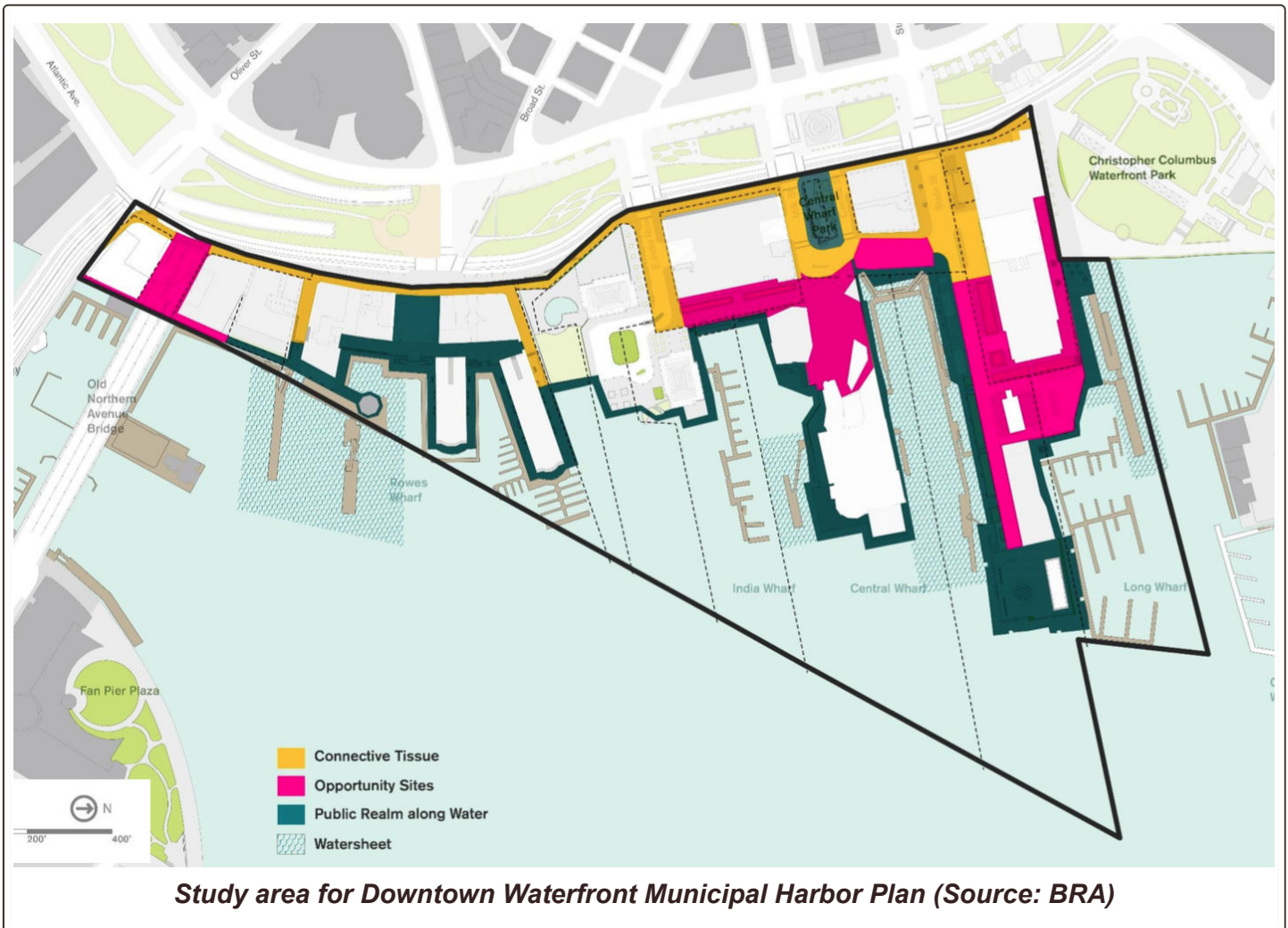




## Progress Report on the Downtown Waterfront Municipal Harbor Plan Draft

by **Gabor Korodi** on Fri, Mar. 11, 2016 in **Real Estate & Development**

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Wednesday's meeting of the **Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA)** continued

the work on the **Downtown Waterfront Municipal Harbor Plan (MHP)** draft. The Advisory Committee and the public heard statements from the BRA and Utile Inc, about the progress that was made and the decision making process that is ongoing.

