



Working Waterfront Task Force Meeting Minutes

Wednesday June 23

9:30am - 12:30pm

**MWA Offices
Seaman Church Institute
241 Water Street
New York, NY 10038**

The Working Waterfront Task Force Meeting was held to bring together the Working Waterfront community to discuss updates needed to the New York City Comprehensive Waterfront Plan with a special focus on regulatory changes, program needs, and tax incentives that will protect the economic health of the maritime industry while ensuring the industry's environmental sustainability. It was explained the results of the meeting would be submitted to the City for their consideration in the update of the New York City Comprehensive Waterfront Plan (CWP). The update of the plan is due by the end of 2010.

The results of the discussion centered on eight themes:

- Dredging
- Updates to Significant Maritime Industrial Areas
- Maritime Jobs
- Greening the Port
- Dock, Barges and Better Access
- Marine Delivery for Commerce
- Outstanding Questions
- Financing the CWP

Dredging

Participants explained that the City needs a collective system that would oversee dredging and find beneficial uses for dredge material to offset the costs of the dredge projects. Finding ways to reuse viable sediment material will reduce the cost of dredge disposal and benefit all projects and users. Currently the heaviest financial burden falls on the small harbor operators who can barely afford to pay the escalating costs of even the most minor dredge projects. These burdens tax the general economy and present obstructions to a robust harbor economy.

Participants raised the question of who bears the primary cost of dredging projects. It was explained that other than the Port Authority of New York New Jersey (PANYNJ) and the US Army Corp of Engineering (USACE), private dredging is done on an individual basis. The New York Empire State Development Corporation has funds available that are earmarked for dredging in NYC but it has been difficult to allocate these funds and maintain the depths of the river. The New York City Economic Development

Corporation (NYCEDC) is trying to group and bundle dredging projects to get an economy of scale through reducing mobilization costs and other costs.

It was explained that the Federal Harbor Maintenance Tax is supposed to go towards maintaining federal ports, including New York and New Jersey, since the success of the New York Harbor helps maintain the national economy. Because this economy is critical to the national economy, the Federal funds should cover, or largely supplement, dredge costs.

Other participants who are small maritime businesses stated that New York City needs government-run small business service programs to help determine if a dredge project is feasible before hiring consultants. This would prevent small maritime operators from entering into projects that they are not financially capable of completing.

Along with advice on dredge projects, the City needs to retain the Industrial Business Zones and continually fund the small business assistance programs. According to some participants it takes the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) two to three years to determine if a business can renovate a bulkhead. This is an example of an obstacle to business expansion and the viability of some maritime operators and industries. Indecision on such time-sensitive projects can indirectly lead to contracts being lost to other ports. USACE was unable to secure a dry dock facility in the NY region and had to go to Charleston, NC. It was explained that the cost of labor in the region plays a role in higher costs which affects the competitiveness of the maritime industry.

Updates to Significant Maritime Industrial Areas

It was explained that the City needs to identify locations where maritime and/or industrial growth can occur. The City needs to provide sites for businesses to grow in order to have a viable and robust maritime industry.

It was explained that there needs to be additional maritime infrastructure for fueling and energy transfer. Necessary infrastructure includes pump out locations, bio-diesel fueling stations, as well as locations to plug in. It might be beneficial to use electric trucks at marine terminals for charging. Sid Sanchez from State Senator José Serrano's reported that the Senator worked to bring the country's first electric truck to the South Bronx and is also working on a feasibility study in Hunt's Point to create green jobs.

<http://serrano.house.gov/NewsDetail.aspx?ID=726>

It was explained that the Significant Maritime Industrial Areas (SMIAs) have some of the highest unemployment rates and highest asthma rates in the City and some of the highest in the country. This requires the City to ensure there are ways to prevent impacts on communities in SMIA's. Resources for greening the truck fleet should be part of the answer.

