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Executive Office of Energy and Environment Affairs
Office of Coastal Zone Management

***Notice of submission of a Request for a Notice to Proceed for the City of Chelsea
Municipal Harbor Plan pursuant to 301 CMR 23.00***

In accordance with the applicable regulations at 301 CMR 23.00, the City of Chelsea has submitted a Request for a Notice to Proceed to the Director of the Office of Coastal Zone Management to initiate the development of a Municipal Harbor Plan for the Chelsea Creek waterfront.

Written comments on the proposed planning program will be considered. Comments must be received by 5:00pm on Friday, May 11, 2018 (30 days after publication of this notice in the Environmental Monitor). Comments should be addressed to:

Office of Coastal Zone Management
251 Causeway Street, Suite 800
Boston, MA 02114
Attention: Lisa Berry Engler

Copies of the state regulation under which the proposed planning program will be evaluated (301 CMR 23.00) can be obtained at the State Bookstore, Room 116, State House, Boston, MA 02133, or at <https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2016/08/oq/301-cmr-23.pdf>

Notification Date: April 11, 2018



City of Chelsea
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT
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March 30, 2018

Mr. Bruce Carlisle, Director
Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management
251 Causeway Street, Suite 800
Boston, MA 02114-2138

Dear Mr. Carlisle:

The purpose of this letter is to initiate the process by the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management of issuing a Notice to Proceed with the preparation of a Municipal Harbor Plan and DPA Master Plan for the Chelsea Creek waterfront. The content of this request has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of subsection 23.03 of 301 CMR 23.00, the regulations for the Review and Approval of Municipal Harbor Plans.

1) Description of the harbor planning group, staff, consultants

A Municipal Harbor Planning Group, consisting of local business-owners, industry experts, and neighborhood residents, among others, will serve as the advisory committee providing guidance for the content of the plan and the public participation methods and process. . Members include:

- A representative from the Chelsea Planning Board
- A Chelsea City Council member
- Robert Lynch, Chelsea Conservation Commission
- John DePriest, Director, Chelsea Planning and Development Department
- Fidel Maltez, Public Works
- Roseann Bongiovani, GreenRoots
- A resident from the City of Chelsea
- A college student from the City of Chelsea
- Dan Adams, Landing Studio
- Captain David Cox, Mass Bay Harbor Safety Committee
- A member of the Port Operators Group
- Patrick Herron, Executive Director, Mystic River Watershed Association

Currently, six Municipal Harbor Planning Group meetings are scheduled to take place over the course of the planning process. These meetings, while separate from the public meetings described below, will remain open to the public. Meetings #2 and #3, described below, will include opportunities for the municipal harbor planning group to engage with stakeholders, as described in the section on public participation.

- *Meeting #1:* Introductions, review 2016 Vision for the Chelsea Waterfront, outline public participation plan and first public meeting, identify stakeholders for upcoming meetings.
- *Meeting #2:* Review findings from public meeting #1, including an economic development study update, second half of meeting devoted to stakeholder meetings.
- *Meeting #3:* Planning update, economic development study update, second half of meeting devoted to stakeholder meetings.
- *Meeting #4:* Review findings from all stakeholder meetings, planning update, review presentation for public meeting #2 about economic development study.

- *Meeting #5:* Review findings from public meeting #2, planning update, review outline for harbor plan.
- *Meeting #6:* Planning update, prepare for public meeting #3.

In addition to the harbor planning group, the planning team includes:

City of Chelsea Planning and Development Department: The Planning and Development Department provides professional planning, project and program management services to residents and businesses of the City, to multiple member bodies, the City Manager, City Council, and all City departments as it relates to the physical, economic, social, and environmental needs of the City. The Department also assists the public in developing the vision, policies, and goals for the physical, environmental, economic, and social growth and development of the community.

Utile: Utile will serve as the project lead for the Chelsea Municipal Harbor Plan. An architecture and urban planning firm, Utile has been engaged in waterfront and industrial uses planning for many years. Examples of current and recent work include leading the Downtown Boston Waterfront Municipal Harbor Plan, and participating in the development of the municipal harbor plan for Gloucester, MA. Utile also produced an update to the master plan for the Raymond Flynn Marine Park and served as a lead consultant on Imagine Boston 2030.

