



SOSHull

Prepared Remarks: Hull Redevelopment Authority

October 23, 2023

Presented by Steering Committee members:

Liz Kay

Susan Vermilya

Liz Kay:

Good evening, Susan and I are presenting on behalf of nearly 400 SOS Hull members. Just under a year ago, SOS Hull was formed to address the HRA's proposed building development on the last remaining open parcel of land and place this property in the hands of a private developer. Yes, that could provide a jumpstart of much needed tax revenue, however the question remains - is it worth it in the long term? What do we want to leave for our kids, and for others to follow? SOS Hull's mission: - to pause the development process and rethink what we might do differently is what brings us here today.

Susan and I will tag team- I will present the overview and share some of upfront research findings which drove our vision. Susan will present the revenue generators, funding opportunities, and where we might start.

To SOS Hull, it is evident that this barrier beach is under greater environmental pressures than ever before. To many, far beyond SOS Hull members the land itself needs to be taken into account in our decision-making. We are not alone in asking these questions. Communities across the country are seeking to preserve open land, which has an intrinsic value unto itself - for plants and animals to flourish, to serve as a carbon sink from our overuse of fossil fuels, as well as serve as gathering places to come together, socialize and bridge cultures and differences. What is the right balance for Hull is up for grabs.

Over the summer, we spoke with numerous individuals and organizations, municipal developers, business owners- local and afar, large and small. We spoke with family members who have been here for generations...family members whose parents lived on HRA land. Additionally, we participated in the HRA online and in person meetings.

We have reviewed and synthesized this input to craft a short- and long-term approach and vision. And we do believe that this can be 'right sized' for Hull.

Our insights from this research showed us the following: Success- once it is clearly defined which is one of the challenges ahead of us- requires collaboration, transparency, strategic alignment and leadership to make the hard decision.

SLIDE 6- A huge shout out to SOSHull members who submitted numerous ideas.



For the most all of the 'ideas' we have heard fall into two large buckets: Open Areas, Parks, Gathering and Community Space, and Seasonal Fairs and festivals- experiences that enliven the community and bring visitors into town to experience what we cherish.

With all this input in hand, we landed on the following vision:

Can we celebrate and elevate Hull's natural environment to create vibrant community-focused spaces, provide visitors with festivals and cultural events and also strengthen the present Nantasket Beach Overlay District to enhance business and revenue?

In our proposal on the HRA website, there is additional detail on this research gathering activity. In short, we reviewed community and waterfront developments and public works projects across the country in all sizes and shapes. From San Diego to Buffalo, Ogunquit, Newburyport, Boston and beyond,

I am not going into detail here, however, a few Best Practices bubbled up as you can read here. Can the HRA spearhead the foundational research and can we work towards these Best Practices. And critical to success is to understand our 2 key stakeholders:

- 1- Community: who now lives in Hull, what do they wish to experience now, and for the future? What is the quality-of-life experience they seek? And
- 2- And Visitors: Who are they? What beckons them to return?

The research also revealed that

- an anchoring centerpiece is key
- Strong communications and collaborations with government agencies, town, civic and businesses leaders
- And a mutual respect to commit to the long-term investment in market research and see together the importance of providing a safe, well maintained and welcoming area for all to experience. This came up in discussions repeatedly.

Susan Vermilya:

As part of an urban renewal plan, part of the goal is to bring income to our town. There are many ways to accomplish this goal.

One idea that's been explored was the building of housing units and a hotel on the land. However, we believe that the proposal puts added stress on our town's resources for water, sewer, electricity, fire and police and increase parking and traffic issues.



As an alternative, we are focused on revenue streams that are scheduled in nature and do not tax our resources every day of the year.

As a community of over 10k people, whatever goes on the HRA land has to first and foremost benefit the existing residents. With this being our ONLY remaining available parcel of open space, we need to be smart about what we put there.

Throughout Hull's history we have been a town based on recreation. Over the years, we have slowly given away much of that. On the HRA land, we have an opportunity now to bring back our identity. Through a thoughtful and targeted marketing campaign, we can revitalize tourism in our town, thus bringing in visitors to enjoy Hull and enticing them to spend money.

So, the first branch of our proposal involves hiring professionals to collaborate on a strong tourism study to promote events in this area and then roll out a plan that will help put Hull back on the map as a tourist destination. Wouldn't it be nice to get visitors to come to Hull from Boston and other towns.

Part 2 of our proposal is to bring in an anchoring centerpiece. This would be in the form of an event stage used for concerts, cultural festivals, community events and the like. This centerpiece would be what can bring people back to Hull over and over again.

In our proposal, we have earmarked places where people could be bussed in for events to minimize parking issues. These events would generate multiple forms of revenue through ticket sales, fees, parking, concessions, retail and the like. This doesn't include other revenues generated from visitors patronizing other Hull businesses while here.

