

A Survey of Lynn Stakeholders  
Regarding Potential Waterfront  
Redevelopment

Presented to the Economic Development and Industrial Corporation of Lynn  
Prepared by the Brownfields Team at the MIT  
Department of Urban Studies and Planning

December 16, 2005

## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Working with the Economic Development and Industrial Corporation of Lynn (EDIC/Lynn), a team of MIT urban planning graduate students conducted a survey of twenty community groups and business entities to gauge interest in the potential redevelopment of the Lynn waterfront. The telephone surveys took place from November 7 to December 14, 2005. While the types of respondents were diverse, some common themes emerged in their answers to the survey questions. Many of those surveyed expressed a desire to see a project go forward on the waterfront site that would benefit the city as a whole. All but one of the respondents expressed interest in taking part in a longer-term visioning process for the waterfront. Based on these encouraging findings, the report concludes with a series of recommendations for EDIC/Lynn that, if implemented, will serve to strengthen stakeholder participation in the planning process and better position the ultimate waterfront redevelopment in the eyes of the Lynn community as a whole.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

The survey aimed to reach a broad array of stakeholders in the Lynn community. Through consultation with EDIC/Lynn and through independent research, the survey team compiled an initial list of 16 landowners and organizations to contact. These stakeholders were:

- The Miles Group
- Lynn Business Partnership
- Mr. Chuck Morneau, The Boston Culinary Group
- Lynn Community Health Center
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
- Lynn Historical Society
- North Shore Community College
- Lynn Police Department
- Lynn Arts
- National Grid
- Lynn Seaport Marina
- Lynn Economic Opportunity
- Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce
- Children's Law Center
- Arthur Pappathanasi, The Clock Tower Building
- Volunteer Yacht Club

An introductory letter was sent to each identified stakeholder the week of November 7, 2005. This letter described the Lynn waterfront site discussed in the recent Request for Proposals (RFP) and invited the groups to partake in a short telephone survey.<sup>1</sup> The survey took approximately 10-15 minutes and collected information on each entity including its role in the community and its interests and concerns about potential redevelopment of the waterfront.<sup>2</sup> Telephone calls were placed from November 9 to December 14, 2005. Numerous attempts to contact each participant were made.

Each survey participant was also asked to name any other groups that they believed should be contacted. This resulted in the identification of six more potential participants:

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<sup>1</sup> For a copy of this letter, please refer to Appendix A

<sup>2</sup> Survey questions are located in Appendix B.

- Neighborhood Legal Services
- Mr. Ken Turino, Historic New England
- Greater Lynn Senior Services
- My Brother's Table Soup Kitchen
- Lynn Non-Profit Business Assn.
- Lynn Emergency Shelter

Of these potential participants, Neighborhood Legal Services and the Lynn Emergency Shelter were interviewed.

The initial selection of groups to contact was limited by available resources and time. Though a wide array of organizations in Lynn was contacted, the survey was not comprehensive and should be regarded as the first stage of a longer-term community participation process. In addition to the twenty groups contacted in this survey, there are most likely other groups in Lynn that were not contacted, for instance, those serving non-English speaking communities.

### **3. FINDINGS**

#### **3.1 Community Interest**

***Finding #1:** Almost all respondents expressed strong interest in waterfront redevelopment and were open to ideas about what redevelopment should look like.*

The majority of survey respondents expressed interest in the redevelopment of the waterfront site, making it highly likely that further community involvement in the redevelopment process would be feasible and productive. None of the respondents insisted on any particular sort of redevelopment project.

***Finding #2:** Many respondents expressed their hope to participate in the redevelopment process with the help of expert information.*

Across categories, the surveyed organizations, business interests, and land owners expressed a desire for more information and expert assistance in understanding the implications and potential tradeoffs of proposed redevelopment scenarios.

#### **3.2 Ideas and Concerns**

***Finding #3:** Commonalities in interest for waterfront development exist among different stakeholders.*

There were notable overlaps in interests between groups. The 14 groups interviewed wanted to see the waterfront redeveloped and many saw it as a gateway to Lynn. Though groups had a wide array of interests in the type of development for the site, most groups did not express specific or fixed agendas regarding the use of the waterfront. Even though the majority of surveyed groups represented non-business interests, many suggested commercial uses. Finally, groups agreed on a need to plan the whole waterfront, to respond appropriately to its regional economic context and unique waterfront setting, and to formulate a plan that fits with larger development goals for Lynn.

***Finding #4:*** Many respondents would like to see the waterfront contribute to Lynn’s overall economic development.

Some stakeholders – particularly those who are not users or owners of waterfront property – expressed their interests in terms of the need to improve Lynn’s economic fortunes, and integrate it with Boston and the region. Specific land use suggestions from these respondents included both new ideas and continuations of discussions currently happening in Lynn, including:

- Ferry and train service integrated with the Boston commuter system
- An aesthetic “Gateway to Lynn” entrance to the city from the south
- Light industrial or non-industrial uses
- Height-appropriate (non-high rise) development
- Mixed-use business clusters such as hotels and high-end retail
- High-end, mixed-income or affordable housing units
- Open space

Additional suggestions included using higher-end development to generate employment opportunities for existing Lynn residents.

