

Mystic River Watershed Steering Committee
Draft Meeting Notes
September 16, 2009

Ground Rules:

- Everyone is encouraged to speak
- Please raise your hand to speak
- All ideas should be treated with respect
- One person should speak at a time
- Try not to use acronyms or abbreviations
- Ideas should be written as the speaker intends
- Audience member should state their name and affiliation before they speak

Agreement Points:

- The Committee will continue to form business and municipality subcommittees. **Note: This meeting did not meet the quorum requirements and therefore the committee was unable to formally act on these activities.**

Meeting Dates:

- Meeting dates for 2010 were proposed at this meeting to be:
 - January 20
 - March 10
 - May 19
 - July 21
 - September 15
 - November 17
- They are generally the third Wednesday of the month, with the exception of March where March 17 is a state holiday.
- We will continue to meet throughout the watershed.
- Please volunteer to host a meeting in your community for one of the above dates, some offered at the meeting were MAPC to arrange a meeting in the upper watershed, NERO to host in Wilmington lab, Charlestown in May or July.
- Our next meeting is November 18, 2009 and will be held in Chelsea.

MetroFuture:

MetroFuture is a bold and achievable plan to make a Greater Boston Region — to better the lives of the people who live and work in Metropolitan Boston between now and 2030.

It capitalizes on the region's most important assets: its diverse people and landscape, a history of innovation, and a commitment to education and civic engagement. MetroFuture is a vision of a region where growth is focused in areas where it already exists and linked by an efficient transportation system; our land and natural resources are conserved; we invest in our residents by improving their health and education; opportunities are available to all residents of the region, regardless of race or ethnicity; and expanding prosperity benefits all of us.

This plan was developed with the extensive participation of thousands of “plan builders”: residents, municipal officials, state agencies, businesses, community-based organizations, and institutional partners throughout the region. They shared their visions for the future of the region, evaluated alternative scenarios for our future using data and sophisticated computer models, and had difficult conversations about the region’s priorities. The process concluded with the transformative MetroFuture Regional Plan that was formally adopted by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) in 2008.

Through this process, MAPC has created demographic and economic projections of the region’s future; a set of 65 specific goals for the year 2030, as well as objectives and indicators we will use to measure progress toward achieving these goals; 13 implementation strategies containing hundreds of recommendations for actions needed to achieve our goals; and a constituency of “plan builders” poised to make our vision a reality.

For more information about MetroFuture, visit the website: www.metrofuture.org

Discussion:

- Some communities in the MetroFuture communities are in the Mystic River watershed. MAPC will send out information on the 4 communities they are working with that are in the watershed. MAPC is working to plan a field trip to Wilmington’s Silver Lake.
- Thru MetroFuture, MAPC can help get word out to commercial and industrial sites that there will be more stormwater regulations coming out for development and redevelopment.
- There is an LID checklist that was put together by MAPC focusing on zoning, subdividing, etc. This can be shared so that when communities are updating their codes, they might want to think about some more proactive bylaws.

Priority Discussion: It was determined that without a quorum, the committee would have a conversation about the priorities, but would not be able to make any official decisions until the next meeting. All the priorities and voting results are at the bottom of this section.

- Overall there was a very high rate of consensus when looking at the multi-voting priority results.
- It seems there is some redundancy with the top three high-ranked items, and that they all approach goals in a general way:

Establish and select priorities for next three years to improve water quality in the Mystic River, lakes, and streams in the watershed
Improve coordination of planning and development activities in the Mystic River watershed and look at cumulative impact of development decisions
Create a comprehensive plan for the Mystic River Watershed (e.g. land use, development, flooding, others)

- Discussion around the Matrix and how we might incorporate all that work by looking at all the items and seeing how projects are moving along. We might benefit by seeing what

projects need our attention this year and by looking at the matrix to see what projects fit into the top (yellow) priorities.

