

## **CHANGING LAND USE & IMPACTS ON THE MYSTIC RIVER BREAKOUT SESSION NOTES**

**Facilitators:** Joan Blaustein, Dan Driscoll, and Mike Celona

The Land Use Session was divided into the following three sections: (a) Changing Land Use and Its Impact on the River; (b) Reconnecting People to the River; and (c) Fish Advisories and Getting the Word Out. The Facilitators listed above moderated a brainstorming session with participants to seek general concerns and ideas, and then a subsection of issues across these themes were identified through multi-voting for further discussion.

### **Issue 1: Changing Land Use and Its Impact on the River (Facilitated by Joan Blaustein)**

- Malden River water quality (status of dredging/massive water quality project)
- Amelia Earhart Dam (Structural quality impacting river quality) (1 vote)
- Vehicle transportation in watershed is impacting water quality (oil, grease, stormwater from highways, etc.) (7 votes)
- Mobile source pollution (including PAHs) – (1 vote)
- LEED development.
- Start looking at industrial sources.
- Human Waste
- State of dams along the rivers in the Mystic (impact of dam removal)
- Managing stormwater/groundwater contamination on Brownfields (1 vote)
- Public access to waterfront, esp. in Designated Port Areas along watershed (1 vote)
- Redevelopment impacts on water quality - need innovative requirements to share costs/impacts (4 votes)
- Residents are black topping their yards - should be regulations on this (2 votes)
- Percentage of impervious surfaces in watershed (4 votes)
- Hazardous waste management (e.g., need to cover materials properly) (1 vote)
- Spill response/management
- Connectivity w/nonmotorized vehicles (1 vote)
- Wildlife Protection (1 vote)
- Charlestown Dock is falling apart.
- Quality and stability of docks - maintenance/protection of existing infrastructure (1 vote)
- Waterfront access & redevelopment in designated port areas - options to rezone or reuse needed (19 votes)
- Accessibility to public transportation (1 vote)
- Access to physical activity on river (4 votes)
- Creating livable, sustainable development corridors along Mystic Watershed (3 votes)
- Need to combine projects with many different aspects, accessibility (4 votes)
- Improve operation of dams in a way that protects water quality and enhances aquatic life (1 vote)
- Runoff and erosion control needed throughout water bodies in the watershed (4 votes)
- Need to encourage low impact developments must be done early in the process not later (1 vote)

- Enforcement of permits needed - both EPA and State (9 votes)
- Work with developers to ensure that development/redevelopment projects must be multifaceted and integrated - public access, stormwater improvements, greenspace, transportation, etc. (7 votes)
- Mitigation - what does it truly mean for communities? (2 votes)
- Public access must remain at forefront of development/redevelopment – can't let private institutions take over control of public resource (1 vote)
- Biking needs to be a priority in watershed as alternative to driving (e.g., Somerville) (2 votes)
- Monitor health of fish, birds, and wildlife in the river (3 votes)

## **Issue 2: Reconnecting People to the River (Facilitated by Dan Driscoll)**

### **Audience Brainstorm & Multi Voting Results for Issue**

- Charlestown Navy Yard Park will bring people to the water
- Want people to get to Draw 7 Park
- Bike Paths need to make connections and ensure public access throughout watershed for everyone (dense areas, dense, etc.) (9 votes)
- Look at laterals from where population lives. Need a foot bridge in Everett.
- Footbridges and safe pedestrian crossings throughout watershed (3 votes)
- Traffic in Parkway area is a barrier for public access - need safe routes for pedestrians (1 vote)
- Malden River development will create public park - need to look at that to ensure public access to new resource
- East Boston, Chelsea, and Everett are not connected - need to find a way to find connections to bring people together
- Somerville Parkway is a traffic barrier. Dangerous to cross street.
- Connection needed to development on Malden River
- Access for public boating (1 vote)
- Secure water access points (docks, etc.) for residents throughout watershed (2 votes)
- Walking paths are needed for residents throughout watershed (1 vote)
- Create more public access to rivers/water bodies throughout watershed (6 votes)
- Support and promoting day lighting projects
- Need to find jobs/create professional opportunities to keep people in the area (4 votes)
- Promote good/clean technology and industry to create new, sustainable jobs (2 votes)
- Organize events that bring people together to safely enjoy the Mystic River Watershed (e.g. River Runs, fairs, cleanups, other events) (6 votes)

## **Issue 3: Fish Advisories and Getting the Word Out (Facilitated by Mike Celona)**

### **Audience Brainstorm**

- Outreach needed directly to local fisherman and individuals fishing in waters in the Mystic River Watershed
- Need permanent signs with multilingual translation all along impaired waters

