

Findings from Focus Groups with
Residents and Stakeholders

Waterways:

Connecting Residents of
Roxbury and Dorchester to
Boston's Waterfront

DECEMBER 2018



Aquarium Whale Watch

New England Aquarium

Contents

December 2018: Findings from Focus Groups with Residents and Stakeholders	4
Waterways: Connecting Residents of Roxbury and Dorchester to Boston’s Waterfront	
A. Interim Findings and Action Items	5
B. Focus Group Methodology	5
C. Resident Focus Groups Detail	5
D. Stakeholder Focus Groups Detail	11
Appendix A: Waterways Focus Group Guide for Roxbury and Dorchester Residents	16
Appendix B: Waterways Focus Group Run of Show for Downtown Stakeholders	22

Findings from Focus Groups with Residents and Stakeholders

Waterways: Connecting Residents of Roxbury and Dorchester to Boston's Waterfront

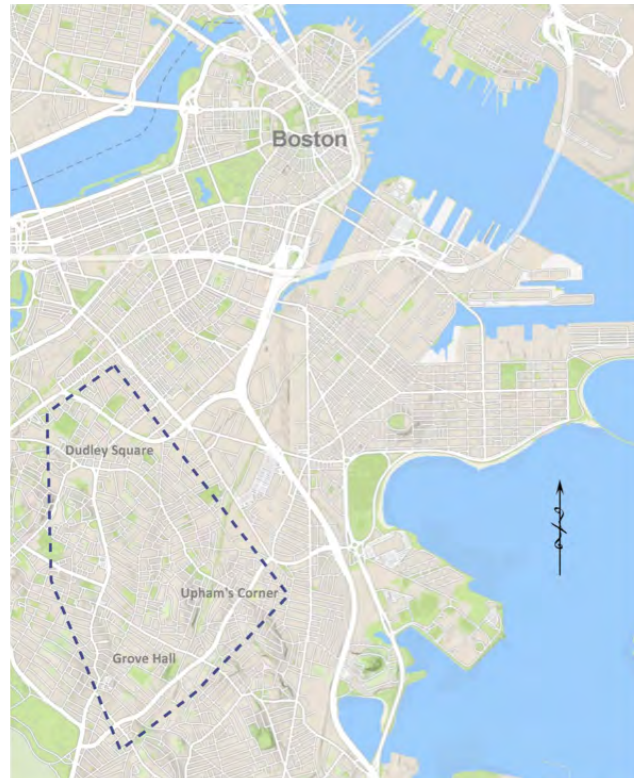
In Spring 2018, The American City Coalition (TACC) together with its partners, Kelley Chunn & Associates and Denterlein, conducted six focus groups to identify current perceptions of, experiences on, interests in, and barriers to accessing Boston's waterfront.

- Four focus groups were held with residents of public and subsidized housing communities in Roxbury and Dorchester.
- Two additional focus groups were held; one with neighborhood stakeholders from Roxbury and Dorchester and the second with downtown Boston waterfront stakeholders.

This summary shares key themes from the focus groups with a total of 71 participants. The focus groups are one phase of Waterways: Connecting Residents of Roxbury and Dorchester, an 18-month project that seeks:

- 1 To expose and engage the communities of Roxbury and Dorchester to the potential social, recreational, educational, economic, and environmental opportunities that exist for their communities along the waterfront; and
- 2 To gather input from residents to improve the understanding of what it would take to develop a stronger connection to the waterfront.

The focus group findings are informing future phases of the broader, six-phase project. Forthcoming phases include a series of activities on the waterfront, events in the neighborhoods of Roxbury and Dorchester, data walks, and visual information sharing/statement of priorities. The project is supported with funding from the Barr Foundation's Waterfront Initiative.



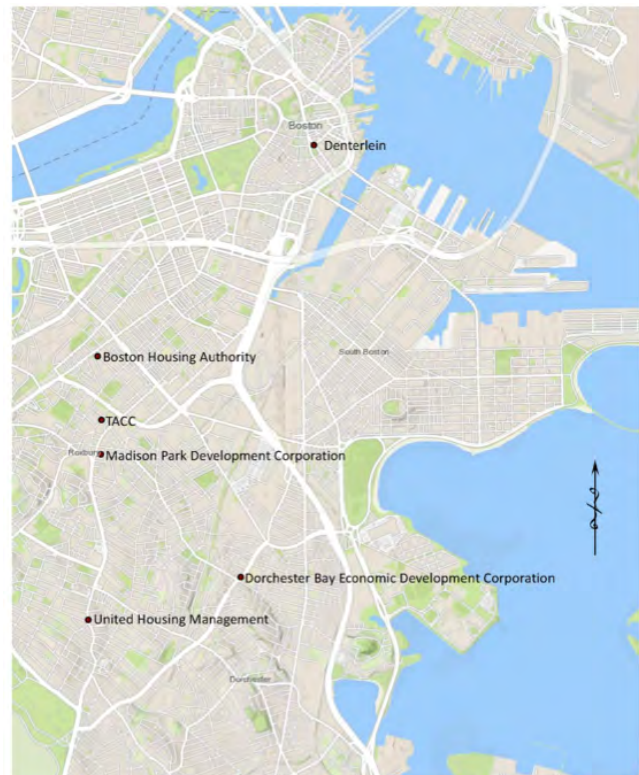
Waterways: Project Catchment Area

TACC welcomes input from all and looks forward to connecting with you to learn more about your ideas regarding what it would take to develop a stronger connection between Boston's neighborhoods and the waterfront. You can reach us at waterways@tamcc.org or **857.308.3015**.

A. Interim Findings and Action Items

The focus groups yielded valuable, early information about issues and themes that address Roxbury and Dorchester residents' lack of knowledge and ease of access to Boston's waterfront that is important to share and discuss. Key interim finding from the focus groups include:

- 1 Lower-income residents of Roxbury and Dorchester have limited knowledge and experiences with the Boston waterfront. Even longer-term residents of the City of Boston are aware only of a very limited number of recreational and cultural spaces on the waterfront, and few have visited the area in the past year.
- 2 Resident perceptions of the waterfront are largely negative, and include notions of racial and economic exclusivity, luxury, and wealth. Residents feel largely disconnected from the waterfront, and relate that disconnect to racial, social, and economic exclusion. At all four focus groups, residents shared how they feel unwelcome on the waterfront, particularly in the Seaport District, among its primarily young, professional, wealthy, and white residents and businesses. Residents are largely uninformed about development, construction, and jobs on the waterfront.
- 3 Residents are unaware of the public rights to the waterfront or the public access protections afforded under Chapter 91, The Massachusetts Public Waterfront Act. Residents are also unaware of the City of Boston's climate preparedness, but expressed concerns about recent weather events and the future impacts of climate change on the Boston waterfront, as well as their own neighborhoods.
- 4 Residents are largely dependent on public transportation to the waterfront and state that the lack of a direct route to the waterfront and the length of the trip are barriers to accessing the waterfront for recreation, culture, and employment.



