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# **LYNN'S REIMAGINED WATERFRONT WOULD FEATURE PARKS, PUBLIC ACCESS, DEVELOPMENT UNDER PLAN**

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BY GAYLA CAWLEY | March 7, 2019

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*A seawall will be built along the water behind the Beacon Chevrolet site. (Spenser R. Hasak)*

LYNN — A transformed waterfront has the ability to enhance the city of Lynn, and would include public access, parks, and new development all coming together.

That's the vision laid out in the Lynn Waterfront Open Space Master Plan, which focuses on increasing open space and public access for the city's 305-acre waterfront site, from southeast of the Lynnway between the General Edwards Bridge and the Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR's) Nahant Beach Reservation.

Mayor Thomas M. McGee said the plan will lay the groundwork for, and add substantial value to, waterfront properties that will be developed in the future. More open space and access would add value to the community and give the public a chance to take advantage of a waterfront that has been closed off for years, he said.

"It's been years of discussion and years of a larger vision of much greater use of the length and breadth of our waterfront," McGee said.

Much of the waterfront remains inaccessible to the public and lacks a sense of identity, which the plan aims to rectify. Often where public access exists, it's in poor condition.

Large-scale visions include transforming the city's former landfill into a public park, which would feature live events and entertainment, and connecting the entire waterfront with a promenade, or paved public walk, and linking the waterfront to the downtown.

"Our goal is to have public access along the waterfront similar to what we have at Lynn Shore Drive," said James Cowdell, Economic Development & Industrial Corporation of Lynn executive director.

The plan was prepared by Brown, Richardson + Rowe, a landscape architect and planning firm, for the city of Lynn, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (Gateway City Parks Program) and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).

It is one of three plans in the works for a new waterfront. Also underway is an update of the 2007 Waterfront Master Plan, focusing on transforming the site with residential, commercial and industrial development, and a Municipal Harbor Plan, which states a municipality's goals, standards and policies to guide public and private land use among harbors.

The first major aspect of a reimagined waterfront will kick off this spring with the groundbreaking of the \$90 million redevelopment of the Beacon Chevrolet site into 332 market-rate apartments in multiple buildings.

The 14-acre site across from North Shore Community College on the Carroll Parkway, dubbed North Harbor, has been vacant for more than three decades.

The North Andover-based development team, Minco Corporation, plans to connect the walkway from the Heritage State Park to the Clocktower Business Center on the Lynnway to provide a downtown connection to the waterfront.

Last week, bids were awarded for the construction of a \$1.4 million, 48,000 square-foot seawall, paid for through a state grant, which is part of that development, according to Cowdell.

Cowdell said the city awarded the bid to Charter Engineering, the same firm enlisted by National Grid to work on the landfill to park project. The seawall is expected to be completed in late spring or early summer.

Implementing the open space plan, which includes a revamped, more public-friendly ferry terminal, several parks, plazas and a cohesive connection between the waterfront's three major areas, known as South Harbor, Central Harbor and North Harbor, will not be without its challenges.

Much of the site has been used for industrial and commercial purposes, which has left contamination. Before becoming a park, the city's landfill is undergoing a cap-repair project for a failing cap to bring the site into compliance with state solid waste regulations.

Two seawalls in poor condition will need to be repaired at a substantial cost, which the plan says could be a major impediment, because it leaves the area vulnerable to rising sea levels. A DCR-owned fishing pier at the South Harbor is in rough shape, with a rebuild and upgrade projected to be another significant investment.

One of the plan's consultants, Clarissa Rowe, principal at Brown, Richardson + Rowe, said at a recent City Council meeting that the state has allotted an \$11 million budget to make necessary repairs to implement the open space plan, but a more realistic price tag is \$22 million.

Other challenges include navigating permitting restrictions, such as Chapter 91 for future development, and the city working with the vast number of different owners along the waterfront. Crossing the Lynnway is a major impediment to public access.

For the plan to be adopted, city and state approval is needed, according to Cowdell.



Gayla Cawley

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