**Mr. Rich McGuinness, Deputy Director for Waterfront Planning** at the BRA started the meeting by informing the committee that a new agency, **RKG Associates**, was selected to perform the analysis of possible offset strategies with owners and developers from other planning areas. The assessment will focus on ways that developers and the BRA can work together to best utilize the funds that will be generated by the projects in the area towards the MHP mandated public realm enhancements.

**Matthew Littell**, Principal from **Utile Inc.** presented a summary of the progress that has been made so far. He emphasized that the goal is to prioritize the public realm improvements that would result from the offsets provided by the development of the three main projects impacting the area.

Mr. Littell explained that **Chapter 91 legislation** specifies the state's preferences for the impact of offsets offered. These are on-site offsets, priority area offsets, connectivity improvements and finally, if none of the previous options are available, district wide improvements. These preferences will be considered while drawing up the draft for the DWMHP.

**The current MHP draft includes considerations for prioritization of benefits, such as the shadow analysis, improvement of connectivity tissue, future opportunity sites (e.g. the Charter House parking lot) and focus on the water's edge.** Mr. Littell also expressed the desire to give the district an identity within the collection of Boston neighborhoods.

When addressing specific projects, Mr. Littell pointed out that the **Marriott Hotel** is at a special location, both historically and physically. The site predates Chapter 91. regulations and the owner of the property is seeking the expansion of the ground level footprint of the building. The expansion would be over the state's limit of 50% of lot coverage, and would need special attention not to encroach on the

current public access areas. In addition, the **Long Wharf area represents 30% of the total waterfront area within the district.**

Committee members expressed concerns, that the current anchor in the area, the [Greenway Carousel](#) would lose its role as an anchor point, if wayfinding in the area is impaired by the extension. Mr. Littell agreed, and added that the additional benefits could include enhanced navigation, and using the Carousel as a stepping stone in the **Faneuil Hall – Greenway – Columbus Park** corridor.

It was brought to the board's attention, that the owner of the site, **Sunstone Hotel Investors Inc.**, is advocating for the expansion, and that the Marriott Hotels as the tenant might be negatively impacted as well.

Discussing the '**Hook Lobster**' site, Mr. Littell focused on the importance of the role the parcel plays connecting the **Harborwalk from Rowes Wharf to the 400 Atlantic Ave.** location and how it plays an increased role in the revitalization of the **Northern Avenue Bridge**. The bridge just recently gained renewed focus by the city, and an "Idea Contest" has been announced, where the public is welcomed to submit ideas about the use and configuration of the structure. Please visit the [Bridging History website](#) for more information.

While the Hook site is in poor shape, the fact that it is over tidelands makes it another area that requires special attention. Several previous studies have determined that navigating around the site and across the new bridge is difficult. Possible improvements could clarify and improve access to the water's edge and the proposed Harborwalk on the site. A proposed 67% of lot coverage, and the special legislation for building over tidelands would call for additional offsets from the developer.

The presentation also addressed the development of the '**Harbor Garage**'. The BRA is advocating offsets to address the issue with the direct use of the water. The near 100% proposed lot coverage, the visual and physical access limitations to the water and the various shadow studies all indicate that a multitude of offsets will be required from the developers/owners of the site. A strategy could be developed

that would perhaps require clear sight of the water from the Greenway, an analysis of the impact on the Aquarium plaza. If the building(s) reach a certain height, it is possible that even Long Wharf might be impacted. The regulation requiring “no net new shadow” by any development will have to be mitigated as well.

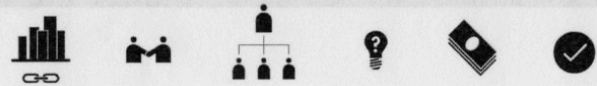
On the issue of 100% lot coverage, the proposed “**Winter Garden**” at the Harbor Garage development does not comply with requirements of providing 50% open-air public space. The glass covered area is currently under discussion between the BRA, the state and the developer. The BRA is suggesting a maximum of 70% lot coverage, with an open park either on the northern side of the property, adjacent to the current park, or on the water facing side of the property. Any excess over 50% of lot coverage would require offsets and even more if the lot coverage goes above 70%. These details are still under discussion.

