

Smart Growth Waterfront Committee Report Initial Report

Executive Summary

If a single overriding theme emerged from the work of our committee, it is that maintaining “traditional waterfront uses” is critical to any successful redevelopment of Keyport. Traditional uses can be defined as: fishing; crabbing; swimming; boating; watching the water; boats; and migratory birds. These activities combined with the magnificent views of Staten Island, the Manhattan skyline, the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge and the Outer Bridge Crossing make this area a popular attraction for adults and children. Much of the shoreline is publicly accessible beachfront where there is the freedom to walk along the waters edge. This committee reached consensus on the goals and guiding principles that it believes will promote water access and enhance the future of Keyport.

Purpose

- Develop a public voice for the waterfront
- Survey existing waterfront elements – report strengths and weaknesses
- Get consensus on values and guiding principles
- Identify any conflicting uses that could restrict the use of the waterfront

Background

The waterfront committee was established to provide public input to PPSA and PPS consultants in preparation of their plan for the Keyport redevelopment area paid for in part by a Smart Growth Grant, Keyport Borough and the Keyport Business Improvement District. The members of the waterfront committee are all residents of Keyport.

Scope

Committee members mapped elements of the waterfront areas, took photographs, made observations, identified strengths and weaknesses, and took virtual tours of other waterfronts. Our efforts concentrated in the downtown public areas and waterfront public parks – Beach Park, American Legion Drive and Firemen’s Park, Beers and Front St, and the three sister parks Cedar Street Park, Benjamin Terry Park and Veterans Park. The other areas surveyed to a lesser extent because of private ownership were Aeromarine, and the marinas.

Members and Meetings

The waterfront committee consisted of 14 members and met on three occasions at 8pm Borough hall. 12 April 2004, 10 May 2004, and 14 June 2004. Committee members visited sites, took photos, drew maps and made observations using a questionnaire developed to inventory sites assigned to each member.

Findings

1. Values and principles were identified. These are intended to be used to guide selecting a course of action when options exist. The Waterfront Committee believes any decision affecting the waterfront should be consistent with these overarching principles.

Value	Principle
Community First	Planning should benefit Keyport community before outside interests
Nautical Character	Preserve/maintain marine businesses
Public Access	Water access to and along beach and or creeks should be required
Natural Environment	Design with integration of nature/eco-tourism element in mind
Open Space for Recreation	Maximize open space for recreation; less space for parking more for recreation
Low Density	Re-development does not mean crowding
Aesthetics	Textures and vistas should be attractive and use inviting design elements
Multi – Activity	Design Ring Road with mixed activities in mind i.e., rear store access, kid/family friendly and public events, marine related fishing/boating
Rights of Ownership	No acquisition through eminent domain for transfer to private re-development

2. Waterfront committee reached consensus on the following:

- No Commuter ferry only small scale water taxi to ports of interest
- No high density development. Consider redevelopment area along Keyport’s highway corridors.
- Maintain marine industry at all costs.
- Develop Aeromarine as other than residential - education facility, museum, or Maritime learning center, by forming a committee to investigate alternatives.
- Low impact environmental friendly uses, concentrating on traditional recreational/ marine uses.
- Limited parking on waterfront
- Relocate or reconfigure boat ramp parking to avoid using prime recreational space and promote safety at Beach Park.
- Traffic calming and enforcement of speed limits
- Replacement of millings with environmentally friendly grass or “geoweb” or pervious paving system
- Tottenville like pavilion or covered portions of the bulkhead
- Divert through traffic away from bulkhead area

3. The Strengths (S) and weaknesses (W)

The waterfront committee assessed the strengths and weaknesses for Cedar Street Park, Benjamin Terry Park, Veterans Parks and Beach Park, and American Legion Drive.

Cedar, Terry and Veterans

- Transition from active to passive uses (S)
- No advertising signage in ball field (S)
- Access to water Veterans Park small boat launch (S)
- Temporary chain link fence along Bulkhead (W)
- Overhead wires in Veterans Park (W)
- Unfinished landscaping Cedar St (W)
- Cars speed down Cedar St (W)
- No parking delineated at Veterans (W)

Beach Park

- Beach Access (S)
- Landscaping trees and lawn (S)
- Places to sit benches and picnic tables (S)
- Loose Road Millings used as paving material (W) consider grass, “ geoweb,” or pervious paving.
- Boat ramp trailer parking (W) consider using offsite locale
- Benches too far from playground equip (W)
- Cars and trailers parked too close to bulkhead (W) consider placing parking stops further away from bulkhead and putting covered benches at the bulkhead
- Cross walk approaches to the park, traffic volume and speed of vehicles is dangerous (W)
- Vehicular noise is uncontrolled especially loud motorcycle mufflers (W) consider landscaping buffer and enforcement of DMV laws.

