in most tidal conditions. The Central Artery/Tunnel Project will undertake dredging within this segment of the Channel that will increase water depths by approximately 5 feet and enhance opportunities for public use and enjoyment of the waterway.

For many years, a large number of abandoned pile fields within the Channel have resulted in obstructions to navigation. However, many of these have been removed by the Central Artery/Tunnel Project; most of the remaining abandoned piles will be removed as part of the Congress Street Bridge reconstruction project. This project will also remove an abandoned water line that crosses the Channel between Congress Street and Summer Street supported on a pile-supported platform and a submerged barge located in front of the Children's Museum.

Tidal conditions also influence a boater's experience of the Channel. At low tide, the predominant visual experience can be the view of the seawall rather than landside activities. This factor will need to be carefully considered in the development of water-based programming that is appealing to the public.

CONTINUED COOPERATION WITH LEGISLATORS AND REGULATORS TO FACILITATE ACTIVATION OF THE CHANNEL

The complex federal, state and municipal legal and regulatory framework that governs water based development in and around Fort Point Channel is broadly supportive of the development of the Channel for water-dependent use. The state Waterways Regulations and the Municipal Harbor Plan process, in particular, represent powerful tools for implementing many aspects of the Watersheet Plan in the context of landside development. The process of developing this plan has already involved close cooperation with key agencies including the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM). Continued close cooperation with regulators and the Massachusetts Legislature will ensure that activation of the watersheet is consistent with key legislative and regulatory goals.

Federal Channel: Fort Point Channel has historically been an important navigation channel for industry formerly located in South Bay. A federal navigation channel extends from Boston Harbor into Fort Point Channel between the Old Northern Avenue Bridge and the Summer Street Bridge. The federal channel is approximately 180 feet wide between the Evelyn Moakley Bridge and the Congress Street Bridge, and is narrower at other points within the Fort Point Channel. In general terms, with some very limited exceptions, structures are not permitted to be located within areas designated as federal channels. The location of the federal channel is seen as an asset not an obstacle to activating the Channel's watersheet.

Chapter 91 of the Massachusetts General Laws and the state's Waterways Regulations represent the key tools for regulating land and waterside development around Fort Point Channel. The South Boston Waterfront Municipal Harbor Plan has been identified by the BRA as an implementation tool, along with municipal zoning, for advancing the Public Realm Plan in the area. Similarly, both the

Bridge to a line approximately 60 feet north of the I-90 extension tunnel under Fort Point Channel. The Harbor Line defines the limit of any pier or major float structures that may be authorized by DEP. Permanent structures may only be extended beyond the Harbor Line following authorization by the Massachusetts legislature. The location of the Harbor Line within the Channel is a vestige of another era in shipping when very large vessels used the Channel and the public interest was well-served by prohibitions on the development of structures within the Channel that could provide obstacles to navigation for large vessels, or where filling of the Channel could lead to shoaling of the waterway. However, in recent years the location of the state Harbor Line has become a challenge in developing the type of marine structures needed to facilitate use of the Fort Point Channel for water transportation and recreational purposes. For example, the new water transportation terminal to be constructed by the Central Artery/Tunnel Project at 500 Atlantic Avenue required legislative action to authorize its development. Similarly the water transportation terminal at Rowes Wharf required action by the legislature, as did the Children's Museum in the late 1980s when it was considering expansion. More recently, the Tea Party Ship and Museum has sought legislative action to authorize its current facility and will likely require further action to advance its proposed expansion. Additionally, the Central Artery/Tunnel Project has sought and was granted legislative relief from state Harbor Line provisions in several portions of the Channel to enable construction to move forward. In granting projects exemptions, the legislature has also authorized DEP to review projects for compliance with the provisions of the Waterways Regulations, ensuring appropriate review of proposed actions in terms of potential impacts on navigation and other important considerations.

The Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA): The MEPA review process provides additional oversight of waterfront related development within the project area. MEPA oversight has frequently stressed the importance of water transportation service in serving the needs of water-side development projects around Boston

Harbor (although the baseline requirement for water transportation including operating subsidies is found in Chapter 91 licenses).

Harbormaster 10A Permits: The Boston Harbormaster can authorize certain types of anchorages within the Channel for a yearly term. In general, the structures that can be authorized by the Harbormaster are modestly-scaled, bottom anchored or moored structures or small floats.

Boston Conservation Commission: The Commission has jurisdiction over the Channel under the provisions of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act. In addition to its role with respect to water quality, the Commission has played a strong role in advancing improvements to Harborwalk, especially in the case of projects that do not fall under the jurisdiction of other regulatory programs.

Boston Zoning Code Article 80: Most of the projects contemplated around the edges of Fort Point Channel are large enough to trigger the provisions of Boston Zoning Code Article 80, governing the review of projects for impacts on the public realm. Through this review process, the Boston Redevelopment Authority works with project developers to mitigate adverse impacts from traffic, wind, shadows, and other designed elements. The City of Boston also regulates development around the edges of the Channel, through its leadership in the Municipal Harbor Plan process and its advisory and commenting role in the Chapter 91 licensing process.

VI. THE PLAN: SHAPING THE FUTURE OF THE CHANNEL AND ITS EDGES



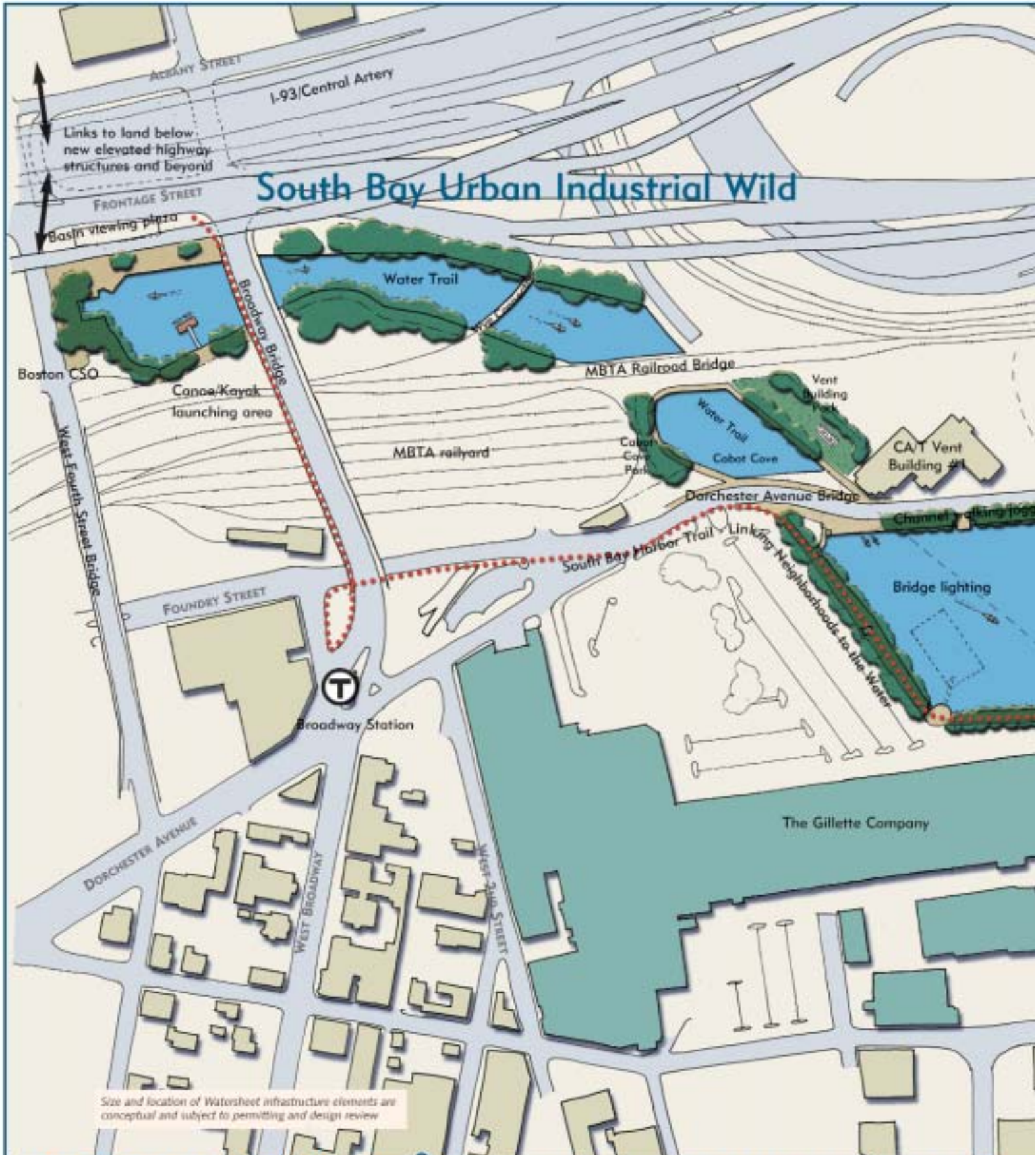
Overview

The Fort Point Channel Watersheet Activation Plan establishes a vision, plan and implementation strategy for shaping the Channel as Boston's "Next Great Place," inviting the public to the water's edge and down onto the watersheet to take part in a wide range of recreational, educational and artistic activities.

This vision anticipates establishing the Channel waterway as a great new public park, "Boston Common on the Water," supporting a diverse range of public uses and activities on the watersheet and around the water's edge that are entertaining, affordable, and attractive to the broadest spectrum of city residents, the area workforce and visitors to the city.

This Plan builds on the area's current strengths including the energy and creativity of existing institutions such as the Children's Museum, the Boston Tea Party Ship and Museum, and the relatively untapped potential of the Fort Point Arts community. The Plan strongly supports existing water-dependent uses including Hook Lobster, Neptune Marine Services and The Gillette Company. The preservation of existing landside and waterside access to these uses is critical.