- A lot of these priorities can be included in a single project. For example, any project can alone encompass public pathways, transportation upgrades, stormwater regulations, and restoration. If there are real on-the-ground improvements, you would integrate all of these ideas. Maybe we should be focusing on restoration, since that would involve all of the priorities listed.
- Perhaps a “mission statement” should be drafted from the high priority items (in yellow) since those are the goals, but not the tasks. Tasks are the actionable items and seem to be in orange.
- The committee could think more about how to work together as a single body. There could be some areas to focus on and work collectively.
- Another approach could be to look at the existing Mystic plans and see what tasks overlap. The committee could then help push forward tasks in the already existing plans.
- This list is missing, “identify resources for projects.”
- Perhaps the approach should be to identify what success in one year looks like, then priorities would flow from that – as what the committee can do to make that happen. Look at short and long-term what we’d like to see take place.
- A subgroup will be formed to look at the priorities and rework them to be better descriptive of what should happen next. Volunteers: Ivey St. John, EK Khalsa, Karen Pelto. This group will work over email.
- The Steering Committee should take on one or two goals and move forward on those. Potentially other ideas could be saved in a “parking lot” and those might be the goals of each individual organization.

Mystic River Steering Committee; Priorities

Yellow = high, Orange = medium, **Green** = Low, *Italics* = no votes

General Strategic Approach

9	Establish and select priorities for next three years to improve water quality in the Mystic River, lakes, and streams in the watershed
2	Create metrics/measurement to track progress and determine success
1	ID funding for scientific investigation
1	Visioning session to create a strategic plan for ten year goals for a healthy urban watershed.
1	What are the initial steps to improve water quality throughout the watershed? Develop a plan.

Mystic River Watershed Planning

11	Improve coordination of planning and development activities in the Mystic River watershed and look at cumulative impact of development decisions
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9	Create a comprehensive plan for the Mystic River Watershed (e.g. land use, development, flooding, others)
	<i>Create an environmental atlas for the Mystic River Watershed (e.g. resources, other issues historical and present)</i>
	<i>Create a standardized bylaw/models for use in the Mystic River watershed</i>
	<i>Flood Plain Management Plan. (Better and more coordinated planning.)</i>
	<i>Goals that are targeted to include wildlife. Habitat restoration and protection.</i>

Water Quality & Sediment Actions/ Enforcement/ Cleanup

11	Increase level of environmental compliance in Mystic River Watershed with measurable results
7	Establish TMDLs for nutrients and other pollutants of concern (e.g. phosphorus)
4	Reduce frequency of SSO, CSO events
3	Increase the level of EPA and state enforcement activity in the Mystic River watershed
1	Establish a Mystic River cleanup boat (like the Charles River cleanup boat)
1	Landscaping ordinances – nutrient free zones
	<i>Include wildlife criteria in water quality goals</i>
	<i>Compile and evaluate existing sediment data, and fill in gaps.</i>
	<i>Monitor remedial efforts and promote redevelopment of hazardous waste sites.</i>

Access

11	Public pathways across the watershed (walkways, bike trails)
4	Increase safe, public access to the Mystic River
1	Waterfront access and redevelopment in DPAs
	<i>Prioritize access for EJ communities</i>
	<i>Distinguish and focus on both efforts directed at navigable bike path access and leisure paths along the river.</i>
	<i>Connect pathways between the river and its tributaries</i>

Outreach –Outreach Tools for achieving the goals outlined above.

13	Increase public awareness, understanding and access to information about the Mystic River Watershed, Create newsletter capturing work of the Steering Committee in the Mystic River Watershed. Communicate Priorities in a highly visible way. Increase media attention on the Mystic.
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6	Identify and secure resources including funding for needed activities/projects in the Mystic River watershed
6	Create a clearinghouse/central location for past and present research and projects throughout the Mystic River Watershed.
4	Create opportunities to listen to community needs and concerns (e.g. listening session)
2	Address pollution from multiple sources and change behavior and practice on key issues (e.g. lawn care, pesticides, residential landscaping techniques, etc.)
1	Report Card event should also include information on positive accomplishments in addition to the grade
	<i>Conduct briefings for funders to attract attention and larger resources for projects</i>
	<i>Create a strategy to engage and involve youth on a range of environment and public health issues (e.g. lawn care, pesticides, etc.)</i>
	<i>Organize and coordinate cleanup events along the Mystic River</i>
	<i>Improve communication/coordination between agencies and departments that normally do not work collaboratively</i>