American Legion Drive

- Access to water (S)
- Underutilized rear of stores (W)
- Overhead wires (W)
- Loose Road Millings used as paving material (W) consider grass or pervious paving
- Limited shaded areas (W)
- snacks and drinks not easily available(W)
- Too much of the area set aside for parking (W)
- Through traffic is too close to bulkhead (W)
- Vehicle speed limits need to be enforced (W)
- There is a lot of seating (S)
- No conflict between fishermen and passive users (S)

The committee spent considerable time on this project and believes this investment gives it an authority by reason of experience, dialog, and consensus to represent the community interest in the redevelopment of the waterfront. We are prepared to champion our findings and provide input to PPSA and PPS as requested. The APPENDICES attached to this report include detailed discussion of our findings.

Submitted 7/01/04

Michael Palmisano, Chairman

Smart Growth Waterfront Committee

Attachments:

APPENDIX 1 (Observations) — INCLUDED IN THIS DOCUMENT

APPENDIX 2 (Maps) — SEE COMMITTEE CHAIR MICHAEL PALMISANO

APPENDIX 3 (Photographs) — SEE SEPARATE ACCOMPANYING FILES

APPENDIX 4 (Meeting Agenda, Notes, Roster) — METHODOLOGY DOCUMENTS ONLY INCLUDED; SEE COMMITTEE CHAIR MICHAEL PALMISANO FOR ADDITIONAL MEETING CONTENT

Observations

#01

Keyport Waterfront Activity Survey May 2004

Summary of Observations

This activity survey for the American Legion Drive portion of the Keyport Waterfront was conducted during the first week of May 2004. The weather was mild, sunny with a slight breeze each day, and temperatures in high 60's and low 70's.

The most common activities were walking, sitting (often in cars), and fishing. Numerous family groups, with a concentration on toddler age children were observed walking and "looking at the water". Fishing activity concentrated at the Municipal Pier and towards the eastern portion of the bulkhead. Both the lot, and the streetside parking were utilized, with the number of vehicles parked at any one time averaging between 30 and 50.

Informal questioning of the users brought out the following general points:

People like the bulkhead "the way it is".

The most commonly requested amenities were a place to buy coffee or ice cream, and bathrooms.

Many users like to sit and "look at the water".

Out-of-town visitors seemed equally divided (numerically) between people who came to experience the waterfront, and those who came to fish. The latter group tended to come from farther away than the former. Both groups tended to purchase food while in Keyport, mostly sandwiches or take out from the Fishery.

People who did not fish felt that there were no conflicts with those who do, in terms of sharing the space.

Observations

O#2

When my husband and I moved to Keyport from Hoboken in 1985 we were drawn by the beauty and potential we saw here – particularly the majesty of the bay. We had a new baby and saw in Keyport a community that fit our most basic need – a place where almost all the activities of life could be done without a car. Over the years and with three more children the town hasn't reached the potential we envisioned but it has certainly provided the quality of life we imagined it would and then some.

More importantly Keyport hasn't succumbed to the frenzied development that transformed our previous residences Hoboken, NJ and Tribeca, NY into places where the middle class has been effectively driven out. It is important to bear in mind throughout discussions about water front development, that our lack of economic development has, in some sense, helped maintain Keyport's diversity and stability. We don't have to look far (Long Branch) to see that development is a double edge sword.

While I didn't follow the rules (I did not date or time my observations) I did try to observe closely the usage and topography from Pedersens Marina to Veterans Park on my walks 3-4 times a week usually in the morning but often in the late afternoon or evening.