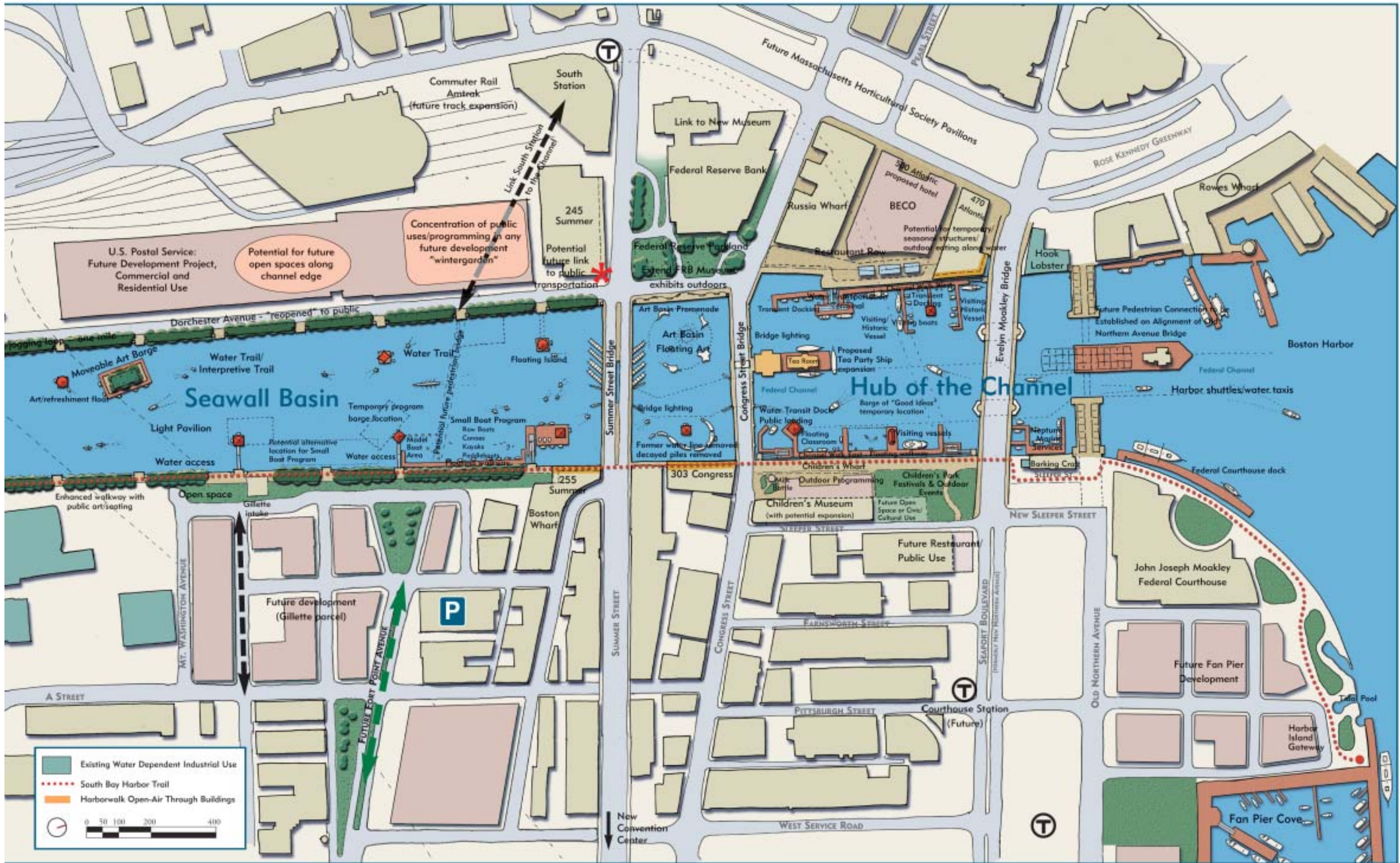
The Plan identifies appropriate uses for each segment of the watersheet and identifies associated land and waterside infrastructure to support these uses; it provides a framework for the further development of Harborwalk along the Channel's edges.



Size and location of Watersheet infrastructure elements are conceptual and subject to permitting and design review

FORT POINT CHANNEL WATERSHEET ACTIVATION PLAN

GOODY, CLANCY & ASSOCIATES | THE WATERFRONT CENTER | VINE ASSOCIATES | FRM ASSOCIATES | VANASSE HANGEN BRUSTLIN | BYRNE, WPKINNEY & ASSOCIATES | TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE FORT POINT CHANNEL ABUTTERS GROUP & THE FORT POINT CHANNEL WORKING GROUP





View of the Channel looking towards the South Boston Waterfront. Floating walkways line the Channel between Congress Street and Boston Harbor. The Art Basin incorporating permanent and temporary art and on-water performances is in the center. To the right is the Seawall Basin with small boat activities including rowing, canoeing and kayaking with floating islands located within the center of the Channel.

While the primary focus of the Plan is on the potential of the watersheet itself, the goal of establishing Fort Point Channel as a year-round waterfront destination is also linked to the creation of landside interior programming and destinations that complement the attractiveness of the waterway and its use. The uses of the watersheet may serve as a primary attractor of people to this destination in warmer weather, and can substantially add to the attractiveness of the destination in all seasons. However, the success of this location as a four season public destination will require the development of new landside attractions including civic and cultural uses to complement the draw of the Children's Museum and other year round uses. In this regard, the opportunity to greatly enhance connections between South Station and the Channel through redevelopment of the U.S. Postal Service facility provides a dramatic opportunity to link the waterway to the region's most important transportation hub. Uses within the Channel must also be linked to other waterfront destinations including future public uses at Fan Pier such as the Institute of Contemporary Art Museum and space associated with the Children's Museum and the Harbor Islands.

The overall Plan for the Channel as outlined here will be accomplished in multiple phases. Important sections of the Channel are now becoming available for public use following completion of construction including the reopened Children's Wharf, a new Harborwalk segment and the 14th floor harbor viewing gallery at 470 Atlantic Avenue/Independence Wharf, and the reopened Harborwalk segment associated with reconstruction of 303 Congress Street. These changes begin to allow the public a glimpse of the Channel's emerging potential. Within two or three years, a dramatic transformation will be well underway with completion of almost all of the construction work currently underway between the Summer Street Bridge and the harbor.

The Plan identifies new floating docks and other marine infrastructure that will be needed to fully activate the watersheet. The size and location of these facilities are identified conceptually based on needs and opportunities associated with the Channel as a whole. However it should not be assumed that the adjacent landowner is necessarily responsible for the development or funding of this infrastructure. The potential uses and opportunities associated with each segment of the Channel are shaped by the characteristics of the waterway itself including basin size, water depths and accessibility; the characteristics of the water's edge including public accessibility; the synergy with surrounding land uses, especially public uses and destinations; and most importantly water quality within the Channel itself.

Based on these factors, the Channel can broadly be understood as three distinct areas each with its own unique challenges and potentials:

- ◆ **Hub of the Channel**, between the Old Northern Avenue Bridge and the Summer Street Bridge
- ◆ **Seawall Basin**, between the Summer Street Bridge and the Dorchester Avenue Bridge
- ◆ **South Bay Urban Industrial Wild**, extending from the Dorchester Avenue Bridge to the end of the Channel at the West Fourth Street Bridge

The issues and opportunities associated with each area are discussed later in this section.

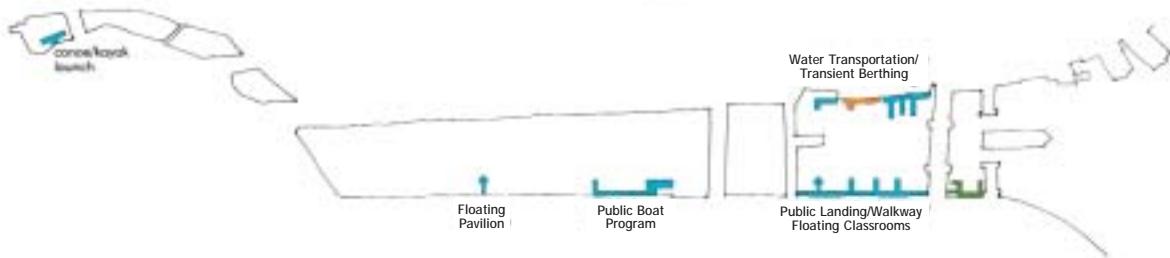
Public access to the Channel's edges

- Existing Access
- ◆ New Access by 2003/4
- ★ Potential Additional Access By 2010



Public access to Watersheet

- Existing Access
- Planned Access by Central Artery/Tunnel Project
- Additional Access Structures by Watersheet Plan



Public use of the Watersheet

- Existing Use
- Planned Use by 2005
- Planned Use after 2005 (interim use prior to 2005)



KEY CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

Fort Point Channel can become Boston's "Next Great Place" if the potential of its underutilized watershed can be captured for public use. Four steps are necessary if this potential is to be truly harnessed:

- ◆ **Public access must be provided to the Channel's edges.** This step is well underway and as construction activity around the Channel is completed by late 2005, the public will be able to access the Channel's edges as never before.
- ◆ **Public access to the watershed must be provided** through the development of marine infrastructure that allows the public to get down to the water and into boats. Current and planned access is very limited. This Watersheet Plan proposes the development of several new docks and boat launching points that must be developed if active use of the watershed is to occur. The Plan also supports the provision of operating subsidies for water transportation and other watershed uses.
- ◆ **Public use of the watershed must be encouraged** through the development of creative water-based programming that is affordable, and attractive to a wide range of city residents, downtown workers, and visitors to the city. Based on research undertaken as part of the development of this Plan and documented separately in an Appendix, there is strong interest among community boating programs and many other groups in developing water based programs in Fort Point Channel. There is strong potential for a diverse mix of economically sustainable, affordable programming on the Channel watershed. However, while a broad range of uses are possible, these publicly oriented uses that provide broad opportunities for the wider public to enjoy access to the water will not be able to support the initial costs of marine infrastructure required to sustain their operations. These initial infrastructure costs will need to be provided through funding associated with landside private sector development, through public funds, and other sources. In the event that watershed boating programs were required to cover all costs associated with infrastructure and operations out of revenues, the types of feasible programming would be very constrained and limited to high end marina facilities with limited public access or affordability.
- ◆ **Protection of water-dependent uses must be accomplished.**

