

Public Access

Key Findings — General

- * Providing public access to the harbor — physical and visual, commercial and recreational — are important aspects of the municipal function

- * The City of Rockland has an amazing portfolio of public properties along the waterfront.
- * Some of these are not used to their potential

- * Public access is largely concentrated in the southern half of Rockland's waterfront

- * While the Harbor Trail extends along part of Rockland's waterfront, much work remains — including obtaining formal easements for existing sections of trail and trail expansion, and extending the trail along the waterfront of properties owned by the City

- * A comprehensive list of the existing municipal properties, rights of ways or easements that provide access to the harbor is not readily available - it is unknown whether additional rights of way exist over private properties, or roads

- * Presently there is no current inventory of key visual corridors to the water

- * Restrooms are not available at all municipal facilities and, where they are available, they are sometimes seasonal or temporary

- * ADA accessibility at public facilities is incomplete

- * Parts of Rockland's waterfront properties are in the flood zone, meaning there are risks of flooding today, and increased risk due to anticipated sea level rise and storm surge within the next 30-50 years

- * Proactive maintenance of public access infrastructure is inconsistent

* Rockland's waterfront infrastructure is important to people and businesses from throughout the region

Key Findings — Property Specific

Breakwater and Lighthouse:

* The breakwater is one of the most popular walks in Rockland for residents and visitors alike

* The breakwater is owned by the US Governmental and managed by the Army Corps of Engineers

* The lighthouse building is owned by the City and managed by the Maine Lighthouse Foundation; public tours are sometimes provided in the summer; the working light is owned and maintained by US Coast Guard

* There is public boat access available at the breakwater via a small float
Public Access

* Pedestrian access to the breakwater and lighthouse is via a small park at the end of Samoset Road with roadside parking '

* There are no public restrooms

* There is no formal easement for pedestrian access from the park to the breakwater

* The Breakwater Light does not have a reserve account

Commercial Fish Pier:

* This facility is important to the working waterfront and provides long term dockage, transient tie-up, catch buying/selling, hydraulic lifts, gear storage, refrigeration, fuel sales, and bait sales

* The facility supports a variety of fisheries and harvesting, including lobster, herring, scallops, and aquaculture

* In its current configuration, the Fish Pier is at capacity

* A grant-funded improvement project is underway that will address age-related deterioration to piles and dolphins, resurfacing, stabilizing the storage areas, upgrading the electrical system and maintenance dredging (estimated completion 2021)

* Refrigeration units are within the floodplain

* The property is deed restricted to protect commercial fishing uses

- * The fence around the storage area is in need of repair or replacement
- * A maintenance plan exists for this facility, including a reserve account funded by user fees and associated revenues
- * There isn't currently a safe place for the general public to sit and watch the boats come in.

Public Landing| Middle Pier:

- * These key properties have potential that is not yet realized (e.g. extension of the Boardwalk, potential amphitheater, greenspace)
- * The properties are connected by an accessway that is used by the public, but the City does not currently own; public infrastructure also runs beneath the accessway
- * The Harbor Master building is in need of repair and located within the flood zone
- * Middle pier is aging and in need of repair I
- * Harbor Park has a reserve account; Public Landing and Middle Pier do not
- * The waterfront supports festivals and events, which are important to the economy and local culture

- * Festivals and events can impact other public access uses (e.g. access to the docks)

Sandy Beach

- * Sandy Beach is the only public facility that offers sitting on a beach and swimming
- * There are no public restrooms
- * There is no reserve account for Sand Beach

Schooner Wharf

- * Rockland hosts the largest fleet of windjammers and schooners?? in the Northeast, and has had a continuous presence of commercial sailing vessels since the State's founding
- * Schooner Wharf is important to maintain this historic asset and part of Rockland's maritime heritage
 - There is no reserve account for schooner wharf
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Snow Marine Park:

- * Snow Marine Park is the only public boat launch on the harbor
- * The boat launch is important for both commercial and recreational vessels

- * Long term parking for boaters can conflict with other park uses (e.g. parking is often on the grass)
- * Snow Marine Park is at the end of the Harbor Trail, but the trail bumps away from the water at the park
- * There is no reserve account for Snow Marine Park
- * Residents of Owls Head use Snow Marine Park to access the nearby mooring area which is in the Town of Owls Head

- * The small leased building is in need of significant work; it also includes a mural by Carol Sebold that should be preserved

Goals and Objectives

Goal:

' Ample opportunities for residents, businesses, and visitors to connect with Rockland's harbor and maritime heritage throughout the City

Objectives:

1. A healthy working waterfront supported by adequate commercial access points and related infrastructure
2. Public facilities along the waterfront are interconnected via multiuse trails/paths
3. Public access for active and passive recreation available at multiple locations throughout the waterfront
4. Increased physical access opportunities in the northern half of Rockland's waterfront
5. View corridors to the water throughout the City
6. Important scenic views are identified and protected
7. Public facilities that are fully accessible (to the extent feasible)
8. Funded reserve accounts for maintenance and improvements
9. Clean, accessible, and modern restrooms at waterfront facilities that receive the most use
10. Infrastructure that can withstand flooding associated with sea level rise and storm surge
11. Community events and festivals are encouraged at waterfront facilities and managed to maintain access to the water for all

