

## **Mystic River Watershed Summit Executive Summary for Changing Land Use & Impacts**

The Mystic River Watershed Summit focused on improving the watershed water quality, and featured four breakout sessions: Bacteria and Storm Water, Industrial Contaminants, Flooding, and Changing Land Use and Its Impact on the River.

Joan Blaustein, Dan Driscoll and Mike Celona facilitated the Land Use session, in order to identify general concerns and priorities. The multi-vote process used identified improving public access and water quality as key objectives. Outlined below are the summaries or key points noted.

- Changing Land Use and Its Impact on the River:
  - Waterfront access and redevelopment (19 votes)
  - Enforcement of permits needed, both EPA and State (9 votes)
  - Vehicle transportation impact on water quality (oil, grease, stormwater from highways) (7 votes)
  - Work with developers to ensure that development/redevelopment projects are multifaceted and integrated allowing for public access, stormwater improvement, and green space (7 votes).
  
- Reconnecting People to the River:
  - Develop bike paths connections to ensure public accesses throughout the watershed for EJ and dense urban areas, and minority and ethnic populations(9 votes)
  - Organize events such as river runs, fairs, cleanups, and other activities to bring people safely to the Mystic River Watershed(6 votes)
  - Create additional public access points to watershed rivers/lakes (6 votes).
  
- Fish Advisories and Getting the Word Out:
  - Participants brainstormed strategies to more effectively reach at risk populations.
  - Priorities were not established as there was no voting process.
  - Outreach directly to local watershed fisherman is essential and not always happening.
  - Permanent signs with advisories in multi-lingual translations are needed along impaired water bodies, in the following languages: Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Cambodian, Haitian Creole and Hmong.

### **Waterfront Access and Redevelopment in Designated Port Areas: Actions Needed**

- Engage communities and residents in listening sessions/organized meetings order to identify interest and needs
- Evaluate and develop appropriate new uses for designated port areas
- Establish job preservation as a priority
- Initiate master planning for designated port areas which include significant public involvement

- Build and expand relationships with designated port area businesses
- Return public land to public (such as 99 year leases)
- Engage TVHA & CZM in the planning process
- Create forums for long term contact/relationship with local businesses like the **Chelsea Creek Business Round Table**
- Keep land in public hands

#### **Enforcement of Permits and Regulations by EPA & State: Actions Needed**

- EPA/State hold annual public forums on enforcement plans/priorities
- Increase number of enforcement personnel
- Develop/publicize SEP projects which upgrade access/use of the River
- Expand water quality monitoring
- Educate communities about the MS4 stormwater permits

#### **Bike Paths/Multiuse Paths/Pedestrian Walkways: Actions Needed**

- Connect Mystic to Alewife and other pathways
- Support river transportation initiatives
- Create watershed pathways map
- Work with existing coalitions and politicians
- Improve transportation to pathways
- Lead guided bike rides and walks to raise public awareness
- Construct sidewalks that lead to parks

#### **Development/Redevelopment should be Multifaceted and/or Low Impact: Actions Needed**

- Establish partnerships/coalitions with developers, use 3<sup>rd</sup> party facilitators
- Establish citizens' groups to evaluate zoning regulations and to improve development plans
- Explore low impact brown field & redevelopment principles, incorporate into RFP's
- Create environmental/ environmental justice principles/priorities to guide watershed development
- Support developers through permitting/licensing process
- Improve/expand resources to aid in community master planning
- Create a comprehensive acquisition plan for watershed open and green spaces

#### **Public Access to the Mystic River for Everyone: Actions Needed**

- Increase amount of open green space in Mystic River Watershed, and create acquisition plans for the Watershed
- Create transportation linkages/connections to existing transit sites and access points
- Increase amount of open/green space in designated port areas
- Increase number of local community events to bring people to the water throughout the Mystic River Watershed
- Link multi-way paths to transit