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

The potential economic and community benefits of a successfully implemented Fort Point Channel Watersheet Activation Plan are substantial:

- ◆ It can improve the livability of the city and the quality of life for local residents. The uses considered for Fort Point Channel can appeal to a broad audience of family, young adult, and older adult households, including those who cannot afford or do not desire to spend money.
- ◆ It can enhance the area's attractiveness to both employers and employees. The ability of a business to attract and retain a quality workforce is improved if workers like the area in which they work. There are many examples of employers citing the contribution that lunchtime recreational and eating opportunities, evening social opportunities, mixed crowds, and an inviting environment positively affect their ability to attract and retain management, technical, clerical, and production employees and colleagues.
- ◆ It can provide new venues for Boston artists and performers, improving their earnings potential and challenging artists with new opportunities for creative expression and display.
- ◆ It can present the area as an attractive destination for all tourists as a cultural and historical resource. The unique mixture of uses and its location between the new convention center and more established tourism destinations (Faneuil Hall, Aquarium, U.S.S. Constitution, Boston Common, etc.) makes the Fort Point area a natural destination for visitors to shop in and explore.
- ◆ It can enhance the competitive position of hotels, restaurants, retailers, and cultural institutions. A Fort Point Channel amenity may even be essential for new projects, as well as existing abutters, to achieve their objectives for room rates and occupancy levels, food/beverage/gift sales, and admissions and membership revenues. Such commercial and institutional uses have a great deal to gain from implementation of the Plan.
- ◆ It can increase property values, providing the City of Boston with additional tax revenues. City residents may have a higher proportional benefit to the extent the leveraged property values and taxes are attributable to the spending of non-resident workers, tourists and other visitors.

PLAN DESCRIPTION

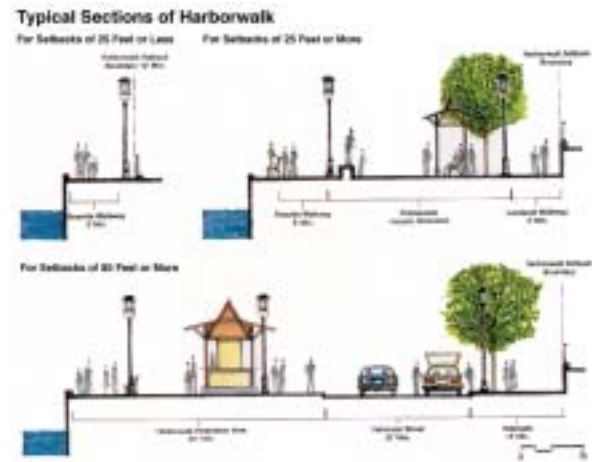
Several initiatives represent overarching themes or needs that must be addressed if Fort Point Channel is to meet its full potential. These include the following factors:

- ◆ Completion of Harborwalk around Fort Point Channel
- ◆ Expanded Watersheet Use and Access
- ◆ Water Quality Enhancements
- ◆ Integrating Land and Water-based Activities
- ◆ Connections to Neighborhoods & Regional Transportation
- ◆ Cultural Loop Water Transportation Service
- ◆ Existing and New Anchor Attractions
- ◆ Events Programming
- ◆ Public Art and Lighting
- ◆ Storytelling and Wayfinding
- ◆ Maintenance and Management
- ◆ Harbor Line Exemptions

Completion of Harborwalk around Fort Point Channel

With the completion of Harborwalk around the Channel, the city has the potential to create one of its most remarkable public spaces. The goal of this Plan is to secure public access to both edges of the Fort Point Channel north of the Dorchester Avenue Bridge, providing a promenade almost three-quarters of a mile long on either side, connecting inland neighborhoods to the water.

Currently planned improvements will complete the eastern segment of Harborwalk by 2003 linking the South Bay Harbor Trail to the harbor. Full development of the western segment of Harborwalk is linked to development of the U.S. Postal Service property that would add over 2,000 linear feet to Harborwalk. These promenades that line the Channel should reflect the grand character and scale of the waterway. Many sections of the walkway have the potential to be enriched by the creation of complementary public spaces as envisioned within the Public Realm Plan, that enable the public to enjoy the Channel edges, take in the activities occurring on the water, participate in special events, performances or festivals on land or water. In many cases, these edges of the Channel should incorporate uses that are accessory to activities on the watersheet, including



The Boston Redevelopment Authority has prepared guidelines for the development of Harborwalk.

temporary or seasonal structures, refreshment stands, storage areas and other amenities for water-dependent uses. Harborwalk should be fully accessible, meeting all applicable codes and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). A particular priority around the Channel will be retrofitting areas that do not meet this standard or where access is limited to certain times. Harborwalk must include consistent lighting all around the Channel. In sections of Harborwalk where there is limited potential for connections to the adjacent landside user, or limited connections to surrounding neighborhoods it will be especially important to accommodate extensive seating areas and tree planting to ensure that the walkway provides an attractive public setting and the opportunity to rest and enjoy the scene. Issues associated with Harborwalk will continue to be studied in conjunction with the development of landside development projects.

Expanded Watersheet Use and Access

The Plan identifies proposed activities for each of the three segments of the watersheet and identifies appropriate points of access. These access points and the associated structures are required to support future boating activity and other anticipated watersheet uses. Additional technical discussion, design criteria and cost information associated with these structures is included in an Appendix to the Plan. These access structures should not only be considered as serving the boating public alone but should also enable a

wider public to gain access down to the edge of the water in all tidal conditions in each of the Channel's basins. The Plan supports the development of fully ADA accessible connections to floating structures throughout the Channel. At several locations within the Channel, the Plan supports the development of extensive networks of publicly accessible floating walkways that like Harborwalk extend seamlessly across the boundaries of land-based ownerships. The primary purpose of these walkways is to provide public access to boats and other watersheet programming. Appropriate controls should be established to ensure pedestrian safety on these waterside walkways. Chapter 21, section 17 of the Massachusetts General Law limits the liability of landowners in making land available to the public for recreational purposes.

The Plan identifies potential locations for the development of docks to support boating activities. As previously noted, these locations are not intended to imply that development of such facilities is necessarily the responsibility of the adjacent landowner. Final locations and designs will be determined through future design and permitting efforts.

Expanded public use and enjoyment of the watersheet will also require the provision of landside support structures including but not limited to boat and gear storage, ticketing, changing areas, lockers and showers. The requirements for each of these uses will be linked to the specific waterside proposal.

The Plan supports creative and unique water-based activities on barges or other floating structures for performances and events. However, this programming should be considered temporary and limited. Over time the Fort Point Channel watersheet should not become a repository of various uses on floating structures that could more effectively be accommodated on land. One of the ideas that was suggested during the public process was to establish a "Barge of Good Ideas," a floating structure that accommodated temporary programming throughout the Channel, changing from year-to-year and season-to-season. Structures on

the watersheet should also be generally limited to temporary, seasonal enclosures unless they are directly accessory to year-round, water-based programming. The design of permanent and temporary enclosures should be carefully considered to avoid blocking views from the land at key locations or limiting the views of the water itself.

Ladders and other safety equipment should be installed at reasonable intervals along the Channel waterway where floats are not provided at water level.

Water Quality Enhancements

The Plan anticipates greatly expanded public use of the Channel bringing the public directly in contact with the water through a diverse range of recreational boating programs and activities. Continued cooperation between agencies and other stakeholders will be needed to ensure that the potential of the Channel as a public recreational resource is optimized. Additional technical discussion is contained in an Appendix to the Plan.

Integrating Land and Water-based Activities

Wherever possible, water-based programming within the Channel should be closely linked to landside activities and uses, with water-related uses serving a natural extension onto the water of the landside activities or vice-versa. Over the longer term, this linkage between land and water uses can contribute directly to the success and sustainability of watersheet programming around the Channel. However, there are several sections of Fort Point Channel where land-based sponsors for water-related activities do not exist. In these instances it will be critical to ensure that water-based programming has the necessary land-based facilities and financial support to sustain high quality and affordable programming over the longer term.

Connections to Neighborhoods and Regional Transportation

Fort Point Channel is located at a critical position within the city and regional transportation network. South Station is the region's most important intermodal transportation terminal and Rows Wharf is its highest volume water



In 2001, Fort Point artists created "green sidewalks on the Summer Street Bridge, capturing media attention and highlighting the Channel's potential as a destination for public art and performances.



The Boston Tea Party Ship and Museum is planning a substantial expansion of its facility at the Congress Street Bridge with the potential to double its visitation.

transportation facility. Fort Point Channel is very favorably located to play an ever-growing role in the citywide water transportation network, particularly intra-harbor services that link waterfront destinations including Long Wharf, Fan Pier Cove, the Charlestown Navy Yard, East Boston, and North Station/Lovejoy Wharf. As these types of services expand, either the 500 Atlantic Avenue water transportation terminal and/or the proposed public landing at Children's Wharf should be incorporated within these service routes. Pedestrian and bicycle access to and around the Channel will also be strongly enhanced through current projects strengthening the links between the Channel and city residential neighborhoods. These links should continue to be expanded and enhanced through future projects. While public transportation on land and water provides excellent access to the area, roadway access is also a key factor in the growth and development of the South Boston Waterfront. Extensive parking resources are located around Fort Point Channel but demand exceeds supply on weekdays. While limited parking supply is not a real factor for visitors or the downtown workforce, it is an important issue for regional and city residents. Ensuring an adequate supply of appropriately priced parking is an essential ingredient in the success of the Channel as a destination for city and regional residents over the long term. While weekday supply is severely limited particularly after the morning commute, evening and weekend supply is plentiful but the affordability of this supply may be a factor.

Cultural Loop Water Transportation Service

The restoration of Cultural Loop water transit service within the harbor has the potential to link Fort Point Channel to other waterfront cultural/tourism destinations around the city, establishing a network of linked waterfront places. Restoration of service could contribute directly to putting Fort Point Channel "on the map". This service would enable passengers to purchase a single ticket and get on and off at multiple destinations. Service within Fort Point Channel could be provided to the Children's Museum and other possible locations including the 500 Atlantic Avenue water transportation terminal.