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC): MAPC is the regional planning agency serving the people who live and work in the 101 cities and towns of Metropolitan Boston. MAPC has extensive experience working in Chelsea, including their work on the Vision for the Chelsea Waterfront 2016, and will lead the public engagement piece of this harbor planning process. Each MAPC team member working on this project is fluent in Spanish. Through their Chelsea experience and the depth of their organization, they will be advising on how to best frame planning concepts in ways that are understandable and relevant to this community.

The Urban Harbors Institute (UHI), University of Massachusetts Boston: UHI is a public policy and applied-science research center which focuses its expertise on solutions to problems of urban harbors and the coastal and marine environments. UHI has been involved in more than 20 harbor planning projects, including the preparation of DPA Master Plans for the Cities of Gloucester, New Bedford, Salem, and Mt. Hope Bay. In 1993, UHI assisted the City of Chelsea in determining reuse potential for its industrial waterfront (DPA). UHI will provide direction with regard to Chapter 91 requirements and plan implementation.

Ninigret Partners: Ninigret Partners LLC (NP) is a boutique economic design firm that specializes in the art and science of blending customer insights, behavioral economics and design principles to achieve desired outcomes. Ninigret Partners will advise on the economics of marine industrial uses.

The Engineering Corp. (TEC): TEC specializes in planning, permitting, design, and construction, and will contribute their transportation planning expertise to the project.

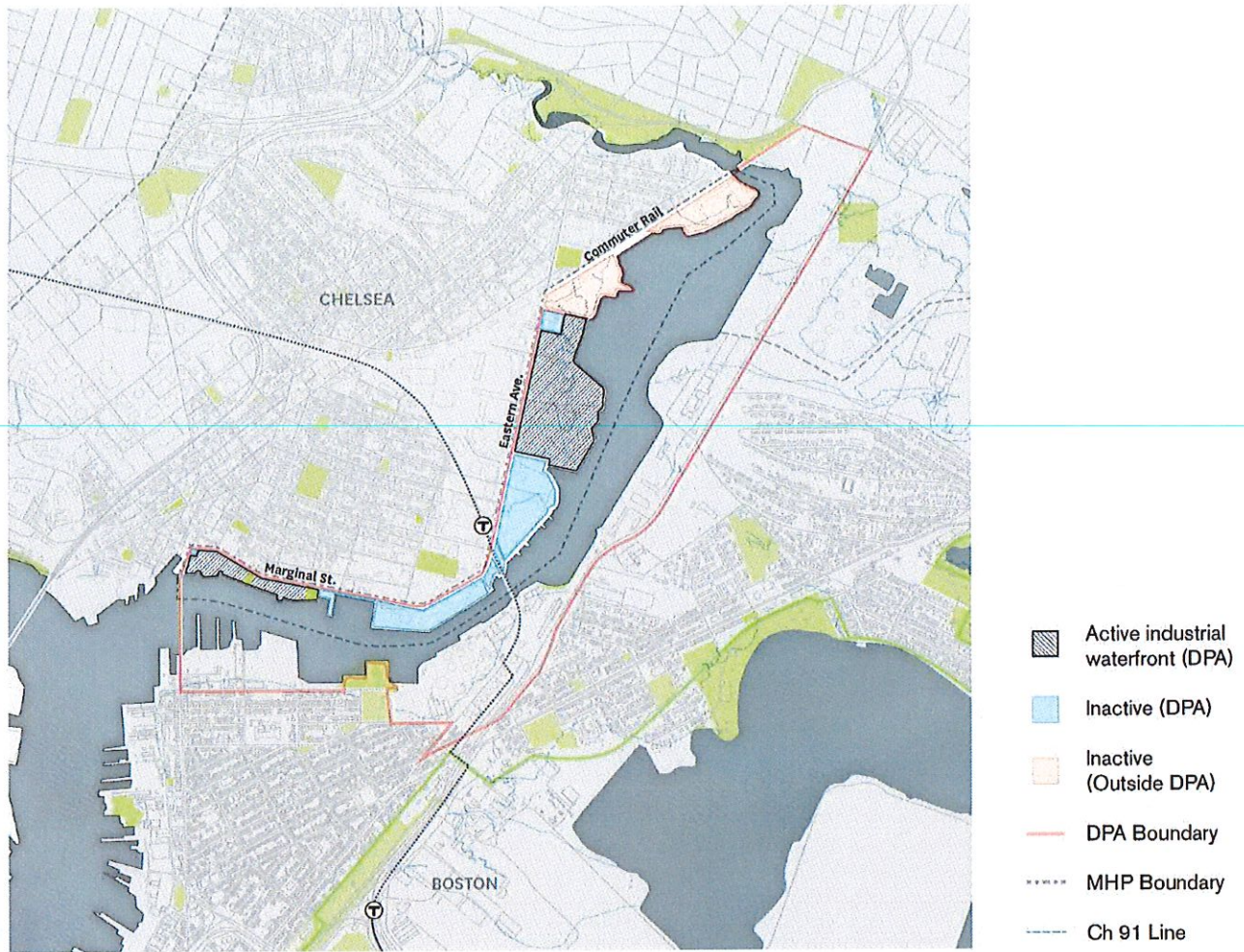
Moffat & Nichol: Moffat and Nichol is a global infrastructure advisory firm working in the marine terminal, transportation, energy, environmental, federal, and urban development markets. Their expertise includes structural, coastal, and civil engineering, and they will lead the waterfront engineering work for the harbor plan.