It was explained we need to provide residents in SMIA's with jobs, and the industry with a local and reliable work force (see Maritime Jobs section below). We need to balance

expanding maritime delivery centers with the problems that emanate from them, such as higher, localized concentrations of trucking and subsequent increases in exhaust and pollution. Distribution networks have a tangible local impact and should be addressed by the City as well as community representatives.

For all matters related to SMIA's, participants explained it is imperative to actively include community members as well as other local stakeholders in the processes for decision making and planning in SMIA's. Advocacy organizations such as UPROSE have been key advocates in the SMIA communities. It was explained that we cannot ignore local communities or you will invite local opposition to future plans.

It was explained that industrial and maritime businesses in SMIA's and other areas need long term certainty and consistency in zoning and regulations in order to attract investments from business and ensure businesses will stay and invest in labor, equipment, etc. Long term zoning consistency will allow businesses to feel that if they invest they can stay.

The City should identify in the CWP the key sites for long term maritime and industrial growth and ensure there is long term zoning consistency in these areas.

Participants explained that more industrial areas will be needed to accommodate growth in green industries. If the City doesn't have the space to site them they will not be able to come or stay in New York City This is a key zoning issue that must be addressed in the CWP.

Maritime and Industrial Incentives

It was expressed that existing industrial incentives are broad based and not targeted toward the water dependent businesses we want to attract and protect. There needs to be a reevaluation of the industrial tax incentives program so it can evolve and stay competitive and effective. Industrial incentives need to be refined to specifically help waterfront industry.

Since the New York State Empire Zone Program is gone, the CWP should recommend that the City create industrial incentives and land use protection programs in addition to or connected to SMIA's that promote and protect the maritime industry. The CWP should identify what the next incentive program is and how it will specifically address waterfront industry.

In addition to retaining the Industrial Business Zones, the City needs to continually fund and maintain the capacity of the existing industrial technical assistance providers with an emphasis on waterfront industries and zoning protection within the SMIA's and other important areas. With more funding, the technical assistance providers - those on the ground with the local knowledge- could eventually be a one-stop-shop for critical maritime issues such as waterfront permitting, workforce issues, waterfront zoning protections, harbor safety, etc.

Maritime Jobs

Maritime training programs exist in the New York Metropolitan Area but are relatively unknown according to meeting participants. The City and agencies in charge of secondary and vocational education need to make people aware of the training programs that exist in New Jersey and New York, especially Kings Point, NY.

It was explained that NY Harbor School (NYHS), a New York public school focused on maritime education, has developed a maritime intern program. Sandy Hook Pilots and local tug boat units are offering deck hand training programs for NYHS students in hopes of hiring graduates. There were once numerous other maritime-themed high schools throughout the City that were shut down over time. New York Harbor School is reinventing and reinvigorating these important educational institutions.

It was expressed that the New York City Waterfront Management Advisory Board should include a representative from the New York City Department of Education to encourage the Department of Education to bring back more career technical maritime programs to New York City.

Greening the port

It was explained that there is a lot of interest in the use of wind turbines as means of local energy distribution. One participant asked if New York City has any wind turbines on the waterfront. SIMS at 30th St Pier in Brooklyn is interested in putting up a wind turbine but there are lots of questions and red tape to attempt this kind of waterfront project. The Frederick Douglas Academy is exploring putting up a wind turbine on the Harlem River that would power the school. The City explained that the CWP will address examining renewable energy opportunities on the waterfront, like wind turbines, to see what the impacts are and the viability of such projects.

A participant expressed that building in the water doesn't need to be detrimental to the water quality because there are opportunities for habitat enhancements. New waterfront projects could incorporate ecological solutions, like the components of Design the Edge, to create lasting and environmentally-friendly edge enhancements.

Dock, Barges and Better Access

It was expressed that we need more floating docks, barges and better access to the waterfront. We need to present a comprehensive strategy outlining the ideal size, location and cost of dock facilities so that we can collectively lobby for funding and overcome the current obstacles to building more. City-based efforts are working to create more access, such as NYCEDC working with New York Water Taxi to bring the Harbor Way to life and MWA working with the Parks Department to build the first Eco-Dock in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn.

