

Head of the Bay Gateway – Shooters Redevelopment

MARINA MARKET ASSESSMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Head of the Bay Gateway Committee* (HOBG) hired *Harbor Engineering, LLC* (HARBOR) to assess the former *Shooters Waterfront Café* (Site) by providing professional services including a limited marina market assessment, a marina conceptual planning exercise, and to report on economic factors useful in the evaluation of the potential financial viability of redeveloping the property.

The Site has great potential to attract various user groups who seek access between Providence and local waters, including the Providence and Seekonk Rivers and Narragansett Bay. The Site will attract the following groups of recreational boaters:

- Boaters who either live or work in Providence looking for seasonal (staying all summer long) slips
- Boaters from outside the local area looking for transient (short-term stays up to 10 days) slips who are looking for a metropolitan destination that offers more sophisticated dining options, shopping and entertainment
- Boaters from the local region, mostly from upper Narragansett Bay, looking for casual-transient (staying only part of a day) slips in order to dine at the local restaurant, walk in the park, or take a quick jaunt into downtown. All of the marina managers interviewed felt that their customers would find this appealing and believed they too would benefit by having their marina located in close proximity to the Site

Beyond those with boats, HARBOR sees the potential for the Site to welcome the general public, including those who wish to rent a boat (including kayaks, stand-up paddleboards, or sailboats) or take a ride on an excursion/ferry boat into the Bay. A variety of watersports rentals will add recreational vibrancy to the facility, boosting the overall vision of providing public access to the waterfront.

Now approximately 1.4 acres in size, the Site is in a strategic location for Providence in that it is unfettered by navigational restrictions such as the Hurricane Barrier, nor does it conflict with the working waterfront along the west side of the Providence River. Situated adjacent to India Point Park and the Community Boating Center, the Site is in a prime location to provide public access to the navigable waters of the Providence and Seekonk Rivers and Narragansett Bay. Additionally, it can offer an ideal gateway to the Bay that can receive a variety of different excursion and recreational vessels.

HARBOR took into consideration eight (8) marina facilities from around the region, looking at their size, offerings, occupancy, and rates. The best comparable facilities to the Site were Downtown Marina (located in Providence) and Milts Marina/20 Water Street, Hemmingways, and Harborside Lobstermainia (all three located in East Greenwich). The Downtown Marina currently experiences less-than-ideal occupancy that is believed to be a result of the present economic climate as well as the physical restrictions of the Hurricane Barrier, which prevents larger boats from reaching the facility. The facilities in East



Greenwich offer water-enhanced dining combined with limited marina services. These facilities are generally near full capacity and do draw casual transients from around Upper Narragansett Bay who prefer to come to the area restaurants by boat.

HARBOR prepared two (2) conceptual marina layouts, taking into account a variety of physical limitations for the marina basin and the potential market demand obtained from the market assessment effort. Both layouts were able to achieve greater than 4,000 linear feet of leasable dockage arranged in a layout to support all of the potential users groups identified. One option focused more on reserving 84 dedicated slips for specific size vessels and the balance of the facility having open areas able to accommodate a wide range of vessel sizes. The Second option has a more flexible layout, offering 61 dedicated slips with significantly more open dock space to a variety of vessel sizes. Associated construction cost for each layout ranges from \$4–6 million. It is strongly recommended that any potential project be discussed with the various regulatory agencies to understand how far the marina can protrude into the harbor.

To ensure that the marina and upland facility is a successful year-round operation, it will be important to plan its offerings and amenities carefully. This will keep the Site vibrant over twelve months compared to a limited 4-6 month seasonal window. For the marina, the most important element will be security (including both passive and active considerations) and providing sufficient utilities, keeping the needs of the various vessel types in mind. For the inland development, intermodal transportation is critical to get people to and from the Site and various points throughout Providence. Methods of transportation to consider include:

- Trolley service
- Rental kiosk that could offer bicycles, scooters and Segways
- Launch service that can receive and drop off people between the Site and the many existing waterside landings along the Providence Riverwalk as it extends to Waterplace Park

Other upland offerings to consider for the Site include a marina center (including office, visitor's desk, excursion boat ticket desk, bathrooms, and showers), fine dining restaurant, seafood shack, indoor/outdoor café and ice cream stand, retail shops, interactive classroom, professional office space, gym, venue for outdoor music and harbor walk that connects with India Point Park. Of course, the challenge will be to fit everything on the site including the building space (additional floors beyond what is currently in place would most likely be needed) and parking.

If developed properly, the project can have an amazing synergy with all of Providence's current offerings and attract people to the area throughout the year. This revitalization of the city's waterfront is the economic boon Providence needs and an offering that the rest of the state can benefit from as well. The potential success of this proposed redevelopment can be easily measured by the successful waterfront revitalization implemented by other cities including but not limited to Boston, Chicago, Baltimore and Charleston.