

Plattsburgh (C) Harborside Master Plan

Virtual Public Information Meeting #1

November 16, 2021 @ 6:00pm – Video Conference



SUMMARY NOTES

[Link to the Virtual Public Meeting Recording](#)

Attendees:

Bob Murphy, AICP and Leigh Jones, PLA from Barton & Loguidice, DPC (B&L) hosted and facilitated the first Public Information Meeting on the Harborside Master Plan.

There were 24 attendees in the live virtual meeting. As of February 24, 2022, the recording of the meeting has 133 views on YouTube, and the WAMC Northeast Public Radio also discussed the contents as well as posted the recording on their page.

[Consultants discuss initial concepts for Plattsburgh's Harborside Master Plan | WAMC](#)

1. Introductions, Ground Rules, and Project Team

Mr. Murphy walked everyone through the agenda items before going through the evening's virtual public information meeting ground rules. These included an explanation of the Q&A, Chat Box, and Poll Question functions. The Project Advisory Committee (PAC) was then introduced along with the consulting team from B&L, Aubertine & Currier, Hadley Exhibits, 4ward Planning. Finally, it was acknowledged that funding for this project is primarily funded by the NYS Department of State (DOS) and the project contact from DOS – Barbara Kendell – was also introduced.

The project schedule was also described with the goal being a grant application being submitted in the July 2022 Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) grant round for implementation of the Harborside Master Plan. There will also be two other public information meetings (Late Winter 2022 and Late Spring 2022) along with an online community survey in late 2021 or early 2022.





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Harborside LWRP Virtual Public Information Meeting #1 Draft Summary

2. Project Background

Before prompting feedback from participating members of the public, Mr. Murphy briefed them on the geographic location of the Harborside Site, its history, the presence and integration of the City of Plattsburgh Water Resource Recovery Facility (WRRF) on the site, and the site's vision discussed in the City of Plattsburgh Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP).

The three primary project goals were explained to participants as well:

- Identify key community and economic growth initiatives and development opportunities
- Connections between the Harborside area and in the City's downtown
- Preliminary designs for an Environmental Learning Center, an exercise trail, a year-round multi-use building, and recreational amenities

The final piece of programmatic context was the LWRP program itself. Mr. Murphy explained how the Harborside Master Plan grew out of the City of Plattsburgh LWRP and was subsequently funded under that DOS program. He also described how the program refines state coastal policies to reflect local needs and conditions and includes strategies for addressing critical waterfront issues like:

- Community resilience
- Enhance public access
- Improve water quality
- Revitalize underutilized waterfront areas
- Protect natural and historic resources
- Protect open space and scenic resources

3. Existing Conditions and Precedent Images

While Mr. Murphy and Ms. Jones understood that many participants are familiar with the Harborside site, they went through a site photo log to give everyone an even starting point on existing conditions.

To further stimulate feedback and discussion about the possibilities of Harborside, they also walked through a series of "Precedent Images" – that is, relevant photos of potential scenes and amenities for the site from elsewhere.

Many participants felt that the pedestrian trail, the scenery, fishing access, farmers market, and affordable boat rentals are important assets at Harborside. Feedback also showed that boat access up the Saranac River toward downtown, more physical lake access, a splash feature, and a playground for families are the highest priority opportunities they see for the future of Harborside. Participants felt as though the biggest constraints facing the future of Harborside include the level of the lake being extremely low, road access to the area, and a lack of informal pedestrian access to the lake.

4. Regional Context and Stakeholders

Mr. Murphy and Ms. Jones then described two maps meant to inform the public and PAC of connections between the site and destinations and activity nodes elsewhere in the City. These maps were:



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- Regional Context Map
- Connections Diagram

Key destinations discussed by Mr. Murphy and Ms. Jones include the downtown business district, SUNY Plattsburgh Campus, Sailor's Point Park, the Wilcox Dock, and City Beach. Additionally, the subdivision of the overall site into a "Lakefront Subarea" near the WRRF and a "Riverfront Subarea" along the Saranac River upstream to the former NYSEG site was introduced.

Participants were asked if there were any missing destinations or activity nodes of significance. Feedback mentioned historical connections with the area being the theatre for the Battle of Plattsburgh and felt that those connections need to be incorporated into physical design of the site master plan.

Participants feel that Stakeholder Groups such as SUNY Plattsburgh faculty, staff and students, boaters and fishermen, NYSDEC, and residents outside the immediate area should be reached out to directly for their input.

