

On Monday, August 19th, 2013 the Saugus Economic Development Committee hosted a public meeting/workshop concerning the Saugus Waterfront. The meeting was held at the Fox Hill Yacht Club. Approximately 120 people attended this meeting and actively participated. The main purpose of the meeting was to identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats facing the Saugus Waterfront.

The first phase of developing a strategic plan for the Saugus Waterfront involves an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the vitality of the waterfront. This SWOT analysis entails a look at both external and internal factors which could help or hinder waterfront development. This analysis is important because it can inform latter steps in planning to achieve the goals and objectives. By matching the strengths to opportunities we can define the competitive advantages of the waterfront and by understanding the weaknesses and threats we can convert them into strengths and opportunities.

Below is a summary of the strengths and opportunities as well as the weaknesses and threats of the Saugus Waterfront which came out of our meeting on August 19th.

Following this summary is the individual listings of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Asterisks after each item indicate the number of times that particular item came up in discussion.

Our next steps in this process would involve developing a cohesive vision for the waterfront which will help us establish specific obtainable goals and objectives. Once agreement is achieved on goals and objectives we need to develop a number of actions to be taken that will result in the implementation of the goals and objectives.

We are looking for assistance from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to help Saugus clearly define a vision, help us establish realistic goals and objectives and developing a number of action steps to be taken over the short, medium, and long term.

Summary of Strengths/Opportunities and Weakness/Threats

Advantages of Waterfront (strengths/opportunities)

Increase/improve access to the Saugus Waterfront for pedestrians and commercial/recreational boaters by creating additional open space and increase public moorings and improve public launch area.

Facilitate the development of a mix of uses including residential, office, retail, restaurants, light industrial, hotel-create waterfront overlay district or change zoning

Replace vacant land, underutilized structures and undesirable uses with moderate intensity mixed-use development.

Increase real estate investment and maximize development

Make the Saugus Waterfront aesthetically pleasing

Improve the Saugus Waterfront and create new public open space and make open space connection to new DCR park

Clean environmentally contaminated sites to a level suitable for a mix of uses including residential. Any mixed use development should include retail on the first floor

Promote accessibility within the district by improving existing roadways and improving and creating new pedestrian walkways and bicycle paths.

Improve utilities and infrastructure

Encourage appropriate connections to the proposed 33 acre Ballard Street marsh restoration by DCR Encourage a balance of wildlife, open space and development

Create s Resource Management Plan

Disadvantages of Waterfront (weaknesses/threats)

Current zoning

Undesirable land uses

Further use of G.E. site in Lynn, if it closes

Truck traffic on Ballard St-congestion/ speeding on Route 107

Threat of RESCO expansion

Lack of regional cooperation

Saugus sewer pump station

Loss of wildlife

Environmental threats

Drainage/Flooding

Pollution

Old pillions in Saugus river

Lack of orderly docking facilities

Lack of public moorings

Unwelcoming gateway

Need improvements to public landing including adequate parking of cars/trailers/ dredging

Lack of access to Romney Marsh

Lack of quality open space with connections to other open spaces/bike trails

Individual Listing of Waterfront STRENGTHS

Opportunity for recreation (create a Greenway)

Good road conditions on route 107 (elevation of roadway raised)

