



FINAL REPORT

November 15, 2006

City of New Bedford, Massachusetts
Scott W. Lang, Mayor

Prepared by

City of New Bedford Planning Department

1. PREFACE

This report documents the planning, participation and outcomes of a public charrette process for the Fairhaven Mills site. The purpose of the *Fairhaven Mills Planning Charrette* was to allow meaningful public involvement to inform the future redevelopment of the site by having teams develop and articulate concepts that will be incorporated into a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a comprehensive development of the site. The participants engaged in a creative, open and inclusive dialogue that was part design studio, part town meeting.

This site, commonly referred to as Fairhaven Mills, has unique investment and development potential due to its attractive waterfront location, access to an interstate highway and proximity to New Bedford's historic downtown as well as other potential development sites, such as the Hicks-Logan district. Public amenities, such as the new Riverside Park, along with current progressive planning initiatives, has attracted interested parties to evaluate this site and consider private investment for redevelopment.

However, prior to any development taking place, Mayor Lang asked for community wide participation into the vision of this site and indicated that the proposed development should reflect the significant value this site has to the adjacent neighborhoods as well as the city at large. The charrette format was seen as a valuable planning tool that could successfully engage a diverse range of participants to examine the potential of the site and provide a vision for future development.

Prior to the charrette event, there was extensive outreach into the community for participation. A variety of methods were used to ensure that as many stakeholders as possible were contacted and informed of the planning event. The City of New Bedford issued a press release informing the community of the event, the event was highlighted on the City's website and e-mail invitations were sent to targeted groups who have expressed an interest in the site, or whose input was seen as valuable. These targeted groups included neighborhood organizations, business organizations and interested citizens. In addition to these efforts, approximately 100 print invitations were mailed to invitees whose attendance was thought of as critical; this included the site's various property owners, City Councilors, as well as the property abutters.

2. SHAPING A VISION

On a hot summer day more than sixty people, from all walks of life, came together to help plan a bit of New Bedford's future. The participants included business leaders, economic development leaders, professional planners, developers, non-profit directors, artists, neighborhood community groups, municipal department heads as well as interested citizens. These participants gathered at the recently redeveloped *Ropeworks* mill (adjacent to the Fairhaven Mills site) and represented a wide range of stakeholders who are committed to the future of New Bedford.

Getting Started

Registration started at 8:30 a.m. and participants starting arriving soon after. Each participant was assigned a group number and received a guidebook for use in the working group sessions. The daylong session was kicked-off with a keynote speech from Mayor Lang. The Mayor encouraged the participants to think about new and exciting possibilities when envisioning new uses and development for the Fairhaven Mills site. David A. Kennedy, City Planner, then oriented the participants to the charrette process and outlined the planning initiatives that the City is currently undertaking.



Participants were provided with seven themes and goals relevant to the redevelopment of the Fairhaven Mills site and asked to prioritize three, and then focus and develop ideas relating to these themes and goals during their discussion. The seven goals/themes were:

1. economic development potential
2. vehicle & pedestrian access concerns
3. potential housing needs
4. environmental impacts
5. recreation & open space opportunities
6. historic preservation
7. tourism potential

Five Groups, One Site

At the conclusion of the morning presentations the participants broke out into five working groups led by facilitators and discussed the seven themes/goals in relation to the site and the city throughout the morning. Discussion and debate within the groups was spirited, positive and productive. The groups were given a mid-day lunch break, during which many participants took the opportunity to visit the site and appreciate the river and harbor views from the top floor of mill #4. The groups reconvened after lunch to refine the morning's discussions and prepare for the final presentations.



Final Presentations

At the end of the group sessions the five groups selected a member of the group to present the results of their discussions in a final presentation to all participants. Once the final preparations were made all of the participants gathered together for the group presentations. During the final presentation groups summarized and presented the themes and goals, which they had identified and developed, to be included in the future redevelopment of the site. Following are the recorded presentation sheets that the teams used during the oral presentations:



GROUP 1

Economic Development Potential

- Site should connect to other parts of the city – “not an island”
- Take advantage of its gateway location
- New fire/police departments
 - Public safety
- Site development:
 - Restaurant/banquet facility
 - Tourist info center
 - Hotel/Conference/Banquet center
- Must be historically preserved
- Rehab mills
- Tie-in recreation
 - Water access
 - Bike path
 - Gardens
- Focus of the site needs to be business oriented
- Job creation
 - Multi-level jobs
- Focus on incubator space
- Integration into Master Plan

Recreation & Open Space Opportunities

- Take advantage of the existing open space:
 - Swan boats
 - Piers for pedestrian use to enjoy water views
 - Bike paths/rentals & expand throughout the city
 - Boat/kayak rentals
- Establish floating swimming pools in the water
- Encourage swan wildlife in the area
- Create a historic landscaping design

Tourism Potential

- Use site as a magnet to attract people to Acushnet Avenue
- Businesses should be linked with tourism
 - i.e. Wrentham Outlets
- Capture historic flavor/character
 - Historic preservation draws people in
- Use the proximity to the highway to draw people to the site
- Herman Melville museum
- Visitor Center
- Commercial harbor w/office space & restaurants
- Docking for houseboats

Historic Preservation

- Preserve Mill #4
- Encourage design review for new construction



GROUP 2

Economic Development Potential

- Adaptability – development is readily adaptable to a new use, if the original use leaves
 - No single-use buildings
- Promote fishing industry
 - Fish market, etc.
- Diversity
- Business friendly
- Branded area – site to reflect New Bedford's image
 - Landmark features
- Hotel/Convention Center/4-Star Area
- Improve Trade/Jobs
 - New jobs, noncompetitive with other jobs/businesses
 - Food, retail, marine technology
- Capture traffic
 - Wrap-in tourism
 - Gateway development to downtown
- Catalyst for further development
- Incorporate development into Master Plan
- Maximize new economy business
 - Revenue to stay in the city
 - Improve the local trade balance
 - Improve local commercial infrastructure
- Cleanup/promote area/make more inviting
- Expand opportunities for people in the city
- Connections to river as an economic development driver
 - Seating (connecting to river/park) performance space

Historic Preservation

- “New Bedford is not just anywhere”
- Highlight the mill/textile history
 - Child Labor Movement
 - Level of whaling history