Recommended Actions (see key to abbreviations, below list)

Public Access — General

<u>Recommended Action</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Timeline</u>
Improve public access on the northern half of the harbor and when feasible acquire appropriate rights or land	S	Ongoing
Consider appropriate uses for the City-owned lot on Samoset Road	S	
Support and prioritize obtaining permanent public access rights to the Boardwalk and pedestrian access rights Rockland Breakwater	S	
Obtain additional rights to improve connectivity of public access rights along the waterfront	S	
Continuously improve the public's experience along the waterfront	S, HTC, P&RC	
Continuously evaluate opportunities to enhance the City's portfolio of waterfront properties or rights of way	S	
Review City ordinances and propose appropriate standards or incentives to encourage public access as part of all waterfront development projects	S	
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Conduct a comprehensive review of current and	S	

historic public access points; maintain existing and historic rights of access

Consider anticipated sea level rise and storm surges during the useful life of the project in all capital investment decisions S

Provide public restrooms (ideally flush toilets) at key waterfront properties HMC, P&RC

Explore areas within the City which would be appropriate to accommodate overnight parking for harbor boaters; revise parking policies as necessary S, PC

Develop a capital improvement plan for key waterfront infrastructure and associated reserve accounts HMC,S

Breakwater and Rockland Harbor Light

<u>Recommended Action</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Timeline</u>
Work with the Samoset and Jameson Point residents to identify a location at or near the end of Samoset Road for a public restroom	S	Ongoing
Work with the Samoset to obtain an easement for the Harbor Trail	S	Short Term

Note: Actions related to maintenance, improvement and effectiveness of the breakwater are included under the Harbor and Mooring Management section; see page YYY.

Commercial Fish Pier

	Responsibility	Timeline
Consider options to maximize flexibility and adapt to changing needs in the commercial fishing industry	HMC, S	Ongoing

Add additional floats and ramps as necessary to support the needs of the Fish Pier users	HMC	Short Term
Explore ways to add additional cooler space and move coolers out of the flood zone	HMC	Short Term
Investigate additional areas for dredging to add berthing and docking space, ideally as part of the current improvement project	HMC	Immediate
Consider whether changes to layout would improve efficiency and add capacity and space for additional uses, ideally as part of the current project	HMC	Immediate
Consider opportunities to improve fencing by the trap area that is both secure and attractive; provide public seating and signage where the general public can view the commercial activity on the pier	HMC, S	Short Term

Public Landing/Middle Pier

<u>Recommended Action</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Timeline</u>
Develop a plan that considers Public Landing, Middle Pier and the adjacent parks together	S	medium term
Purchase the property located between the Public Landing and Middle Pier, if available and feasible	S	
Obtain ownership or rights to access road that connects Harbor Park with Buoy Park/Middle Pier		
Create reserve account for Public Landing and Middle Pier or combine with existing account for Harbor		

Park; adequately fund accounts for future needs and grant matching

Improve and possibly relocate the Harbor Master's building - consider floodplain as well as the visual and physical needs of Harbor Master in relation to the harbor and boat traffic S

Evaluate infrastructure needs and determine scope of improvements, with consideration of past plans and concepts as well as new idea S

Develop policies that provide access to the public ramp, floats and Harbor Trail during events; revise application materials for facility use accordingly HMC

Document riparian rights and other site considerations to better understand expansion possibilities S

Evaluate the risks to investments and infrastructure due to flooding associated with sea level rise and storm surge; incorporate resiliency into facility design and improvements S

Sandy Beach

<u>Recommended Action</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Timeline</u>
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Evaluate ADA accessibility and potential improvements	S	Ongoing
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Create reserve account; adequately fund accounts for future needs and grant matching

Develop a permanent public restroom S

Schooner Wharf

<u>Recommended Action</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Timeline</u>
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Create reserve account; adequately fund accounts for future needs and grant matching	S	
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Evaluate the risks to investments and infrastructure due to flooding associated with sea level rise and storm surge

Snow Marine Park

<u>Recommended Action</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Timeline</u>
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Plan for appropriate uses and activities and consider this property as an appropriate location for future public events and festivals	P&RC	Ongoing
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Develop policies that ensure access to the public ramp, floats and Harbor Trail during events; revise event application materials accordingly	HMC	Ongoing
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Explore options and policies for long term or overnight parking for cars and boat trailers at Snow Marine Park	P&RC, PC	Medium Term
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Make necessary repairs to the structure currently being leased or provide a lease term sufficient for the tenant to make repairs; preserve mural from Carol Sebold	S	Short Term
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Create reserve account; adequately fund accounts for future needs and grant matching	S
Add dinghy dock and maintain on shore storage for personal watercraft	HMC
Provide a trail along the waterfront and stairs to the water	S, HTC, P&RC
Review the need for additional amenities and added restrooms; actively plan for improvements as necessary	S
Open dialogue with Owls Head over shared interest and needs for Snow Marine Park	HMC
Evaluate the risks to investments and infrastructure due to flooding associated with sea level rise and storm surge	S

Abbreviation Key:

City Council — CC

Harbor Trail Committee — HTC

Parks & Rec Committee — P&RC

Harbor Management Commission ~ HMC

City Staff - S

Parking Committee — PC

Rockland Port Authority — RPA