Good access to Boston on route 107 **

Good MBTA access to Boston

Vacant properties that could be developed or redeveloped **

Portions of the area in natural state ***

River flow without brackish water

Modern yacht club (family friendly, rental uses & community functions) *

Lobster lockers ***

Vitale Park **

Waterfront access and easy ocean access **

Potential for family friendly activities **

Town landing for residents**

New bridge being constructed on route 107

Upstream opportunities

Commercial lobster fleet

Bacon property now in hands of DCR

Strong community support for the area

Multiple types of boating **

Wildlife and breeding ground *****

Improved views of the river

Tom's Bait and Tackle

Good access to Saugus River

Protected Harbor

High interest in the area

Connection to the Iron Works

Strong public interest

BJ's at the end of route 107

Another yacht club up stream

Many properties for redevelopment

Waterfront property values –homes

Residential properties being improved

Environmental values

Recreational values

Historic value

Family neighborhood

Organizations that support the area

Affordable boat access

Commercial opportunity for route 107 *

Infrastructure has been improved *

Residential zoning

Cleaner water

Individual listing of Waterfront WEAKNESSES

Used car dealerships

Bridge issues *

Heavy truck traffic on Ballard Street ***

Speeding on Route 107 **

Missing guard rails-route 107

No flood gates **

Bridge construction will take several years **

Tide gates/values *

Saugus River dredging ****

Revere traffic route 107

Distressed properties ***

Need for new sidewalks

Cannot swim in river

Lack of restaurants or retail shops *

Debris in river

Unwelcoming gateway

Blight at lower end of Ballard Street

Unwelcome industrial uses *

FEMA insurance rates *

Eastern Tool property

Unwelcome/unproductive businesses

Need for additional rip rap

Old pilions & pipes in river

Lack of orderly docking facilities

Indecisive decision making *

Noise

Dumping of trash (litter)

Run-down buildings *

Lack of adequate sidewalks along Eastern Avenue

RESCO ***

Flood issues (Insurance rates) **

Zoning-limitation (constraint) for economy in area to grow

Lack of fuel docks and other amenities to support boatong

Restrictions that inhibit development (ACEC)

Industrial zoning

Areas of contaminated soil *

Dumping *

Unsightly views

Impact of pollution on wildlife & breeding

Cost without improvements

Potential to crowd out lobstermen **

Lack of parking

Contractor yards in Lynn across the River

Air quality from G.E

Rats

Drainage/flooding

Empty building *

Lack of channel markings

Floodplain issues

Natural flow of river disturbed

Bridge causing problems for boats

Lack of regional cooperation on planning

Conflicts between zoning/conservation

Lack of access to Romney Marsh

Sewage pumping station

Lack of river management

Boat launch ramp too shallow

Wildlife

Individual Listing of Waterfront OPPORTUNITIES

Town purchasing private property

Improve water quality

Funding to dredge further up the Saugus River

Increase parking for town owned land (boat ramp and park)

Create a Natural Resource Area-RESOURCE Management Plan

Deal with vacant buildings

Take advantage of safe harbor

Opportunity to connect rail trail to the river

Riverboat tourism

Opportunity to establish a bed & breakfast

Create a Veterans Memorial

Leave area alone, just clean it up

Better regional planning

Create more recreational uses**

Condo-house boats

Create more recreational boating opportunities

Educational opportunities relating to river and conservation issues

Need more fuel pumps

Seek grants from Seaport Council

Compare/look at other waterfront communities

Create docking rights at Ken's Car Care**

Extend sewer & water down route 107

Opportunities created by new route 107 bridge

Create mixed use zoning***

Expand waterfront uses*

Family restaurant, not fast food*

Commuter boat to Boston

Improve area between 84-96 Ballard-public boat ramp

Further develop recreational and wildlife activities (passive-walking trails)

Establish an information kiosk

Solar panels on public property on eastern side of route 107 (RESCO side)

General beautification and landscaping**

Encourage more retail shops and fish market***

Create a master plan for the area

Create the I-95 park

Individual listing of Waterfront THREATS

Current zoning

G.E –future of the site if it closes

Property values negatively impacted by existing industrial uses/zoning and poor planning process

Increases congestion

Saugus sewer pump station

Loss of wildlife

Increased traffic **

Storm surge & floodgates

Resco expansion ****

Lack of ability to maintain what we have now

Lack of regional unity

Liability of town as area develops

Repair/shop/used car dealership environmental issues

Lack of funding for projects

Fear of eminent domain takings

West Nile virus/spraying **

Increase in property taxes *

Lack of community cohesiveness

Global warming *

Restarting the I-95 project

New environmental threats

Competition from other areas for development

Potential light pollution

Public recreational uses-impact on surrounding neighborhood

Mismanagement of projects if not done right

New FEMA flood maps

Parking issues

Flooding and more pollution

Lack of funding

Loss of wildlife

Contaminated sand-might cause river issues. Need regional approach