Waterways: Resident and Stakeholder Focus Group Locations

In focus groups, residents and stakeholders discussed and identified key issues and themes related to...

- Familiarity and Perceptions
- Experiences and Current Use
- Public Access
- Barriers and Inclusivity
- Climate Change

5 Despite the negative perceptions, experiences, and barriers to accessing Boston’s waterfront, residents share enthusiasm for accessing the waterfront and a hopeful vision: If Roxbury and Dorchester residents were more aware of what was available to them and how they could access its recreation uses, employment, and housing, and if the activities and spaces on the waterfront reflected a wider range of people, interests, and cultures, the waterfront could become a more inclusive, diverse, and enjoyable area.

6 Neighborhood stakeholders have a greater level of knowledge and more experiences with the waterfront than residents have, but share many of the same negative perceptions of the area. Neighborhood stakeholders, all of whom were either long-term residents of Roxbury and Dorchester themselves, emphasized the underlying systemic problems related to race, power, and politics they see as perpetuating an exclusive Boston waterfront that is unwelcoming to residents of color from Roxbury and Dorchester. They believe the long history of discrimination in the City of Boston is influencing waterfront development in a way that lacks meaningful engagement and inclusion of residents in decision-making, and has resulted in an exclusive waterfront that lacks diversity in businesses, employment, housing, institutions, activities, and events.

Residents of Roxbury and Dorchester offered specific short-, mid-, and long-term strategies including...

- Expand publicity and outreach in the neighborhoods
- Develop maps and resources that visualize connections between all of Boston’s residents and the waterfront
- Improve transportation options to the waterfront for recreation and employment

7 Downtown stakeholders acknowledge that the waterfront feels inaccessible and disconnected for many. They see a need for places that draw crowds that are diverse in age and background, as well as more concerted outreach and programming efforts in conjunction with these physical spaces. Both the waterfront and neighborhood stakeholders have similar ideas and solutions, including maps of the area, increased accessibility, and physical improvements to the infrastructure, attractions, and public transportation.



During the focus groups, residents and stakeholders offered a range of specific suggestions for strategies to reduce barriers and create a more inclusive waterfront over the short-, mid-, and long-terms. Some of these efforts are already underway and some are not:

1 Short-Term Strategies

- Expand publicity and outreach about waterfront activities and venues in the neighborhood through a multifaceted strategy that includes advertising in local newspapers (e.g. The Bay State Banner) and multi-lingual radio stations;
- Provide a multitude of experiences for residents to explore the waterfront in order to build familiarity and a sense of ownership of waterfront spaces; and
- Address the affordability gap for access to waterfront institutions, activities, and amenities by increasing awareness of the Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Card to Culture established through a partnership between the Commonwealth's Department of Transitional Assistance and the Massachusetts Cultural Council as well as other free or reduced cost programs and evaluating the threshold to access current amenities (e.g. restaurants, shopping).

2 Mid-Term Strategies

- Create waterfront maps that include the neighborhoods of Roxbury and Dorchester, transportation options, and visualize the connections and proximity of all of Boston's residents to the waterfront;
- Promote affinity groups, ambassador programs, and identify a point person or organization for residents to connect with to obtain information about the waterfront;
- Engage residents of Roxbury and Dorchester, and other neighborhoods that do not abut the waterfront, in planning and programming of public spaces around the waterfront in order to create culturally inclusive programming and spaces in collaboration with downtown stakeholders;
- Record and share a more inclusive narrative about the waterfront that communicates the African-American experience over time; and
- Explore and develop mechanisms to increase awareness of waterfront employment and housing options on the waterfront to build deeper economic connections between neighborhoods.

2 Long-Term Strategies

- Improve public and private transportation options to the waterfront for recreation and employment; and
- Support sustained collaboration and connections between waterfront entities and the neighborhoods.



B. Focus Group Methodology

Geographic Area: Resident focus groups aimed to reach residents of public and subsidized housing in Roxbury and Dorchester from housing developments and scattered site housing owned and operated by a range of entities in the Upham’s Corner–Dudley Square Corridor and Grove Hall. The neighborhood stakeholder focus group targeted nonprofit, education, and civic leaders from both Dorchester and Roxbury; the downtown stakeholder focus group targeted business and cultural leaders from the downtown waterfront area. An additional focus group with downtown stakeholders dedicated to employment is forthcoming.

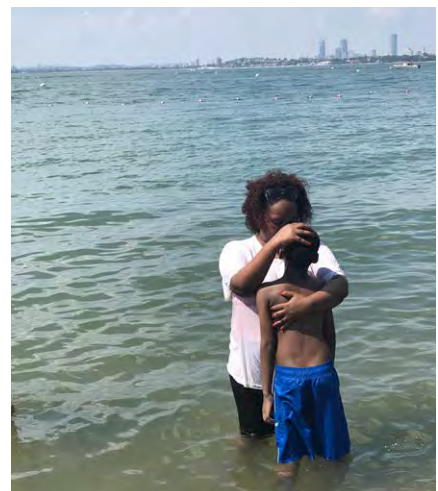
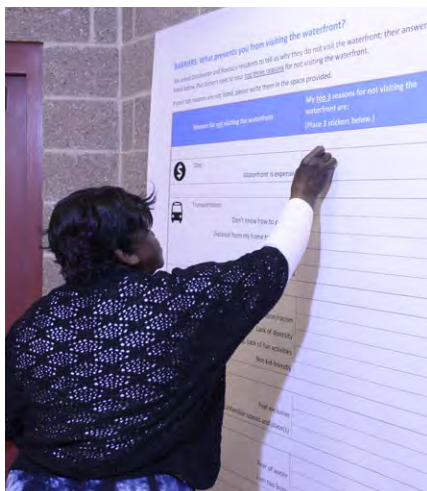
Outreach: Resident participants were recruited through a network of resident services and community engagement staff at four housing entities; neighborhood stakeholders were recruited through Kelley Chunn & Associates; and Denterlein recruited downtown stakeholders through their existing network. Participants were invited to attend the focus groups to share their perspectives regarding their access to and experiences with the Boston waterfront.

