The City of Easthampton

Pleasant Street Mills Infrastructure Project

Elevating Municipal Partnerships Conference: New Tools and Resources
Housing and Economic Development Workshop

November 12, 2015
URBAN RIVERS VISIONS, 2002

Lower Mill Park: A new front door for Easthampton’s Mill District

Create "Lower Mill Park"
- Create a natural trail along the Manhan River
- Incorporate public art in the park on the pond
- Provide accessible parking

Create a Park Gateway at Ferry Street
- Create a pedestrian bridge linking the Eastfield School area to Lower Mill Park
- Create a pedestrian bridge linking the Eastfield School area to Lower Mill Park

Consider new opportunities for reuse of city property along the Manhan River
- Promote reuse of the Ferry Street Mill complex
- Promote use of the future Manhan River Rail Trail by pedestrians and bicyclists

Promote use of the future Manhan River Rail Trail by pedestrians and bicyclists
- Promote use of the future Manhan River Rail Trail by pedestrians and bicyclists

Provide limited public access to the South Shore of Lower Mill Pond
- Provide an internal and external trail along the south shore of Lower Mill Pond
- Provide an internal and external trail along the south shore of Lower Mill Pond

Urban River

Visions

Initiative of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Secretary Rick绒绒nal, in partnership with the City of Easthampton

Through wetlands, islands and a variety of land and water features sits Lower Mill Pond. Lower Mill Pond is the headwaters of the Manhan River, which flows into the city of Easthampton. The pond is a part of the Manhan River Basin, which is a major tributary to the Charles River. Lower Mill Pond provides a unique opportunity to create a new public space for the community.

Lower Mill Pond has the potential of becoming a vital and recreation place in the area of wetland ecosystems. The pond is a haven for a variety of wildlife, including birds, fish, and amphibians. It also serves as a popular location for fishing and other water activities.

Lower Mill Pond is located in the heart of the city of Easthampton, making it easily accessible to residents and visitors. The pond is surrounded by green space and is close to the city's main commercial area. This makes it an ideal location for creating a new public space that can be enjoyed by all.

The proposed plan for Lower Mill Park includes the creation of a natural trail along the Manhan River, as well as the incorporation of public art in the park on the pond. Accessible parking will also be provided, ensuring that the park is easily accessible to everyone.

Consider new opportunities for reuse of city property along the Manhan River. Promote reuse of the Ferry Street Mill complex. Promote use of the future Manhan River Rail Trail by pedestrians and bicyclists. Provide limited public access to the South Shore of Lower Mill Pond.
SLUM AND BLIGHT DESIGNATION, 2003
PUBLIC INVESTMENT (2002-2012)

Lower Mill Pond Park

Manhan Rail Trail

Sidewalk Improvements

Streetscape Improvements

Pleasant Green Playground
PRIVATE INVESTMENT @ Pleasant Street Mills

Mill 180

Paragon Arts & Industry

Eastworks
Limited parking

Safety concerns → electrical and water lines

Outdated electrical systems

No stormwater management

Limited connection from Mills to Rail Trail / Lower Mill Pond Park
PROJECT SCOPE & BUDGET

MassWorks Grants

- MassWorks 2012: $2.75M → Address safety concerns (water & electrical)
- MassWorks 2013: $1.5M → Stormwater management
- MassWorks 2014: $2,991,834 → Retaining wall, parking lot, lighting, landscape

  TOTAL: $7.24M

City of Easthampton

- CPA Funds: $400K → Enhance connections from rail trail to mills, downtown
- Legal fees: $5K → Easement agreements

Private Mill Owners

- 25% Design / Engineering / Permitting: $200K
- Private building investment (incl. upgrade electrical): Millions and millions

Utility Company (WMECo / EverSource)

- City-wide Electrical Upgrade: $3M
CULTURE CLASH

Municipality
- Bean Counters
- Rule Followers
- Grant Manager
- Collaborators
- Visionaries

Mill Owners
- Entrepreneurs
- Outside Box Thinkers
- Like to move quickly
- Various levels of financing
- Various levels of interest
- Single Focus

Utility Co.
- Multi-leveled Organization
- Slow timelines
- Soft budget figures
Only some of mill owners engaged / invested in project

Multiple legal documents

Negotiate long-term maintenance of improvements

Public electrical design incomplete at grant award → project delays

“Spaghetti” under ground → no records on file

Concerns with hitting “hot” soil

Tight budget

Power struggles
STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Weekly construction meetings – all parties at the table
Cultural awareness & respect
Establish City is the PM
Open communication with MassWorks
Direct communication between contractor / mill owners
Direct communication between mill owners / tenants
Respect for funding deadlines / grant requirements
Keep public informed
Ask lots and lots of questions!

Project completed on time and on budget

Phase I Complete December 2014
PHASE II
NEW PRIVATE INVESTMENT (Since 2012)

Upgraded electrical systems (All)

Purchase of Keystone Mill and approved Special Permit

External demolition for new infrastructure improvements (Eastworks, Keystone)

Two Craft Breweries (Mill 180, BrickYard)

11 new market rate live/work apartments (Mill 180)

10 new recording rehearsal studios (BrickYard)

Buildout for aquaponics, garden center and restaurant (Mill 180)

New professional / office (Mill 180)

Expansion of small manufacturing companies (All)
What makes a place great is not four or five big things, but a hundred little things. The places we love around the world are only about a block in size, but they’re filled with a hundred great little things: the little cafe, deli, market, shoe shop, falafel stand, what have you... and usually, in proximity to a great public space where you can linger and see your community...

Jason Roberts, Better Block Project
Contact information

Jessica Allan, AICP

Easthampton City Planner

allanj@easthampton.org

Facebook.com/Easthampton Planning Department