- Reflect architectural heritage in any new construction
 - Maritime theme/mill theme
- Architectural design review/standards for new construction
- Historic District Overlay
 - Size specific
 - Inclusive of larger region
- Take advantage of historic tax credits
- Preserve the façade of Mill #4 – flexibility w/interior
- Vision should consider Coggeshall & Rt. 18 spaces

Tourism Potential

- Branding and imaging of New Bedford
- Public access for portion of the site
 - Waterfront park
 - Pedestrian easement
 - Nucleus
- Tourism draws:
 - Art store
 - Textile/Labor/Fishing/Whaling Museum
 - Great restaurant w/great view
 - Roller Rink
 - Indoor mini golf/arcade
 - A stop that tourists seek out
 - Child focused entertainment
 - Restaurants
- Unique boutiques, shops
- Fairgrounds/festival area
 - Connection to the EPA site
 - Enjoyable events in an enjoyable place

GROUP 3

Economic Development Potential

- Learn from past mistakes & successes from New Bedford, other cities
 - Oceanarium
 - Baltimore, Savannah
- What we would like to see on site:
 - Mixed use/smart growth approach
 - Affordable housing
 - Restaurant, fish market
 - First floor museum
 - Hotel
 - Health care/assisted living
 - Keep antiques mall
- Expand/add auction
 - Market – local based
 - Open air market
 - Parking structure, lots
 - Visitor kiosk
 - Public access to water
 - Professional service spaces
 - Movie theater
 - Community center (if needed)
 - Recreational marina
 - Day care
- Mix of job opportunities
 - Low to high-end paying to support community & reduce “brain drain”
 - Stop catering to low paying jobs
- Make it look good to attract people to it (landscaping, etc.)
- Connectivity to North End Business District & downtown
- Site should increase tax revenue

Historic Preservation

- Save all the mills – make them productive
 - Don't assume burnt out buildings are a loss
- Tourism aspect
 - Old fashioned whaling town
 - Encourage local artists
 - Learn from Plymouth, Mayflower

- We could overstate positive economic impact (Mystic is suffering)
- Caliber of building cannot be replicated
- Acknowledge & accept trade-offs of preservation
- Lewis Hine opportunity:
 - Museum
 - Tourism draw
 - Experience of working in that environment
 - UMD & RISD current textile museum

Vehicle & Pedestrian Access

- Third highest location for accidents in the state of MA
- Improve safety of the ramp intersection
 - Without improvements any project is worthless
 - City, State & Federal governments need to address situation immediately
- Traffic will be increased
 - Need for additional off ramp?
- Include an additional ramp to the north end
- Connect vehicle & pedestrian access from the site to Hicks/Logan & Acushnet Ave.
- Extend feeder street into parcels

Challenges of the Site:

- How to engage the average New Bedford resident?
- Lots of residents commute out of New Bedford
 - New Bedford brain drain of educated middle class
 - Loss of community memory
- Recent change in public discourse – people being listened to
- Development needs to fit into the fabric of the neighborhood
- Have the city government take today serious

GROUP 4

Economic Development Potential

- A net fiscal impact analysis required in the RFP
- Creation of jobs; creation to linkages to living wage jobs
- Creation to innovative & evolving diversified uses/businesses
 - Research & development firm
- Development of a high-end residential space
- Multi-use, multi-cultural campus concept
 - Mixed-use development
- Hotel/convention center/marina
- Supermarket w/an international market w/local purveyors
- Restaurant/food court within
 - Provides jobs
 - Fills a void in the neighborhood
 - Draw people off the highway
- Think beyond chains
 - Other forms of retails
 - Special/unique uses
- Sustainable, evolving uses
- Satellite campus for Bristol Community College
 - Will promote educated workforce

Tourism Potential

- Concentration of waterfront/maritime activities
 - Water access
 - Amphibious tours
- Linking this site to other city attractions
- Parking for ferry overflow & residential
- Minimal services
 - Visitor center
 - Transportation hub
- Comfort center
- Function facility/club
- Fishing museum

- Textile museum
 - Capitalize on Louis Hine connection
- Create innovative & unique destination
- Create linkages to boardwalks, bike paths & existing parking thru a shuttle system
- Whaling village
- Events space/locations
 - Art shows, music, car show

Historic Preservation

- Preservation of Mill #4
 - Most complete structure
 - High visibility
 - Becomes a memorial to textile labor
- Keep & redevelop burned down building #7
 - Add on to building #7
- Encourage preservation of all the mill buildings in the RFP
 - Proposals that integrate mill #4 will receive higher consideration in the RFP process
- Development/redevelopment should be consistent w/ historic context & reflect the fabric of the city
 - Make new development look completely different, but complimentary, to the existing historic structures
- Gateway location
 - Use of iconic symbols, such as, whales, scallops, harpoon
- Connect boardwalk to working waterfront
- Transportation links
 - Bus, train, trolley
 - Improve exits

GROUP 5

Tourism Potential

- High-visibility site & a gateway to the city
- Use arts & antiques existing as an anchor
- What we'd like to see at the site:
 - Visitor center
 - Hotel
- Accommodations are crucial
 - Shuttle service to downtown attractions, museums
 - Faneuil Hall style market w/local foods
 - Food market – both sides of highway:
 - Seafood
 - Portuguese
 - Local wine
 - Marina – other side of highway
 - Textile museum
 - Portuguese village celebrating our heritage
 - Family activities:
 - Bike paths
 - Sports fields
 - Public pool
 - Water park
 - RV hookup site

Economic Development Potential

- Preserve existing mill & replicate mill style for new construction
 - Mixed-use mill mall
 - Antiques
 - Residential
 - Commercial
 - Wrentham Outlet Premium style shopping
- Contextual design for new construction
- Parking underground to avoid blacktop parking lots

Potential Housing Needs

- Mixed-use housing
 - Market rate & affordability
 - Affordability is key
 - Union St./Coffin lofts as role model
- Mill/loft space w/green space
- Ropeworks as a role model
 - Artists want to be in mill/loft spaces
- Sell as raw space & let buyers do what they want w/the space
- Tax incentives for landlords to reside in the area triple-deckers
- Village style mixed-use
 - Ground commercial
 - Upper floor residential
 - Rear of mill - garden



3. CONSENSUS

The report out from the five working groups included recurring themes and goals associated with the Fairhaven Mills site focused on the economic development potential, tourism opportunities and historic preservation. **The consensus vision is that of a mixed-use development that implements smart growth principles to provide enhanced economic opportunities, improve the quality of life for the residents, is welcoming and attractive to visitors while maintaining the site's urban mill history and character.** Three goals/themes were only mentioned once (recreation/open space, vehicle access, housing) and no team set environmental impacts as a priority.

