

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Thursday, March 24, 2016

**Contact:**

Derek Santos, NBEDC executive director  
508.264.9883  
[dsantos@nbedc.org](mailto:dsantos@nbedc.org)

Edward Anthes-Washburn, HDC executive director  
508.801.5685  
[Edward.antes-washburn@newbedford-ma.gov](mailto:Edward.antes-washburn@newbedford-ma.gov)

***Private-Sector Stakeholders, Public Agencies, and Local Officials Applaud Release  
of Long-Awaited Master Plan for Redevelopment of New Bedford Waterfront***

*Internationally Renowned Planning Firm Sasaki Sees Central Waterfront As Key To Future*

**New Bedford, MA**--The long-awaited Master Plan for the redevelopment of the New Bedford waterfront was released today following a massive data-collection and an extensive stakeholder outreach effort that took more than a year to complete.

The city's waterfront is widely regarded as the economic backbone of the New Bedford area economy, with more than 4,100 workers employed by a broad range of commercial enterprises, with combined annual sales of more than \$2.7 billion.

The New Bedford Economic Development Council (NBEDC) worked with the City of New Bedford/New Bedford Redevelopment Authority and the Harbor Development Commission to coordinate the work of the internationally renowned planning firm Sasaki Associates of Watertown, using a major federal grant secured from the U.S. Economic Development Administration.

Under the terms of the federal grant, Sasaki undertook an 18-month, \$400,000 land-use planning project to analyze in detail the city's land areas from the Hurricane Barrier to the upper reaches of New Bedford harbor.

The Plan establishes a "framework" for future growth that identifies priority areas and suggests general uses for those areas that are flexible enough to accommodate multiple waterfront interests and multiple goals. It will be used by private investors and policy-makers to guide decision-making about the future of the waterfront.

## **Central Waterfront Area Identified As Major Opportunity**

The Master Plan highlights the importance of redevelopment in the central waterfront area, which abuts the city's downtown and is within the programmatic area of the Whaling National Historic Park. Key sites include the State Pier, strategically located on more than eight acres at the foot of Union Street, but vastly underutilized as an economic asset. Also identified is the former Cannon Street Power Station and surrounding properties owned by Sprague Energy and Eversource.

The central waterfront focus drew particular support from Mayor Jon Mitchell as well as State Senator Mark Montigny.

"Waterfront stakeholders from the fishing industry, the cargo industry, and the tourism industry all want to see action on State Pier so that the Pier starts to play an economic role for all three of these sectors. People also made it clear they want to see the waterfront and downtown knit back together after a half-century of being disconnected. The planners at Sasaki and in my Administration have heard them loud and clear," said Mayor Mitchell.

Today's release of the Sasaki plan also compliments Senator Montigny's longtime vision of connecting a vibrant downtown with a bustling working waterfront, which includes his \$25 million bond authorization to redevelop State Pier into a vibrant mixed-use facility.

"Redevelopment of State Pier to provide enhanced industrial and commercial operations alongside expanded retail and public access will generate significant economic activity and further fuel our local tourism industry. Complete redevelopment of this central asset will mark the final phase in an overall vision we have pushed for over a decade, starting with the transformation of the Star Store building into a thriving arts and college campus and followed by the reworking of Route 18." said Senator Montigny, who has led the implementation of this overall vision through Senate earmarks, his Star Store legislation, Route 18 funding and millions in bonding authorizations.

## **Local Stakeholder Input Deemed Essential**

Input from a local Steering Committee comprised of more than three dozen key waterfront stakeholders, including major commercial fishing industry interests, was essential to the Sasaki analysis. The Steering Committee's input, combined with a major information-gathering exercise, was used by Sasaki to create the "growth framework" that will be used to help shape industrial, commercial, residential, and public-sector redevelopment in years ahead.

## **Local Stakeholders and Others Weigh In On Waterfront Master Plan**

"Comprehensive land-use planning is recognized by private-sector investors, public-sector planning and infrastructure agencies, as the fundamental first step necessary to stimulate redevelopment, and maximize an area's economic potential, and foster job-creation. In the case of New Bedford's waterfront, highly functioning port areas must prepare for expanding services to the fishing industry, allow for the emergence of a new offshore wind industry, and respond to increasing demands from the public for access to waterside locations for tourism and culture-related purposes," stated Robert Culver, Managing Director of Sasaki Associates.