- Need to identify “safe places to fish” so residents can safely go to right locations (e.g. place on website?)
- River herring/state fish bans on alewife also current need to be communicated to compliment advisories
- Need translation into Asian languages
- Need to look at ultra-fine particle contamination in fish tissue
- Direct education and outreach to PTO’s and schools in watershed needed to raise awareness of advisories
- More species of fish need to be tested
- New signage locations needed – Route 99, North Washington Street Bridge, Navy Yard Piers, Chelsea Street Bridge, local hospitals, neighborhoods centers, tackle shops
- Need to engage organizations that serve vulnerable populations for education and outreach (e.g. WIC, etc.)
- Link fish advisory/consumption to healthcare providers/physicians
- Need to disseminate advisories electronically so partners can send out to existing networks
- **TRANSLATIONS NEEDED:** Vietnamese, Chinese, Cambodian, Hmong

### **Multi-Voting Results: Top Issues Across Topics for Further Discussion**

- Waterfront access & redevelopment in designated port areas
- Bike paths and ensuring biking/walking along waterfront
- Enforcement of permits & regulations EPA and State
- Development/Redevelopment that is multifaceted and/or low impact
- Public access to the Mystic River for everyone

### **Audience Discussion: Some Actions Needed For Next Steps**

Note: Due to time constraints, it was not possible to fully discuss audience ideas for action and next steps across the top issues resulting from the multivote process. The ideas captured below intend to represent a starting point for further discussion.

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

- Engage communities and residents to identify interest and needs through listening sessions/organized meetings
- Rethink and reevaluate appropriate reuse for designated port areas
- Prioritize job preservation
- Initiate master planning for communities with designated port areas with strong public involvement
- Build and or expand relationships with designated port area businesses
- Return public land to public (e.g. 99 yr. leases)
- Reach out to TVHA & CZM to get them bought in
- Create forum for long term contact/relationship with local businesses (e.g. Chelsea Creek Business Round Table)
- Keep land in public hands

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

- Connectivity between Mystic and Alewife – fund it and implement it (pick projects & act on them)
- Support initiative “Mystic River Active transportation initiative”
- Multi-use paths are important
- Support DCR’s bike path initiatives
- Make map of current Mystic River Watershed bike map of routes (pathways are there)
- Work with existing bike groups/coalitions to coordinate activities
- Engage political stakeholders to support bike/pedestrian paths
- Raise visibility advocacy of bike paths and walking paths as transportation nodes (currently unfunded)
- Explore connections with adding walkways/paths are incorporated to bridge upgrades/repairs
- Improve quality of transportation corridors connecting people to the paths that exist or will be created
- Lead Organize & guided bike rides and walks to raise public awareness of value of paths
- Need to construct sidewalks that lead to parks

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

- EPA & state meeting with public to explain enforcement plan and priorities on annual basis
- Increase available staff that does enforcement work in Mystic River – both at EPA and the state. Who should we call?
- Encourage investment in SEPs in Mystic River area – violations should be reinvested in area
- List of Mystic River SEP ideas should be created with good plan for management/implementation with cost estimates
- EPA & state need to provide education, outreach and training on river – related enforcement
- Explore possibility of expanding existing water quality monitoring and consider erosion “mud” monitoring
- Somerville – education efforts are needed for stormwater. What is in the permit? Need more information on MS4 permit.

### **Development/Redevelopment that is Multifaceted and/or Low Impact: Some Actions Needed**

- Build coalition/partnerships with developers to work with them on plans.
- IEKA comment letter – still time for feedback
- Create comprehensive acquisition plan for Mystic River Watershed (conversion back to open /green spaces)
- Citizens group must continue to watchdog zoning along Mystic waterfront to see if any changes are needed and ensure that development plans are conducive
- Explore ways to do low impact development in Brownfield’s (collect and share best management practice)

- Create set of environmental justice principles and environmental principles and environmental priorities to guide future development in and along Mystic River Watershed
- Provide facilitated discussion (3<sup>rd</sup> party facilitator) between community and developers and provide long term support to developer during implementation (e.g. letters, meetings)
- Develop guidelines and requirements for low impact development that can be incorporated into RFP's (early to influence design) (e.g., Plymouth document)
- Improve resources for community master planning

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

- Increase amount of open green space in mystic river watershed (e.g. create acquisition plan for mystic river watershed)
- Create transportation linkage/connections to public transportation and existing access points
- Increase the 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

### **Facilitator Report Out:**

At the end of the day, Joan Blaustein was asked to distill the brainstorming contents of the session to respond to some key questions. Highlights of the report out are below.

- 1. What are the one to three key problems identified in your session? What are the major water quality goal(s) you developed in your session to resolve those problems?**
  - Embrace green infrastructure. reducing negative impacts of run-off and land use (low impact)
  - Bring people to the river for their sake and the rivers sake - as stakeholders
  - Education so people understand impact of their actions + for those who already at green development principles river fish - make sure they are healthy fish advisories
  - Access to the Mystic River for everyone
- 2. What are the top three proposed actions needed to improve water quality and public health from your break out group?**
  - Enforcement and Education
  - Funding
  - Partnerships - public – public, public – private, and non-profit
  - Advocacy
- 3. What is needed to carry out those actions?**
  - Financial resources
  - Legislative support
  - Engaging more citizen volunteers