

Mystic River Watershed Open Space Subcommittee Meeting

Monday, November 8, 2010, 10:00am-11:30pm

EPA New England, 5 Post Office Square, Boston, MA

Workgroup Attendees:

Ivey St. John (CWC), Joan Blaustein (MAPC), Christian Spanring (MAPC), Rafael Mares (CLF), Nick Cohen (Tri-CAP), Jennifer Lawrence (Groundwork Somerville), Lynne Hamjian (EPA), Karen Simpson (EPA), Caitlyn Whittle (EPA), Kim Roth (MyRWA), Ellen Mass (Friends of Alewife Reservation), Kelly Bitov (CLF)

MAPC Presentation and Discussion of Mystic River Maps

- Added an option to display predefined maps of specific study areas with corresponding layers
- Need to re-work folder names to be more user friendly
- Group needs to decide:
 - o Which background map to use
 - Make sure that base maps include all current green space
 - o What information will be included for each point
 - o Which coverages will be available
- Incorporate legend from Dana's maps- distinction of priority sites (potential, existing, potential for improvement, feature of interest)
- The list from Dana on additional data layers looks good.
- Integrate new open space plans
- Joan may be able to look at parking and public transportation as they relate to parks and pathways as part of a \$15,000 grant she has received for lower Mystic walking routes
- Karen and Ivey will meet with Christian to go over which trails have been walked, maps, photos, etc.
- Ivey will contact DCR to see if she can get access to DCR Master Plan data
- Can we link to map from EPA's Mystic River site?
- Suggestion to use historic map overlays to see where water used to be
- Group needs to decide how they expect people to use this tool
 - o Suggestion to show to end users and get feedback
 - o What would they need this for?
- As a group, we need to decide if we want to expand on our current map or refine what we have
 - o Group decided to keep the focus on the lower Mystic pilot and refine what we have. Group agreed to choose a specific community because of funding issues and to keep it simple. That said, we should try to see if existing coverages exist on pathways for the upper watershed. Joan will look at the upper watershed with the North Suburban Planning Committee.
 - o Somerville, Everett or Malden
 - o Focus on the lower Mystic because it is heavily used by the public and the goal is to increase access where it isn't already present

- We can use a group of planners as a focus group
- Use satellite images to look at current public open space areas (parking lots, parks, pathways) in the upper watershed
- Create a different set of maps:
 - One map for families to use for planning trips to current green space areas
 - Would include information on the green space, how to get there, where to park, and pictures
 - Planning uses-
 - Create a list of current green space, and where there is potential for others
 - Connections for existing parks
- Things to keep in mind when choosing a particular prototype community:
 - Somerville has a new green infrastructure planner
 - Malden River: DCR plan doesn't include it, but it is just outside of the plan. Would be a way to connect to the network
- Presentation of progress to Steering Committee at November 17 meeting (Ivey, with Joan's help)
- Get input from the Steering Committee to see what they think, and if there's anything we are leaving out

Report on 5 Priority Sites

- Chemical Lane (Kim Roth on behalf of EK)
 - It is a reported RTN site (has a Release Tracking Number)
 - Phase II investigation had been completed and the site is contaminated (classified brownfield)
 - Not in the DPA
 - Privately owned, EK will contact owner
 - P. Johnson thinks there is more pollution than we are aware of
 - Monsanto Chemical report describes how often the property changed hands – EPA will pass this report on to workgroup members
- GE site in Everett (Nick Cohen)
 - Used to be site of GE plant that manufactured airplane engines
 - Site of Rivergreen Technology Park
 - Nick emailed the principle scientist for more information
 - 5 parcels of land are designated for light industry: office space. Trails and public access will also be incorporated, but the public access section on on the most contaminated part
 - Remediation needs to be done, but we will just have to wait for an interested buyer or leaser
 - There is a lot of green space development going on around the site
 - GW Somerville is installing a rain garden adjacent to this site
 - Nick will send out executive summary of project proposal and draft EIR
 - Bring this to the Steering Committee, establish a role and see where we can work together
 - Joan will be walking the site and can do some mapping while she's there

- How will this site interact with adjacent streams (north and south boundaries) that are not included in development plan
- Draw 7 Park (Ivey and Jen)
 - Environmental consultant is Tom McShane
 - Consulting company works to get developers through MEPA process
 - DCR may have a large amount of money coming in (upon occupancy permit)
 - This money would build linkages between pathways from Route-99 to MBTA yard
 - Could be later than 2013, after first building is built
 - Bulkhead/retaining wall is falling down and needs repair
 - Ivey wants to see if collaboration is possible to fix retaining wall
 - 2.5 years after first building is done, DCR will spend money on pathway, this money could go to Draw 7
 - Mark Boyle is the head of reality for the MBTA
 - We could discuss with him the possibility of a park
 - MBTA would give Charlestown a park in exchange for more dense zoning near Community College T-stop
- Sandy Beach
 - Patrick is working on this
 - We could support and build on his efforts
 - Kim will check on this
- DCR Lands in Chelsea
 - DCR does own land in lower Mystic (outside of DCR Master Plan)
 - Lack of green space in these areas, need to check with folks in Chelsea
 - Nick has reached out to Kim and Rosie, and will continue to do so
 - Steering Committee should see if Chelsea Green Space needs support from the Steering Committee or if they want to do it on their own

Meeting wrap-up

- Ellen Mass would like to get her group involved in open space and bring attention of the group to the park/wild in Alewife which is currently owned by the MBTA.
 - Many travelers go through this site on a daily basis
 - Ellen will send to the group what has been done, and what could be done in the future
 - Incorporate Alewife Master Plan
 - Will discuss at next meeting/call
- Open Space group will give a 15 minutes report-out (with 5 minutes of discussion) at Steering Committee Meeting on November 17. This report will include:
 - Update on Mystic River Watershed Mapping (Ivey)
 - Update on 5 priority sites- provide brief background and progress of these sites. Ask for input from the Steering Committee on how they can help

- Monsanto Chemical: EK
 - GE Site: Nick
 - Draw 7 Park: Ivey and Jen
 - Sandy Beach: EK?
 - DCR Properties: ??
- Next Open Space work group meeting will be a **conference call on December 13** from 10-11am. EPA will set this up and send out information to the group.

Follow-Up Actions

- Ivey will report to Steering Committee regarding the progress of the Mystic River Watershed Mapping Project
- Karen and Ivey will meet with Christian to go over which trails have been walked, maps, photos, etc.
- Ivey will contact DCR to see if she can get access to DCR Master Plan data
- Caitlyn will e-mail Dan Driscoll again
- Joan will write a one page proposal for the \$15,000 and circulate it to the group to see if her project can be modified to dovetail with the pilot mapping project.
- EPA to pass along Monsanto Chemical report by P. Johnson
- EPA will set up conference call and send call-in information to the group