With regard to parking, we've seen people come to Hull, park in the HRA lot and never visit any of our businesses. As part of an overall strategy, we recommend improved signage in town directing cars to the existing DCR lots on GW boulevard to help increase visitation to our local NBOD businesses. HRA can help to make this happen.

In addition, as part of an HRA parking fee, there could be cross-promotions for other Hull businesses to increase sales and extend family friendly experiences throughout the NBOD.

In balancing summer beach traffic with shoulder seasons, the HRA lots along Phipps St would continue to be dedicated parking, generating income all summer long. And would be leveraged during off-season events along with an added bus depot.

The 3rd part of our proposal is to design beautiful parks throughout the campus. Feedback from the community has been to beautify the land and keep it as an open space. In our proposal, we envision native plants that help protect our town from storm surges. The construction of sun shelters, greenery and resting places such as benches and picnic tables would also be added.



In addition, as part of this plan, the Weir Rive Bayside parcels could be turned into a park that honors the families who lost their homes and businesses 60 years ago. That area could be beautified with kinetic wind sculptures and added educational signage heightening awareness of climate change and our precious barrier beach.

Under the present Mass administration there is a new push to increase outdoor recreation and promotion to visitors. In the Director of that agency's words "we want our natural capital to be as strong and healthy as our economic capital".

The 4th part of the plan would involve, as a first phase, changes to Hull Shore Drive ext. To help ensure visitors don't just come to park and go to the beach and go home, we recommend dropping that road down to 1 lane, add a row of revenue producing concession stands as well as a bike path that would also be used for the addition of fun Pedi cabs designed to bring people up and down the NBOD.

Liz Kay:

Thanks Susan. I want to pose 4 long term visions:

In time, can we possibly gate Hull Shore Drive extension and turn the entire area into a promenade encouraging family biking and walking area- separated from vehicles? We can easily park our surfers as well as provide those with disabilities with access in a designated location towards Phipps Street.

If one of our short- and long-term goals is to strengthen and invigorate the NBOD small businesses, can we help assure that incoming visitors be directed to either satellite parking and/or directed to DCR parking at the entrance to Hull instead of driving right past our business district? In many California beaches towns, visitors are used to walking to their final beach blanket location... doesn't this open the opportunity for visitors to stop along the way to grab lunch, or a beer, or start with a kayak tour of the Weir River.

Last week, Procopio Companies presented its new design to the Design Review Board with 130+ apartments. If this densely packed project is to move forward, which I believe it will in some iteration, is this another incentive to maintain all 13 HRA acres as open land.

And, in a longer-term vision, could we invite visitors to Hull via public transit, or commuter boat... and leave cars elsewhere? Can we be a green alternative? We all experience the extraordinary day and night skies- how do we help others realize this is the place to be?

From sunrise to sunset.

Can we imagine a stronger marketing campaign coming from our HRA funded research:

Hull: Make a full day of it!

Ocean sunrise to bay sunset- Come experience it for yourself.



I am not a copy writer; however, a professional agency can help bring this vision to life.

Susan Vermilya:

Let's talk about how we might fund this. This comes in 4 forms:

1. We recommend using some of the roughly \$2m HRA has in the bank to jump start the project, using it to fund research to increase visitors, to help fund initial landscape design and implementation and to identify a marketing/promotion/planning firm to bring the project alive.
2. Identify an experienced, professional grant writer to seek out funds for the project.
3. Use Parking revenue to pay for on-going maintenance and upkeep of the land.
4. Consider a Hull member organization to help with seed-funding since there are so many supporters of open space in our town.
5. Potentially collaborate with a landscape architectural school to create a winning design for Hull open space.

Please see the end of our presentation for additional state and federal funding sources.

Here's where we could start. First stop is to not operate in a vacuum but to ask HRA to collaborate with key stakeholders on a future vision and path to get there. This has already begun with HRA asking for community feedback, THANK YOU!

2nd, we propose HRA meeting with other town board members and businesses to start to develop a plan that allows the HRA land to help increase visitation to our existing businesses as well as future businesses within the NBOD, thus bringing income to our town.

3rd, we propose designating this land as permanently open to protect it from future development.

4th, we recommend a commitment to a small part of this proposal in 2024.

Goals for next year could look something like this:

1. Create a pocket park with native plants and benches.
2. Increase marketing promotion to create 1 festival event.
3. Define standards for community hosted events on HRA land.
4. Identify a grant and funding consultant.

In closing, we believe putting buildings on this land does not make sense. There are multiple large-scale projects already under discussion and nearly 900 housing units that have been built



so far with more to come. All the more reason for this space to be left open as a community gathering place and a buffer to the residential neighborhoods.

We are bringing back the pictures designed to give you a sense of what the space could look like. Thank you to Lisa French for her expertise in designing these for us and thank you to our SOS Team for all of their ideas and support. See proposed visuals below.

Thank you.





