

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT EVENT #2 SUMMARY

### Local Waterfront Revitalization Program Update Poughkeepsie, NY

March 7, 2019, 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Mid-Hudson Children's Museum



## Introduction

On Thursday, March 7, 2018, BFJ Planning facilitated the second Public Engagement Event for the City of Poughkeepsie's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) Update. The event was held at the Mid-Hudson Children's Museum, located at 75 N. Water Street. The Mayor of Poughkeepsie, Robert G. Rolison, and Paul Hesse, Community Development Coordinator for the City of Poughkeepsie, opened the Public Engagement Event with introductory remarks explaining the overall process and introducing elected officials and Waterfront Advisory Committee (WAC) members in attendance as well as members of the consultant team. Sarah Yackel, Principal of BFJ Planning, and Ariana Branchini, Planner at BFJ Planning, presented an overview of the LWRP process, Poughkeepsie's LWRP boundary, an outline of the requirements and sections included in the LWRP plan, and an overview of potential projects proposed for inclusion in the LWRP. The potential projects were also the subject of round table discussions following the presentation.

Following the presentation, participants were invited to join a group around tables facilitated by members of the consultant team for discussion about potential projects to be included in Section IV of the LWRP. Each table discussed projects organized around three areas: Area-wide,

City of Poughkeepsie  
Local Waterfront Revitalization Program

the Hudson River Waterfront, and Fall Kill (see discussion notes below). At these stations, participants provided feedback on the proposed projects, brainstormed project details and identified additional projects they would like studied. Participants provided input that will help to inform the planning process and flesh out project details. Following the round table discussions, the facilitator of each table provided a brief summary/report back to the group at large.

The workshop was attended by members of the City of Poughkeepsie Common Council, Planning Board and Waterfront Advisory Committee, as well other representatives from the City and Dutchess County, and approximately 60 members of the public.



## Presentation

Below is a summary of the consultant team's presentation.

1. Sarah Yackel introduced the BFJ team and described the work of updating the LWRP for the City of Poughkeepsie. Ms. Yackel described the LWRP process, purpose and the parties involved in updating the LWRP.
2. The LWRP is sponsored by the New York State Department of State. The City of Poughkeepsie's existing LWRP was locally adopted in 1998, but was never adopted by New York State. The City has elected to update its LWRP now to reflect changes to the City's waterfront, and to utilize support from NYS DOS to complete the LWRP and an associated build-out impact analysis.
3. Ms. Yackel discussed the timeline, which will conclude in October 2019, and will include a public hearing in early September. Other public outreach will include an online survey, which is currently open, and ongoing stakeholder focus group meetings.

City of Poughkeepsie  
Local Waterfront Revitalization Program

4. Ariana Branchini, BFJ Planning, discussed what goes into an LWRP and the organization of the document. Ms. Branchini introduced the updated LWRP boundary, which has been expanded from 1998 to include properties adjacent to Fall Kill Creek.
5. Additional elements of the Plan will include an inventory and analysis (Section II), policies (Section III), projects (Section IV), and implementation (Section V).
6. Ms. Branchini described the preliminary goals of the LWRP projects and described projects organized by location within the Waterfront Revitalization Area.
7. BFJ Planning described the format of the workshop, in which members of the public would discuss potential projects with a facilitator from the consultant team and/or City staff. The following summarizes comments received during the round table discussions.

### Summary of Public Comment:



### Hudson River Waterfront

#### Potential Projects:

- Non-motorized Boat Launch at Main Street Pier
  - Provide storage for non-motorized boats (kayak storage)
  - Provide non-motorized boat rentals
  - Partner with non-profit to provide educational programs on boating/environment (STEAM).
  - Buoys are needed near mouth of Fall Kill for safety. This area is very dangerous for non-motorized boaters.

City of Poughkeepsie  
Local Waterfront Revitalization Program

- Complete Sections of the Hudson River Greenway Trail
  - Extend greenway to Marist College north of the City; include policy to extend greenway.
  - Trail could be used for recreation and travel -an accessible trail can be used by all residents and visitors.
  - Trail can link the waterfront to the downtown area, but also can link areas north and south of downtown – Marist and Hospitals.
  - Signage is key – will direct people to downtown, give history and ecology information, show links to other trails and parks.
  - Technology can also play a part – QR codes, interactive maps and info, look at other examples nearby – notably Hyde Park Trails. Signed entrances help orient people and create the “sense of place.”
- Former DeLaval Site Redevelopment
  - One table discussed the importance of preserving public views, supporting a mix of uses, providing continuous greenway, allowing for water-dependent uses, and ensuring the site has meaningful public access.
  - Redevelopment of the site needs creativity to enhance City as a whole; the site needs to be an activity center for the City.
  - Something should happen on the site, it should not be left vacant.
  - At one table, the discussion of this property concluded that one of the most important elements of this project is that there must be public access, and preferably a public use on this site. Previous plans for this site included an aquarium, which would serve as a tourist attraction and have a public use that benefits city residents and tourists. Other plans have included residential use, a concert venue/amphitheater. Generally, the feeling of the group was that there should be something at this site that attracts people to the waterfront that is welcoming to all, and beneficial to the city.
  - Some described an interest in focusing on water-dependent uses at this site, which could include commercial fishing docks or tour boats.
- Continue to Explore Opportunities to Implement Recommendations of the 2015 Waterfront Redevelopment Strategy
  - Redevelopment of the City’s waterfront should contribute to the City’s economy. Should be a job creator and include local hiring.
  - Rinaldi Blvd. is in need of a road diet – narrow the roadway, add bike lanes; connect to Pine Street.
- Litter

City of Poughkeepsie  
Local Waterfront Revitalization Program

- MTA should be held responsible for litter, maintenance and upkeep on/of tracks and other MTA owned properties/rights-of-way. MTA properties have too many impervious surfaces.
- Relocate the Skate Park to Site Near Eastman Park
  - One table reached agreement that the skate park should be moved to another location.
  - At another table, the feeling was in the middle – some people liked the skate park and thought it should stay at the waterfront – others though it would be a good use at Eastman Park.
- Other
  - Dock and dine facilities are needed.
  - Transient boating opportunities/facilities are needed close to Downtown.
  - There needs to be better signage/wayfinding from Walkway over the Hudson to attractions along the waterfront (i.e. Children’s Museum, Farmer’s Market, etc.)
  - The Walkway doesn’t let local businesses advertise on the walkway – missed opportunity to drive visitors to waterfront. Same problem at Train Station.