Tetra Tech: Tetra Tech provides consulting and engineering services focused on water, environment, infrastructure, resource management, energy, and international development. Tetra Tech will contribute their expertise on resilience and infrastructure and provide engineering support for the harbor plan.

2) Harbor planning area and map

The study area for this project consists of the entire Chelsea Creek Designated Port Area (on the Chelsea side) and other waterfront parcels along the Chelsea Creek from the McArdle Bridge to the confluence with Mill Creek. The study area is bounded on the upland side by Pearl Street, Marginal Street, Eastern Avenue, and the MBTA railroad right-of-way and on the water side by the Chelsea/East Boston/Revere municipal boundary. The entire watershed remains in the DPA.

While the planning area helps to define the primary region of interest, the plan will be developed with an understanding that issues, *e.g.*, water quality, and opportunities, *e.g.*, economic development, may affect and be effected by factors outside of the planning area boundary.



3) Historical narrative of land and water use and development in the harbor planning area

Densely-settled and comprised of just under 40,000 residents, Chelsea is a 1.8 square mile urban municipality bordered by the cities of Boston, Revere, and Everett. Chelsea is a community of inveterate diversity: the City has historically welcomed successive waves of foreign immigrants beginning their lives in America and continues to do so. Currently, approximately 44% of Chelsea’s total population is foreign born, the largest percentage in the Commonwealth. All neighborhoods in Chelsea, including the neighborhoods adjacent to the study, are comprised of significant Environmental Justice populations.

The Chelsea Creek is historically noteworthy. Chelsea was the site of the first permanent settlement on Boston Harbor, where Samuel Maverick built a stockade trading post in 1624. Chelsea Creek was the location of the second battle of the American Revolution after the Battle of Lexington and Concord. This battle was the first naval engagement, in May 1775, between the Colonists and the British. The capture, plunder, and burning of the schooner Diana was a major morale boost for the American Patriots.

Despite its historical significance, today the Chelsea Creek is more commonly known for hosting numerous regionally significant industrial uses, including road salt, home heating fuel, jet fuel, seafood processing, gasoline and ethanol. Currently, six oil terminals, owned by five individual companies, and one major road salt facility, represent the water-dependent port operations along the Chelsea Creek. Three of those facilities are located along the Chelsea side of the waterfront. The remainder of the designated port area on the Chelsea side is occupied by industrial uses such as a food service equipment and supply company, temporarily-permitted parking lots, and underutilized, underperforming and often vacant parcels. There are significant opportunities for the integration of public access, employment opportunities, and public benefits that balance the economic and industrial opportunities along the Creek.

