



MEMO

Date: October 1, 2012
To: Sandrine Thibault; David White
From: Department of Parks & Recreation
Re: Plan BTV Draft Staff Review Comments

COMMENTS FROM P&R STAFF

General

- Pages 10-11 add dates to B&W photos
- Incorporate a page (or article) about the Imagine City Hall Park process to show what has been done and that there is a connection between CHP moving from business district to waterfront
- Include Waterfront North plans in drawings
- The future connection to the north 40/Urban Reserve should be represented in the plan
- Need for a community aquatic facility
- Green roofs, specifically on parking garages, are a good thing
- Concern that Main St. is the best street to convert for cycle track; College St. may be a better location: less conflicts with vehicle traffic, not connected to interstate
- Support for permanent bike valet system
- Concern for providing ample safety/lighting/stair-width/accessibility in conjunction with public access paths and routes

Boathouse & Waterfront

- Improve public access directly to waterfront & dock systems
- Provide alternative pedestrian access routes other than through the boathouse
- Improve circulation around echo to the boathouse
- Potentially remove berm on sidewalk leading to boathouse
- Create a permanent foundation for the barge/boathouse
- Separate commercial and public facilities: commercial by Perkins and public by Boathouse and develop more transient boathouse dock and slip south of Perkins Pier
- Identify landside support services: bathrooms, showers, game room, marine support supplies at both commercial and public locations (more at Perkins)
- Transfer more operations staff to Perkins Pier
- Repairs and upgrades are needed to support the actual breakwater; this is massive consideration in developing additional slips
- Additional slips means increased back & forth traffic within the ferry lane; more traffic increases the potential for accidents

- Concern with providing enough parking for boaters, visitors, residents with the addition of infill at the Waterfront
- Suggestion that the Sailing Center be united with an aquatic building with dockage on back side

Events

- Major events need full-service, proximate staging area with restrooms, utilities & more parking
- Circulation/drop-off for event deliveries
- Clarify that city noise ordinance applies ONLY to Waterfront Park (p. 49)
- Concern with constructing a bandshell to direct sound away from homes: this type of bandshell may limit activity and events for particular events (p. 49)
- Develop a road that would lead out of North 40 Moran area adjacent to rail track exiting or entering off of North Ave by Yankee Medical Building near railroad trussel
- Propose commuter rail from Essex & St. Albans!!!!
- Concern with elimination of critical parking spaces with addition of market building
- Proposed waterfront resembles Baltimore's waterfront (in a positive way), but concern with elimination of existing parking
- Scale of building at north end of event grounds (market building) is very large
- Four little buildings at events space center seems like a lot to dance around; two small buildings might be potentially useful for ticketing... generally, this space is prime – every inch utilized during events – and building in this area should be thoughtful & deliberate
- Concern with main street landing parking being eliminated
- Need for improved power & utilities at Waterfront
- Benefit of market building opportunities for building programming; this building would need adequate loading/unloading areas

Trees & Greenways

- There is currently very little in plan that connects urban forest - for the long-term sustainability of the trees
- The design of hardscape needs to work with the soft scape so that the trees will be sustained by giving them what they need – and this generally happens below ground
- How do street trees work with the design of trees through all streets? (p.80)
- Cycletrack configuration protects the street trees through setbacks; this is good (p.67)
- There should be a relationship between Plan BTV and the master planting plan (developed in 2000) to help identify relationship to key through-fares and what should be prioritized
- Strengthen connections between urban forest and Plan BTV; design process should consider the long-term survival needs of trees
- Utilized stacked parking with green roof to maximize spaces & greenery where possible

COMMENTS FROM WATERFRONT OPERATIONS

Waterfront Park

- I really like the concept of using landscape architecture to create different ‘zones’. The addition of a building at the North end would relieve some stress with rentals associated with public restroom facilities on site, especially the smaller events (walks). This would also give a permanent location to the necessary tools and storage event management requires.
- Rehabilitation of Depot Street as a usable thoroughfare is essential. The primary focus as a pedestrian is wise with the ability to use it as a relief valve for post-events is key to a successful event site

Skating Rink

- Yes! I would really like to see all 4 seasons utilized on the waterfront. I can see programming, events, skate rentals, shows and café sales all incorporated in this for better public enjoyment.

Waterfront Pavilion

- A much better aesthetically pleasing entrance to the waterfront from College Street than our current parking lot. This also extends the waterfront into all 4 seasons.
- I very much support bringing back our rich maritime history by using this pavilion in the winter for boat expo’s and boat building classes and maritime safety classes. Possibly a connection with Burlington College?

Marina Operations

- The need for transient and seasonal marina support facilities is crucial for a successful working marina and harbor. Defining who offers these services is as essential and needs to be clarified. A combination of both public and private is ideal to strike a balance in Burlington. However, these improvements need to be equitable between private industries and publicly run entities so as not to be detrimental to one or the other. There is sufficient demand in the boater industry to satisfy both public and private needs.
- Boat storage: Great idea, however is downtown Burlington the best location? Seeing this pushed to far North or South is better, to allow for greater pedestrian access throughout the waterfront.
- Defining small water-based commercial entities with necessary support services strengthens our waterfront. Examples – Sailing charters, fishing charts, scuba charters and small craft motorized boat rentals. Defining areas where these would be successful and supported creates better water access for visitors and locals.
- Boat Slips along the breakwater is an interesting idea, but would need significant landside operations (refuse, showers, POS, laundry, store) to ensure success. Due to ice flow in the winter, all docks most likely would need to be removed and stored in the off-season. Locating a space to secure docks in the winter would be necessary, along with the staff to perform this. Daily operations would require a structure to be located out at the break wall to manage daily traffic and slip assignments if this plan progressed.
- Floating break wall – This is a great idea that has been discussed numerous times and is absolutely necessary for the future success of marina development in Burlington. The predominant wind is from the south in the Summer months, so eliminating wave action from the south opens up possibilities in several locations. Great, great, great idea – Let’s do it!

COMMENTS FROM P&R COMMISSIONERS

General

- The plan is excellent, but the omission of the Champlain Parkway is a problem since it affects the plan in many ways. However, my chief concern is the impact of Battery Street which runs the risk of cutting off the waterfront from downtown (as happened so dramatically in Boston until the recent Big Dig fixed it). There should be more attention made to be sure that Battery Street does not become a barrier; and to incorporate into the plan ways of easing pedestrian and bike crossing to and from the waterfront.