Format: Two-hour sessions were held onsite in the community rooms of the respective housing developments for residents; neighborhood stakeholders met at TACC (2136 Washington Street, Roxbury) and downtown stakeholders at Denterlein (3 Post Office Square, Boston).

Participant consent forms were reviewed at the beginning of the focus groups to explain the purpose of the discussions and provide an overview of the topics that would be discussed, confidentiality, and reporting protocols. All participants were provided with a meal and refreshments purchased from neighborhood businesses. Residents received a \$20 gift card to a local supermarket and a raffle entry for a \$50 gift card as a token of appreciation for their time; neighborhood and downtown stakeholders received gift cards to Haley House Bakery Café.

Focus groups were facilitated in English; translation was provided as needed. The facilitators (Kelley Chunn, Principal, Kelley Chunn & Associates for residents and neighborhood stakeholders; Diana Pisciotta, President, Denterlein for downtown stakeholders) guided the discussions with questions and probes from the Focus Group Guide (Appendix A) and visual materials. Denterlein developed and utilized a Run of Show (Appendix B) to guide the discussion with downtown stakeholders.

With permission, all focus groups participants were added to a database and are receiving ongoing communication about the project.



C. Resident Focus Groups Detail

Participant Profile: The 55 participants in the resident focus groups were:

- Residents of subsidized housing in Roxbury and Dorchester, including housing developments and scattered site housing owned and operated by the Boston Housing Authority (BHA), Madison Park Development Corporation (MPDC), United Housing Management (UHM), and Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation (DBEDC);
- Majority long-time residents of Boston, with some residing in the city for more than 60 years;
- Majority long-time residents of their respective neighborhoods;
- Varied in age, race/ethnicity, and language, although the majority of participants were African-American and Hispanic women; and
- Mothers and fathers of young children, younger adults without children, as well as older adults with grandchildren or great-grandchildren.

In two-hour sessions, participants were guided through a series of questions and probes that addressed following key themes:

- 1 Familiarity and perceptions;
- 2 Experiences and current use;
- 3 Public access;
- 4 Reducing barriers and creating a more inclusive waterfront; and
- 5 Climate change.

1 Familiarity and Perceptions

Despite living in Boston for years, as a whole, participants had limited knowledge of and experiences with the Boston waterfront.

When asked what first came to mind when they heard the words “Boston waterfront,” participants responded with a range of positive and negative associations such as:

- *“Luxury, exclusivity, and wealth are prevalent on the waterfront, specifically in the Seaport.”*
- *“Peaceful place with nice views where I can have fun with family and relax.”*
- *“Activities, food, and housing are extremely expensive.”*
- *“Specific attractions and activities such as Carson Beach, New England Aquarium, and tall ships.”*
- *“Unwelcoming place for me and for other people of color from communities like mine.”*

Residents’ definition of what geographic land mass constituted the waterfront varied, although most included the Seaport District. Other areas frequently mentioned were: South Boston, Castle Island, East Boston, Carson Beach, Charles River, Boston Harbor, and the Financial District. When residents were shown a tourist map of the waterfront, many were disoriented by it, especially since the map did not include their Roxbury and Dorchester neighborhoods. Participants found it difficult to locate specific places without guidance and noted that the map was missing some helpful points for reference such as the full Seaport District and parts of the Dorchester waterfront with which they had greater familiarity.

Some residents were familiar with a number of recreational and cultural spaces on the waterfront and could name specific attractions. The most commonly mentioned venues were Boston Children’s Museum, Boston Harborwalk, and the New England Aquarium; a limited number of participants mentioned the Blue Hills Bank Pavilion, Carson Beach, Harbor Islands, and Lawn on D. However, most

participants struggled to name any specific places on the waterfront. Facilitators probed by mentioning the names of specific venues (see list to right); many of these venues were unknown to participants.

Very few participants mentioned or knew about employment and housing opportunities along the waterfront.

2 Experiences and Current Use

Residents were engaged in a series of questions related to their past experiences and current use of the waterfront.

The majority of residents had been to the waterfront at some point, but most had not visited recently or frequently. Only a handful of residents had visited in the last year for a group trip, a family function, church event, concert, or for work. Interestingly, many long-term residents visited the waterfront when they were enrolled as students in the Boston Public Schools; one group engaged in a lengthy discussion about their concern that young people are not taking as many fieldtrips to the waterfront and how, over time, this will further limit Roxbury and Dorchester residents' familiarity with and sense of ownership of the waterfront.

Participants described both positive and negative feelings based on their prior experiences on the waterfront:

- Two participants enjoyed their experiences and felt welcome in the waterfront, commenting that they like the views, activities, and people that they encounter.
- Others do not wish to return because of racial tension, expense, and general discomfort regarding transportation, parking, a lack of seating, and not being familiar enough with the area. Several participants noted that there is not enough shade, public seating, or handicap accessibility.
- Negative feedback among residents echoed a common theme: those who have visited, and even those who have never been before, feel excluded and unwelcome given the homogenous, higher-income, and white population that lives and works in Boston's waterfront. Some individuals say that they avoid certain areas of the waterfront because of the racism that they have experienced.

Focus group participants were asked about their familiarity with:

- Boston Harborwalk
- Rose Kennedy Greenway
- Charles River Esplanade
- Harbor Islands
- Fort Point Channel
- Castle Island
- Carson Beach
- Seaport District
- New England Aquarium
- Institute of Contemporary Art
- Boston Children's Museum

- Those who have never visited the waterfront do not know what there is to do or where they should go.

Other barriers to visiting and experiencing the waterfront that were discussed by participants included:

- **Cost:** The high cost of food, parking, and admission fees are stated as reasons for the fact that visiting, living, or working near the waterfront does not appeal to many participants. One participant states: *"You get priced out. A person who makes a higher income will get more enjoyment from the experience because they will not have money restraints that someone who can only afford to enter the [New England] Aquarium but is not able to buy food."* Interestingly, most residents have not heard of the EBT Card to Culture or the Boston Public Library Museum Passes, two state- and city-led initiatives to offer free or discounted tickets to venues.
- **Transportation:** Participants say they take public transportation to the waterfront due to lack of car ownership, traffic, congestion, expensive, and limited parking. However, without a direct route to the waterfront, the trip can take over an hour. Some residents had taken the bus, the train, or driven to the waterfront before, but note all three options have serious downsides.
- **Connections/Awareness:** Other residents, though

interested, did not know how to get to the waterfront at all and would not be able to find or navigate their way around the area. Many state that they simply do not see a reason or incentive to go to the waterfront due to the general unfamiliarity with the area, events held there, and overall lack of cultural and physical connection to the neighborhoods.