Existing and New Anchor Attractions

The continued success of existing attractions and public destinations around the Channel is the key to enhancing its potential as a public destination. These attractions together with the strong resident Fort Point Arts community have the strongest potential and incentive to provide year-round creative programming around the Channel and on the watersheet. The continued development and growth of these entities is supported by the Plan.

The Children's Museum will manage the use and development of the new Children's Park adjacent to its facility on the Channel. Upon its opening in 2005, this park will become the largest public open space along the Channel and present a major opportunity for outdoor events and festivals. The next step in the development of Children's Wharf as a destination will be establishing direct links down to the water to create an educational and entertaining experience for families, children and the wider public.

The Boston Tea Party Ship and Museum is planning a substantial expansion of its facility at the Congress Street Bridge with the potential to double its visitation over the longer term to close to 500,000 people. This project will be subject to review by the City to evaluate its impacts. In particular, successfully accomplishing this expansion will require close cooperation with the City in addressing issues associated with staging for tour buses and trolleys within the area.

The Fort Point Arts community is strongly committed to playing a major role in shaping the Channel as a citywide and regional arts destination. The Plan supports the development of landside support facilities and exhibit space in order to facilitate this expanded role.

The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston is planning to create an exhibit oriented toward telling the story of New England's economic history that is strongly oriented to the maritime economy. Expansion of this exhibit from within the building onto the exterior along the Channel is encouraged.

New Destinations: In the mid and longer term, major new landside public attractions including civic and cultural uses, will be needed to further expand the role of the

Channel as a year round public destination. The establishment of major interior public spaces that can serve as year round destinations for public events is encouraged. This concept could be modeled on the Winter Garden in New York's Battery Park City. Such a concept could build on the range of programming activities that currently occur at South Station, but on a larger scope and scale.

Events Programming

Fort Point Channel can serve as a destination for a wide variety of public events and activities both on the water and along Harborwalk. An intensive program of activities could ultimately be undertaken during warm weather with additional events throughout the year on holidays and weekends. Events should complement and supplement landside programming and should be part of a coordinated strategy for enhancing public enjoyment of the Channel.

Public Art and Lighting

The development of a comprehensive public art program on the watersheet and around the Channel is a key element of the Plan and because of the strong presence of the Fort Point Arts community a unique opportunity to enrich the public environment and enhance the visibility of the arts community within the area. The Plan identifies some locations where public art may be appropriate, most specifically in the so-called "Art Basin" formed by the Congress Street and Summer Street bridges, the most visible location within the Channel, and along streets and bridges and along Harborwalk. This work should include large and small works, permanent and temporary works, performances, planned and spontaneous. The work should include themes inspired by the place but should not be limited to these alone. The full scope, scale and character of a public art program within the Channel will need to be the subject of ongoing discussions and should include a discussion of how Fort Point might continue to evolve as an arts destination of citywide and regional importance for both visual and performing arts. To date several key parties who should participate in these discussions have been identified; several of them have participated directly in shaping this Plan. They include Fort Point



Distinctive environmental graphics such as these at Bell Street Pier in Seattle can enhance visitor orientation and encourage exploration of the area.

based entities such as the Fort Point Cultural Coalition, Mobius, New England Foundation for the Arts, Revolving Museum, Artists for Humanity, and the Fort Point Arts Community, Inc. Other potential participants include Urban Arts and institutions potentially including the ICA, MassMOCA and the Museum of Fine Arts in conjunction with the City of Boston.

The Channel provides opportunities for special lighting programs or ideas that illuminate important structures including the Channel's historic bridges, its seawalls and the watersheet itself. This lighting should be considered as part of the artistic program for the Channel and an integral part of the overall arts program. Several thoughtful efforts are already underway including lighting of the Evelyn Moakley Bridge and lighting of portions of the water. Additional opportunities that should be developed include lighting of the Congress Street Bridge counterweight that is one of the most visible gateway experiences to the Channel and lighting of the Summer Street Bridge. Creative lighting presents one of the most significant immediate term opportunities to enhance and enliven the Channel as construction activity continues.

Storytelling and Wayfinding

A distinctive signage and environmental graphics program should be developed to encompass the entire area of Fort Point Channel. This should include wayfinding signs and maps of the Channel area that provide information and orientation about each part of the Channel. An interpretive program should also be developed that outlines the Channel's development over time and evolving relationship to the city as a whole. Appropriate themes include the evolution of the Channel from a natural waterway to a major industrial waterway and the evolving face of the city around it. Interpretive trails should be developed both on land and water that echo the themes of the Channel's history, development, and recent reclamation. Cities such as Montreal have been very effective in interpreting their industrial history along their waterfronts and linking this storytelling to landside museums that echo and expand on these themes.

Maintenance and Management

Consistently high standards of maintenance must be established throughout the Fort Point Channel if the area is to meet its potential as a public destination. This will require a coordinated effort involving the City and the abutters group. These efforts will need to address both land and waterside issues including the issue of marine debris that can particularly be an issue in Fort Point, as debris from city streets is carried onto the Channel through stormwater outfalls, or is blown off surrounding streets and properties.

Harbor Line Exemptions

Several of the boating facilities that are supported by the Plan and will enhance public use and access to the Channel may require exemptions from state Harbor Line provisions. The Plan supports development of a coordinated overall strategy for advancing these requests to the legislature that can expedite implementation while ensuring that DEP has the ability to review all proposals for conformance with the letter and spirit of the Waterways Regulations. The BRA will take the lead with the partnership to pursue legislative action.

Urban Design Framework:

Hub of the Channel

Seawall Basin

South Bay Urban Industrial Wild



Water transportation facilities at Rowes Wharf and within the Channel can support its development as a destination linked to other waterfront locations within Boston and the region.

WATERSHEET USES

HUB OF THE CHANNEL

MAIN BASIN

- Water transportation terminal
- Harbor ferries
- Cultural loop
- Water taxi
- Performance barge
- Boston Tea Party events
- Visiting vessels
- Public landing/touch-and-go facilities
- Harbor tours/excursions
- Educational vessels
- Floating "Channel Walk"
- Floating Classrooms
- Children's programs
- Short term vessel tie up
- Water shuttle to Seawall Basin

ART BASIN

- Floating Art
 - Temporary
 - Permanent
- Canoes
- Kayaks
- Rowing-recreational

SEAWALL BASIN

- Rowing
 - Fitness-26-foot single scull (membership only)
 - Recreation
- Canoes
- Dragon boat races
- Water Taxi
- Youth Programs
- Water festivals
- Lantern festivals
- Paddle Boats
 - Individual
 - Groups
- Kayaks
- Floating islands
- Floating art
- Floating horticultural displays
- Art barge
- Model boat racing
- Light festivals/displays
- Floating park
- Fountains
- Interpretive water trail
- Tidal art

SOUTH BAY URBAN INDUSTRIAL WILD

- Canoe
- Kayak
- Interpretive water trail



Hub of the Channel

Hub of the Channel, extends from the Old Northern Avenue Bridge to the Summer Street Bridge. This area benefits from excellent access to South Station and will play an increasingly important role in the emerging harborwide water transportation network. While the vertical clearance of the Evelyn Moakley Bridge restricts larger ferries from accessing this basin, small and mid sized water transportation shuttles and other powered vessels can readily access the area up to the Congress Street Bridge. This area can also include commercial excursion uses, transient and event dockage, touch-and-go facilities that are available for public use, and berthing for historic and educational vessels that can negotiate the clearance restrictions of the Evelyn Moakley Bridge. The Plan encompasses the development of a network of floating walkways on either side of the basin to enhance the capacity of the basin to provide docking for boating uses.

This segment of the Channel is host to the four bridges that link downtown to the South Boston Waterfront and will become an increasingly visible and central location as development within the South Boston Waterfront area advances. The Hub of the Channel can support an intensive program of water-based activities including cultural, educational, and artistic uses and performances complemented by landside museums, restaurants and open spaces. Around the edges of the Channel, this segment provides opportunities for a concentration of restaurants, open-air cafes, food vendors and public seating areas along the water. Uses such as the Barking Crab restaurant highlight the potential of the area to provide unique waterside dining experiences. The development of rooftop viewing areas as provided at 470 Atlantic Avenue and as is anticipated at the Barking Crab and could be developed at other locations is strongly encouraged as a way of enhancing the vitality of the area.



A wide range of uses and creative programming can be accommodated on the watersheet but must be carefully considered to avoid any conflict with transportation related and water-dependent uses. Artistic and cultural installations and programs are a vital part of this segment of the Channel, especially within the “Art Basin” between the Congress Street and Summer Street bridges.

The Plan recommends that landowners cooperate in developing a proposal to formally designate fairways within this basin to ensure that new structures and floating docks do not impinge on water transportation services to the 500 Atlantic Avenue terminal and other vessel navigation.

Channel Walk East

The Plan proposes the development of a floating “Channel Walk” along the frontage of the Children’s Museum and Children’s Park between the Congress Street Bridge and the Evelyn Moakley Bridge extending approximately 650 feet with a minimum width of 12 feet. This floating walkway and dock would be ADA accessible and could incorporate ferry and water taxi service, a public landing with touch-and-go service and short-term tie up for transient vessels, berthing for visiting educational vessels, temporary water level classrooms for Children’s Museum programming, and a unique walk along the water between the Channel bridges. The walkway would also provide the opportunity to host

performances or events on the water linked to the adjacent landside park or the Children's Museum through the use of temporary barge structures. Development of this floating walkway may require legislative action in order to allow DEP to review the project under the provisions of Chapter 91.

Children's Wharf and Children's Park

Children's Wharf will become a major new waterfront destination over the next few years with the recent completion of the 650-foot long public wharf structure to be followed by the completion of the adjacent Children's Park over the Transitway tunnel by late 2005. These exterior public spaces in combination with the Children's Museum itself will result in the creation of a major new destination along Fort Point Channel that enjoys some of the finest views of the downtown skyline. This location can become a destination for unique waterside programming, outdoor eating, music performances and events. Capturing the ultimate potential of this location will require the development of more direct links to the watersheet to extend the Museum's educational programs out onto the water via the floating walkway and waterside programming.