There was contention over how accessible piers are to various types of boats. For example, Pier 11 has a bias towards small commuter boats over dinner cruises. It is impossible for cruises to dock at River Café because of the size of the landing and the depth. Also, some participants are against private boat access to New York City piers

and docks because kayakers, jet skiers and recreational boaters put them and others in harms way. There are security zones but we need to educate boaters about safety. Participants seemed to be in support of Assemblywoman Sandy Galef proposed legislation, pending bill No. A05889E, which would require boating safety certificates of all persons operating a mechanically propelled vessel. There are exceptions for new owners and certain renters as well as a phased in period and penalties for violations.

Concern was expressed over the safety and structural integrity of floating docks and smaller piers because tugs and barges going at a normal speed can cause significant damage to smaller waterfront facilities. Infrastructure is being destroyed because of the significant amount of wave action. The finger piers at Hudson River Park as well as a dock at Green Street in Greenpoint were damaged by wake-induced wave action. Designers need to look at wake effects when building new marinas or docks.

Various types of access require very different needs; whether it includes commercial operations, recreation, or fishing etc. It was suggested that we may have to separate some of the docking facilities if they can't all accommodate mixed use. We have to make sure access to the water is actually usable and accessible. Additionally, if access is a goal, we need to put docks within a walkable distance to subways and parking lots.

It was explained that there are huge inconsistencies in resident's ability to enjoy boats and entertainment boats, with the outer boroughs having less access than others.

Marine Delivery for Commerce

There are very few marine repair facilities in Manhattan for tug and barges. Each borough needs facilities that help get trucks off the road. This is why the region needs to preserve the two existing graving dock facilities.

Participants explained the need to balance expanding maritime delivery centers with the problems that imminent from them, such as increased trucking from the facilities. Additionally it was expressed by a participant that even if we develop a rail system to ease the strain on maritime distribution, it will still depend on trucks to a degree. Therefore we need to look into retrofitting trucks or providing new cleaner trucks so that there are fewer consequences for local residents who live near transportation nodes.

It was explained that a lot of the waterfront support industries do not need to be on the waterfront. Warehouses and truck repair facilities could be near the waterfront but don't need to be on the waterfront. A participant expressed that the Mayor needs to maximize existing City owned infrastructure when discussing the solid waste management plan.

Outstanding Questions

- As we promote the working waterfront, how do we strategically position the NY side of the harbor to compete with NJ to get trucks off the road since the distribution centers are mostly in NJ?
- If we look at places like Red Hook, Brooklyn Navy Yard and Sunset Park how can we have world class parks along with maritime use?

- Can what is built in the water actually help clean the water?
- Could we use Bush terminal buildings to vertically distribute goods?
- Brooklyn is naturally deep but we still need to pursue ship to rail distribution. Rail is good to take you further into Long Island but how will we find a way to improve the truck distribution model throughout NYC?

Financing the CWP

The anticipated efforts to coordinate organizations and elected officials to advocate for better funding for the New York Harbor could be a great source of funding for the CWP from federal level representatives. Participants will be organizing a movement for environmental remediation, restoration, parks, and federal commerce funds. All Congressional representatives have some section of waterfront in their district. It would help to have some congressional and state representatives on the Waterfront Management Advisory Board as a more permanent legislative influence for better federal funding.

Funding for the Harlem River Parks was provided by Congressmen Rangel and Keith Wright. These congress members could be asked for additional funding for similar projects.

Recap and Summary

Participants agreed that maritime is a small voice among the real estate and banking sectors of New York City, but a large economic sector that deserves better attention. Everyone needs to be engaged at the local level and can start by contacting their legislators.

This region has congestion issues, job challenges and ecological problems but we can use our waterways to help relieve many of these issues. The maritime industry provides middle class jobs; we just need to promote the training programs that exist.

There needs to be a better evaluation of the needs of the working waterfront community before we can go out and get the funding needed to preserve and protect it. We can do this in the form of research completed by Universities and/or NYCEDC.