Culver added, "This is why Sasaki Associates, at the direction of the NBEDC, NBRA, and HDC, made it a top priority to bring together a wide-range of stakeholders to forge a strategic, thoughtful vision for future growth that is flexible enough to accommodate multiple interests."

“The NBEDC, our partners in New Bedford City government, and the HDC now have detailed knowledge and a framework for future growth that we did not have previously. This waterfront master plan is a critical and necessary resource in our efforts to pursue new business development opportunities that are compatible with the commercial fishing industry, other marine industrial uses, and the cultural tourism renaissance anchored by the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park and the downtown’s ongoing revitalization,” said Anthony Sapienza, President of the NBEDC.

"This plan charts a path forward for the New Bedford waterfront that builds on the strengths of the industries throughout the harbor. As the #1 fishing port in the US, dockage is at a premium. Recommendations like the expansion of the North Terminal bulkhead reflect the needs of the waterfront's stakeholders and will solidify New Bedford's place at the top of the commercial fishing industry for decades to come," stated Roy Enoksen, steering committee member.

“The consensus among folks in the fishing industry is that the planners at Sasaki genuinely welcomed input from fishermen, and I think the finished Master Plan reflects that approach, said Richie Canastra,” a Commissioner of the New Bedford Harbor Development Commission.

David Wechsler, the President of Maritime International, which utilizes the State Pier in order to handle the large ocean sailing vessels, for both exports and imports of various cargo, commented that he was impressed with the Sasaki Plans for the New Bedford Harbor.

“I have felt that Mayor Mitchell had made an intelligent and far sighted view of the area by contracting this well known group. From Maritime International's point of view, the company endorses the concept of multiple uses of the State Pier and it will show great flexibility in order to help to make the plans work. The results will be benefits to the entire community," said Wechsler

“From day one, this effort was a strong collaborative planning effort among various partners and waterfront stakeholders, including City departments, HDC, and the NBEDC. The process has allowed all the stakeholders to create a vision for the waterfront and advance a very sensible strategy which ensures phased development that integrates commercial fishing, offshore wind energy, cultural tourism, and other uses,” said David Kennedy, Chairman of the New Bedford Redevelopment Authority.

“I am excited by the approach which the NBEDC and its partners and Sasaki took in developing the plan, especially by the framework for long-term development of the north terminal, the south terminal, and the central waterfront – and specifically the State Pier site within the central waterfront and our ability to connect it to downtown. Clear development themes for each area emerged, and these are going to allow both the public and private sector to seize new opportunities both in terms of new commercial investment and job-creation,” said Jeff Pontiff, Steering Committee member.

“The framework provided by the Master Plan is also essential to future efforts to advance development using the state’s Urban Renewal Program. The Sasaki framework includes several sub-district development plans for key areas of the waterfront, and these would form the basis by which the New Bedford Redevelopment Authority could begin to undertake infrastructure and real estate development projects in the future,” said Patrick Sullivan, Director of Planning, Housing, and Community Development for the City of New Bedford.

### **More on Waterfront Master Plan Funding Sources**

The NBEDC, the HDC, and the City of New Bedford agreed to jointly provide the local matches necessary to secure the \$200,000 in federal USEDA grant funds. In all, the City provided approximately \$133,000;

the NBEDC provided approximately \$67,000 in staff-time; and the HDC contributed staff-time and various other non-financial support.

#### **To Access The Waterfront Master Plan**

The completed Plan can be found at the following link: <http://we.tl/Q06OYSEKLE>

#### **About the New Bedford Economic Development Council**

The New Bedford Economic Development Council is a nonprofit organization comprised of 250 successful leaders in business, education and government led by a nine-member Board of Directors. In conjunction with the Mayor's Office, the Council sets the agenda for the city's key strategic economic development areas. The Council also manages the day-to-day operations for the Greater New Bedford Industrial Foundation. [END]