

Urban River Visions

*Redefining the
River's Edge*



*An initiative of the
Executive Office of
Environmental Affairs,
Bob Durand, Secretary*

*in partnership with the
communities of:*

*Athol
Chicopee
Easthampton
Fall River
Hudson
Lawrence
Worcester*



So what's your *UrbanRiver Vision?*





What are the Conditions for Success?

- Achievable Vision
- Build on existing community initiatives
- Build public support and awareness



What we've learned so far

- Innovative work going on in many riverfront communities—you are the experts
- Opportunities for learning from one another—communities with similar issues and experience
- Need to look at national examples of success--and understand realistic timeframes
- Potential for linkages to educational institutions



Consultant Team

- Goody, Clancy & Associates
- Maria Van Dusen
- The Waterfront Center
- FXM Associates
- Byrne McKinney & Associates
- Vanasse Hangen Brustlin
- Vine Associates
- Norris and Norris



Program Overview

- Kickoff meeting—all communities
September 2002
- Charrettes
September-November 2002
- Lessons Learned/Next Steps
(to be scheduled)
- Website
www.urbanrivervisions.org



How the Charrette Process Works

- Initial meetings in communities with partners
- Adhoc working groups formed-to begin to discuss issues and prepare for charrette
- Charrette held—daylong event; participants define a series of visions.
- Consultant team prepares vision drawing and action plan—reviews work with each community
- Final vision plan and action plan prepared

The Charrettes—the start...



The Charrettes—the middle...



The Charrettes—the finale...



How We Live

A CIVIC INITIATIVE for a LIVABLE NEW ENGLAND

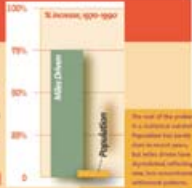
Led by the Boston Society of Architects and backed by a wide array of civic, governmental, environmental, and professional groups, the Civic Initiative brought together more than one thousand citizens in 2000 and 2001. In forums, workshops, a planning workshop, and a future search, participants focused on two central questions: **Will we continue to sprawl, squandering a legacy of historic cities and open countryside? Can we find ways to grow that protect and nourish our heritage and our resources?**



1 Why is sprawl happening here? We have used increasing wealth to

2 Why should we care? We're rapidly losing our heritage

- We're sprawling more than Los Angeles**
 - Proportion of Massachusetts defined as developed is up to 48%
 - Same figure projected for 2005 63%
- We're paying more for heritage**
 - Increase in population, metro Boston, 1990 census 44%
 - Increase in personal vehicle to metro drivers 45%
- We're leaving greenways**
 - In the Boston metro area:
 - Mass. Dept. of Environmental Protection projects that 80% levels will begin rising again over the next five years as a result of increasing vehicle miles traveled.
 - 1/3 of new land for road alone meets quality standards, that number will rise during the next five years, according to DEP projections.
 - More children and seniors suffer from asthma; mortality related diseases that is 10 years high.
- We're facing a housing/affordability crisis**
 - 2000 Boston rental vacancy rate 1%
 - Change in number of housing families, 1990 census 48%
 - In pace in the communities of eastern Massachusetts—home to nearly 1/3 of the state's population—a family wanting the median income could not afford a home at the median price.
- We're draining wealth from our other cities**
 - From 1990 to 1995:
 - Change in employment outside Route 128 up 4%
 - Change in office job concentration up 4%
 - We have exported our economy to the suburbs.
 - Bottom share of Class A office space is 10% greater than 40%
 - Bottom share of Class A office space is 10% less than 40%



We're shrinking our social fabric
 In the Boston metro area:

- Proportion of poor children living in cities 84%
- Proportion of low-skill workers in the core in 2000 competing for scarce available jobs 84%
- Core community household income as a portion of household income in outer communities 44%
- Proportion of state's African and Latino-American residents living in cities 79%

3 What can we do? Ten key goals will help us begin to address the problem

- 1) Preserve** sufficient land use to ensure natural resources and ecological diversity.
- 2) Restore** urban and rural equity across the state.
- 3) Encourage** inclusive educational equity.
- 4) Create** new forms of urban sharing to improve the quality of urban communities.