I was surprised; first, how much discussion has taken place around the need for parking on the waterfront. In truth there is a surplus of parking in this study area if the ferry issue is removed from the equation. While summer has not yet come and will increase the usage of lots, at no time is current public parking near the bay even close to _ capacity. The area next to Ye Cottage Inn supplies ample parking for the entire area. The parking area adjacent to the boat launch, while providing a small number of spaces close the park and launch impacts negatively on the space esthetically and is a safety issue with regard to the park because of the presence of children, the park itself has been unfairly denigrated in some respects. It is my family's favorite park, partly because of its proximity to home, but mostly because it naturally draws one to the water and provides plenty of exploring space for kids. The traffic around the park is a problem particularly with young children. Partly this is an enforcement issue but traffic calming needs to be studied to enhance the safety and enjoyment for pedestrians. The water front proper and the pier are a mixed bag. The area is used for fishing and sitting all day. I've met people who travel here from Middlesex county and local inland towns just to sit and enjoy the water and the constant refrain is that Keyport is the only place you can. The consensus is provide more shade, some green space and it's just about perfect. All of us had our dream projects (my own was a theater) but in truth simply enhancing what we have, and protecting it as well is important (for instance people on the pier often repeated being roused by ferry officials during its run). The waterfront is not particularly child friendly (I'm always worried my son will flip over the bulk

Observations

head into the bay or step off the curb into traffic it's a treacherous walk! Nor is it access able to the disabled.

The private parts of the area – the backsides of residences and businesses have been for the most part been admirably spruced up and make the public portion look particularly shabby millings mysteriously placed on the Fireman's parking lot are washing into the bay and the public works is an unfortunate eyesore. Some signs and enforcement of litter laws is needed.

In closing, the waterfront provides a great deal of what we all want now – a place to access water nature recreation but it makes all of us long for it to reach its potential. Having said that we all worry that changes could rob us of the one constant – access, and that paradoxically economic development might by increasing traffic and pricing some people out, reduce the quality of life that makes Keyport such a nice place to live.

Jennifer Henning 5/04

Observations

O#3

Date:5/9/04

Time:4-5PM – Clear sunny day about 70 degrees

Observer: Eleanor Cosgrove

Beach Park This is a public park located on the corner of First St, Broad and American Legion Dr.

Parking Lot

The park consists of a gravel parking lot which takes up 35% of the area. The park has a mixed use consisting of a boat ramp, small shed to purchase boat ramp passes and bait for fishing and crabbing, play ground, beach, and picnic area . The boat ramp is used for daily access by boaters and also people with Wave Runners. There were 3 Vans with trailers parked at the bulkhead and 2 other vehicles with trailers parked closer to the park.

Other cars and trucks were parked at various times. Some people parked in the lot and went across the street to the bar.

Playground

The playground consists of swings for older and young children, large plastic slide with various platforms (jungle jim), a See Saw, 2 kiddy rides on springs (one is broken) and round spinning ride which is surrounded by uneven sand where holes have been dug. On the other side of the playground separated by a winter fence with rusted poles is a volley ball net. (no one used it while I was there)

7 adults and about 10 children under the age of 10 were in the park and only stayed about 25-30 minutes from when I had arrived.

Picnic area

Picnic tables with attached benches were set up in the shade (about 6 but more were stacked up) Some people brought there supper to the park. (fish dinners in brown bags, probably from Wilson's).

Beach

Although it was a nice day no one was on the beach or near the water. The beach looked much cleaner than when I last visited a month ago when it was littered with garbage consisting of plastic cups, bags, utensils, pieces of wood, cans, bricks, branches, etc..

Observation- The playground has sparse equipment for children. The sand is dark yellow like construction sand and doesn't appear to be conducive to sitting in (also it discolors your shoes).The fence posts separating the play area from the beach and volley ball net is rusted. The boat trailers take up a lot of room. The view to the bay is blocked by vans, trucks, and cars parked up at the bulkhead

Observations

3 people brought their dogs into the park and kept them on a leash.

The park has 20 trees: 9 Red Maple trees, 7 Sycamore trees along First St. and 4 Oak (?) trees at the end of the park.

3 Street lights are in the parking area with a Bright Blue Port-O-John and 4 Garbage cans

Barriers:

Flooding

The beginning of First St by the park is a flood zone during storms or high tide and is often blocked off from traffic. American Legion Drive is also affected by high tide not necessarily related to storms.

Traffic

The intersection of First and Broad is heavily traveled and is extremely difficult and dangerous to cross at the corner. First St is a county road and also a bus route. It is also VERY NOISY- Just sitting on the picnic bench for an hour, I heard a constant barrage of speeding vehicles many of which were motor cycles coming up and down First St and around American Legion Drive. Some motorcycles were so loud you could not hear. Cars also impacted the peace and quite with loud engines and speeding up the hill on First St.