After several concerns were raised by the public, Mr. Littell assured the committee and the audience, that qualitative standards will be included in the draft as well. In addition to the provisions and offsets, the project will have to comply with zoning regulations set forward in the Greenway Overlay District’s regulations.

After the presentation, Mr. McGuinness closed the meeting with the reminder that the next committee meeting will be held on April 13th, also in the Piemonte Room. Further information and documents can be found on the BRA’s [Downtown Waterfront Planning Initiative](#) website.

The following implementation draft document was handed out during the meeting, detailing specific action items along the planning area.

# Implementation



### How to evaluate and implement public benefits

Key considerations with public benefits include whether it is 1) linked to significant development; 2) requires a partnership between various stakeholders; 3) poses management challenges; 4) is an idea that needs adoption; 5) requires only money; or 6) has few barriers.

The following pages list public benefits that emerged from this planning process, and attempt to list what barriers or challenges there might be to their implementation.

	Linked to significant development	Requires a partnership between stakeholders	Poses management challenges	Idea that needs adoption	Money	Do it now
<b>District-Wide</b>						
Better signage or markings for the HARBORWALK, such as through blue brick path or uniform paving materials	○				○	
Unified signage system for ferries. Uniform digitalw (i.e., ITS) system for ferry/boat operators.		●	●		○	✓
Regular north-south transportation links, such as a South Station to North Station shuttle bus or Greenway trolley		●	●	○	●	
Event venues: floating barge for events. This could be coordinated with Fort Point Channel and serve double purpose as an event barge / art barge.		○	●	●	●	
Broader range of food venues, ranging from casual (food trucks, etc) to fine dining, dining on the water	○					✓
Increase winter activities (e.g., ice skating rink, winter walking programs, Christmas market, nature walks, fall and winter nature tours of the Harbor Islands)		○	○	○	○	
Places to access the water - to physically touch the water's edge. E.g., BRA-owned land in front of the Harbor Garage.					○	✓

- Strongly requires or linked to
- Medium link
- Low link or challenge

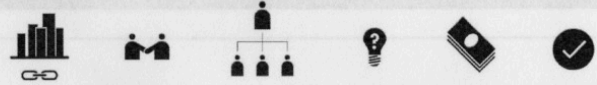
# Implementation



	Linked to significant development	Requires a partnership between stakeholders	Poses management challenges	Idea that needs adoption	Money	Do it now
<b>Northern Avenue</b>						
Northern Avenue Bridge - short-term improvements such as painted jersey barriers, lighting, art installations.			○		○	✓
Northern Avenue bridge - long-term restoration; dedicated barrel for pedestrians and cyclists					●	
Hook site - active edges facing Moakley Bridge, Greenway, and water	●					
Hook site - careful design of Northern Avenue face with loading dock, etc.	●					
Encourage WDU on Hook site.						
Coast Guard building - making clear that the cafeteria is open to the public			○	○		✓
Coast Guard building - improve the loading dock area / entrance on Northern Ave. Consider reopening entrance on corner of Atlantic Ave.				◐	◐	
Coast Guard Building - reestablish public access to the dock; public access to the exterior stair facing the water?				◐		✓
Coast Guard Building - active edges on the waterside and facing the Greenway	●		●	●	●	
Harborwalk accessibility at Northern Ave bridge - ramp up to meet bridge level	●				●	
Harborwalk accessibility at Moakley Bridge - investigate possibility of ramping down under bridge.	●			◐	●	
Expanded public realm on this narrow section of the HARBORWALK - decking out over the water as a possible way to facilitate the HARBORWALK connections	●			●	●	