3 Public Access

With only one exception, participants were not aware of the public rights that they have to the waterfront through Chapter 91, The Massachusetts Public Waterfront Act, which protects public access rights to waterfronts. Others were surprised and interested to learn more about their rights. The law and its relationship to public access to restrooms, building lobbies, and seating on the waterfront were discussed and examples provided.

4 Reducing Barriers and Creating a More Inclusive Waterfront

Participants were asked a series of questions about improving access and interest in the waterfront among residents from Roxbury and Dorchester. Encouragingly, participants were excited about engaging with the waterfront and offered a range of suggestions to help create a more inclusive waterfront:

- **Publicity and Outreach:** Limited awareness of the waterfront and lack of outreach and inclusion were stated as the main issues for why those who are interested in visiting the waterfront have not done so recently or at all. Many participants express their interest in concerts, parks, attractions, and activities at the waterfront, but say that they never hear about such events or spaces. The fact that local agencies and newspapers do not publicize activities, coupled with other barriers such as lack of affordable and efficient transportation, are stated as factors in deterring interest and impeding access to the waterfront for Roxbury and Dorchester residents.
- **Awareness:** Participants discussed multiple strategies for increasing awareness of existing resources and programming including:
 - Provide information about upcoming activities and events at the waterfront, preferably in a consolidated format that clearly explains what there is to do and where to go;
 - Post information on Facebook and other social media platforms; and
 - Create an online calendar that residents can easily find or an electronic mailing list. Most participants prefer radio advertisements aired on local English and Spanish stations, newspaper inserts and advertisements, announcements at churches and neighborhood meetings, as well as fliers in local agencies, supermarkets, libraries, schools, and health clinics.
- **Community and Cultural-Based Resources:** Residents are also interested in obtaining more information than just dates and times for events. Since many have not been to the waterfront in years, and the area has changed significantly since their last visit, several people suggested that a map that includes their neighborhood as a point of reference would be helpful for getting around and understanding the area. In addition, residents state they would be more likely to visit if there were tour guides or volunteers of color stationed at the waterfront to help visitors of color feel welcome and find their way. Spanish-speaking participants emphasized the importance of bilingual advertisements and maps, as well as interpreters. One participant, an older resident who often relies on his grandchildren, said: “It’s important because sometimes you need information to get around or to guide you, but you don’t know the language.” A better balance of diverse ongoing programming along the waterfront could support this goal.
- **Affinity Groups and Events:** Many participants indicate they prefer group outings with other members of their community; this is articulated as a strategy that could help those who say they feel unwelcomed or daunted by finding their way around. Participants express the highest level of interest in activities for children, concerts, cultural and international events, community trips, parks and trails, and employment and housing opportunities on the waterfront. In addition, participants

think that a specific contact person to answer their questions about events, transportation, and changes would be beneficial.

- **Affordability:** Residents expressed dismay at being “priced out” of the area. Not only do residents feel closed off from the waterfront economically, but socially and racially as well due to the fact it is both expensive and exclusive. The costs associated with visiting the waterfront is a deterrent for many participants.

Residents stated they would be more likely to visit if they knew there would be affordable transportation options, free or low-cost entry to waterfront activities and institutions, and affordable food and dining options. Residents suggested a discount card that would provide complimentary tickets or discounts at waterfront attractions and restaurants. Most residents had not heard of or used the EBT Card to Culture or the Boston Public Library Museum Passes. There is a strong interest in learning more about these programs and participants suggest an information campaign and outreach to neighborhood residents and institutions could spread the message about the free or discounted tickets to waterfront venues.

- **Transportation:** Those who have visited the waterfront before cite the transportation costs and inconvenience as reasons for not going, especially the elderly and disabled and those with young children. Residents suggest running a shuttle from a local train station or bus station (e.g. JFK MBTA train station, Dudley Square) that runs directly to the waterfront, possibly accompanied by discounts to local attractions for shuttle riders.
- **Planning and Public Spaces:** If participants were to visit the waterfront more often, they would like it to feel more inclusive and diverse. Some residents are interested in the possibility of planning meetings for activities and spaces that would work to ensure that as the waterfront develops, it reflects the needs and interests of multiple communities in Boston including their own.

- **Employment and Housing:** Increased marketing of employment and housing opportunities in the waterfront should reach people from multiple neighborhoods and encourage them to spend more time on the waterfront. Focus group participants are uninformed about the development, construction, and jobs on the waterfront, and they indicate concern that they are not sharing in the benefits of this development. Many residents express dismay at being “priced out” of the area. Not only do residents feel closed off from the waterfront economically, but socially and racially as well stating that it is both expensive and exclusive. A comment made by one participant reflects the sentiments of many others: “The waterfront was made for whites.”

When probed, the vast majority of residents do not know about Metrolist housing options on the waterfront or job openings at the new Omni Hotel/MassPort project. Facilitators discussed the ways in which the development of the Seaport District offers a variety of new jobs, particularly in construction and hospitality. One younger resident, a recent college graduate, expressed the need for a management structure to share information about jobs and opportunities on the waterfront stating: “Who is going to make the connections? We need to get jobs and employment requirements in the new buildings. We need somewhere we can go in our neighborhood to get information on jobs on the waterfront, fill out applications, and get skills training needed for these jobs.”

- **Sustained Collaboration and Connections between Boston’s Neighborhoods:** A repeated sentiment expressed by focus group participants is balancing the desire to focus on, improve, and uplift their own neighborhoods rather than other areas like the Seaport District and downtown waterfront that are already economically booming. One participant suggests bringing events and activities to local parks and public spaces in Roxbury and Dorchester rather than going to another area such as the waterfront for these experiences. “Why do we have to leave the neighborhood to get the luxury and benefits of the Seaport?”