Economic Development Potential

The economic development potential of the site was the dominant theme of the charrette and was a focus area of all five groups. The groups identified the site's location along Interstate 95 and the river as amenities to attract diverse forms of economic development that may be nontraditional to the city.

Projects envisioned were varied and included a mix of retail, commercial and other uses that included tourism related business, general business, retail, restaurants, hotel/conference center, residential lofts and other related activities to enhance usage of and access to the river. The opportunity for a high-end use for the site would increase the diversity of the economic base and provide job opportunities across a range of wage levels, while offering the ability of sustainable growth and attract future synergistic development throughout the Hicks Logan Sawyer area.

Discussions of linking this site to the downtown and north end business district were prominent throughout the groups. A great deal of emphasis was placed on development that would compliment existing business to the greatest extent possible and not replace existing business or simply move jobs around. The thought was for a new business type with new employment opportunity. One group suggested that a net fiscal impact analysis be required in the RFP.

Tourism Potential

Tourism is one of the fastest growing segments of the region's economy and four out of five groups identified local tourism as an important component of an overall economic development strategy. The groups appreciated the need for the city to play to its unique strengths and capitalize on its history, culture and architecture as a means to draw visitors to New Bedford.

The gateway location of the site provides for a unique opportunity to attract visitors and provide direct highway access to the site. Development of the site should include businesses and uses that are attractive to visitors who are traveling on Interstate 95 to and from Cape Cod.

The potential for visitor amenities on site were discussed within the groups. Suggestions included a visitor contact station, waterfront and recreation uses and the development of a textile museum on the site that could link with the whaling museum and the national park. Agreement was universal that the protection and enhancement of the community's historic resources would be vital for a successful tourism effort and that the location and appropriate development of the Fairhaven Mills site was critical to greater tourism industry success.

Historic Preservation Potential

Four out of five working groups emphasized the role of historic preservation as an effective economic strategy. The discussions focused on the premise that the preservation of the historic built environment can be a critical vehicle to new development.

The rehabilitation of Mill building # 4 was thought to be a means for job creation, small business incubation, housing and tourism. The preservation of Mill # 4 was designated as an significant asset to the community as it reflected the history and culture of the city and stood as an icon of New Bedford's prosperous textile era and thus the preservation and adaptive re-use should be a requirement for new development. There were numerous references to other communities that have rehabilitated their mills successfully as a form of economic stimulus.

The groups also stated that design standards and an architectural review be part of the approval process for new proposals. Site design infrastructure should also be reflective of a historic mill district. The consensus was that if New Bedford wanted to attract investment, it must differentiate itself from anywhere else. Protecting, enhancing and promoting New Bedford's unique "sense of place" was a term used often throughout the day.

4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work of the following organizations, public entities and individuals ensured that the Fairhaven Mills Charrette resulted in being a productive and successful planning event.

The City Of New Bedford, Office of the Mayor
The City of New Bedford, Planning Department
NBPI, New Bedford Public Interest
WHALE, Waterfront Historic Area League
New England Grassroots Environment Fund
The Ropeworks, Adam Buck, Norm Buck, Anne Wolfe
Medium Studio
Cobblestone Restaurant
D&D Caterers

5. APPENDIX

Invitation

Press Release

Participant's Reference Guide

Power Point Introduction Presentation

News Coverage

Fairhaven Mills Site

ALL DAY EVENT
LUNCH & REFRESHMENTS
IDEA SHARING

Public Charette

July 8th 2006 Saturday

Come share ideas & visioning for the Fairhaven Mills site.
Work in teams to shape goals & themes.
Join in the public process to inform city officials.
Have your voice heard!



at The Ropeworks
123 Sawyer St.
New Bedford

Partnership of the City of New Bedford, NEPI & WHALE
Funded in part by the New England Grassroots
Environment Fund



New England
Grassroots
Environment Fund

8:30: Coffee & Sign-in

9:00 to 3:00: Charette Events

To pre-register or for more information
contact the city planning department:
508.979.1488

 **mediumstudio**
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION



City of New Bedford
Scott W. Lang, Mayor

City of New Bedford
Office of the Mayor
Contact: Elizabeth Treadup
(508) 979-1410

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Date: June 28, 2006
For Immediate Release

MEDIA ADVISORY

Planning Charrette for the Fairhaven Mills Site on Saturday, July 8, 2006

New Bedford, Massachusetts- The City of New Bedford in collaboration with New Bedford Public Interest (NBPI), a grassroots community group, will be sponsoring a planning charrette for the Fairhaven Mills site on Saturday, July 8, 2006. The event takes place at the newly renovated Ropeworks @ 123 Sawyer Street, adjacent to the Fairhaven Mills site from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm, rain or shine. The purpose of this charrette is to allow meaningful public involvement into the future redevelopment of this important parcel of land and to produce concepts that may be incorporated into the future Request for Proposal (RFP) for this site.

The event is a brainstorming session that is part design studio, part town meeting. It will be a creative, open and inclusive process that helps people to visualize the possibilities and expand their thinking about this site and produce outcomes that will be presented to the wider community.

Registration, with morning refreshments, begins at 8:30am and participants will be split into groups of 8 to 10 people, each with its own facilitator who will encourage participation, maintain focus and assist the group in the visualization process. There will be an hour lunch break from 11:30am to 12:30pm (free brown bag lunch provided), at which time participants will be encouraged to walk the site or enjoy Riverside Park. After lunch, the groups will reorganize and present their findings to the entire group.

Mayor Scott W. Lang encourages all those interested in participating to pre-register, or if you should have any further questions, to please contact the City Planning Department at 508-979-1488.

This charrette is funded by the New England Grassroots Environment Fund.