Business and Municipality Subcommittees:

Business:

- The formation of the Business Subcommittee has been a little stalled. Chelsea Creek Action Group has quarterly business round table meetings. Ivey St. John will be invited to the next meeting to present the work of the Steering Committee and recruit additional business interests.
- EPA New England has compiled a list of NPDES permittees in the watershed.
- All Steering Committee members should forward commercial and industrial organizations to Ivey St. John for follow-up on interest in the subcommittee. Please include ideas from the upper watershed.
- EPA is planning to draft an outreach letter to all the NPDES permittees to invite them to the first subcommittee meeting.
- Tony Rodolakis will assist Ivey in recruiting business members to the subcommittee and with setting up the first meeting. He will maintain significant involvement in the subcommittee.

Municipality:

- EPA New England has met internally and is hoping to send a letter to all chief elected officials in watershed communities asking them to formally select someone from their municipality to sit on the Municipality Subcommittee. We will then convene a meeting some time in November/December to brief everyone about the Steering Committee and then hope to schedule time with the mayors at the Annual Massachusetts Municipal Assn. conference in January.
- Members will read comment and make suggestions on the Municipality Subcommittee guidance within two weeks of the posting of these notes. Municipalities will have the opportunity to comment on this before it is made final.

- It's possible that it might still be hard to get the attention of the municipalities until the group is more focused. MAPC offered to be a lead volunteer to try to get the word out to municipalities.
- It is clear that participation in this Initiative will not offer private entities immunity from current, ongoing, or future enforcement action by any regulatory agency.

Announcements:

- EPA New England is working with EPA Headquarters on a Webcast that will focus on the Mystic River Watershed Steering Committee. It will be aired live on November 19, 2009.
- MAPC's lower Mystic strategy will be posted on the web and there will be a meeting in October in Somerville to wrap up Phase 1 and discuss Phase 2 of the strategy.
- On October 4th Pier's Park will be hosting a one-day sailing event for disabled children.
- The DCR Master Plan will be printed and released by the end of October. It outlines possibilities for pedestrian crossing over the Earhart dam as well as the Lake dam restoration, which is moving forward this fall.
- On October 4th, CWC and the BRA will partner to host a collaboration of Courageous Sailing, Piers Park Adaptive Sailing Program & Spaulding Rehabilitation's Charles Weingarten Adaptive Sports Program to provide 50 disabled youth an afternoon of sailing and sports fun.
- Shannon Beach (formerly Sandy Beach) on Upper Mystic Lake suffered a Shigella outbreak in late July/early August of this summer. It was determined that the bathroom facilities were not sanitary. MA DCR shut down the facility, disinfected the bathrooms and collected wipe samples. The playground was also sanitized and was re-opened. The beach will be re-opened next year. There were reports of unsanitary actions by patrons, but that is hard to catch and hard to enforce. This might be a good location for an education campaign about sanitary issues (diapers, etc.).
- The City of Medford has announced Phase 1 of the restoration of the Condon shell area on Mystic Valley Pkwy to include upgraded parking lot and public pathways. Renovation of the shell itself is unfunded phase 2.
- There have been oil spill trailers donated to Revere, Chelsea, and Everett as part of the oil spill trust fund. MassDEP has been giving these trailers so that they are the first line of defense for local oil spill issues – they are not for cleanup purposes.
- There is motion to connect the Minuteman Bikeway to the Mystic on both sides of Alewife Brook. This was announced on Sept 27.
- EPA recently took enforcement action against 9 communities in MA under the stormwater regulations for overflows.
- \$6M has been given to extend bikeways from Davis Square to Brighton St in Belmont which will go into construction this winter.