The Chelsea Creek area is well integrated into the regional transportation network. Between 1948 and 1950 the Mystic River Bridge, now called the Tobin Bridge, was built through Chelsea in conjunction with the Northeast Expressway. This highway project tore through residential neighborhoods and cut the City in half. The new bridge replaced a swing bridge and causeway that previously connected Charlestown and Chelsea. The current bridge provides a 135 foot high navigable channel through the Mystic River and the Boston Inner Harbor. Although originally intended to carry Interstate 95 north from Boston, the Interstate was never built and the bridge is now used for Route 1 and connects to Interstate 93 and central Boston. Route 16 provides east-west connectivity with connections to the airport, beaches, and universities in Cambridge and Medford. The regional transit agency, the MBTA, has a commuter rail stop in the center of Chelsea with one-stop access to North Station. The new Silver Line Gateway bus rapid transit line will encompass four (4) station stops in Chelsea and a relocated commuter rail station, providing direct access to Logan Airport, North Station the South Boston Waterfront, and the South Station intermodal transportation hub. Truck routes from the Chelsea Waterfront traverse residential neighborhoods or use bridges across the creek to access East Boston. Hazardous cargos, such as petroleum, are prohibited from the harbor tunnels and the Tobin Bridge. Any such traffic heading south is conditioned to traverse Marginal, Williams, and Beacham Streets in Chelsea towards Everett, to cross the Mystic River on the Alford Street Bridge (Route 99). Traffic heading to the airport and East Boston will use the Chelsea Street Bridge. Traffic heading north will typically cut through Chelsea to access the Northeast Expressway or follow the southbound traffic to cross the Mystic River and access Interstate 93 northbound in Charlestown. Both roads that bound the upland edge of the study area, Marginal Street and Eastern Avenue, are state designated truck routes.

4) Reasons for initiating the harbor planning process, including current problems, opportunities, and other harbor planning issues

With its small land area, the City is interested in maximizing the economic development opportunities of all of its parcels while maintaining and improving the quality of life for all of its citizens. The waterfront and its adjacent uplands represent a sizeable opportunity to increase the value and benefits of many underutilized parcels for the residents of Chelsea and the region.

The City has many specific and general goals for its waterfront. Part of the harbor planning process will be to further refine these goals through data gathering, analysis, and public participation. Among the City's initial goals are:

- Engage a diverse set of stakeholders in devising a plan that integrates water-dependent maritime uses with sustainable economic development and creates a more balanced waterfront
- Where feasible, increase open space and public access along the waterfront and maintain/improve viewsheds to and along the water
- Improve and increase transportation in the area while minimizing conflicts between trucks, buses, cars, bicycles, and pedestrians. As part of this, promote transit-oriented development near Eastern Avenue Silver Line stop and explore opportunities for mixed use and public access on Forbes Site, possibly with innovative transportation options. Also explore integration of the Community Path with public access to the waterfront, and connecting to abutting communities, including a possible rail trail in East Boston and Revere
- Coordinate municipal zoning with the DPA regulations to allow for appropriate development
- Seek relief on building height restrictions on the parcels recently removed from the DPA
- Foster the appropriate, viable maritime uses and their attendant infrastructure within the Designated Port Area (DPA), ensuring transportation and other utility access
- Celebrate Chelsea's maritime and industrial heritage
- Integrate improvements and developments on the Chelsea side of the Creek with opportunities on the East Boston and Revere side of the waterfront
- Buffer residential neighborhoods from maritime industrial uses, heavy trucks, and noise, light, and air pollution, and provide strategies to avoid displacement from those neighborhoods.
- Remediate contaminated sites and improve water quality
- Increase net revenue on all underutilized parcels

- Increase good, living-wage jobs in occupational sectors and industries that are stable and/or possess projected growth opportunities
- Protect critical infrastructure from flooding and sea-level rise
- Maintain and improve maritime infrastructure, e.g. bulkheads, piers
- Address social equity and environmental justice issues
- Review options for reasonable restrictions on the times when movable bridges are opened
- Propose zoning changes to implement the MHP vision and to implement the Economic Development Study recommendations