Fairhaven Mills Site Public Charette

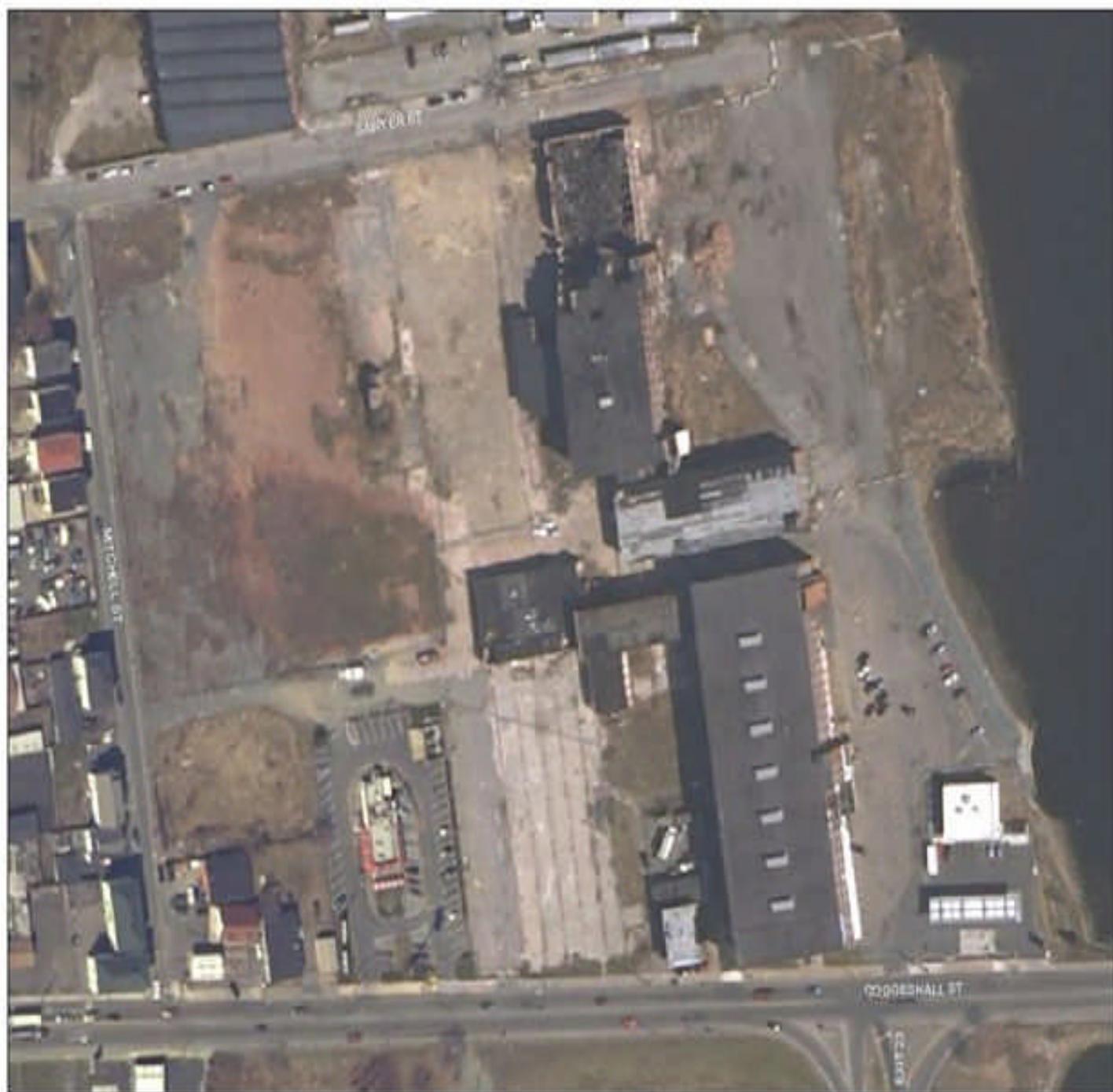
Reference Guide



New England
Grassroots
Environment Fund

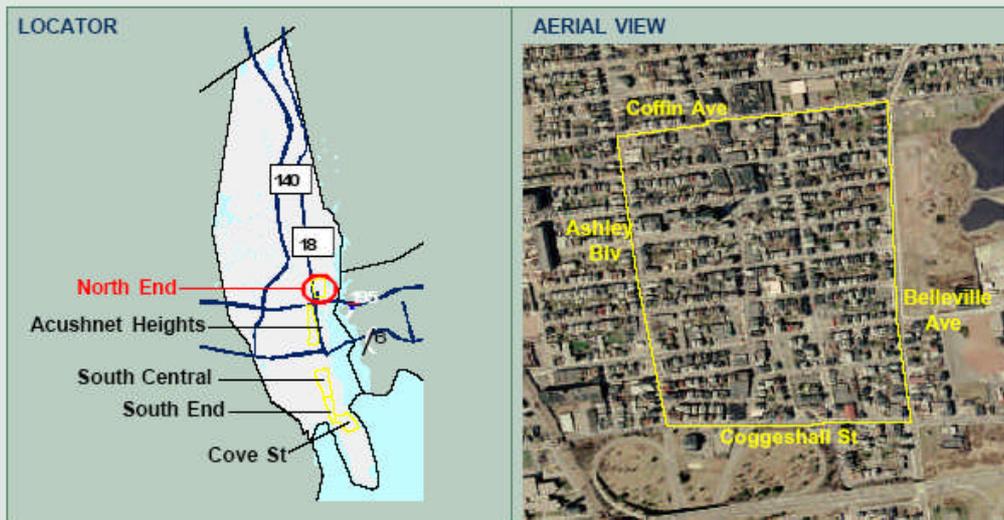
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 - c) Potential Housing Needs
 - d) Environmental Impacts
 - e) Recreation & Open Space Opportunities
 - f) Historic Preservation
 - g) Tourism Potential



NORTH END

Target Area Profile



DESCRIPTION

The North End Target Area is bordered by Coggeshall Street to the south, Belleville Avenue to the east, Coffin Avenue to the north and Ashley Boulevard to the west. The area covers a 1.5 mile stretch of the Acushnet Avenue commercial district, and 25 square blocks of housing that sprout off of eight residential cross streets. Revitalization tasks include upgrading of older storefronts, rehabilitation of degraded housing stock, and improvement of outdated infrastructure.