5 Climate Change

A series of questions addressed climate change, the level of preparedness on the waterfront, the city-led planning study, Climate Ready Boston, and related community engagement. Overall, participants have limited knowledge of climate change risk and its potential impact on the waterfront and the City of Boston as a whole. However, participants shared concerns about:

- Damage to Castle Island from the previous year's winter storms and whether it is safe anymore; and
- Rising sea levels as the water "comes closer to the city."

Participants were not aware of any of the measures that the City of Boston is taking to prepare for extreme weather and strategies that could be used to make buildings and public spaces more climate change ready. Although climate change was not a pressing concern for most, one resident articulated their ways in which climate change is a common, citywide issue that could be used to unite people and build a more inclusive community, "I think it [climate change] will affect us greatly. It brings different kinds of people together that will stop discrimination. People will see similarities instead of differences...[and] have respect for one another."



D. Stakeholder Focus Groups Detail

To address expanding access to and interest in the waterfront, two focus groups were held with stakeholders: one with downtown waterfront stakeholders and one with Roxbury and Dorchester neighborhood stakeholders.

The downtown waterfront stakeholders (recruited and hosted by Denterlein) included eight participants from a range of private and nonprofit entities, including representatives from hotels, museums, the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway, a planning organization, and arts and culture. The neighborhood stakeholders (recruited by Kelley Chunn & Associates and hosted by TACC) included eight individuals from Roxbury and Dorchester nonprofits, including those engaged in subsidized housing, community engagement and supportive services, arts and culture, as well as parks and recreation. All had worked in Roxbury or Dorchester for many years, and most were also long-term residents of these neighborhoods. The neighborhood stakeholder participants were all people of color; with the exception of one participant, the downtown waterfront stakeholders were all white.

1 Familiarity and Perceptions

The neighborhood stakeholders were all familiar with the waterfront, and their associations with the area were very similar to those expressed by the resident focus group participants: lack of advertising about programming, the

feeling of being unwelcome, the feeling of racial tension and exclusion, lack of accessibility, and high transportation and admission costs. Aside from well-known landmark areas such as the Financial District, Seaport District, New England Aquarium, and the Greenway, neighborhood stakeholders were relatively unfamiliar with specific public spaces, museums, and events. Neighborhood stakeholders had few positive experiences and felt the exclusion most strongly in the Seaport, expressing concern that this is an area of the waterfront forming an identity that lacks multicultural influence.

The downtown waterfront stakeholders were aware that many people of color or those who are lower-income find the area to be an uncomfortable and unwelcoming environment. These stakeholders cited lack of signage and fractured public spaces as making visitors feel even more disoriented and unfamiliar with the area. Downtown waterfront stakeholders were interested in making public spaces actually feel public by increasing accessibility and addressing the exclusive feel of the waterfront. They envision the Seaport District evolving into more of a true neighborhood, filled with opportunities and a sense of community, potentially by marrying development and programming efforts with workforce recruitment.



2 Reducing Barriers and Creating a More Inclusive Waterfront

The neighborhood stakeholders consistently emphasized the lack of representation and inclusion at the waterfront. Participants felt that Black culture and talent should be welcomed at the waterfront, but the physical detachment from the Roxbury and Dorchester communities, coupled with the way they and other people of color are sometimes treated there, reinforces the feeling of being an outsider. Neighborhood stakeholders explained that racial tensions in the area (both past and present) are an active deterrent to people of color visiting the waterfront; they suggested this tension could be ameliorated with increased diversity and representation.

Neighborhood stakeholders proposed requiring bias and sensitivity training for all waterfront business owners and staff stating, “They need to be triple trained in how to be friendly to people of color... because of the history of racism in this city.”

- **Publicity, Outreach, and Awareness:** Neighborhood stakeholders indicated advertisement for waterfront events in local papers such as The Bay State Banner could attract more local residents to the waterfront. Downtown waterfront stakeholders generally do not advertise in local neighborhood newspapers; several downtown stakeholders have advertised on bus shelters but they noted they were unsure if these methods were effective. Other downtown stakeholders conduct outreach through a limited number of community organizations in low-income communities of color; others expressed an interest in expanding outreach methods and new partnerships to reach these communities. One downtown waterfront stakeholder noted partnerships have proven to be more effective when it comes to planning and marketing than advertising on bus shelters, for example.

Downtown stakeholders proposed improved signage for public spaces and especially public restrooms for visitors from the neighborhoods. Waterfront stakeholders suggested history markers and art created by a diverse range of artists and subject matter displayed throughout the waterfront to help residents from a variety of backgrounds and neighborhoods feel more connected to and informed about the waterfront.

- **Community and Cultural-Based Resources:** All focus group participants agreed that programming that recognizes, includes, and welcomes all Bostonians regardless of backgrounds and socioeconomic status is important for creating a waterfront where everyone feels that they belong. Downtown stakeholders suggested a “neighborhood ambassadors” program that would provide free memberships to museums and other waterfront entities to a group of residents from Roxbury and Dorchester. Ambassadors could then serve as a source of information for local residents, make suggestions on where and when to visit the waterfront, and accompany residents on periodic visits.
- **Affinity Groups and Events:** Neighborhood stakeholders called for more diverse events and activities on the waterfront. As one stakeholder said, “We need to create happenings that celebrate everyone.” Specific suggestions included Ujima Day, historic tours with Black mariners in period costumes, and cultural market days.

The downtown waterfront stakeholders were aware of the fact that programming is not universal, and they try to create demographic-conscious programming that appeals to the preferences and interests of those beyond the young, white, and affluent residents who are already utilizing the waterfront for housing, employment, and recreation. They suggested diversifying the offerings of activities and programming on the waterfront.

- One stakeholder suggested that “efforts that encourage waterfront businesses and programming entities to check their biases in their thinking of what is fun” as a way to expand and diversify their offerings to draw more residents from Roxbury and Dorchester.
- Another stakeholder stated, “Programming is not universal. Not everyone wants to do yoga or play corn hole... we need to think about dominoes and other activities that resonate with a wider range of cultures.”
- Additionally, just a small fraction of the 400+ free annual events held on the waterfront are cultural events. Suggestions included increasing culturally-specific events such as an African heritage celebration or a Brazilian festival, as well as attractions that draw more diverse patrons as opposed to those that cater to the younger, white residents (e.g. the Greenway rings fountain vs. a beer garden).