Barking Crab/Neptune Marine Services

The Barking Crab is a unique destination in its own right with access from land and water. Landside access is provided from Sleeper Street, a dead end city street that was created as a consequence of the construction of the Evelyn Moakley Bridge. Preservation of landside access to this use is strongly supported by the Plan. The Crab's mix of wharfside dining closely linked to transient vessel and commercial excursion uses is a model for other uses in this area.

Neptune Marine Services provides construction, repair, and support services related to marine infrastructure and water-dependent uses and could play an increasingly important role within the Channel as water-based programming increases.

As the proposed floating dock network is developed along Children's Wharf, consideration should be given to linking this network into the waterside of the Barking Crab.



Waterside dining, Boston.



Waterside dining, San Antonio.



Waterside performances, Providence.



Seasonal food service, Boston.



Neighborhood Waterfront Festival, New Bedford.

Channel Walk West/ Water Transportation Terminal

The Central Artery/Tunnel Project's construction of its water transportation terminal at 500 Atlantic Avenue should serve as an integrated portion of an overall plan for accessing the watershed along the frontage of Russia Wharf, 500 Atlantic Avenue and 470 Atlantic Avenue. Design of the terminal should ensure that ramps and other access structures are sized or can subsequently be modified to link to a floating walkway and "Channel Walk" that connects all three properties. This walkway will provide access to boats through the development of a continuous float system approximately 650 feet long and a minimum of 12 feet wide, making it possible to connect at water level from one bridge to the other. Potential uses include touch-and-go service, temporary vessel tie up, entertainment oriented uses, boat shows, and other public programming. Development of this floating walkway may require legislative action in order to allow DEP to review the project under the provisions of Chapter 91.

470 Atlantic Avenue/500 Atlantic Avenue/ Russia Wharf-Restaurant Row

These three properties will all incorporate restaurant uses along the Channel and have the potential to create a vibrant evening and weekend destination. Between Harborwalk and the faces of the buildings, these waterside spaces should be activated with seasonal uses and structures supporting events and outdoor performances, outdoor dining and other similar activities. This new exterior space will overlook the adjacent floating walkway and transportation terminal.

Hook Lobster

Hook Lobster is a water-dependent industrial use and the Plan does not anticipate any impacts on this use and does not propose the development of any structures on the waterside adjacent to its water intake system. Any development adjacent to Hook must ensure that any impact on its water intake system is avoided. Extension of Harborwalk



Fort Point artists prepare an exhibit at the edge of the Channel. The “Stags” were later placed on the abandoned waterline that extends into the Channel.



Floating art in the Channel, 2001. An initial exploration of the potential for developing floating exhibits.



Even modest fountains can enrich the public environment, Paris.

across this site is a longer-term goal of the Plan. If redevelopment of this parcel were proposed in the future, consideration should be given to the extension of the proposed floating walkway system from 470 Atlantic Avenue below the Evelyn Moakley Bridge northwards across the frontage of this property with a possible link to the street level at the location of the Old Northern Avenue Bridge. This link would provide an enhanced connection to the Rowes Wharf water transportation terminal.

Boston Tea Party Ship and Museum

The Boston Tea Party Ship and Museum is proposing an expansion of its facility in Fort Point Channel that would allow for expanded visitation. The proposed expansion would include two additional vessels, expanded public access to unpaid areas and enhanced facilities including a waterfront Tea Room. While this proposed project must undergo review to assess its impacts, in general the Watersheet Activation Plan supports uses that would attract more people to the Fort Point Channel.

Art Basin–Congress Street to Summer Street

The very high level of visibility of this basin, together with its limited accessibility for boating use, create a unique opportunity for art-related programming on the water. Such programming provides a dramatic opportunity to enhance the visibility of the Fort Point Arts community and other arts programming along the Channel. Temporary and permanent works and performances could be accommodated on land and water including both bridges and Harborwalk. Floating art could be accommodated within the basin outside of the federal channel, potentially with a mix of permanent and temporary works. Floating art and performances could be experienced both from the land and from small boats within the waterway.

Dorchester Avenue Harborwalk

The sidewalk area that will be constructed by the Central Artery/Tunnel Project is a critical piece of the overall design structure of the Fort Point Channel. It serves as one of the most important entry points to the Channel, particularly

from South Station, and as a potentially dramatic waterfront destination with some of the best views of the Boston Wharf district and the Art Basin. As this vision for the Channel has been developed after initial designs for the sidewalk were prepared, it is critical that final designs by the Central Artery/Tunnel Project reflect the full potential of this location. Like the recently completed colonnade that provides a dramatic entryway to City Hall Plaza, this location demands a very creative and ambitious design solution that integrates art, lighting, and interpretive elements.

Federal Reserve Bank

The landscaped area behind the Federal Reserve Bank is an attractive open space; the lawn is used informally as a seating area on summer days. This space could potentially be enhanced through the development of interpretive materials or public art that links to the themes being explored by the Federal Reserve Bank in its new exhibit on economic history. This exhibit will trace the economic history of the region including maritime activities and trade. The potential to expand this story out onto the area along the Channel is a potentially attractive enhancement of the project that could draw people to the water's edge.

303 Congress Street

The ground floor of this building would be an appropriate location to accommodate facilities that are accessory to activities within the adjacent basin that might include space allocated for visitor facilities related to the Fort Point Arts program and arts based watershed programming.

260 Summer Street

Future uses of the ground floor of this structure along the Channel should be publicly accessible. This segment of Harborwalk is narrow and the existing stair makes it inaccessible to persons with disabilities. Improvements to this segment of Harborwalk to enhance accessibility are desirable.

245 Summer Street

The covered arcade at the base of this building represents one of the most important pedestrian approaches to Fort



Waterside "Bench art," Chicago. Chicago has advanced an extensive public art program along the Chicago River.



Covered arcade at 245 Summer Street, a gateway to the Channel.

Point Channel. If any substantial future changes to the building are advanced these should incorporate active pedestrian-oriented uses in the lower floor of the building and might consider art or interpretive elements along the arcade.

Enhanced South Station Access- Dorchester Avenue at Summer Street

The Plan supports the provision of enhanced South Station access at this location, potentially through redevelopment of the U.S. Postal Service property, as recommended by the South Boston Transportation Plan prepared by the Boston Transportation Department.

Bridge Lighting

Lighting of the Channel's landmark bridge structures represents a dramatic opportunity to enrich Fort Point Channel through well-orchestrated artistic expression. Lighting that is unique and changing should be explored, with each structure considered as both a unique opportunity and as part of an integrated ensemble.

Old Northern Avenue Bridge

The Old Northern Avenue Bridge will need to accommodate the MBTA's water transportation service upon completion of the terminal at 500 Atlantic Avenue in 2003. With the bridge in its closed position, vertical clearances below the bridge structure would limit water transportation to low tide conditions only. The bridge cannot feasibly be opened and closed to meet the needs of scheduled water transportation. The City of Boston is committed to continuing to explore creative solutions that accommodate planned water transportation service while providing pedestrian access across the Channel at this important crossing point.

Congress Street Bridge

The Congress Street Bridge will be reconstructed with construction anticipated to commence in 2002 and continue for 24 months. The bridge will be reconstructed in such a way as to allow virtually continuous use of the Channel crossing over the construction period. Bridge reconstruction will include removal of abandoned pile systems within the waterway and removal of the unused waterline that crosses the Channel south of the bridge. The completion of bridge construction is of key importance in the phasing of improvements to the Channel. Timely completion of bridge construction is a high priority item in advancing the Watersheet Activation Plan.

Summer Street Bridge

The Summer Street Bridge will become an increasingly important pedestrian corridor linking to the South Boston Waterfront and will be the primary pedestrian corridor linking South Station to the new Convention Center. Linkages between the bridge and the Harborwalk to the north and south are currently problematic and should be enhanced. Creative lighting of this bridge as part of a public art program is an important priority.

Limitations on Small Boat Activity

Use of the basins north of Congress Street for small boats such as canoes, kayaks or rowboats should be limited because of potential conflicts with larger vessels and scheduled water transportation services. Small vessel use in these areas should in general be restricted to experienced users or closely supervised educational activities. Boat rental facilities are not desirable within this basin



