

## Purpose and Plan Overview

## Purpose

This plan outlines goals, objectives and actions for Rockland Harbor. It will help the City manage increased user pressures, guide policy actions, and help to maintain the diversity of users that characterize Rockland. It is intended to be incorporated as an appendix to the City's Comprehensive Plan.

## Background and Process

On March 12, 2018, the City Council passed a resolve to develop a new Harbor Management Plan.<sup>1</sup> As part of this resolve, the City Council established the Ad Hoc Harbor Management Plan Committee ("The Committee") – a steering Committee charged with submitting a draft plan for City Council approval. Consistent with the Resolve, the steering committee includes members of the City's Harbor Management Commission, Comprehensive Planning Commission, Economic Development Advisory Committee, and members of the interested public.

With the help of a grant from the Maine Coastal Program<sup>2</sup>, the City hired The Musson Group to support the Committee in drafting the plan. The Committee, with help from The Musson Group, undertook a process of televised public meetings, proactive outreach to harbor stakeholders, and ongoing discussions to develop an inventory of harbor resources and propose goals and objectives appropriate for today's harbor.

The Committee followed a consensus-building process that focused first on fact finding, and then on identifying high level goals and areas of agreement upon which to build.

## Guiding Principles

The Committee identified the following overarching principles to help guide development of the plan:

- Celebrate the City's historical and cultural connections to the harbor and waterfront.
- Promote public access and connectivity to the harbor and along the waterfront.
- Promote environmental and ecological wellbeing within the harbor.
- Support the working waterfront.
- Encourage a balance of uses within the harbor and complementary land uses along the waterfront.
- Embed economic, cultural, environmental, and social considerations in future decisions.
- Recognize and support Rockland's role as a major contributor to the region's marine economy.
- Encourage climate preparedness that considers the best available science, protects against coastal flooding and supports resiliency.
- Consider the capacity of the harbor, waterfront facilities, and the City to support use and development, and recognize that this capacity is subject to change over time.

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<sup>1</sup> Resolve # 10, "Harbor Management Plan", Sponsored by Councilor Glaser, March 12, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Award from the Shore & Harbor Planning Grant Program, using funds from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce.

The principles and recommendations outlined in this plan are consistent with the general goals for the harbor outlined in Chapter 2 of the City Code, Section 2-703:

*... to protect its marine-historic resources and sensitive natural resource areas found along its harbor and in nearshore coastal waters; to provide growth in public opportunities for water-based recreational activities; to maintain and enhance navigational facilities for the benefit of all harbor users; and to allocate land and water resources in an economically and environmentally sound manner.*

### **Implementation and Updates**

Once approved, the Harbor Management Plan intended to be incorporated as an appendix to the City's Comprehensive Plan (both the current plan and the new Plan under development).

Under City Code, the City's Harbor Management Commission is charged with annual review of the Harbor Management Plan and recommendations to the City Council for additions and/or modifications over time (Section 2-703, 5).

The Harbor Management Commission also is charged with reviewing harbor use proposals for consistency with the Harbor Management Plan (See Section 2-703, 6i and 7).

This Plan also suggests actions that would be implemented by City Departments or others, often in coordination with the Harbor Management Commission.

### **Plan Structure**

This Plan has 3 parts:

1. *Harbor Overview.* This overview provides the high-level background on the harbor and helps to define the study area. It also describes the core functions which are the primary responsibilities the City has in managing the harbor.
2. *Key Findings, Goals, Objectives and Actions.* This section provides a summary of some of the key findings from the harbor inventory and public input processes. It also offers specific goals, objectives, and actions that apply to various aspects of the harbor.
3. *Harbor inventory.* The inventory documents: physical features of the harbor, including the natural environment and harbor infrastructure; harbor and waterfront uses; the regulatory environment; flood zones and potential sea level rise; and the elements of the harbor economy. The inventory serves as a common baseline of understanding to inform decisions about goals, strategies, and actions.

Also included are appendices which include larger formats of some of the maps used throughout the report, a summary of the stakeholder input and how it was used, and a copy of a recent survey results related to cruise visitation, "Impacts of Cruise Ship Visitations in Rockland", prepared by Maine Center for Business and Economic Research, Edmund S Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine (2019).