- **Affordability:** Neighborhood stakeholders suggested a need for a variety of inexpensive and free events on the waterfront. They suggested expanded promotion of the EBT Card to Culture, as well as developing other discount options for residents who may feel stigmatized for using their EBT card.
- **Transportation:** Neighborhood stakeholders suggested a more direct route and reliable and affordable public transportation system is needed to facilitate better waterfront access for neighborhood residents. Downtown stakeholders pointed out that transportation barriers could be eased with supplemental private transportation. One stakeholder noted that some employers including those in the Marine Industrial Park provide shuttle service.
- **Planning and Public Spaces:** Neighborhood stakeholders indicated that the waterfront needs cultural spaces to nurture more community engagement; and suggested more connected physical spaces on the waterfront.

Downtown stakeholders noted that one challenge in diversifying the activities is that governance of waterfront spaces is currently fractured between public, nonprofit, private governing agencies: the groups that coordinate the spaces differ from those that actually plan and run the events. One suggestion included city funding to bridge the gap in governance between private and public spaces on the waterfront.

- **Employment and Housing:** The neighborhood stakeholders stated that people of color from Roxbury and Dorchester do not see the possibility of upward mobility, economic opportunity, or community collaboration for them at the waterfront. Increasing the number of people of color in visible, responsible positions is an important strategy for breaking down stereotypes, particularly in a city with such a turbulent and persistent racial divide.

Downtown waterfront stakeholders proposed job fairs and intentional outreach to Boston neighborhoods to truly incorporate a diverse range of people to increase the level of comfort and familiarity with employment opportunities in waterfront areas, thus increasing the likelihood of visits for leisure. However, the neighborhood stakeholders expressed concerns about these types of job fairs and held the viewpoint that there was nothing there for residents as

the few jobs that were being marketed were low-skilled service positions or jobs that required extensive unpaid training, compared to the better-paying high-skill jobs in the technology and financial sectors headquartered in the Seaport District. Neighborhood stakeholders emphasized that residents want access to better jobs, on-site hiring, and paid training at more diverse and inclusive companies, which would help create a more integrated workforce. They indicated that due to many residents' limited awareness and comfort level with the waterfront, businesses should conduct outreach, hiring, and training in the neighborhoods. Neighborhood stakeholders also suggested stronger hiring requirements may be needed, such as job quotas and paid training for neighborhood residents.

Downtown stakeholders suggested that waterfront businesses need to be encouraged to invest in recruiting, training, hiring, and supporting employees that live in the Roxbury and Dorchester neighborhoods.

- **Sustained Collaboration and Connections between Boston's Neighborhoods:** Neighborhood stakeholders stated that the limited access and influence in waterfront development for people of color is evidence of the need for systems change, and that the waterfront development is advancing in the same manner as the development of other areas of the City of Boston such as Faneuil Hall. Neighborhood stakeholders view commitments to giving communities of color a voice, input, and an inclusive and transparent development and hiring process as a positive, but practices fall far short of those commitments. They shared their frustration with the cycle of "smoke and mirror games" where city officials and developers pay lip service to "inclusive development" or "diversity in procurement." According to one stakeholder, *"People have been doing and saying the same things for 40 years. So it's about systems..."* A second offered: *"Solutions must be top heavy... from the Mayor."*

Downtown stakeholders suggested developing new partnerships with specific community-based organizations in neighborhoods in order to improve outreach to residents. Once new collaborations are generated, they need to be maintained so that trust and support grows between residents and waterfront stakeholders.

3 Climate Change

Neighborhood stakeholders were particularly concerned about climate change and its effect on the waterfront, as well as their own neighborhoods. They believe that the city is not doing enough to prepare for the increasing number of natural disasters and the rising sea levels that are threatening the waterfront, claiming that developers and officials are choosing land value over residents' current and future wellbeing.

They suggested the creation of more storm drainage systems, adapting the structural designs of new developments to be more prepared, and addressing preexisting structural weaknesses. They also acknowledged that climate change hits groups of people differently. As one neighborhood stakeholder noted, *“The response teams in the inner-city has to be just as vigilant and robust as they are in other communities. They need to make sure that they are building infrastructure to handle the impact especially for the most vulnerable.”*



APPENDIX A:

Waterways Focus Group Guide for Roxbury and Dorchester Residents

A. PURPOSE OF THE FOCUS GROUPS (10 Minutes)

- 1 Please help yourselves to some food and refreshments. Feel free to eat during our discussion.
 - Thank you for coming and agreeing to participate in this group discussion today; and
 - Introduce agencies, staff, and roles of TACC, Kelley Chunn & Associates, and Denterlein.
- 2 The purpose of the focus group:
 - Barr Foundation grant: Connecting Residents of Roxbury and Dorchester to Boston's Waterfront;
 - Help us improve access to the waterfront for residents from this community; and
 - Want to hear from you about your thoughts on Boston's waterfront, what it means to you, and understand your interest in waterfront places and activities, barriers you and other residents may face in accessing the waterfront, and suggestions for making the waterfront a more inclusive and desirable place for Roxbury and Dorchester residents.
- 3 What is a focus group/how does a focus group work?
 - One way to get resident input; an informal discussion guided by facilitator's questions;
 - Here to learn from you; you are the experts. TACC appreciates your time and sharing your views and ideas. Your participation is important;
 - Taking notes but not keeping track of names; taping to make sure answers are recorded accurately but tapes will be destroyed at end; review confidentiality policy; and
 - Consent form.

- 4 Focus group ground rules:
 - Facilitators present questions;
 - Only one person talks at a time;
 - Confidentiality: What is shared in the room stays in this room;
 - Important to hear everyone's ideas and opinions. It is important for us to hear all sides of an issue--both the positive and the negative;
 - There are no right or wrong answers to the questions--just ideas, experiences, and opinions, which are all valuable;
 - Appreciate and respect all participants and perspectives;
 - Food, gift cards, and raffle; and
 - Sign-in sheet: First name, your neighborhood, number of years living in neighborhood, number of years living in City of Boston.

Once everyone gets food, the focus group will get started.

B. INTRODUCTIONS

- 1 Please tell us your first name and which development/neighborhood you live in.
- 2 How long have you lived in this neighborhood? How long have you lived in the City of Boston?
- 3 Do you have children? If so, how many and what are their ages?