5) Review of Prior Planning Efforts

The City of Chelsea and various community and academic groups have periodically engaged in planning studies of the waterfront. Recent planning efforts include:

- Community Vision of Chelsea Creek, Chelsea Creek Restoration Partnership, 2004.
- Upholding the Public Trust Doctrine While Revitalizing the 'Working Waterfront': Master Planning Strategies in Boston and Chelsea, Massachusetts, Tufts University, May 2005.
- Chelsea Creek Waterfront Study, Cities of Chelsea and Revere, Byrne McKinney and Associates, November 2005.
- Chelsea Creek Waterfront Plan, Cities of Chelsea and Revere, Vine Associates, 2007.
- Chelsea Design Study, Team Project Competition, Advanced Management Development Program in Real Estate, Harvard Graduate School of Design, February 2009.
- The Chelsea Creek and the Designated Port Area Program, Chelsea Collaborative and Tufts University, March 2009.
- The Ports of Massachusetts Strategic Plan, 2013, Massachusetts Ports Compact.
- Environmental Justice Analysis in Support of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permits for the Chelsea River Bulk Petroleum Storage Facilities, US Environmental Protection Agency, March 2014.
- Massachusetts Coastal Infrastructure Inventory And Assessment Report Update, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, July 2015.
- During 2015 and 2016, the City conducted the Chelsea Waterfront Visioning Plan to inform the Municipal Harbor Plan. The final draft of this plan was completed in October 2016 and will provide a foundation for this study. Though extensive public participation went into "A Vision for the Chelsea Waterfront", significant additional public engagement is also required through this study.
- Designation Decision for the Chelsea Creek Designated Port Area, Office of Coastal Zone Management, April 2016. This review removed three parcels containing approximately 40 acres in the Railroad South and Railroad North Planning Units from the Designated Port Area. The review did not include the watershed, which remains entirely within the regulated port area. All of these parcels contain filled tidelands and will require public benefits and access to develop/redevelop.
- Designing Coastal Community Infrastructure for Climate Change, City of Chelsea, Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management, Stantec and the Woods Hole Group, 2017.

6) Participation program

Public participation is critical to the success of the harbor plan. As such, the project team has developed a robust participation program including public meetings and targeted stakeholder roundtables. Efforts will be made to ensure that the meetings are accessible to the broad community through venue selection, scheduling, and translation at meetings and of written material. More specifically, three public meetings (aside from the required public hearing that during the Municipal Harbor Plan Approval process) are planned. These meetings, the details of which will be

determined by the Municipal Harbor Planning Group, serve as an opportunity to solicit feedback from the greater Chelsea community: residents, workers, land owners, businesses, and visitors.

- *Public Meeting #1:* Tentatively scheduled a month after the approval of the Request to Proceed, this meeting will serve as the public kick-off of the plan. The meeting will be an opportunity for the harbor planning team to get up to speed since the time of MAPC's last public meeting in Chelsea and share the planning context, including a public debrief on Chapter 91 and DPA restrictions for the site. This meeting will also introduce the participation plan that will have been approved by the Municipal Harbor Planning Group. The meeting will set the groundwork for a dialogue with the public and include multiple opportunities for conversation. This meeting is meant to elevate the experiences and voices of the community. An open house style will provide an opportunity for participants to share their experiences with previous planning processes and living and working in the area. Breakout stations or other activities will allow for a discussion of perceived opportunities and constraints on the site. While a formal presentation will cover some of the technical information, the goal of this meeting is to produce a shared understanding of the purpose, goals, and objectives of the Chelsea Creek Municipal Harbor Plan.
- *Public Meeting #2:* The second public meeting is scheduled mid-way through the planning period. The format will consist of a presentation of the concurrent Economic Development Study and breakout stations to discuss initial planning and design scenarios. This meeting will include a visioning portion to directly address concepts and strategies for public waterfront access. The goal of this meeting is to keep the public informed of the plan and solicit feedback that has the potential to shift the direction of the planning process.
- *Public Meeting #3:* The third meeting, scheduled during the final month of planning for the Chelsea Creek Municipal Harbor Plan, will include a presentation of the draft harbor plan and solicit feedback from participants. Another interactive session, this meeting may include more breakout stations and/or a survey.