Population Change, 1990 - 2000

Neighborhood	1990	2000	%Change
City of New Bedford	99,922	93,768	-6%
North End	3,488	3,220	-8%

Population Distribution by Age, 2000

Age	Number	Percent
Under 18	1,025	32%
18 to 34	978	30%
35 to 64	956	30%
65 and Over	261	8%

Population Distribution by Race/Ethnicity, 2000

Race/Ethnicity	Number	Percent
White	1,973	63%
Black	128	4%
Latino	781	19%
Other	338	14%

Median Household and Per Capita Income, 1999

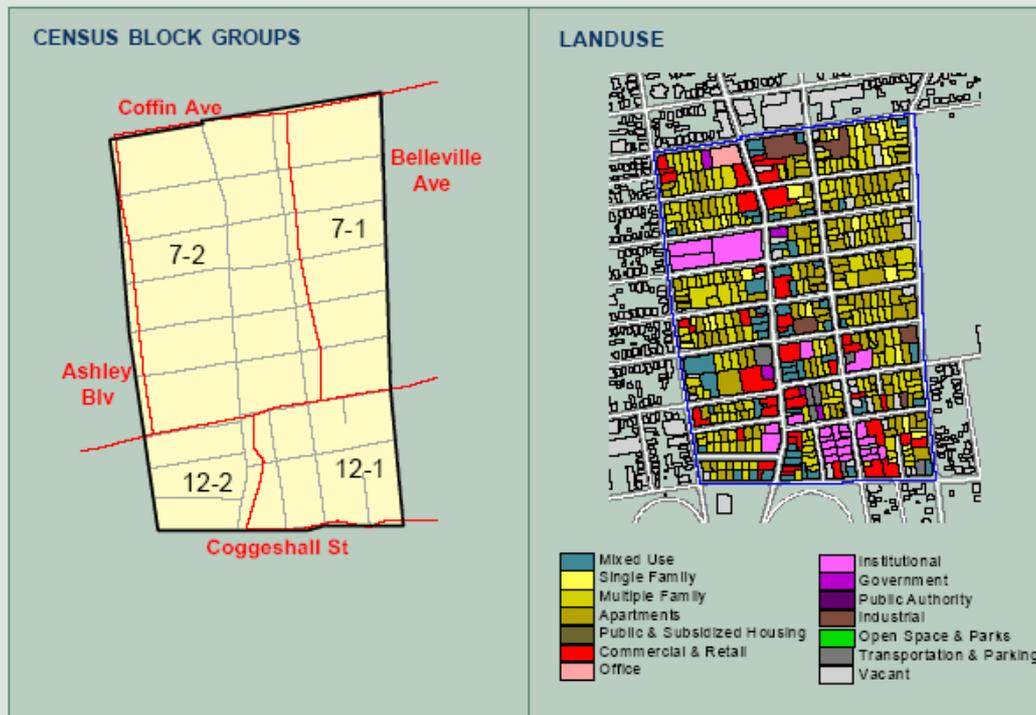
Tract-Block Group	Median Household	Per Capita
14-2	31,806	17,709
14-3	26,111	12,959
14-4	28,542	10,775
17-1	12,928	8,800

Persons in Very Low, Low and Low to Moderate Income Groups, 1999

Tract-Block Group	Very Low	Low	Low/Mod	%Very Low	%Low	%Low/Mod
7-1	405	526	736	52%	73%	40%
7-2	523	683	878	55%	71%	42%
12-1	483	662	724	84%	91%	61%
12-2	378	493	636	56%	73%	43%

NORTH END

Target Area Profile



Housing Units: Year Structure Built

Built	7-1	7-2	12-1	12-2
1999 to March 2000	0	0	14	0
1995 to 1998	0	0	0	0
1990 to 1994	3	0	7	0
1980 to 1989	43	0	0	3
1970 to 1979	9	7	12	9
1960 to 1969	16	38	24	38
1950 to 1959	30	38	19	49
1940 to 1949	109	107	101	44
1939 or earlier	238	407	119	296
Total	448	597	296	439
%pre-1940	53%	68%	40%	67%

Housing Units: Vacancy and Tenure, 2000

Status	North End		New Bedford	
	Units	Percent	Units	Percent
Housing Units	1,437	100%	41,511	100%
Vacant	193	13%	3,333	8%
Occupied	1,244	87%	38,178	92%
Owner-Occupied	222	18%	16,711	44%
Renter-Occupied	1,022	82%	21,467	56%

Current Initiatives in the Area Include:

- Hicks/Logan/Sawyer IPOD
- Riverside Park Redevelopment
- Acushnet River & New Bedford Harbor Cleanup
- Harbor Master Plan
- Designated Port Area
- Mill Overlay District/Rehabilitation
- Route 18 Improvements
- City Master Plan

Main Themes to be Discussed:

- Economic Development Potential
- Vehicle & Pedestrian Access Concerns
- Potential Housing Needs
- Environmental Impacts
- Recreation & Open Space Opportunities
- Historic Preservation
- Tourism Potential

Economic Development Potential

New Bedford is an internationally renowned city that dominated the whaling industry in the early 18th century. The great wealth reaped from whale products, particularly whale oil, resulted in New Bedford becoming one of the richest per capita cities in the world.

However, with the discovery of petroleum in 1859, the whaling industry embarked on a slow decline. Anticipating a need to diversify their great wealth, the astute businessmen of New Bedford began to explore alternate venues to invest in to maintain their prosperity and continue to provide employment opportunities to the people of the city. At this time the textile industry slowly began to supplant the whaling industry as the principal employer of the city of New Bedford.

Even so, New Bedford has not benefited from one of the longest periods of economic prosperity in the United States history. The city's economy suffered from the decline of the manufacturing industry, losing 60% of its manufacturing jobs between 1985 and 2000 and did not benefit from the economic boom of the 1990's that surrounding southeastern communities enjoyed.

Still, in recent years, with aid from state and federal funding, New Bedford has successfully implemented brownfields remediation, transportation infrastructure improvements and harbor planning, which have encouraged economic development and redevelopment in the city.

A planning initiative that is being proposed in this area is the proposed Hicks/Logan/Sawyer (HLS) Interim Planning Overlay District (IPOD). The HLS District consists of approximately 95 acres of predominantly industrial zoned land covering 13 city blocks. The District contains mill buildings dating to the 19th and 20th centuries, when it was the center of textile and metals manufacturing. Through the use of the IPOD, the Planning Board, Planning Department and the Redevelopment Authority will encourage the redevelopment of brownfields, as well as, new development within the HLS District. (Included in this packet is the language being proposed for this IPOD, as well as, a brief summary of what an IPOD is.)

Further evidence that New Bedford's greatest chance of economic revival comes from the sea is the growing marine technology based industries coming to our city. These companies are taking advantage of New Bedford's central location between Woods Hole and Point Judith, in what is now known as the "marine technology corridor". Just a few weeks ago, the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries announced that it is relocating its southeast field station from Cape Cod to New Bedford, where its offices will be housed in the Quest Center until its permanent headquarters can be built in the south end of the city. New Bedford was chosen for its status as the most valuable commercial fishing port in the country and its close proximity to SMAST, University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth's School for Marine Science and Technology. The City of New Bedford must work together aggressively to secure its future economic vitality.