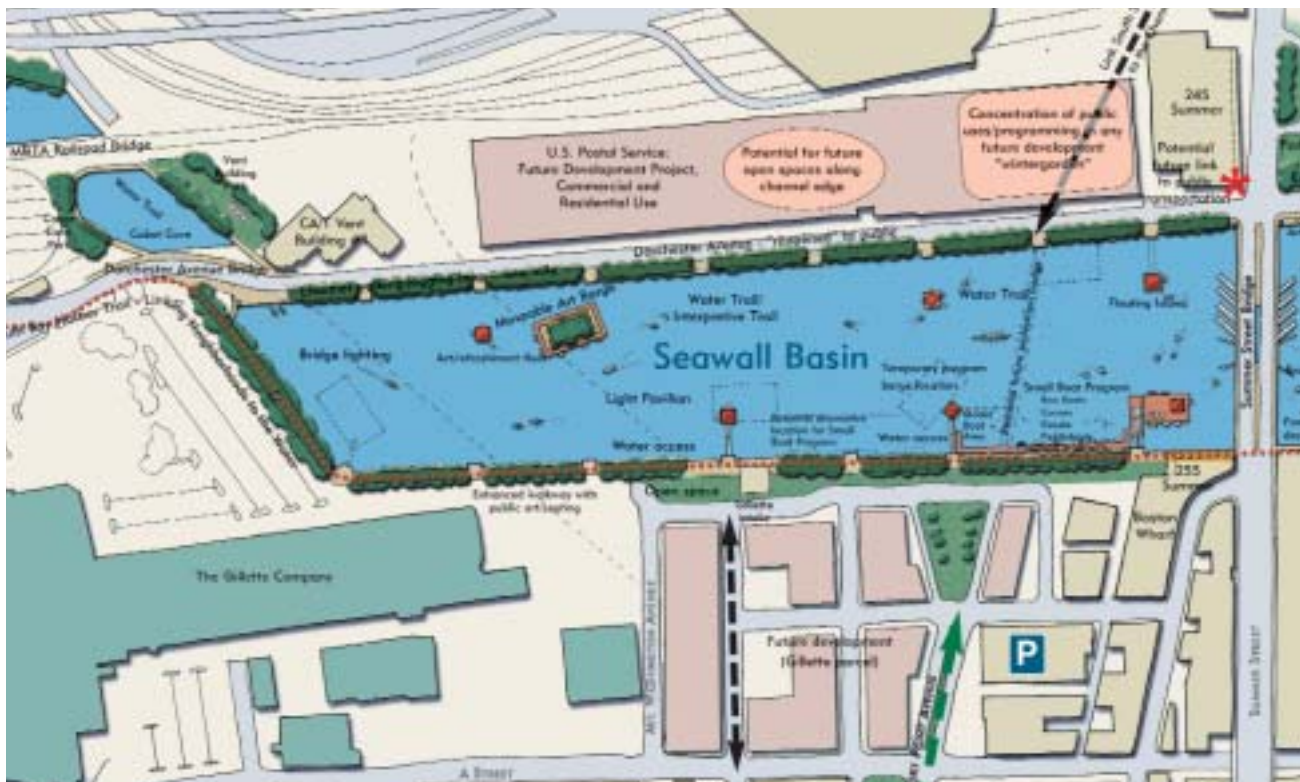
Seawall Basin

Seawall Basin extends between the Summer Street Bridge and the Dorchester Avenue Bridge. The Seawall Basin is currently a hidden treasure that can become transformed into one of Boston's most unique public spaces. This well-protected basin can support a wide variety of recreational small boat activities including rowing, canoeing, kayaking, paddleboats, model boat activities, special events including races, and other cultural and artistic programming. Capturing the full potential of this area will require the development of a complementary Harborwalk promenade around the entire basin, with seating areas providing an opportunity to relax and view events and activities on the water. The creation of this one mile long, uninterrupted landside loop around the basin for walking, jogging and bicycling represents a recreational opportunity with few parallels within the downtown area. The construction of a 2,500-foot long segment of Harborwalk along the Gillette property will be completed in 2003 and will put this basin on the map. However, it is critical that the design of the Harborwalk promenade and landside uses reflect the true potential of this space as a remarkable public destination and amenity. Future landside development has the poten-

tial to further enrich this area bringing a complementary range of landside uses.

The experience of the waterway can be enhanced by the creation of floating islands that can serve as destinations for people in small boats and serve to enrich and expand the experience. Many of the operators of small boat programs agreed that such enhancements were essential to securing the success of this basin as a waterfront destination with broad public appeal.

The basin can provide a controlled ocean boating experience for children and inexperienced boaters. Unlike the Charles River Basin, the Seawall Basin is too narrow for wind-powered craft and too short for racing crews, so the two basins can naturally complement one another: the Charles River Basin (and the rest of the Charles River out to Cambridge) emerges as the "sailing and racing basin," while the Seawall Basin in Fort Point Channel functions as the "recreational rowing" basin, providing an alternative for inland Boston neighborhoods to the busy rowing program on the Charles in Brighton.



Although it is narrow, the Seawall Basin is quite long - about 2,500 feet - and for young or inexperienced boaters such a large space presents an important set of challenges. There must be a variety of places to get down to the water, just as there must also be a variety of "rest stops" or areas of safe harbor on the watershed itself. Expanded public use of the watershed should also be accompanied by the development of a safety program that should include the provision of safety ladders and other measures throughout the basin. As additional design work moves forward, a designated channel area should be established and marked within this basin and should be maintained free of obstructions.

The Seawall Basin has the potential to serve as a major public destination for large festivals and events. These events would integrate land-based and water-based programming. This type of programming will require that substantial land areas are available in key areas around the Channel to accommodate temporary structures for registration, sponsors, boaters and others. The type of events that could be staged in this basin includes activities such as dragon boat races, other types of races and recreational uses. These events are currently mostly staged along the Charles River in Cambridge and in Allston and Brighton. Water taxis can access this basin in some tidal conditions; call boxes and signage should be incorporated to facilitate use of this service.



Kayaking in the heart of Chicago. The Seawall Basin can provide a similar experience.

Small Boat Program/Model Boat Area

The preferred location for development of a base of operations for a small boat program within the Seawall Basin is on the eastern side of the Channel near to the Summer Street Bridge. This location provides good accessibility to South Station, the potential for off-peak parking at adjacent parking garages, and excellent visibility from the Summer Street Bridge. This location along Harborwalk also provides excellent views of downtown and has the



Model boats in New York's Central Park. The Seawall Basin could be a destination for large events attracting enthusiasts and engaging a wider audience of onlookers.



The "Art Barge" would add a creative dimension to the experience of the Channel promoting the area's artistic community.



The protected waterway of the Seawall Basin could become an affordable family-oriented destination for teaching boating skills.

potential for use from early morning to late evening. Alternative locations within this basin that are convenient to South Station may also be considered. The operator of this facility should have overall responsibility for programming in this large basin including the development of islands, other floating structures, and watersheet management including scheduling of different events and activities. A boathouse should be developed that serves as the primary facility for small boat-related activities within the Channel. This public boating facility could accommodate a wide range of uses and small vessel types. Such a program should be modeled on other affordable public boating programs around the harbor and on the Charles River.

Potential users would include youth programs, downtown workers, area residents, tourists and convention visitors. At a minimum the facility should have a floating barge and accessible floating docks, and should also include a model boat area. A small area of floating dock would be allocated for use by model boat enthusiasts with a larger area used on a temporary basis for major model boat events or festivals. Landside support facilities will also be needed for the small boat program including office space, boat storage, showers and locker rooms. Facility design should accommodate future expansion potential as the area becomes more established as a destination and additional development occurs around the Channel. Floats and barges associated with this facility are likely to extend beyond the state Harbor Line and require a legislative exemption to enable DEP to issue Chapter 91 licenses.

Islands/Floating Destinations/ Temporary Barges

As described above, these facilities would need to be developed under the coordination and management of a single entity, anticipated to be the operator of the small boat facility described above. Each of these elements provides opportunities for creative design and expression. Islands are anticipated to be modestly scaled floating structures that could serve as destinations for boating activities within the basin.

Water Trail

An interpretive water trail will extend throughout this basin and into the Art Basin and the South Bay Urban Industrial Wild. This trail would be designed to be experienced from the water and would be accessible from row-boats, canoes, kayaks and other small boats that are available for rent within the Seawall Basin.

Central Artery Harborwalk/The Gillette Company Property

Initial plans for the extension of Harborwalk along The Gillette Company's property called for development of a pile-supported walkway over the Fort Point Channel water-sheet. While such a pile-supported walkway has been permitted, recent discussions between Gillette and DEP and the Central Artery/Tunnel Project open the possibility of substantial design improvements that would lead to the creation of a land-based walkway over Gillette land. The Gillette Company's willingness to contemplate this improvement has the potential to dramatically improve the attractiveness of Harborwalk in this area. A drawing indicating the location of the previously designed pile-supported walkway is included in the Appendix. Future discussions of walkway design should include the accommodation of trees along the Harborwalk to provide shade and buffering. It will also be important to ensure that this segment of the Harborwalk is an elegant public promenade providing a front door for Gillette, an attractive transition between the property and the water. The walkway has the potential to serve as a major amenity serving the general public as well as Gillette's 2,600 on-site employees. This walkway could also serve as a very attractive pedestrian connection between the Gillette facility and South Station. Extensive seating areas should be accommodated. Design should accommodate both pedestrians and bicyclists.

The Gillette Company

As a water-dependent industrial user, The Gillette Company utilizes water from Fort Point Channel as a part of its production process. Gillette currently uses up to 40 million gallons daily and is permitted for up to 60 million



Small and large boats could follow an interpretive water trail introducing the Channel's history.



Dining by the edge of the Chicago River.



This fountain on the Chicago River marks a transition from the river to the lake. Activating each hour for a ten minute period, it provides a dramatic spectacle within the heart of the city.

gallons daily. Continuing coordination with Gillette will be needed to ensure that Gillette's water and manufacturing needs are not in any way compromised by any future uses of the Channel and its amenities. It is not anticipated that any of the proposed activities will impact Gillette's water intake needs.

Linkages to Neighborhood

The Fort Point District Plan process, which focuses on parcels in the South Boston Waterfront south of Summer Street, is currently considering appropriate locations for establishing connections between landside uses and Harborwalk. Once the locations of these connections have been finalized the design of Harborwalk will need to be closely coordinated.

South Bay Harbor Trail– Linkages to all city neighborhoods

The South Bay Harbor Trail, which connects to the Fort Point Channel via the Broadway Bridge, provides an opportunity to connect many of the City's neighborhoods to the waterfront. Design of the Harborwalk should facilitate extension of the trail along the Channel to the harbor. Key issues that will need to be resolved include accommodating the trail on Foundry Street, improved access across Boston Wharf Company land, and improved pedestrian connections at the Summer Street and Congress Street bridges.

255 Summer Street– Boston Wharf Company

As discussed elsewhere, Harborwalk currently connects through this building within an open arcade at the ground floor level. However, Harborwalk contains a stair that accommodates the change in level between Summer Street and land along the Fort Point Channel. This condition limits pedestrian access and prevents easy access through the building for bicyclists. An improved accessible Harborwalk is needed.

New Bridge at Fort Point Avenue

As recommended in the Public Realm Plan, this Watersheet Activation Plan anticipates the development of a pedestrian

bridge crossing of the Channel. Based on planning undertaken by the BRA, landowners including The Gillette Company, neighborhood participants, and other stakeholders it is anticipated that such a bridge would be located approximately on the alignment of a future Fort Point Avenue, halfway between Summer Street and Mount Washington Avenue. This bridge would offer enhanced pedestrian access between South Station and the areas to the east of the Channel. This location also supports a future potential pedestrian connection through the U.S. Postal Service site directly to the Leather District and the Kneeland Street area. Any future bridge design should be carefully considered to continue to allow the full range of small boat activities within the Seawall Basin in all tidal conditions. Key issues that will need to be considered include the locations of any potential bridge supports and vertical clearances of the bridge above the watersheet.