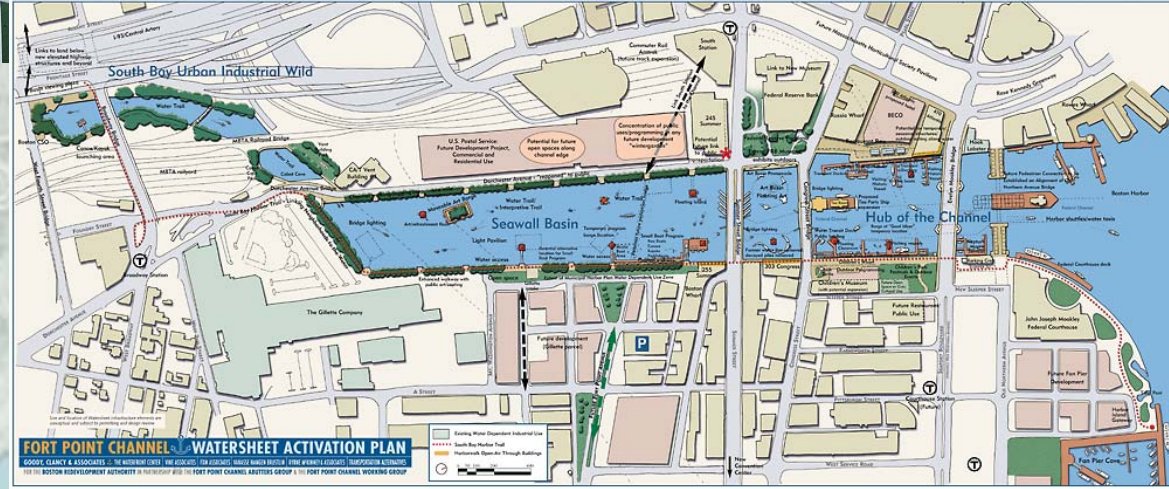
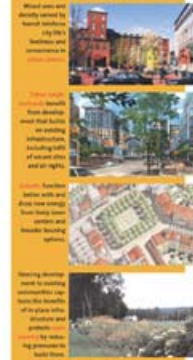


The proposed plan that shows how the green spaces...
 More green growth around Boston and New York has...
 More green growth around Boston and New York has...
 More green growth around Boston and New York has...

4 What next? Build a coalition

- Civic initiative proposals will convene key leaders to begin building a smart growth coalition that addresses environmental, housing, transportation, education and other elements of a growth-management agenda. The coalition would focus on three goals:
 - Building greater public understanding to cultivate an informed constituency.
 - Building consensus to identify solutions to complex challenges.
 - Advocating growth-management issues.
- Identifying and coordinating existing groups. There is support for growth-management issues.
- Rallying support for key legislation.

What does smart growth look like?



Schedule

- Easthampton *September 21st*
- Athol *September 28th*
- Worcester *October 5th*
- Hudson *October 8th/9th*
- Chicopee *October 26th*
- Lawrence *November 16th*
- Fall River *November 23rd*



Charrette Products

- Vision Plan
 - A picture is worth a thousand words
 - Something to put on a wall not on a shelf
- Action Plan
 - Open-ended
 - Opportunities for partnerships



Today's Program

- Ann Breen: Communities Across the Nation Reinvent their Urban Riverfronts

- Lunch

- Workshop presentations by each community
 - Study Areas
 - Goals
 - Challenges
 - Success stories

- Discussions of common themes, challenges, and approaches



Key Charrette Themes

- Downtown Revitalization
 - Mill Building Reuse
 - Riverfront Redevelopment
- Brownfields Redevelopment
- Community Facilities
- River/Pond Access and Use
- Environmental Enhancements
 - Water Quality
 - Air Quality
- New Connections
 - Bikepaths/Rails to Trails
- Partnerships

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Easthampton





Easthampton

- New Bikepath as Catalyst—
new gateway and local and regional connections
- Continue momentum of innovative Mill Reuse strategies—including housing
- Access and Use of Mill Pond

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Athol

GC
&A





Athol

- Downtown revitalization through riverfront renewal—and downtown open space development
- Enhance connections to new Millers River Environmental Center
- Reuse of major mills
- Use of mill ponds as a catalyst

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Worcester





Worcester

- Continue to redefine the city's southern gateway—and linkages to the Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor
- Redevelop riverfront properties along Route 146
- Provide enhanced access to the river
- Linkages to Quinsigamond Village

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Hudson

GC
&A





Hudson

- Reconnect downtown to the river—
and promote riverfront access
- Promote revitalization of the historic
center—including mill reuse
- Promote new development potentially
including housing

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Chicopee





Chicopee

- Capture the River's potential as a symbol for the whole community
- Promote expanded public river use and access
- Support continued mill reuse
- Create linkages between the River and public facilities such as the new library
- Advance the vision of the Chicopee River Business Park to facilitate economic development and environmental education

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Lawrence





Lawrence

- Establish a vision for the Canal that integrates with the Lawrence Gateway project and other community initiatives
- Support renewal of neighborhoods around the Malden Mills complex and the ongoing initiative around the Spicket River

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Fall River





Fall River

- Create a vision plan for the Quequechan River that gave the city its name—a green corridor within the city
- Create linkages to other waterfront projects such as the newly opened Kerr Mill Redevelopment that includes the UMass Dartmouth Advanced Materials Technology Center



Communities Across the Nation Reinvent their Urban Riverfronts— the national perspective

Ann Breen
The Waterfront Center
Washington, DC



www.urbanrivervisions.org