Vehicle & Pedestrian Access

Transportation, pedestrian access and parking are key to any development. The redevelopment of this site may increase traffic on the roadways, not only in this area, but adjacent areas as well. The Request for Proposals will include a requirement for a traffic study, not only for the traffic generated by the proposed use, but also for the potential growth in population and development outside the site.

The following traffic volumes were counted on Coggeshall Street according to a traffic study conducted in June 2005:

- Weekday volume of automobiles was 20,680 trips per day
- Saturday volume of automobiles was 19,693 trips per day
- Predominant flow of weekday evening peak hour flow was 61% eastbound
- Predominant flow of Saturday midday peak hour flow was 59% eastbound

Traffic mitigation for this site may include improvements to the following areas:

- Coggeshall Street and I-195 westbound ramps and the entrance to the Fairhaven Mill site
- Coggeshall Street and Belleville Avenue intersection
- Howland Street and Main Street intersection (Fairhaven)
- Howland Street and Adams Street intersection (Fairhaven)

Mitigation for these areas may include, but is not limited to, widening of on and off ramps and lanes, traffic lights, right and left-turn only lanes/signals, one-way in and one-way out of the Fairhaven Mill site.

Another component to consider when looking at traffic is the pedestrian. The following are items to consider as ways to enhance pedestrian quality of the streets in this area:

- Waterfront paths/trails for walking and biking
- Sidewalks and paths to the adjoining neighborhoods
- Street lighting and street trees/landscaping
- Access from the mill site to Riverside Park

Regardless of what type of development/redevelopment takes place on the Fairhaven Mill site, traffic and pedestrian safety will be of the utmost concern when drafting and issuing an RFP and especially when selecting and approving a proposal.

Potential Housing Needs

The City of New Bedford is endowed with an older housing stock that is well preserved and architecturally unique. New Bedford has a large supply of affordable housing, which consists of both public housing and privately owned subsidized housing. The City's affordable stock is well managed and provides essential housing opportunities to the elderly, veterans, and families with low wages. While most of the City's housing is maintained satisfactorily, there are some notable exceptions. Older housing that is severely degraded and sometimes abandoned compounds problems related to health, drugs and crime in a number of New Bedford neighborhoods.

Home values were extraordinarily cyclical in the 1990s. Real median home values fell by 50 percent between 1988 and 1995. The quick decline led to a high number of foreclosures and an increase in abandonment. The trend reversed itself in 1996 as developers began renovating deteriorated housing throughout the City. In 2003, property values surpassed 1988 levels.

Homeownership remains allusive. New Bedford has one of the lowest homeownership rates in Massachusetts. In 2000, 44 percent of households owned their own homes; exactly the same proportion as in 1990.

A large number of renters are rent burdened. Thirty-nine percent of households who rent spend over 30 percent of their household income on rent - 20 percent of all renting households spend more than half of their income on rent.



New Bedford's housing stock includes over 41,000 units. Single-family homes account for a third of the City's housing; over three-quarters of the stock are accommodated in structures that include fewer than 5 units. According to Census files, the majority of the City's housing was built prior to 1939.

Among New Bedford residents, no gains in homeownership were made over the last decade. Fewer than 44 percent of households own their own homes, 18 percentage points below the statewide homeownership rate.

Most New Bedford residents rent their homes. While rents are relatively low throughout the City, families here earn less than in other parts of the state. As a result, most households are severely rent burdened. This is particularly troublesome because they come from data collected before New Bedford experienced significant appreciation in home values. Recent evidence suggests that rents along with housing prices are escalating rapidly in the City.

Fortunately New Bedford has a large supply of subsidized housing that will remain affordable to families living in the City over the long-term. This supply includes approximately 2,500 units of public housing and over 1,700 rental assistance vouchers that protect families with the greatest need. Less secure are the nearly 2,000 housing units financed under state and federal programs. These programs required a long period of affordable rents before owners could let at the market rate. Unfortunately, many of these agreements are nearing their terms. Close to three hundred units have already been lost, and use restrictions on another 800 units are set to expire in the coming years.

Environmental Impacts

The 18,000-acre New Bedford site is an urban tidal estuary with sediments that are highly contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and heavy metals. At least two manufacturers in the area used PCBs while producing electric devices from 1940 to the late 1970s, when the EPA banned the use of PCBs. These facilities discharged industrial wastes containing PCBs directly into the harbor and indirectly via the city's sewerage system. As a result, the harbor is contaminated in varying degrees for at least 6 miles, from the upper Acushnet River into Buzzards Bay. Over 100,000 people live within 3 miles of the site. A 5-acre northern portion of the Acushnet River Estuary contaminated with high levels of PCBs has been identified as the "hot spot" area of the site. Measurements taken at the site indicate tidal action transports up to 0.5 pounds per day of PCBs from the upper harbor to the lower harbor and, ultimately, Buzzards Bay. Bioaccumulation of PCBs within the marine food chain has resulted in closing the area to lobstering and fishing, and recreational activities and harbor development have been limited by the widespread PCB problem.

This site is being addressed in four stages: initial actions and three long-term remedial phases focusing on the hot spot area, the upper and lower harbor areas, and the Buzzards Bay area.

Initial Action: In 1982, the U.S. Coast Guard erected signs warning the public of the presence of PCBs in the harbor. Maintenance of these signs and erection of newer signs continues as needed. In 1985, 2,000 feet of chain-link fence at two recreational facilities were erected to keep people out of contaminated areas.

Hot Spot Area: The EPA's original 1990 remedy for the hot spot area included dredging and on-site incineration of those PCB-contaminated sediments above 4,000 ppm. Due to a vehement and congressionally supported reversal of local support for incineration, EPA elected to postpone the incineration component of the hot spot remedy and explore alternative treatment approaches. Dredging of the 14,000 cubic yards of sediment from the 5 acre hot spot areas was accomplished from April 1994 to September 1995, with the dredged sediment temporarily stored in a lined and covered holding pond. Seawater removed from the sediments during dredging was treated on site. Pilot studies of solidification and chemical destruction technologies were completed in the fall of 1996, and a feasibility study of alternative remedial approaches was issued in December 1997. EPA issued an Amended Record of Decision (ROD) in April 1999 that included dewatering and off-site land filling as the final component for the hot spot remediation. Transportation of the hot spot sediment to an offsite TSCA permitted landfill started in December 1999 and was completed in May 2000.