U.S. Postal Service Property

Future development of the U.S. Postal Service property is anticipated and will provide several opportunities to enhance the Seawall Basin and the Fort Point Channel as a whole. The development program will most likely incorporate commercial, cultural, and residential uses. Achieving strengthened pedestrian links between South Station and the Channel represents a key public goal. The potential for creation of a major interior public space (such as a winter garden or public market) that is accessible from the Channel is another major opportunity. Harborwalk in this location should incorporate a variety of public spaces, small and larger that add to the amenity of the Channel.

Moorings

In general, the provision of private moorings within this basin is not supported over the longer term, because of potential conflicts with water-based activities. Limited exceptions to this general rule relate to vessels used to enforce watersheet management, vessel safety or other public purposes. However, prior to establishment of boating programs in the basin, moorings could be established to enhance interim use and visibility.

Private Marinas

Private marina facilities should not be permitted within this basin. The key to overall success of this basin as a major public park on the water is the coordinated control of watershed activities by a single operator responsible for waterside programming, scheduling and safety.

Lighting of the Watersheet

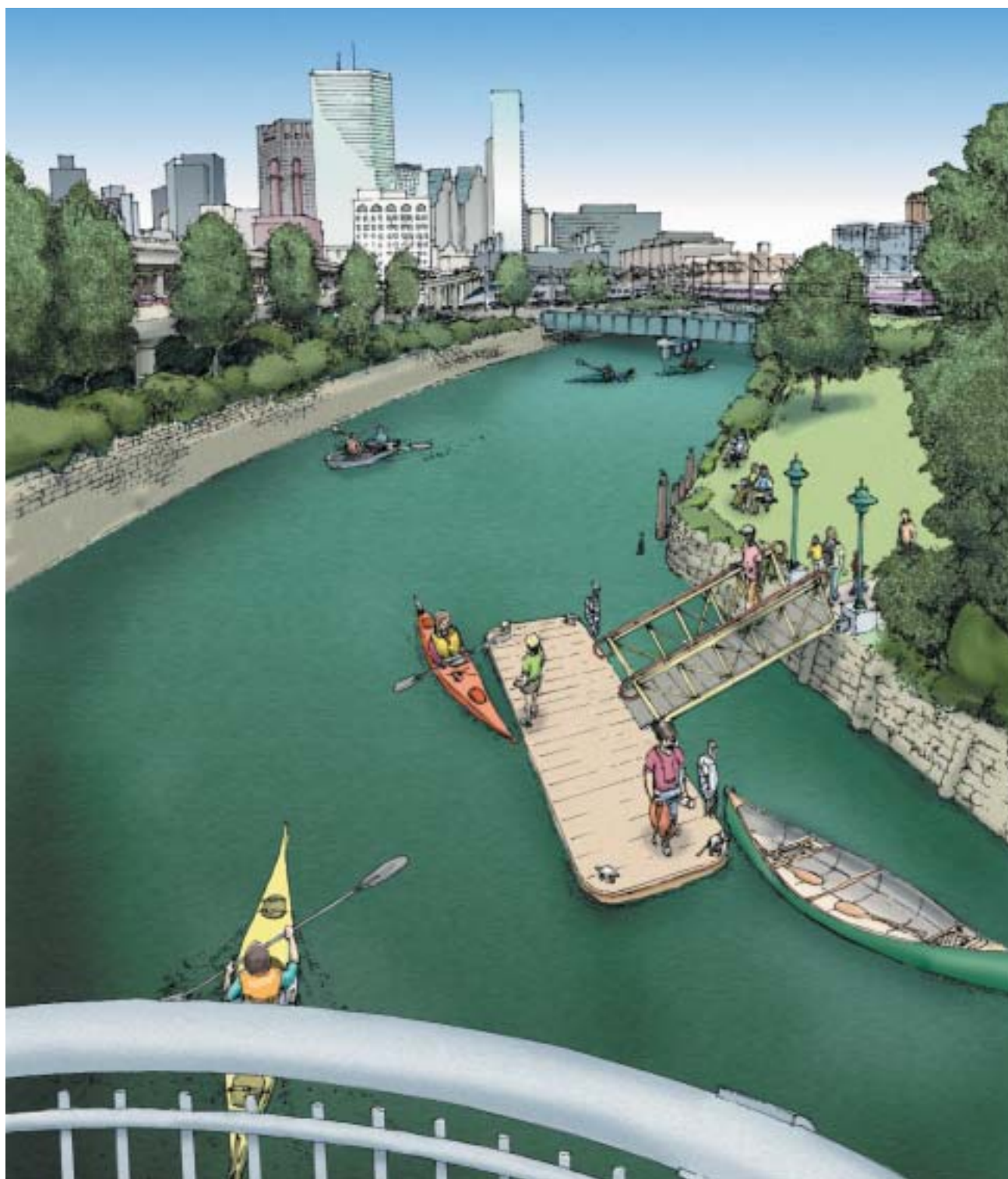
Like other segments of the Channel, this basin can be enhanced through creative lighting of the watersheet.



Sited close to the waterfront, Seattle's public market is one of the city's best known attractions.

Potential Scheduling and Seasonality of Major Activities within the Seawall Basin

User	Time	Season
1. Employee (exercise) Rowing, 26-foot, single scull - membership only	6am-8am; 12N-1:30pm, 4:30-6pm(M-F)	4/1-10/31
2. Youth (education) Rowing, canoeing, kayaking - summer program minimal fee	1:30-4:30pm (M-F)	6/15-8/30
3. Family/Visitor (recreation) Rowing, canoeing, kayaking, paddle - hourly rental	9am - 5pm (Sat - Sun) 9am - 4pm (M-F) 9am - 1pm (M-F)	4/1-10/31 6/15-8/30
4. All (recreation) Concerts, model boat racing, water/light displays, festivals - kiosks lease concession rights	6pm - 9 pm (Thurs - Sun)	6/1-9/1 + holidays
Ongoing floating displays of art, sculpture, and horticulture, (made into obstacle courses for recreational boaters)		



South Bay Urban Industrial Wild

South Bay Urban Industrial Wild extends from the Dorchester Avenue Bridge to the end of the Channel at the West Fourth Street Bridge. The South Bay Urban Industrial Wild is a segment of the Channel that few people know exists. The area marks the first bridge crossings between South Boston and the main Boston peninsula. For a portion of the 20th century, this segment of the Channel

continued to serve as an active waterway serving piers along Albany Street and in South Bay. The continued growth and development of rail and roadway infrastructure ultimately resulted in the filling of South Bay and has surrounded the Channel by road and rail lines. The development of Cabot Cove Park and Vent Building Park by the Central Artery/Tunnel Project will bring this part of the Channel back



into view. This parkland area will also host a fragment of the former Old Colony Bridge, recalling the area's past. The improvements now underway by the Central Artery/Tunnel Project between the West Fourth Street and Broadway bridges will create a viewing plaza for enjoying the waterway, potentially setting the stage for creating another small park at the end of the Channel. With its relatively shallow water, limited tidal flushing, and major CSO that frequently discharges untreated sewage into the Channel near the West Fourth Street Bridge, this segment

of the Channel has never received much attention. However with the completion of the MWRA's CSO improvement program in 2005, sewer outflows will be virtually eliminated, water quality standards within this basin will improve sharply and the opportunity to reclaim this small Channel potentially linking two attractive parks will be greatly enhanced. The repair, rebuilding and replacement of seawalls and the dredging of the waterway that are being undertaken by the Central Artery/Tunnel Project also substantially enhances the potential for reclaiming this area

for truly public use. Improvements to this end of the Channel can help provide the link between South Boston, Chinatown and the South End, particularly if landside development strengthens the pedestrian experience and pedestrian links to the waterway, including land below the Central Artery.

The South Bay Urban Industrial Wild can only be fully explored from the water in a small boat. It could be an exciting and truly multi-modal recreational area, with landing areas or floating docks where boaters can stop and watch the varied activities occurring overhead on the bridges spanning the southern end of the Channel - trains turning on the Wye Bridge, vehicular traffic on the West Fourth, Broadway, and Dorchester Avenue bridges, pedestrians hiking and walking around the edges of the Channel, and other boaters enjoying the more urban portions of Fort Point Channel. Over the longer term, efforts should continue to enhance pedestrian access to the edges of the Channel. Structures in the basin will be designed and located to avoid interference with storm flows and velocities.

Canoe and Kayak Dock

A small canoe and kayak dock will be incorporated either between the Broadway and West Fourth Street bridges or just north of the Broadway Bridge. A limited parking area should be provided adjacent to the dock to facilitate neighborhood access.

West Fourth to Broadway Basin

The MWRA's CSO improvements are scheduled to come on line in early 2005. Until this time, water access should not be provided. Additional improvements to water quality within this area will need to focus on stormwater that surges into the basin following storms carrying with it a variety of urban debris. This site could be an important portion of an environmental education program about urban water quality including the development of an expanded park and accessory parking area extending along



San Antonio Riverwalk.

the east edge of the Channel, under the Broadway Bridge to the rail crossing of the Channel. A small dock should be added between the West Fourth Street and Broadway bridges suitable for canoe and kayak launching. Continued discussions should be held with the MBTA on the future potential of this area.

Cabot Cove Park

Cabot Cove Park is a new park being constructed by the Central Artery/Tunnel Project along the edge of the Channel at the south end of the U.S. Postal Service property adjacent to the Dorchester Avenue Bridge. The park has the potential to serve as a destination for neighborhood events and activities and has the potential to be substantially enhanced over the longer term as development occurs around it, and it becomes more integrated into the fabric of the area.

Interpretive Program

This segment of the Channel provides an important opportunity for creating a land and water-based interpretive program that charts the changing transportation technologies, environmental values, and civic aspirations that have shaped the development, virtual elimination, and reclamation of this area over a period of 200 years.