In addition to the public meetings, this harbor plan will include targeted stakeholder roundtables to engage local business-owners, members of the waterfront industry, and community members who may not otherwise participate in the planning process. These stakeholder meetings will coincide with the Municipal Harbor Planning Group Meetings, in order to inform members of the steering committee and keep meetings efficient and informative. These roundtable discussions will make use of printed maps and moderated discussions with members of the Municipal Harbor Planning Group. Summaries of these conversations will be printed, translated, and circulated to members of the Planning Group and to the public.

Ensuring equal access and participation to all throughout the planning process is a priority for the team. Every effort will be made to schedule meetings after work hours, in convenient locations. If possible, childcare and refreshments will be provided. Furthermore, all print and online materials will be provided in both English and Spanish and any meetings open to the public will have translators available. Outreach material advertising for public meetings will also be in English and Spanish.

Based on an ongoing assessment of public participation, additional engagement tactics may be appropriate. Examples of strategies that may be employed include door-to-door outreach and a paper or online survey, covering topics such as opportunities and constraints, priorities for the site, and public waterfront access.

7) General description of a study program

The planning analysis used to develop the goals, address potential issues, and assess alternatives – including amplifications and substitutions – will involve a thorough public participation program, as described above. In addition, the project team will engage in the following activities:

Assess implication of DPA Regulations on parcels within and adjacent to the DPA: Our team will assess the current DPA regulations on the waterfront parcels and the manner in which they may affect future development on the site. In conjunction with local zoning which may dictate height, setbacks, parking, and FAR, the DPA regulations have implications on allowable uses, site coverage, public access and use association with operations dependent on waterside access, ship-to-shore transfer of goods or a relationship to the withdrawal and discharge of large amount of water among other requirements. In conjunction with the economic development study, future development sites will be explored to conform with or break from such regulations.

Assess implication of Chapter 91 Regulations on recently de-designated parcels: The Railroad North (Forbes Site) and Railroad South parcels are no longer subject to the use and dimensional requirements of the Designated Port Area.

However, they will remain partly subject to Chapter 91 regulations. While the Chapter 91 jurisdiction does not cover the entirety of these parcels, relief may be requested by future development for additional height and density. Development “test-fits” for a mix of uses for these sites will have to respond to the Chapter 91 requirements.

Explore integration of public waterfront access and industrial uses: A primary outcome of the Chelsea Waterfront vision plan was the universal desire and support for more public access to the waterfront. The planning team will analyze those areas most suited to public access and evaluate the implications of public access on industrial operations. Prior analysis has suggested that an open space “gateway” at the foot of the Chelsea St Bridge may be an opportunities for new open space proximate to the future Silver Line stop and the Community Path.

Examine relationship between local zoning and state regulations: It has been noted that the existing city zoning for the waterfront is not in alignment with the state regulations that guide the use of the working waterfront. Examining the local zoning controls and making recommendations for future changes will provide a more expeditious path for future development.

Establish Economic Baseline: The team will map, quantify and segment the economic activity of the Chelsea Creek Waterfront and examine port and maritime land status and economic activity and its implications for Chelsea Creek.

Specific activities include:

- Mapping the waterfront to understand physical capacity, locational relationships, and properties in transition to help inform strategies pertaining to physical improvements and differentiation of uses across the waterfront;
- Quantification of the number of jobs and wages across the key sectors using a mix of government data sources and private economic databases;
- Segmentation of the sectors into water dependent and water-enhanced uses to understand the role and relationship to the waterfront and waterfront access;
- Identify temporary uses other than surface parking that may provide living wage jobs for area residents.

The team will utilize a variety of sources and secondary research to create this picture. 3 to 5 interviews will be conducted to add context to the statistics.

