



Are you on board?

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November 2, 2018

Via email: long-island@boston.gov

Mayor Martin J. Walsh
City of Boston
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201

Re: Long Island Request for Information

Dear Mayor Walsh,

As the non-profit partner of the Boston Harbor Islands Partnership, Boston Harbor Now is excited to envision the impact that Long Island could have on the public and economic health of Boston Harbor and its Islands through this planning process. We were pleased to learn about the City's Request For Information to better the process for implementing programs, services, and other resources as part of a vision to build a recovery campus on Long Island.

A key component of Boston Harbor Now's mission is to facilitate and increase public access to Boston Harbor and the Islands. In concert with municipal, state, federal, for-profit, and non-profit partners, we plan, activate, and advocate for Boston Harbor and its islands and waterfront. We are excited to play a role in developing the future of Long Island as a public health resource and re-introduce it as part of a publically accessible island within the National Park Area.

The Imagine Boston 2030 plan sets a citywide vision and comprehensive plan for how Boston will continue to thrive as a waterfront city. The Assessment identifies Long Island as an opportunity to "support significant open space in the tradition of the region's great reservations, allowing generations of Bostonians and visitors to experience nature just minutes from Downtown." We wholeheartedly agree with this aspiration.

As we contemplate the future uses of Long Island and its facilities, we should first recognize that, at more than 200 acres, Long Island is the largest island in the Boston Harbor Islands National Park Area. Together, the Islands and Harbor area represent an impressive 34,000 acres of public blue and green open space in the Greater Boston Region and as such serve as a major public health resource for over 3.5 million residents and millions of visitors. Just 7 miles from Boston's waterfront, Long Island is uniquely positioned to be both a destination and a healing sanctuary.

Research on public health and open space has found that green environments have a direct link to increased physical and mental health of our communities. As the region continues to grow and densify, the preservation of open space as a matter of public health becomes increasingly clear—especially in

compact urban environments like Boston. To make the most of our largest harbor island, Boston Harbor Now believes the City of Boston should:

Enhance Open Space & Promote Recreational Uses. Given the City's commitment to repurposing the Island's infrastructure, we strongly recommend exploring the important role Long Island can play for the public as well as the clients of the proposed recovery campus. As a strong advocate of public access to our waterfront and islands, we would like to see part of Long Island reopened for public recreational use. We view enhanced open areas and recreational uses as complementary and an opportunity to create areas that enhance aspects of the healing campus as well as removing the potential stigma of a single use facility.

Enhance and Expand the Public Education Component. Established in 2007, Camp Harbor View provides summer camp experiences for over 900 youth from Boston's underserved neighborhoods. It is an exemplary educational program that should be preserved. In 2016, b.good restaurant established the one-acre Hannah Farm operation to grow organic vegetables for its local restaurants and the camp. As part of its mission and to give back to the local community, the farm provides a learning experience for campers, the restaurant's employees, and members of the public as well as job training for camp staff that grow and sell produce.

With increased programs and visitation, there is great potential to make Long Island a robust component of the larger island park system experience. Existing island experiences address camping, ecological habitat exploration and hiking for the visiting public. Expanding educational and volunteer activities like Camp Harbor View and Hannah Farm would be a unique opportunity to further connect the general public with the natural environment and the Harbor Islands.

We feel strongly that Long Island can offer a wide range of benefits to a broad cross-section of the population. Its location in the Harbor also offers the residents of the recovery campus the opportunity to visit and explore the remaining Boston Harbor Islands National Park Area. Long Island has the potential to be a recovery campus and so much more.

With multiple uses and areas that leverage its health benefits for all users, Long Island can be a model that builds a new kind of public open space with social and recreational uses that impact generations of Bostonians and visitors and improves the community while improving the public health of our City.

Sincerely,



Kathy Abbott
President and CEO