VII. IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN: NEXT STEPS

This section outlines the key steps that will be undertaken to advance implementation of the Watersheet Activation Plan. These steps fall under the following categories:

- ◆ A Partnership to Implement the Plan
- ◆ Costs of Implementing the Watersheet Plan
- ◆ Coordination with DEP and CZM/Permitting
- ◆ Matching Costs with Funding Sources
- ◆ Phasing Strategy for Advancing the Plan
- ◆ Fort Point Channel Water Quality Task Force
- ◆ Harbor Line Exemptions/Extension of Chapter 91 Jurisdiction onto Fort Point Channel Watersheet
- ◆ Critical Near-term Action Items

A PARTNERSHIP TO IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

The development of this Watersheet Activation Plan is the first result of a cooperative effort between the BRA, the Fort Point Channel Abutters Group and the Fort Point Channel Working Group. This partnership will continue to play a leading role in coordinating the implementation of the Plan over the next 12 months.

- ◆ Efforts will focus on the public realm of the watershed, open space and destination management.
- ◆ Near term, the partnership of the City, Abutters and Working Group will continue to focus on advocacy, planning coordination, and promotion; an immediate term need will be to secure funding for a staff position to advance the work effort through the period of ongoing construction within the Channel.
- ◆ Over the longer term, it will be desirable to establish a more formal organization to advance the Plan and to coordinate Channel programming and promotion. The Plan recommends the continued exploration of appropriate management structures to advance its implementation, together with the development of an equitable mechanism for distribution of costs associated with programming of activities and long term maintenance. Additional discussion of implementation considerations is included in an Appendix to this Plan.

COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THE WATERSHEET PLAN

Several hundred million dollars of public investment has already been committed to the area in and around the Fort Point Channel over the last several years. This investment has set the stage for private sector investment in new construction and rehabilitation of existing structure that will likely exceed the public expenditures. Costs associated with implementation of the Watersheet Activation Plan reflect additional expenditures needed to activate the waterway. Capital costs are estimated at approximately \$11,000,000 (present value) for the Plan elements described below. Annual operating costs are in the \$435,000-\$610,000 range with the assumptions listed below. Additional details on costs are provided in a supporting Appendix to this Plan. These costs are modest relative to the value of surrounding real estate and the level of public investment in the Channel to date.

These costs include the following elements:

Capital Cost

Marine Infrastructure (total)	\$7,020,000:
<i>Cost breakdown:</i>	
Channel Walk East	\$2,000,000
Channel Walk West	\$1,000,000
Small Boat Program Facility/Model Boat Area	\$1,700,000
Barges (Art Barge/Barge of Good Ideas)	\$800,000
Floating Islands/Pavilions (2)	\$300,000
Canoe Kayak Launch	\$50,000
Design Costs/Contingencies (20%)	\$1,170,000
Environmental graphics and public landscaping	\$2,000,000
Public art program and interpretive elements	\$2,000,000
Potential dredging costs to be determined	
Total Capital Cost	\$11,020,000

Ongoing Annual Costs

Annual maintenance costs for marine infrastructure	\$110,000
Annual watersheet maintenance cost	\$100,000
Capital replacement fund for marine infrastructure	\$150,000
Operation of a Fort Point Channel organization	\$75,000-\$250,000
(staff, events programming and funding)	
Total Ongoing Annual Cost	\$435,000-\$610,000
Endowment Fund required to cover Annual Costs	\$7,500,000

COORDINATION WITH DEP AND CZM/PERMITTING

The partnership should continue to work closely with DEP and CZM on plan implementation and coordination between landside development and implementation of Watersheet Activation Plan elements. In addition, continued cooperation between state and city agencies throughout the permitting process based on the framework established within this Plan will contribute to timely and effective implementation. It is anticipated that Plan elements will be used by DEP as a "menu" to fulfill baseline Chapter 91 requirements, as well as amplifications and one source of offsets under municipal harbor plans. The Watersheet Plan will provide additional context for both the Downtown and South Boston MHPs. The partnership should also continue to work with DEP and CZM to establish agreement on key implementation principles including:

- ◆ Chapter 91 commitments to Channel to run for the duration of the license.
- ◆ Chapter 91 funds may be targeted on a district-wide basis based on priorities identified in the Plan.
- ◆ Proponents are to implement mitigation projects where feasible; funds may be held in an escrow account where necessary.

MATCHING COSTS WITH FUNDING SOURCES

Several types of funding will be needed to implement the Watersheet Activation Plan. The primary source of funding is anticipated to be through the Chapter 91 program in conjunction with landside development.

Capital Costs

Primary funding sources will be private sector through Chapter 91, including baseline, and MHP amplifications and offsets. Additional funding may be possible through public funding sources.

Maintenance (watersheet and infrastructure)
Chapter 91 funds, public funds, property owners

Water Transportation operating subsidies
Chapter 91 funds, public funds, property owners

Channel-wide events programming
Channel stakeholders, Chapter 91, public funds

PHASING STRATEGY FOR ADVANCING THE PLAN

The Watersheet Activation Plan will be advanced in a series of phases, each building on the success of the previous phase of effort and widening public recognition of the Channel's potential. While the timing of some elements may be influenced by the pace of private sector development around the Channel, the extensive public and private sector improvements that are already in the pipeline will ensure substantial progress over the next several years.

Phase I-First Steps: 2002-2003

The initial implementation phase will involve inviting the public back to the Channel as major construction efforts in some segments of the Channel come to an end, building the visibility of the Channel as a major emerging destination. The following ideas are proposed for the summer of 2002:

- ◆ Children's Wharf outdoor programming
- ◆ Waterfront learning program
- ◆ Music barge concerts
- ◆ Channel race
- ◆ Sprint to Boston Harbor
- ◆ Art on the Channel with a link to Open Studios
- ◆ Flower program
- ◆ 470 Atlantic restaurant and open space opening
- ◆ Courthouse events
- ◆ 303 Congress Street Harborwalk opening
- ◆ Summer Street Bridge lighting

Phase II-Next Steps: 2003-2005

Between 2003 and 2005 several major public projects will be completed, setting the stage for a full program of activities in and around Fort Point Channel:

- ◆ Transitway Service initiated late 2003
- ◆ Boston Convention & Exhibition Center open: mid 2004
- ◆ MWRA CSO program improvements go online spring 2005
- ◆ Hub of Channel near complete
 - ◆ Children's Wharf and Park completion-major new waterfront public space; potential for enlarged festivals and events-2004/5
 - ◆ Congress Street bridge reconstruction complete; waterline removed and pilings removed
 - ◆ ART Basin established
 - ◆ Tea Party Ship expansion complete-late 2003
 - ◆ Central Artery/Tunnel Project water transportation terminal opens at 500 Atlantic Avenue property-fall 2003; start service
 - ◆ 500 Atlantic Avenue hotel opening-2004
 - ◆ Complete Channel Walk West Floating Walkway-2004
 - ◆ Transient berthing-2004
- ◆ Seawall Basin landside access complete
 - ◆ Harborwalk along Gillette property opens-late 2003; South Bay Harbor Trail link
 - ◆ Initial "trial" watersheet festival viewed from Harborwalk-late 2003
 - ◆ CSO water quality improvements come online Spring 2005 and continue through 2007
 - ◆ Full watersheet use/program Summer 2005 (if small boat facility established)
 - ◆ Art barge/water music-Summer 2005

Unknowns:

- ◆ Redevelopment of U.S. Postal Service Facility
- ◆ Development of Gillette Company land
- ◆ Development of small boat program facility
- ◆ Water quality status

Phase III-Completing the Plan: 2005-2010

- ◆ Seawall Basin waterside program complete
 - ◆ Small boat program established
 - ◆ Islands installed
 - ◆ Full barge program established on the water
- ◆ South Bay Urban Industrial Wild complete
 - ◆ Cabot Cove Park/Vent Building Park open-2003
 - ◆ CSO water quality improvements come online-Spring 2005
 - ◆ Canoe and kayak launch
 - ◆ Interpretive signage/environmental art

Unknowns:

- ◆ Water quality status

FORT POINT CHANNEL WATER QUALITY TASK FORCE

The City of Boston will invite other agencies and stakeholders to participate in a Water Quality Task Force associated with Fort Point Channel. Key participants will include MWRA, BWSC, Boston Department of Public Works, Save the Harbor/Save the Bay and The Boston Harbor Association. MWRA's CSO improvements will substantially enhance water quality in the Channel with major improvements coming on line in 2005 and additional enhancement in 2007. However, additional coordination among city and state agencies, harbor advocates and Fort Point Channel stakeholders is needed to further evaluate water quality conditions in Fort Point Channel and to put in place a strategy for further enhancement. Key issues will be as follows:

- ◆ Based on anticipated change of use identified in the Watersheet Activation Plan, pursue additional modeling and testing of water to assess current and anticipated conditions at multiple locations within Channel.
- ◆ Undertake a watershed study to assess stormwater issues; implement a targeted strategy for maximizing stormwater improvements.

HARBOR LINE EXEMPTIONS/EXTENSION OF CHAPTER 91 JURISDICTION ONTO FORT POINT CHANNEL WATERSHEET

The state Harbor Line within the Channel is a legacy of a very different era in shipping when large vessels moved through Channel bridges to reach South Bay. The historic location of state Harbor Line can be a legislative challenge to establishing meaningful access to the watersheet within Fort Point Channel. The BRA will take the lead with the partnership to pursue legislative action to enable projects that serve a clear public purpose and are consistent with the Watersheet Activation Plan to be evaluated by DEP through the Chapter 91 permitting process.

CRITICAL NEAR-TERM ACTION ITEMS

The following are the critical early action items that must be advanced:

- ◆ Establish an ongoing partnership to advance the Plan; establish and fund a Watersheet Activation Plan coordinator position.
- ◆ Coordinate implementation of the Watersheet Activation Plan with other planning efforts, especially the Municipal Harbor Plan process.
- ◆ Establish the Fort Point Channel Water Quality Task Force.
- ◆ Initiate an approach to resolution of state Harbor Line issues.



A digital version of this Watersheet Activation Plan report is available online in PDF format at the Boston Redevelopment Authority web site: <http://www.cityofboston.com/bra>

The following appendices to this report are also available at this location:

- Marine Infrastructure Design and Costs
- Watersheet Permitting
- Water Quality
- Economic and Market Considerations
- Implementation Organization
- Interim Presentation Slides
- Additional Support Documents