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# Implementation



	Linked to significant development	Requires a partnership between stakeholders	Poses management challenges	Idea that needs adoption	Money	Do it now
<b>India Row / Rowes Wharf</b>						
Clarify the public way through the Harbor Towers property - create more clear distinctions between public and private through landscaping and wayfinding.				<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Clarify East India Row and the boundary with the Harbor Towers. This might be done through material changes, landscaping, etc.				<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Atlantic Avenue - in this area, Atlantic Avenue has fences, curb cuts, and hard building edges. Add more active uses to Atlantic Avenue or better landscaping (street trees, plants, etc.).			<input type="radio"/>		<input checked="" type="radio"/>	
Rowes Wharf Pavilion - use for seasonal events, programming; open up for more public uses			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Strengthen lateral connections to waterfront through programming/ground-level activity and maintaining view corridors - encourage programming of the interstitial spaces, such as the space between Rowes Wharf and 400 Atlantic Avenue			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	
Harbor Towers could benefit from greater visual porosity through the fences.				<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
400 Atlantic Avenue - fence that faces the watershed - add active uses here, or greater porosity.				<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Make public access to the Rowes Wharf rotunda more visible / known.			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Under-used docking facility?			<input type="radio"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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# Implementation



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<b>Long/Central Wharves</b>						
Seasonal programming or festivals (e.g., cider festival in fall or ice sculpture festival in winter; see Quebec winter festival as example).			○	○	●	
Marriott Long Wharf expansion: include a ferry terminal, waiting room, bike storage, and other passenger amenities.	●		○	●	○	
Marriott Long Wharf: add ground-level programming and porosity, such as retail and restaurant uses	●					
A designated drop-off/pick-up area for school and charter bus users of water transportation and the other amenities and attractions.			○			✓
Chart House parking lot: redevelop into open space, connect with the restaurant in Marriott Long Wharf	●				●	
BRA-owned land between the waterfront and the Harbor Garage: improve hardscape, add interpretive information about history of this area.	●				●	
Long Wharf: introduce restaurant uses or food trucks and large sculptural element to draw visitors to end			○			✓
Ferries: unified wayfinding system and intelligent transportation system (ITS)		●	●		○	✓
Improve Aquarium plaza through unified materials, wayfinding, visibility from the Greenway	●				●	
Interpretive signage throughout this area - both environmental and historical; build on the Walk to the Sea.		○			○	✓
NEAq - improve visibility from the Greenway through gateway elements / possible display on IMAX theatre.		○		○	○	
Harbor Garage site - active uses on ground-floor facing Central Wharf and Atlantic Ave. Make visible the education programs and public uses inside.	●					

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# Implementation



Harbor Garage development site - create view corridor to the water / NEAq; open space should be on north side.	●			●		
Create more visible and legible links from Harbor Islands Pavilion to the ferry locations		●			●	✓
Create a permanent Harbor Islands Gateway on the waterfront		●			●	

	Linked to significant development	Requires a partnership between stakeholders	Poses management challenges	Idea that needs adoption	Money	Do it now
<b>Watersheet</b>						
Ferry hubs - to assist commuters and visitors in finding the correct wharf and help better coordinate landside transfers.	●	●	●	●	●	
More bus shuttles and water taxis/local ferries (small on-off vessels) to attract more riders, especially during winter months.			●	●	●	
Sheltered and heated waiting areas landside.	●	●	●	●	●	
Ticket areas for all ferry terminals (e.g., for T passengers on the north side of Long Wharf)		●	●	●	●	
More water taxi docks: all should be ADA compliant.		●	●		●	
Subsidized water transit, and add new routes, both intra-city and inter-city.	●	●	●	●	●	
Subsidized ferries to the Harbor Islands		●	●	●	●	
Fish cleaning stations and other amenities for fishermen.			●	●		
More services for recreational boaters, including transient moorings and slips, dinghy docks, and "touch and go" docks.		●	●	●	●	
Temporary "parking lots" in another part of the harbor (e.g., East Boston) with boaters brought to the Downtown Waterfront area by water taxi or launch.		●	●	●		
More activities and facilities on the Harbor Islands (e.g., Hubway and bathrooms)		●		●	●	
Redesign moorings to increase density of boat moorings in the harbor.		●		●	●	

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## Related posts:

1. [Downtown Waterfront Municipal Harbor Planning Process Extended; Offset Strategies Discussed](#)
2. [Transparency Concerns Surface Regarding Downtown Waterfront Municipal Harbor Planning Process](#)
3. [BRA Responds to James Hook and Co.'s Lobster Tower Proposal](#)

◆ [BRA, Downtown Waterfront, Downtown Waterfront Municipal Harbor Plan, Top](#)

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