5. Preliminary Conceptual Plans and Your Feedback

Mr. Jones then described the consultant team and PAC's observations of Harborside with a pair of Inventory Maps for both the Lakefront and Riverfront Subareas along with a preliminary conceptual design of potential improvements at both sites. Much of it focuses on opening up the shorelines to recreational activities, improving connections between Harborside and other destinations including downtown, orienting activity at the site around the WRRF, Plattsburgh Waterfront Farmers Market, and the proposed Environmental Learning Center attached to the WRRF.

This description set the stage for poll questions to follow.

Poll Questions

- 1) *How strong of a priority should active recreation be at Harborside Lakefront?*
 - a. *High*
 - b. *Medium*
 - c. *Low*
- 2) *How strong of a priority should active recreation be at Harborside Riverfront?*
 - a. *High*
 - b. *Medium*
 - c. *Low*
- 3) *How strong of a priority should whitewater recreation be for the lower Saranac River?*
 - a. *High*
 - b. *Medium*
 - c. *Low*
- 4) *What type of amenity would most enhance your experience when visiting the Plattsburgh Farmers Market? 1st Priority*
 - a. *Playground*
 - b. *Splashpad*
 - c. *Events and programming*
 - d. *Views of the lake*
 - e. *Fitness/exercise activities*



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- f. Sitting areas*
 - g. Dog park*
- 5) *2nd Priority*
 - a. Playground*
 - b. Splashpad*
 - c. Events and programming*
 - d. Views of the lake*
 - e. Fitness / exercise activities*
 - f. Sitting areas*
 - g. Dog park*
- 6) *3rd Priority*
 - a. Playground*
 - b. Splashpad*
 - c. Events and programming*
 - d. Views of the lake*
 - e. Fitness/exercise activities*
 - f. Sitting areas*
 - g. Dog park*
- 7) *What types of exhibit features would you most like to see at the Environmental Learning Center?*
 - a. Water cycle and the WRRF*
 - b. Ecology of the river and lake*
 - c. City and site history*
 - d. Weather and climate*
- 8) *How do / would you commonly access Harborside Lakefront?*
 - a. Green Street*
 - b. Dock Street*
 - c. By boat*
 - d. Cumberland Avenue Pedestrian Bridge*
- 9) *How do / would you commonly access Harborside Riverfront?*
 - a. Caroline Street / Peru Street*
 - b. Pine Street Pedestrian Bridge / Saranac River Trail*
 - c. Durkee Street Pedestrian Bridge / Saranac River Trail*
- 10) *What types of features could be provided at Harborside that are missing or lacking in Plattsburgh right now? Select all that apply.*
 - a. Recreation fields*
 - b. Exercise trails*
 - c. Scenic views*
 - d. Passive recreation / picnic areas*
 - e. Kayak / canoe access*
 - f. Fishing access*
 - g. Stage performance space*
 - h. Public art*
 - i. Event destinations*
 - j. Public education*



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The majority of participants felt that active recreation at Harborside Lakefront Subarea should be of medium priority (61%). At the Riverfront Subarea, 56% of participants feel that active recreation should be of medium priority, and said 33% high priority. 47% of participants said that whitewater recreation for the Lower Saranac should be high priority, 35% said medium priority.

The replies to question 4 showed that the top priority for many people when visiting the farmers market should be events and programming and views of the lake. Secondary priorities were spread out between sitting areas and views of the lake, third being events and programming and sitting areas again.

Regarding the Environmental Learning Center, participants said they want to see the ecology of the river and the history of the area highlighted. This was followed by the relationship between the water cycle and the WRRF and local climate.

Dock Street is the most common entrance point for Harborside Lakefront Subarea, slightly more than Green Street. The results were spread out when asked how people access the Riverfront Subarea.

Participants feel that elements that are missing or lacking in Plattsburgh now that they think could be provided included largely scenic views, kayaking and canoe access improvements, picnic areas, and public art.

There were a few comments in the chat asking about the phases of the project, and what the mechanisms are for ensuring that there is significant green space conserved for public use at Harborside Lakefront Subarea.

Ultimately, this feedback exercise was used in the development of the Harborside Master Plan Online Community Survey which was launch in January 2022 following this virtual public meeting.

6. Next Steps

B&L will catalog feedback from tonight's virtual public meeting and prepare a summary. The poll questions will also be expanded into a formal online survey to garner more feedback from the community. This information will be used to refine the preliminary conceptual layouts and more fully develop the Environmental Learning Center design.

The results of this advancement will again be brought to the public at an in-person workshop in late winter 2022.

Participants were also directed to the project's own webpage on the City's website.

- [Harborside Master Plan | City of Plattsburgh, New York \(cityofplattsburgh-ny.gov\)](https://www.cityofplattsburgh-ny.gov)

7. Adjourn

The Harborside Master Plan Virtual Public Information Meeting #1 adjourned at 7:25pm.