Document the status of maritime activity in port of Boston and implications for Chelsea Creek: The team will conduct a review of secondary data describing the status of port and cargo trends. The team will also review relevant available capital plans from other facilities and conduct an industrial & logistics real estate market overview

Summarize planning context and background: The team will review all pertinent studies to incorporate a broad ranges of issues including:

- Threat of sea level rise and flooding to critical public infrastructure and residential neighborhoods, such as the local elementary schools and pump stations.
- Future of the working waterfront relative to the presence of water dependent industries
- Transit accessibility from the Silver Line extension
- Implications of the recent DPA Boundary Designation decision on future waterfront development

Analyze existing conditions: Much analysis of the existing conditions of the waterfront has been conducted in prior studies. We will incorporate that into our own overall assessment of conditions such as:

- Truck access and circulation
- Street hierarchy around the industrial district
- High level evaluation of waterside infrastructure
- Identification of certain sites for brownfield status
- Parcel elevation relative to future flooding and sea level rise
- Physical barriers to growth and access by the public

Clarify purpose, goals, and objectives: Part of MAPC’s recent community planning process was to identify the community vision is for the waterfront. In the early public outreach the team will review those goals and objectives, and set new ones based on additional community input and feedback. An ongoing conversation with the local community is important to this planning process to make sure the MHP executes recommendations consistent with public and economic goals and consistent with statutory constraints.. The opinions of city officials and local businesses are also important to integrate into the goals of the project.

Identify potential development sites: Long term uses along the waterfront have been identified in prior planning, but the future of some parcels remains uncertain. The team will identify those development sites, conduct rigorous economic research and evaluate potential uses. A set of criteria based on property ownership, economic viability, use restrictions and appropriate waterside infrastructure will help the team prioritize the appropriate parcels and then propose different scenarios for these parcels.

Develop planning and design scenarios: Based on the development site assessment, the team will propose different planning and design scenarios for the selected parcels. Considering both water dependent industrial uses, as well as supporting uses, and in some cases, the flexibility of mixed uses on parcels that sit outside the Designated Port Area. Plans, massing studies and shadow studies will be provided for the selected sites.

The team will reference the recent studies by the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) and the Woods Hole Group to understand where and how vulnerable areas at risk of coastal flooding (currently and in the future) will affect future development, its configuration, and the manner in which it can be protected from flood events and sea level rise. Adaptation measures will vary in scale and complexity relative to the site and type of development.

Propose concepts and strategies for public waterfront access: Site studies should consider issues around public access and open space during the planning and design phase and not as an afterthought. Limited public access to the waterfront has been an ongoing issue for Chelsea for decades, especially in neighborhoods that are underserved by open space. Safe, clear connections to the waterfront from the neighborhoods are an equally important factor in considering the location of future open space, which may come in the form of paths, point access or larger green spaces.

Recommend substitutions and offsets: Based on the preferred scenarios for sites, the plan may propose and justify changes to the regulations for dimensional requirements for some parts of the waterfront. The team will provide recommendations on what those changes might be, the appropriate language to be incorporated into the MHP and DPA Master Plan, and the path towards implementing them.

Recommend zoning and planning strategies: The team will review the current city zoning ordinance for dimensional standards and uses for the Waterfront District and the various overlay districts, as well as for adjacent districts along Marginal St and Eastern Ave. Identifying appropriate transitional uses between the working waterfront and the residential neighborhoods is important to reduce noise, pollution and incompatible uses.

Propose ordinance changes to implement MHP: Based on the municipal harbor planning process and the subsequent recommendations, the team will see how they align with the current city zoning. Where there are incompatibilities based around use or dimensional requirements, recommendations will be made for amendments to the current zoning.

Propose ordinance changes to support economic development study: The results of the economic development study may suggest some future uses along the waterfront based on potential business attraction and industry forecasts. In addition, the parcels removed from the DPA boundary will likely be affected as far as they align with the current zoning. The changes to the ordinance should incorporate a certain level of flexibility in uses and dimensional controls as economic cycles often affect the type of uses and businesses that may eventually establish themselves along the Chelsea Waterfront.

Sincerely,



John DePriest, AICP
Director, Chelsea Department of Planning and Development