



As part of the **Public Forum series on the NYC Comprehensive Waterfront Plan**, the Waterfront Alliance partnered with NYCDP to host a meeting on ***The Working Waterfront and Transportation of Goods***. There were more than 85 attendees including representatives from maritime companies in NYC and NJ, nonprofit and community groups, government agency officials, representatives of academic associations, researchers, and citizens with general interest in the waterfront.

Following introductory remarks and a presentation on the Comprehensive Waterfront Plan, Max Taffett from NYCEDC and Ed Kelly from the Maritime Association of the Port of NYNJ discussed current issues pertaining to the working waterfront. Specifically, they discussed data on the dramatic growth of volume in shipping in the region, the need for greater capacity, types of maritime jobs in our region, new innovations like offshore wind, and infrastructure opportunities and challenges before us.

Karen Imas, Senior Director of Programs at the Waterfront Alliance, facilitated an open forum Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) exercise. This enabled attendees to begin thinking collectively about major issues relating to the working waterfront. Participants then broke out into smaller groups to discuss these issues and report back their top priorities. The ideas and themes highlighted during the open SWOT portion are listed at the end of this document.

The topics discussed during breakout groups were:

- (1) **Issues related to infrastructure, planning and technology:** What issues related to infrastructure, planning and technology should we be focused on for the next 10 years? What are the related public policy areas?
- (2) **Governance & community stewardship:** Who decides? What are the governance and regulatory issues that we need to address in order to support the working waterfront?
- (3) **Equity:** How do we ensure all New Yorkers benefit from the working waterfront?
- (4) **Data & further Analysis:** Do we need further analysis, information or data to inform how we plan for the future of the waterfront?

Main Takeaways:

Real Estate Pressures and Land Use

Real estate pressures and land use issues were frequently brought up by attendees. They noted that waterfront industrial areas in NYC are limited and that which remains is under redevelopment pressure. Attendees suggested stronger land use measures to protect IBZs, SMIA's, buffer zones and the overall notion of balancing development. Protecting IBZs and SMIA's, attendees noted, can eliminate the "whims of Mayoral administrations." Some attendees argued that the City has overdone it with waterfront parks, preventing future industrial use. Others weighed in that developers and land owners should be incentivized to create or provide small scale maritime uses or bulkhead repair. Some suggested that the real estate sector needs to be educated about the working waterfront to understand

how this sector can add value and where there are synergies. One example highlighted looking at commercial warehouses located on waterways.

Another land use theme that emerged was “mixed use” - thinking about how maritime industrial uses can include flexible uses – offering public access, educational opportunities/field trips (SIMS Recycling hosts educational tours), view corridors, etc.

Infrastructure

Attendees frequently mentioned that there is simply not enough dock space for smaller vessels and boats to tie up. This is a major hindrance to advancing short sea shipping. The cost of dredging came up as well. Financial incentives were also mentioned multiple times as a tool for upgrading facilities.

Technology/innovation

Alternative fuels and electrification was also a key theme during the forum. These are both opportunities for the greening of the maritime sector. Some attendees noted that alternative fuels and electrification can also be seen competing interests to some extent - which approach should public and private stakeholders get behind? Shore power was cited several times as a resource where NYC is lagging and where progress has not been made since the last CWP. Similarly, the City is lacking an LNG terminal at a time when many large ships are moving over to LNG.

The Jones Act was mentioned as a hurdle to innovation in the overall maritime sector since it increases costs of doing business. Historically, the Jones Act has been an economic engine, keeping maritime jobs in the U.S. At the same time, it is being viewed as a hurdle to maritime operations and maintenance.

Environmental Justice Communities

The previously mentioned issue of greening the ports and maritime sector is tied to EJ/public health in many waterfront communities. There are long-standing historical legacies around these issues. Some attendees suggested that electrification and alternative fuels may provide a pathway to alleviate some of these serious issues, specifically less polluting methods of moving goods (Red Hook was specifically cited). More progress needs to be made and faster, according to many attendees. There is also work to be done in ensuring that the benefits of these industries go back to support local communities through providing good jobs, neighborhood amenities and access, etc.

Further, education and maritime jobs training in underserved communities would be welcome. Harbor School was often cited as a model to emulate.

Regional Planning

The working waterfront is a NY/NJ issue with broader regional implications. A strong NY Harbor port keeps the region globally competitive. Standards across PANYNJ facilities should be uniform – for example, electric trucks everywhere.

Permitting Challenges and Regulatory Issues

The Waterfront Navigator was cited by several individuals as an asset and a step in the right direction. At the same time, more robust solutions are needed to alleviate bureaucratic overlapping jurisdictions.

Workforce

Jobs and workforce development were mentioned many times in the forum and by almost every table group in the final round-up. This issue appears to be both a challenge and an opportunity. Greater focus by the DOE and higher education institutions is needed on vocational learning, apprenticeships and both traditional and cutting-edge maritime jobs. New sectors like offshore wind present opportunities. The public is largely unaware of the maritime sector and the jobs that it brings. Someone asked, “with new tugs and vessels working in the harbor, where will crews live and stay while in NY?”

Data and Further Analysis

Trucking came up several times in the context of moving goods on water. Some attendees asked whether the true cost of moving goods by truck (congestion, air quality, roadway damage) is reflected in our supply chain. A cost-benefit analysis can help make the case for waterborne freight. NYCEDC’s Shared Harbor Survey was mentioned as a great tool. Some data could be disaggregated further. It was noted that large shippers were not thoroughly reflected in the survey.

SWOT Exercise

Strengths and opportunities

Education; Labor – jobs; Existing Infrastructure; Affluent Consumers; Lots of waterways; Capacity for moving goods; Naturally protected harbor; Intermodal connections; Rich maritime history and culture; Failing BQE; Cross Harbor Rail Expansion; Marine highways; Power from Offshore Wind; Shore power options; Greening ports; More community engagement; Jobs; Public pressure for more efficient transportation; Alternative fuels; Space for small scale maritime; Electric vessels; Maritime related industries

Weaknesses and threats

Pollution/Diesel; Lack of cross harbor tunnel; Cost of business; Cost of land; Aging piers; Community Opposition; Shipyard Capacity; Residential/land use pressure; Lack of education; Poor connections & neighborhoods; Weak industrial zoning; Lack of short sea transport; Dependence on trucks; Climate Change; Lack of funds; Gentrification; Residential and commercial rezoning; Development Jones Act; Congestion; Competing land use interests; Future aircraft using waterways; Automation; Support for waste management; Competition from Southern ports; Political squabbles; Online fulfillment centers / last mile; Failure to modernize and decarbonize; Siting of power plants and chemicals

Key themes by comments: mixed harbor use, permitting, innovation, funding, community benefit, infrastructure/design, workforce development, competing interests, land use, environmental justice, sustainability, economic development, cooperation, emergency preparedness, industrial zoning, accessibility, and tourism.