*Additional Comments:*

- Overall Notes
  - It is important to think big, but to eventually bring it back to something that is implementable. The more potential funding partners the better
  - Think about the physical waterfront – where can we actually touch the water and enjoy it?
  - Balance active recreation and passive space along the waterfront; there should be enough attractions to keep people around, but also highlight the natural beauty of Poughkeepsie and the Hudson Valley
  - Waterfront should have good design – feeling is that right now it is a little ho/hum
- Waterfront Improvements could include the following elements:
  - Dog park
  - Kayak rentals, bike rentals
    - kayak at water, bike near station
  - Event space
  - Floating dock for swimming
    - swimming pool – in water boundary
  - Concert band shell
  - Public wifi
  - Public restrooms
  - Signage
  - Repair the skate park

City of Poughkeepsie  
Local Waterfront Revitalization Program

- Art along the waterfront
- “Back-in” boat launch that would serve jet-skis
- Dock improvements
  - deep water dock for overnight stays for larger boats
- Waterfront Commercial Development
  - Retail and commercial can serve both locals and tourists
  - Would be nice to buy New York and local Hudson valley products for tourists, but also for locals who want to pick up some cheese for a picnic
  - Loop bus/small transit could help bring tourists between the waterfront and downtown

### Fall Kill

#### Potential Projects:

- Support urban agricultural and farming
  - Identify community leaders and reach out
  - Poughkeepsie’s African American community have been leaders in urban farming/community gardens – reach out to leaders.
  - Poughkeepsie Farm Project
  - Support Pershing Avenue Urban Farm Project
  - Consider adding a policy to Section II related to urban agriculture
- Access & Walkability
  - Add Wayfinding signage on Main Street to direct people to resources
  - Verazzano Blvd. should undergo complete street improvements
  - The intersection of Bridge/Verrazano/Washington needs improvement
  - The west bound arterial needs traffic calming – isolates commercial district
  - Provide better access from the Hospital to the waterfront.
  - There is support and positive feedback about the CSX Urban Trail
  - Connect people in the Northside to the waterfront along the Fall Kill through bike/ped lanes.
  - Increase number of green spaces especially around Middle Main Area
  - Create more bike lanes such as along North Clinton to access College Hill Park
- Daylight the remainder of the Fall Kill
  - There are opportunities in the Fall Kill area to increase visibility and access to the creek. The group supports projects that could achieve this goal, and identified opportunities at:
    - Malcom X Park on the east side
    - Family Partnership Center
- Support Fall Kill Clean Up
  - There should be no smoking areas along the creek.

City of Poughkeepsie  
Local Waterfront Revitalization Program

- There should be efforts to coordinate with local schools located adjacent to the creek to educate children about the habitats living in the creek, and teach the importance of maintaining clean waterways.

*Additional comments:*

- Environmental Conditions in the Fall Kill Creek
  - Invasive plants in Fall Kill Creek along Brookside Ave.
  - Water quality of Fall Kill Creek – possible discussion with the Omega Institute
  - Organize regular clean ups for litter
  - Management and care for wildlife in Fall Kill Creek
- Safety
  - Drug Issues around Winnikee Ave., Harrison and Thompson Street
  - Additional green space might decrease or increase drug use
  - Create well-lit spaces to mitigate safety concerns
- Access & Walkability
  - Add Wayfinding signage on Main Street to direct people to resources
  - Create historical markers to direct people to important landmarks
  - Potential to develop sidewalk on Brookside Ave. and Verazzano Blvd.
  - There is support and positive feedback about the CSX Urban Trail
  - Plan for more local commercial storefronts near the Walkway
  - Increase number of green spaces especially around Middle Main Area
  - Create more bike lanes such as along North Clinton to access College Hill Park
  - Need to communicate with residential property owners of single, 2-, 3-family homes about wall repair and LWRP plan: they also have a stake in the LWRP
- Public Space
  - Increase people sense of place and comfortability to use public spaces (ex. soldiers' fountain)
  - Create the Fall Kill Creek as a destination
    - Ex. Beautiful wall and view of waterfront near Dongan Place across from Café Aurora
    - Ensure that design approach to repairing walls and adding other amenities does not result in physical barriers to seeing and accessing the Fall Kill Creek
  - Create art installations around the City of Poughkeepsie as well as “instagrammable” spots
- Increase connectivity
  - Create boardwalk to increase connectivity around Fall Kill Creek
  - Possibility to connect Salt Point Turnpike to the Walkway
- Ways to support community initiative
  - The city needs innovative budgeting
  - Involvement of anchor institutions to fund specific LWRP projects in the future

City of Poughkeepsie  
Local Waterfront Revitalization Program

- College Hill Park
  - Marc Nelson, City Administrator, briefly mentioned some updates about the City's plans to improve College Hill Park
  
- Water Quality
  - The group shared concerns about water quality given the historical use of the creek for industry and existing auto repair centers in close proximity to the water.