I live on First St. just up the hill from the fire house and feel that the police need to start enforcing the speed limit since no one obeys it and the average speed is at least 45-50mph. We should also request to have the speed limit reduced to 25 miles per hour, request speed strips to be installed at the beginning of First Street going North and also coming South at the top of the hill by the Firehouse as you come down the hill. Also we should see what we can do about getting some noise restrictions in place especially on motor cycles. (NY City has a program called Operation Silent Night to reduce noise pollution).

Maps

SEE COMMITTEE CHAIR MICHAEL PALMISANO FOR CONTENT

Photographs

See separate accompanying documents.

Meeting Agenda, Notes

WATERFRONT INVENTORY QUESTIONARE

I. Sketch – Line drawing

- a) Name of Open space, preparer, date
- b) Show all features i.e., shore line, trees, shrubs, playground equipment, benches, ball fields, adjacent buildings, roads and access ways

II. Features

- a) Ownership private or public
- b) Usage Primary/Secondary describe:

Uses	Primary	Secondary	Comment
Nature walk			
Dog Walk			
Ball field			
Parking			
Firemen's Fair			
Others:			

III. Existing elements:

- Beach
- Bulkhead
- Paving
- Playground equipment
- Benches
- Fences
- Bushes
- Trees
- Buildings
- Walks
- Access points – land and water
- Parking
- Surrounding area i.e., residential/commercial
- Streets

IV. Potential Barriers:

- Wetlands
- Flood zone
- Private property

Meeting Agenda, Notes

- Others

V. Observations: (at least 5 times during the month)

- Observer
- Date
- Time of observation example: from 1pm – 1:30pm
- Weather
- Tide
- Number of visitors
- Duration of visitors stay
- What are visitors doing:

- ---

Meeting Agenda, Notes

Exercise Determining Values and Principles

Value

Principles

Used for our community (Keyport First) (for the benefits of those who live here)

Preserving the Nautical Character/maintain marine businesses
Maritime business preservation act?

Public Access

Better Integration with Nature/eco-tourism?

Less space for Parking, more for recreation

Encourage the back of Front Street

Re-development does not mean crowding

A waterfront with character/mix of uses

Underutilized Park Land

Recreation should be open space and marine related

More kid/family friendly recreation

Aesthetics are important

Textures and vistas

Public events on the waterfront

Ferry?

Benefits

Liabilities

Residential ownership (no acquisition through eminent domain for transfer to private re-development)

Meeting Agenda, Notes

Interpretive areas including walkways in marshes throughout the town

Step at streets on the beach for access

Educational programs including boating fishing and marine heritage

Protecting natural resources

Invite our neighbors in adjacent towns to participate/

Protected inner harbor

Develop ratables other than residential

Highway re-development (talk to business and transportation committees)

Use the waterfront in comfort and peace in shady areas for walking sitting and fishing as much green area as possible.

Road further up toward the backs of the stores

Bulkhead construction (tail wagging dog?)

Maintaining character of town, diversity in population not only for rich right

Waterfront Inventory Area Assignments

Aero-Marine

Andy, Peggy

Cedar, Terry, Veterans Park

Marge Gene

Beach Park and Boat Ramp

Mike Eleanor

American Legion Drive and firemens

Jennifer, Candy, Matthew, Angel

Marinas

John

Apollo

Andy, Peggy

Meeting Agenda, Notes

BLUE SKY Exercise

floating dock outside of the bulkhead. Floating docks.

Close the whole area for traffic. A service road and no parking. Building put on the back with open space and pedestrians.

Wooden walkway from broad street continuing up Luppatatong Creek

Rest rooms places to sit, a promenade, kayak launch separate from launch ramp. Kid friendly eating a great place for shelling,
Swimming friendly park, sea shelling, fishing,

Beach park carousel, place to learn about fish educational, \\\

Aero Marine bikeway, walkway, kayak way up chingarora creek some parking

Ferry at aeromarine

Bay heritage/aeromarine museum

Floating docks on town dock rather than on the bulkhead

Place where people can walk and sit with greenery and shade beach park area with play sculptures in beach park. Walkway, and access through (ring road) and some parking.

Get away from the idea of the waterfront as a parking lot. To be real place for the community to come together the focus cannot be parking lot.

Community theater at waterfront and bandshell with the stage near the water front Shakspeare in the Park

Expand the oyster project for education and bring community together perhaps revenue.

Picnic areas

AeroMarine should be a Brookdale satellite or high tech school by county

No parking on ring road or closing off front street as a walking street, put outdoor rooms cafes. Fountains, shuffle board and bocci, chess boards wall for sitting benches landscaping

Hotels, bed and breakfast