Follow up Actions:

- EPA will send out the Matrix and will activate the submission button on the EPA NE website. We will also bring printed copies to the next meeting.
- Convene priority sub-group via email to rework, re-order, and boil down priorities.

- Steering Committee members should submit their ideas for additional business entities to include in an outreach effort. Please include ideas from the upper watershed.
- EPA New England will draft a letter to NPDES permittees asking them to participate in the first Business Subcommittee meeting.
- EPA New England will draft a letter to all watershed communities asking them to select a representative to attend the first subcommittee meeting. EPA NE will also schedule the subcommittee meeting and time at the MA Municipal Assn meeting in January.
- EPA NE will draft a one-page handout that succinctly outlines the Initiative and relevant information (phone numbers, website, members).
- Members will read comment and make suggestions on the Municipality Subcommittee guidance within two weeks of the posting of these notes.
- The Steering Committee will continue to have briefings and/or distribute materials on state and federal water quality standards and regulations (CWA, TMDLs, etc.)
- EPA will continue to gather and distribute existing Mystic River Watershed plans from DCR, MyRWA, MAPC, and Chelsea Creek and look at how they relate to the list above.
- EPA will continue to outreach to and involve additional municipalities in this effort.
- The next Meeting will be on November 18, 2009 in Chelsea. Specific location TBD

**Mystic River Watershed Steering Committee Sign-in Sheet
September 16, 2009**

Name	Organization	E-mail address
Ivey St. John	Charlestown Waterfront Coalition (CWC)	gran.nie@comcast.net
Andrew DeSantis	Chelsea Department of Public Works (DPW)/Revere ConCom	adesantis@chelseama.gov
Melvin Kleckner	Town of Winchester	mkleckner@winchester.us
Catherine Woodbury	City of Cambridge	cwoodbury@cambridgema.gov
Ekongkar Singh Khalsa	Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA)	ek@mysticriver.org
Jovanna Garcia-Soto	Chelsea Green Space	jovannags@chelseacollab.org
Jan Dolan	Friends of Upper Mystic Lake	dolanjanicea@hotmail.com
Joan Blaustein	Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)	jblaustein@mapc.org
Jenny Birnbaum	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)	Jenny.birnbaum@state.ma.us
Karen Pelto	Massachusetts Office of Energy and the Environment (MA EEA)	karen.pelto@state.ma.us

Michael Celona	Massachusetts Department of Public Health	Mike.celona@state.ma.us
Robert Bennett	MassHighway	Robert.bennett@state.ma.us
Dan Driscoll	Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (MA DCR)	Dan.driscoll@state.ma.us
Cynthia Liebman	Conservation Law Foundation	cliebman@clf.org
Stephen Perkins	US EPA New England	Perkins.stephen@epa.gov
Lynne Hamjian	US EPA New England	hamjian.lynne@epa.gov
Caitlyn Whittle	US EPA New England	Whittle.caitlyn@epa.gov
Stacey Johnson	US EPA New England	Johnson.stacey@epa.gov
Michael Castagna	US EPA New England	Castagna.michael@epa.gov
Julie Wood	Charles River Watershed Assn.	jwood@crwa.org
Amanda Clark	ExxonMobil Pipeline	amanda.clark@exxonmobil.com
Steve Dodge	MA Petroleum Council	dodges@api.org
Arthur Powers	ExxonMobil Pipeline	arthur.f.powers@exxonmobil.com
Tony Rodolakis	MACTEC Eng. & Consult.	amrodolakis@mactec.com
Judith Dyer	Chelsea Conservation Commission	Judie_dyer@msn.com
Brad Washburn	Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management	Bradford.washburn@state.ma.us
Amy Cotter	MAPC	acotter@mapc.org
Corin Parsons	Senator Jehlen's Office	Corin.parsons@state.ma.us