***Finding #5:*** Some respondents proposed specific business-oriented uses.

Stakeholders directly invested in waterfront properties expressed desires for development linked to their own activities: boating-related condominium housing, marine-related business, and development that increases land value and business potential.

***Finding #6:*** Some respondents were concerned about the impact of waterfront development on Lynn’s social and political balance.

Several respondents were concerned about equitable development: Would the city divert social service funds to the waterfront? Would an influx of wealthier residents adversely impact the existing Lynn population? Others expressed concerns about the process of redevelopment, especially the use of eminent domain, and the need for the cooperation of all parties.

### **3.3 Potential Conflicts**

***Finding #7:*** Although respondents’ interests are flexible, conflicts over waterfront development could arise.

It appears that the main potential for conflict lies not in the decision to pursue market-driven development, but in choices about how to execute that development. For example, market-determined waterfront uses might allow either low-rise or high-rise buildings, but according to our responses, high-rise construction could be a source of conflict.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS**

Given the overall enthusiasm for redevelopment of the Lynn waterfront and community recognition of the tradeoffs associated with development, it seems appropriate to involve stakeholders in the redevelopment process to gain their support. Due to the relatively unfixed goals of the respondents, it appears that there is ample room to reach a compromise that accommodates a variety of interests. Where resources allow, EDIC/Lynn should consider involving Lynn stakeholders more intensively throughout the planning process and use that engagement to provide community members with tools for understanding the process and assessing plans. Early and informed community engagement significantly strengthens the final development project.

In order to sustain a more thorough community participation process, EDIC/Lynn should:

- Examine the survey for gaps in stakeholders contacted and questions asked with an eye towards a second, more comprehensive survey if needed.
- Disseminate educational materials that explain the redevelopment process prior to community engagement meetings.
- Include in the consultation process additional broad-based stakeholder meetings open to the public at which EDIC/Lynn and the consultants are present. These meetings should seek to educate stakeholders about the opportunities and constraints of the site, feasible options for redevelopment, and the redevelopment process. In parallel these meetings should also be viewed as educational opportunities for EDIC/Lynn and its development consultant to hear from local stakeholders. Such meetings will be most effective if they are held at the start of the planning process, repeated prior to major development decisions and conducted on a stated schedule timed to phases of development.

## Appendix A:

**Department of Urban Studies and Planning  
Environmental Policy Group**

**Massachusetts Institute of Technology**  
77 Massachusetts Avenue, Building 10-485  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139-4307

November 4, 2005



[Name]  
[Organization]  
[Address 1]  
[Address 2]

Subject: Your Opinion on Lynn Waterfront Development Planning

Dear [Name]:

As you may know, the Economic Development and Industrial Corporation of Lynn (EDIC/Lynn) is exploring redevelopment of underused land on the Lynn waterfront (please see attached illustration.) We are a group of urban planning graduate students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who are helping EDIC/Lynn assess community opinions on the waterfront planning process.

To support this process, we are surveying local Lynn businesses and organizations to better understand community opinions on the waterfront redevelopment. Survey results will be used to inform EDIC/Lynn as redevelopment planning moves forward. We are writing to invite you to participate in a short telephone survey on the future of the waterfront.

We plan to begin the survey the week of November 7<sup>th</sup>. The survey will take approximately ten to fifteen minutes of your time.

Thank you in advance for your assistance. We look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Luke Schray  
Project Manager

cc: Peter DeVeau, EDIC/Lynn

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## **Appendix B**

### LYNN SURVEY:

#### **Telephone Introduction – points to mention in introduction**

- Did you receive the letter we sent to your organization?
- Group from MIT working on behalf of city agency/Lynn EDIC
- Calling to gain understanding of what the community thinks about the redevelopment of the Lynn waterfront
- Do you mind if we ask you a few questions about your thoughts about the Lynn community?

#### **Framing objectives for survey:**

1. What is (your organization's) place or function in the community?
2. How many people work for or are members of your business/organization?
3. Are you familiar with the waterfront site recently proposed for redevelopment?

If familiar, continue on.

If not, explain redevelopment:

Be sure to include:

- Located east of the Lynnway including the TDC landfill, Phillips Lighting Company Building (Clock Tower), and West Lynn Creamery
- 200 acres—1/4 of which is vacant, undeveloped, or contains large parking lots
- City of Lynn recently put out a request for proposals to develop land to better serve Lynn

4. What are your concerns/interests regarding development of the waterfront site?
5. If you are not interested now, what might make you interested in the development at a later time?
6. What facilities/resources are lacking in Lynn?
7. What are Lynn's greatest needs?
8. Are you or anyone in your business/organization interested in taking part in a longer community visioning process?
9. Is there anyone else you think we should contact?

Thank you very much for your time.