Upper and Lower New Bedford Harbor: After an extensive process of studying New Bedford Harbor and developing consensus for a solution to the widespread PCB problem in the Upper and Lower Harbor areas, EPA issued a final ROD in September 1998. The selected remedy calls for dredging and shoreline containment of approximately 450,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment and wetlands in four combined disposal facilities (CDFs).

Enforcement Highlights: In 1982, the EPA entered into Consent Agreements with two companies to address the PCB contamination on their properties. In 1992, the EPA, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and five companies that used PCBs reached settlement regarding the EPA's claims.

Recreation & Open Space Opportunities

Open space and recreational opportunities in an urban setting have more value than one might at first perceive. Urban green space provides many benefits, such as mitigating air and water pollution, combating sprawl, providing opportunities for recreation, reducing crime and fostering unified neighborhoods, attracting businesses, and stabilizing property values. As part of a broader urban agenda, open space can serve as an anchor for revitalizing neighborhoods and building healthy communities.



The Fairhaven Mills site has the potential to provide many open space and recreational benefits to the neighborhood and the city as a whole. The past years have seen the EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers ongoing cleanup of the Acushnet River, which included the cleanup and redevelopment of Riverside Park.

Riverside Park provides the city with an outdoor hockey rink, basketball courts, soccer fields, a skate park, open recreational space, outdoor performance venue and picnic tables. Over the coming years, as the cleanup is completed, the park will be expanded to include access all the way to the riverfront and with that come many opportunities for the city to take advantage of.

If planned efficiently, the redevelopment of the Fairhaven Mills site may provide the residents of the area with many unseen benefits, such as a walking and/or bicycling access to the future commuter rail station. This connectivity to other neighborhoods and the future rail station would be a profitable boon to the city, as it would help alleviate traffic and increase the neighborhood's property values. Well utilized bicycle and walking paths, along with recreational opportunities, have also been proven to lower crime in inner cities.

The cleanup of the Acushnet River will provide direct access to the waterfront, an amenity that will help to attract the types of development and redevelopment that the residents of the city envision.

In summary, open space and recreational opportunities have the potential to provide the following benefits:

- Mitigates air and water pollution
- Unify people and neighborhoods
- Attract businesses
- Stabilize property values
- Provides a safe place for children to play
- Offers a venue for a variety of performances

Historic Preservation

New Bedford's mills are grand icons of the city's prosperous textile industry, which spanned from the mid 19th century until the last decade, when the industry declined as an economic force. Some of these mills retain some form of light industrial use, while others have been redeveloped or utilized for various uses, including residential, commercial retail, offices and artist work spaces. Other communities that retain these structures have begun to realize that these buildings are not only important historical and cultural resources, but also assets that can be redeveloped and aggressively marketed to help bring economic revitalization to their communities.

How are other communities redeveloping their mills? Lowell, Massachusetts brands itself as "Mill City" and has successfully turned its rehabilitated riverfront mills into housing and mixed-use developments with a National Park located downtown to celebrate and interpret the textile industry that existed in the city. Many of Boston's suburbs have also seized the opportunity to preserve their mill history while providing affordable housing in converted mills.



New Bedford's Mill Properties: While some of New Bedford's mills stand empty or underutilized, many continue to contribute to their surrounding neighborhoods, such as: Joseph Abboud Manufacturing, which takes place in an aesthetically pleasing two story mill; Howland Place - houses offices, a gym and an upscale nightclub slated to open this month; The Ropeworks, the city's first artist live/ work space.

The last few years has seen intense interest in converting local waterfront mills into housing units, which led the city to introduce four mill overlay zoning areas, that allow for what was traditionally competing uses, business and residence, to exist together and spur future development. In the last 24 months the city's Planning Board has approved four mill developments, with another proposal next month. In total, these mill developments will account for nearly one thousand units, comprised of elderly, veterans, artist live/work space, condominiums, and market rental. Many of these housing developments are also planning retail spaces to be incorporated at street level.

The Fairhaven Mills Building #4: Fairhaven Mills, with its excellent location and views of New Bedford's inner harbor and the ocean, can be envisioned as an important component of a vibrant development. Structurally sound building providing a blend of historical elements that attract investors, such as the soft natural light from the north facing monitors, full height, arched top, multi-pane windows, high wooden ceilings and exposed bricks, columns and beams.

Mills are being recognized for their historic, aesthetic, as well as, their immense economic value. Large window, high ceilings, brick facades and the waterfront locations associated with mills make them attractive for conversion to apartments, condominiums, offices and retail shops.

Tourism

Visiting historic and cultural sites is one of the most popular tourist activities today. One of the fastest growing niche market segments in the travel industry today—**heritage tourism**.



The National Trust for Historic Preservation defines heritage tourism as “traveling to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes historic, cultural and natural resources.” According to a recent study by the Travel Industry Association of America, people who engage in historic and cultural activities spend more, do more, and stay longer than other types of U.S. travelers. The American heritage traveler is older, better educated, and more affluent than other tourists.

Baby boomers in particular wish to experience history through travel, visiting the authentic places where significant events occurred or made relevant contributions to the development of America. The potential is huge, not only to attract more visitors to New Bedford but also to increase the monies generated from existing or new visitors. Heritage tourism also uses assets—historic, cultural, and natural resources—that already exist. Rather than creating and building attractions, New Bedford should continue to look to the past for a sustainable future.

Why is this site important?

Location, location, location. The Fairhaven Mills site is located at an interstate highway exchange that has 48, 500 vehicles traveling by it every day. That translates into over 15 million vehicles annually that pass through New Bedford on I-195. The Fairhaven Mills location is highly visible and that portion of the interstate corridor allows for a cityscape vista that offers visitors and the passerby an important first impression of the City. Therefore, the development of the Fairhaven Mills site and the image it portrays is important to New Bedford’s heritage tourism efforts.