C. KNOWLEDGE AND FAMILIARITY WITH THE WATERFRONT

- 1 People have different ideas and view about the Boston waterfront. Many Boston residents are not at all familiar with the waterfront. (Need to acknowledge that there are no expectations for participants to be familiar/unfamiliar with the waterfront; that there are disparities in access.) What first comes to mind when you think of the Boston waterfront? (Call out your thoughts/words that come to mind; facilitators write on easel notepad.) Remember, there are no right/wrong answers.
- 2 What/where is the Boston waterfront to you? Probe (after open-ended question):
 - a. Landmarks;
 - b. Public parks/open space;
 - c. Water access/activities;
 - d. Cultural/museums/arts/music;
 - e. Educational;
 - f. Jobs/employers;
 - g. Restaurants/food;
 - h. Shops/services;
 - i. Transportation; and
 - j. Social.
- 3 Display basic map of City of Boston to locate the areas that participants identify as the waterfront (by facilitator or participant pointing if static map or zooming in/out, if presented digitally).
 - a. Point out the similarities/differences in perceptions among the group;
 - b. Explore other areas that participants may recognize/point out while looking at map;
 - c. Present other ideas/conceptions of the “waterfront” (e.g. city/stakeholder maps highlighting different geographic areas considered the Boston waterfront). Get reactions/discuss; and
 - d. Handout maps of waterfront region and ask participants to circle area they consider waterfront or use different colors or symbols to distinguish areas they consider the waterfront, areas they have visited, and areas they have never visited or heard of.
- 4 Next, we are going to list some different places/activities that people might go to the waterfront for, and we would like you to tell us if you have heard of any of these specifically on the waterfront. Probe (after open-ended question):
 - a. Public parks/open space/recreation (Boston-Harbor Islands, Boston Harborwalk, Carson Beach, Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway, Charles River);
 - b. Water access/activities (water taxi, boating, harbor cruise, duck tours);
 - c. Cultural/museums/arts/music (Jazz Fest, African Festival, Amistad, Convention Center, Blue Hills Pavilion, Institute of Contemporary Art);
 - d. Educational (Boston Children’s Museum, New England Aquarium, Boston Tea Party museum, Moakley Courthouse, Old Ironsides);
 - e. Jobs/employers;
 - f. Restaurants/food;
 - g. Shops/services;
 - h. Transportation; and
 - i. Social activities (fireworks).
- 5 Establish a working definition/geography for the waterfront to clarify what we mean by the waterfront in the following questions: Seaport District, Boston Harborwalk, Charles River, East Boston, Charlestown, Dorchester and South Boston, Citypoint, Carson Beach, University of Massachusetts Boston, Harbor Point.

D. EXPERIENCES AND CURRENT USE OF THE WATERFRONT

1 Have you ever been to the waterfront? Why/why not?

If YES, when did you last go there?

- a. How many times have you been there in the past year/12 months? Six months? Three months?;
- b. Tell us about where you visited, why you went there. (Probe: Leisure, recreation, culture, work);
- c. Did you have a plan/destination/work/event/activity that brought you there? How did you find out about it/get information about it?;
- d. Did you go with someone/meet there?; and
- e. How did you get there?

Probe:

- i. How long did it take you?;
- ii. Was it easy or difficult to get there? (Probe: Navigating public transportation, cost of transit, parking, finding your way around/to your destination);
- iii. If you haven't been to the waterfront, could you find the way to the waterfront from here? How would you get there?; and
- iv. What if you were in the middle of downtown Boston (e.g. City Hall), would you be able to get to the waterfront from there? What would you need? Trail signs or brochures?
- f. How would you describe your experience once you were there? Probe: Positive? Negative? (On a range of 1-10 where 10 is excellent and 1 is...?)
- g. What did you like/dislike about the visit?

Probe:

- i. People/staff (Probe: Friendliness, diversity/multi-lingual, welcoming, inclusive);
- ii. Quality of places/facilities/parks/museums/events/activities/food/shops/services;
- iii. Costs of facilities/museums/events/activities; have you heard of the EBT Card to Culture? (#

heard, # used) (e.g. Boston Children's Museum = \$2 per person admission; ICA = free for 1 person; kids always free) Have you ever used the EBT Card to Culture for discounted admissions? Where/what type of discount/would you use it?

- iv. Access to the water; and
- v. Transportation/costs.
- h. Would you go back? Bring your family/friends? Recommend to other residents?
- i. Why/why not?

2 For those who have never been/rarely go to the waterfront, why not?

- a. What are some of the main reasons you have not gone there? What do you think are the main reasons some residents in this neighborhood do not go to the waterfront?
- b. Explore/discuss potential barriers:
 - i. Not familiar with the area/what to do there;
 - ii. Do not know anyone who lives/works/goes there;
 - iii. Not interested in what is there (museums/parks/events/activities/food/shops/services);
 - iv. Too expensive (costs of activities, museums, events);
 - v. Transportation costs;
 - vi. Difficult to get there;
 - vii. Do not feel welcome there;
 - viii. People/staff;
 - ix. Bad past experience;
 - x. Negative reputation of the area;
 - xi. Limited water access; and
 - xii. No time/work schedule.

E. PUBLIC ACCESS

- 1 What is your understanding of the public rights to the waterfront (to indoor/outdoor spaces on water)?
- 2 Did you know that public has a legal right to fully access the waterfront?
 - a. All buildings on the waterfront are required to provide public facilities on the ground floor, including public restrooms, access to lobby, free public seating. (Mention: You do not have to be patron or order something.)

F. SUGGESTIONS AND IDEAS FOR IMPROVING ACCESS AND USE

Next, we would like to get your ideas and suggestions for improving interest in and access to the waterfront for residents from Roxbury/Dorchester.

- 1 What types of activities/events/facilities would you be the most interested in?
 - a. Cultural events/activities;
 - b. Music/arts;
 - c. Parks/recreation;
 - d. Water activities; and
 - e. Jobs/employment opportunities.
- 2 Are you aware of free public waterfront activities? If not, why not? What types of events would you like to see there?
- 3 What types of activities or programming would draw more diversity among visitors from different neighborhoods like yours? Example: Festivals that celebrate different cultural backgrounds/heritage?
- 4 What could the city, waterfront institutions, planners, businesses etc. do that might make you/your family/other residents more interested in the waterfront? More likely to visit the waterfront for the first time? More likely to visit the waterfront on a regular basis?
 - a. Information: On the area; museums, parks, facilities; ongoing events/schedules; costs;
 - b. Bilingual/multilingual information, materials, events;
 - c. Free activities/free passes to events, museums;
 - d. Lower cost activities/passes (Note: Try to get at what might be considered affordable to participants/residents in their community. Might not be appropriate/feasible given income level and amount of expendable income for activities.);
 - e. Maps of the area, walking routes;
 - f. Information on transportation, parking options;
 - g. Information/events on employment opportunities;
 - h. Information on housing opportunities; and
 - i. Information/events to involve residents in community planning of the waterfront.
- 5 How would you prefer to get information?
 - a. Mail/fliers/brochures/schedules;
 - b. Internet/website;
 - c. Phone/text; and
 - d. Community-based fliers/library/supermarket.

G. CLIMATE CHANGE

- 1 Do you fear the Boston waterfront is at risk of climate change? Do you think the waterfront is prepared for climate change?
- 2 Have you heard about the work the City of Boston is doing through Climate Ready Boston?

(Definition: Climate Ready = able to withstand extreme weather (flooding, wind); and to bounce back (e.g. buildings usable shortly after storms vs. three months later).
- 3 Are you aware there are currently no laws or regulations to require new buildings to be climate ready?

H. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR FOLLOW-UP

We would like to stay in touch with you and get your input on developing new activities for residents this summer. Please add your phone number or email address to the sign-in sheet if you would like to stay connected, and we will keep you posted.

Note: During the focus group, add specific questions regarding:

- Children/no children;
- Older residents/elderly;
- English/non-English speakers;
- Long-term Boston residents vs. newer residents?
Did you ever visit the waterfront as a child?
How has the area changed?; and
- Car owners/public transportation users.

APPENDIX B:

Waterways Focus Group Run of Show for Downtown Stakeholders

A. INTRODUCTIONS AND PURPOSE OF THE FOCUS GROUPS (10 MINUTES)

- 1 Please help yourselves to some food and refreshments. Please feel free to eat during our discussion.
 - Thanks for coming and agreeing to participate in this group discussion this morning; and
 - Introduce agencies, staff, and roles this morning. TACC, a nonprofit located in Dudley Square dedicated to improving opportunities and quality of life of lower-income residents. Chunn & Associates... Denterlein....
- 2 The purpose of the focus group:
 - Barr Foundation grant, Waterways: Connecting Residents of Roxbury and Dorchester to Boston's Waterfront.
 - This focus group is part of a series. We are also leading focus groups in Roxbury and Dorchester to get the insights of residents of public housing. Over the course of the session today, we will share some of what we have learned from them up to this point.
 - We want to hear from you about what you see as the benefits, opportunities, and challenges of creating a more inclusive waterfront. We know that some of you have been thinking about or working on these issues for years, and for others of you this might be a newer issue. All of your opinions and insights are valuable as we work over the course of the year to consider strategies for building upon programming and activities that have been effective, while also identifying potential new opportunities.

- 3 What is a focus group/how does a focus group work?
 - The session today will work as a guided group conversation.
 - We are here to learn from you—and we appreciate your time and sharing your views and ideas with us.
 - We are taking notes but not keeping track of names; taping to make sure we get answers but tapes destroyed at end; no names will be shared and confidentiality maintained.
- 4 Focus group process:
 - Facilitators present questions;
 - Only one person talks at a time;
 - Confidentiality: What is shared in this room stays in this room;
 - Important to hear everyone's ideas and opinions. It is important for us to hear all sides of an issue—both the positive and the negative;
 - There are no right or wrong answers to the questions—just ideas, experiences, and opinions, which are all valuable; and
 - Appreciate and respect all participants and perspectives.

B. IDENTIFYING WHAT IS WORKING AND CHALLENGES

Let's have everyone go around and share two things you think are working well on the waterfront to promote access, either things you are involved in or that you have seen; then share two challenges to access that you have identified in your time working along the waterfront.

C. BENEFITS TO CREATING AN INCLUSIVE WATERFRONT

- 1 The issue of public access to the waterfront has gotten more attention lately, but it is useful to unpack what you as waterfront stakeholders see as the benefits to promoting an inclusive waterfront.
 - a. How important do you think public access is to Boston Harbor? How does this issue impact your organization--or not?
 - b. What would a truly inclusive Boston Harbor look like to you?
 - c. Can we achieve a vision of an inclusive Boston Harbor through programming and activities, or do we need to do more? (e.g. design differently, rezone)
 - d. How do you think of public access as it relates to jobs access?
 - e. How do you see public access as tied to resiliency?

D. BARRIERS IDENTIFIED BY FOCUS GROUPS

- 1 In our focus groups so far, a few barriers to access have emerged. We would like to talk these through with you to see if these are barriers you have considered or if any are a surprise. (Probe each barrier individually with follow-up.)
 - a. Lack of awareness about what the waterfront has to offer; what has been your experience marketing programming/activities to Roxbury and Dorchester?
 - i. What marketing effort have you seen as most successful in terms of feedback from neighborhoods?
 - ii. Has any marketing effort surprised you by its ineffectiveness?
 - iii. What is the best ways to measure whether marketing efforts are reaching key audiences?
 - b. Transportation challenges; and
 - i. Do you have a sense of how people of color who visit/work in your spaces or take part in your programming get to and from the waterfront?
 - ii. Is transportation a challenge you have heard about before?

- c. Perception that the Boston Harbor is not a welcoming space for seniors.
 - i. Have you ever heard of a targeted effort to bring seniors to the waterfront?
 - ii. Do you see any actual hazards to seniors visiting or living along the waterfront, or is this a problem of perception?

E. SOLUTIONS PROPOSED BY FOCUS GROUPS

- 1 We heard a number of potential ideas proposed by our focus group participants to make the waterfront a place they would be more like to visit. (Probe each solution individually with follow up.)
 - a. Seaport Pass: This was brought up as a parallel to an idea one of the focus group participants had seen at Disney World in Florida. The pass would provide information and discounts to various places in the Seaport District, to be distributed throughout neighborhoods.
 - Would this be a workable idea?
 - Could a pass like this complement the other passes many organizations distribute?
 - b. Harbor Map: The focus group participants felt some confusion about what we actually meant when we talked about the “waterfront.” The idea came up of a full harbor map showing the various museums, open spaces, and attractions throughout the waterfront.
 - Would this be a workable idea?
 - Could this complement the Harbor inventory Boston Harbor Now is compiling?
 - c. Free Transportation: Could it work for waterfront stakeholders to come together around some kind of periodic free transportation service to the waterfront, maybe for the summer months?