On May 5, 2006, the City of New Bedford hosted a Tourism Summit in which the City’s past efforts were assessed and new initiatives were discussed. Participants identified certain themes that are relative to the Fairhaven Mills site:

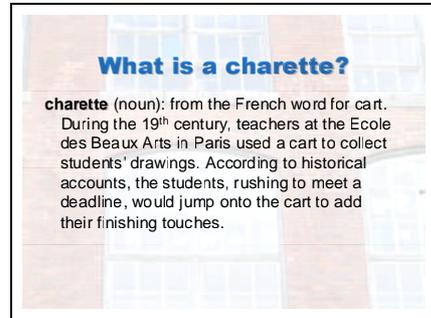
- Increase outreach to I-195 travelers
- Creation of a Fairhaven Mills textile museum and Center
- Capitalize on the Gateway location
- Clean up Exit 15/ Gateway to Downtown
- Build up City brand awareness

Tourism is a powerful economic development tool. Tourism creates jobs, provides new business opportunities and strengthens local economies. When cultural heritage tourism development is done right, it also helps to protect our City’s natural and cultural treasures and improve the quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

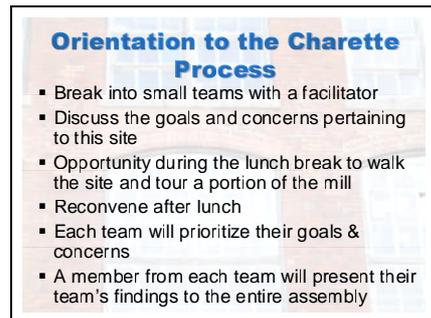
Linking tourism with heritage and culture can do more for local economies than promoting them separately. That’s the core idea in cultural heritage tourism: save your heritage and your culture, share it with visitors, and reap the economic benefits of tourism.

Fairhaven Mills Site Charette PowerPoint Presentation

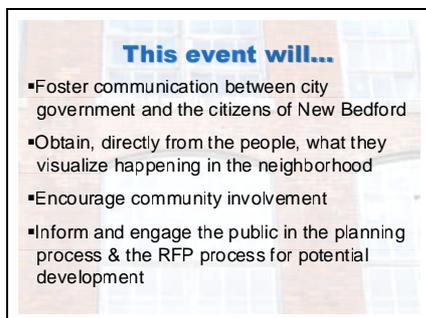
Slide 1, 2



Slide 3, 4



Slide 5, 6



Slide 7, 8

Current initiatives in the area include...

- Hicks/Logan/Sawyer IPOD
- Riverside Park Redevelopment
- Acushnet River & New Bedford Harbor Cleanup
- Harbor Master Plan
- Designated Port Area
- Mill Overlay District/Rehabilitation
- Route 18 Improvements
- City Master Plan

Main Themes to be Discussed

- Economic Development Potential
- Vehicle & Pedestrian Access Concerns
- Potential Housing Needs
- Environmental Impacts
- Recreation & Open Space Opportunities
- Historic Preservation
- Tourism Potential

Slide 9, 10

Next steps after today...

- All information will be collected by the City Planning Department
- The planning staff will prepare a report which will be available to the public
- The City of New Bedford will use the results of today's efforts to inform and guide the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Fairhaven Mills site

What is a Request for Proposal?

A Request for Proposal (more commonly known as an "RFP") is an open solicitation issued by the grantor (the City of New Bedford), which asks qualified applicants to submit an offer providing the city with a solution to a problem or a need that the city has identified.

In this case, an RFP will be issued to address the redevelopment of the Fairhaven Mills site.

Slide 11

"Never doubt that a small group, of thoughtful, committed citizens, can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Mead

City goes back to drawing board on Fairhaven Mills

By Jack Spillane, Standard-Times staff writer

Date of Publication: July 09, 2006 on Page A05

Inside the innovative Ropeworks artist lofts yesterday, just over 60 SouthCoast residents debated the future of the most controversial site on the New Bedford waterfront.

Outside the building, Mayor Scott W. Lang and City Council President David Alves debated whether there was any use of even having such a charette.

The outside debate, perhaps, best demonstrates how deeply divided the city of New Bedford remains over the future of the former Fairhaven Mills site on the Acushnet River.

Mr. Alves dismissed the gathering — which organizers said included businesspeople, professional planners, nonprofit leaders and a smaller number of artists and preservationists — as a collection of "artists and dreamers."

"If you took all of the people in that building combined and totaled all their assets, they would not have enough money to do anything," he said.

Matthew Morrissey, the newly appointed interim head of the Economic Development Council, quickly rebutted the council president.

"That's not true; three developers were there this morning," he said.

Mayor Lang told Mr. Alves that a public discussion on the future of the mill site is the way the city should have conducted its request-for-proposal process to begin with.

A deal between the city and Home Depot to develop the 15-acre site fell apart after Mayor Lang ousted former Mayor Frederick M. Kalisz Jr. and referred the original RFP process to the inspector general's office for investigation.

The inspector general found the process had been arranged to benefit a company involving George Leontire, "a faithful political ally" of the former mayor.

Mayor Lang told Mr. Alves he's open to developing the former mill site as something as simple as a "big box" store to something as complex as a convention center.

The property owners are happy to have the activist groups' and the city's planning input, he said.

After the city decides what it wants in a new RFP for the city's tax-foreclosed properties at the site, the other land owners will make their decision on their best financial interests, he said.

Once the city disposes of its property, the private owners of the other land will be in high demand, he said.

"It will be the Oklahoma land rush."

Mr. Alves, a real estate agent by trade, contended that John Meldon, the owner of the largest property at the site, had informed him he had not been invited to the charette.

He argued that the private property owners have the right to do whatever they want with the land and are not calling for any rezoning or planning process for the site.

"How can you have a city that only owns 40 percent determine what's going to happen for the other 60 percent?" he asked.

Mr. Meldon could not be reached for comment yesterday but he told The Standard-Times earlier in the week that he was not planning to attend the charette.

The charette organizers — which included the city, the economic development council, and the nonprofit groups New Bedford Public Interest and the Waterfront Historic Area League — said the private property owners were invited.

Anne Louro, the city planner who organized the event, said all the owners had been invited by printed invitation, e-mails and follow-up phone calls.

Ernest Fournier, who own a small mill building at 115 Coggeshall Street, and his son Paul, attended, she said.

"This was a wide cross-section of the community. To describe it as artists/dreamers would be a misclassification by a long shot," she said.

Councilor Alves said he is not defending the previous RFP that led to Home Depot acquiring the city land with the assistance of Mr. Leontire's company, Whelan Associates.

"The concept was good, the process was not," Councilor Alves said.

Mayor Lang, however, said the public event is exactly the kind of planning event that should have happened prior to the first RFP.

"This time the city's role won't be circumvented. Zoning is always a community effort. That's exactly the way zoning works for every issue in this community," he said.

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