

Harbor and Mooring Management

Key Findings

- Harbor and municipal infrastructure that supports users from within the City also support adjacent towns, island communities, and regional commercial and recreational activities
- 7 channels in Rockland are important for the safe navigation of vessels within the harbor; all require clear markings and maintenance (See Map ==)
 - 4 federal channels subject to Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) rules, regulations, and maintenance; all are in need of review by the ACOE to determine the current depth and need for dredging
 - 3 municipal channels are defined by City Code (reference) – one in the northern end of the harbor marked by federal buoys, one located out from the Public Landing marked by local aids to navigation, and one in the southern portion of the harbor marked by a federal buoy; all are important to clearly mark and maintain
- There are 3 federally-designated anchorage areas in Rockland Harbor which need to be protected when considering harbor growth (See Map ==)
- There are 6 historic mooring fields which have evolved over time; while there is room for expansion out into the harbor there also are likely opportunities for more efficient layout of existing moorings
- Using data from the 2019 boating season, there were 597 moorings
 - 38% used by Rockland residents, 62% by non-residents
 - 84% recreational, 16% commercial
 - More comprehensive data may be desirable to collect
- While there are reserve accounts for some purposes there aren't savings all for necessary maintenance and improvements to key harbor infrastructure
- Rockland Harbor is currently a "Class C" designated port which means that the City can take vessels coming from a foreign country and their crew could clear customs in the City; passengers on those vessels cannot clear customs in Rockland

Goals and Objectives

Goal:

- A harbor and waterfront that support a diverse mix of commercial, industrial, recreational, transient, and residential uses and activities

Objectives:

1. Harbor infrastructure that meets current and future needs
2. Mooring, anchoring, and navigation in the harbor available on a fair and equitable basis

3. Moorings fields that are organized to meet user needs and are supported by appropriate shoreside facilities
4. Infrastructure that can withstand flooding associated with sea level rise and storm surge
5. Channels, anchorages, and mooring fields that allow efficient and safe navigation for all users
6. Appropriate growth that accommodates both waterside and shoreside needs
7. Adequate protection from storms and waves
8. Harbor revenues that help support needed investment and maintenance of municipal harbor and waterfront infrastructure
9. A fair share of harbor costs paid for by harbor users
10. Capital planning that proactively sets aside funds for necessary maintenance, improvements, and match for grants

Abbreviation Key:

Harbor Master - HM

Parks & Rec Committee – P&RC

City Staff - S

Wastewater Treatment Plant – WWTP

Harbor Trail Committee – HTC

Harbor Management Commission – HMC

City Council – CC

Comprehensive Plan Commission - CCP

Recommended Actions

Moorings and Anchorages			
Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeline
1,2,3,5,8	Update the existing mooring map and database with accurate information for tracking boat size, location, and mooring number along with GPS location	HM	Ongoing
1,2,3	Explore mooring management program to improve efficiency in renewals and improved tracking	HM	Immediate
1,2,3,5	Designate an official mooring expansion area within the harbor	HM	Short Term (1-2 years)
1,2,3,5	Evaluate moorings fields to determine needed closures, expansions or reorganization	HMC	Ongoing
1,3,6	Increase the amount of dinghy space to meet demand at each public facility	HM	Ongoing
1,2,5	Maintain adequate space in designated anchorage areas	HM	Ongoing
5,6	Improve protection of the anchorage area near the cement barge to help maintain unobstructed area; identify who the education and enforcement entity will be	HMC	Short Term (1-2 years)
5	Explore changing the designation of mooring fields to become special anchorage areas and eliminate the need for anchor lights within the mooring fields	HMC	Medium Term (3-5 Years)
1,2,3,6,9	Hold joint discussions with the Owls Head Harbor Committee on topics such as mooring management and access	HMC	Medium Term (3-5 Years)

Safety and Security			
Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeline
1,5,7	Develop and maintain an emergency evacuation plan for the harbor coordinated with local and county EMS	HM	Short Term (1-2 years)/ Ongoing
1,5,7	Generate and maintain contact list of waterfront and harbor stakeholders for emergencies	HM	Short Term (1-2 years)/ Ongoing
1,5	Deploy and maintain navigation aids as needed for safety (e.g. "no wake" areas)	HM	Ongoing
1,6,7	Discuss options for upgrading customs designation as needed	HMC	Long Term (5+ years)

Channels and Navigation			
Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeline
1,5	Support the continued and timely maintenance of the federal navigation project areas, consistent with the current and anticipated future needs of the City's water-dependent uses and facilities	All	Ongoing
1,5	Request ACOE conduct a survey of channel depths within the federal project areas	HM	Short Term (1-2 years)
1,5	Coordinate needed maintenance dredging with ACOE based on survey results	HM	Medium Term (3-5 years)
1,5	Evaluate the need for dredging at the Northern City Channel to maintain functional depth and explore necessary means of funding	HMC	Medium Term (3-5 years)
1,5	Provide and maintain navigational aids within City designated channels	HM	Ongoing
5	Explore land side and ocean disposal options for dredge spoils and evaluate cost/benefits	S	Short Term (1-2 years)

Wave Attenuation			
Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeline
4,7	Request ACOE evaluation of the Rockland Breakwater to determine effectiveness and needed repairs or improvements	HM	Short Term (1-2 years)
4,7	Coordinate with ACOE in funding any needed repairs and improvements to the Rockland Breakwater	HM	Medium Term (3-5 years)
4,7	Explore new means of wave attenuation to mitigate the adverse effects of wave action in targeted locations within the harbor	HMC	Long Term (5+ years)

Harbor Budgeting			
Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeline
8,9,10	Develop a capital improvement plan and related reserve accounts to cover necessary maintenance and improvements to municipal infrastructure related to the harbor and waterfront	HM	Ongoing
8,9,10	Explore public/private partnerships to improve harbor and waterside infrastructure	All	Ongoing
8,9,10	When making a capital investment anticipate flooding from sea level rise and storm surge during the full useful life of the facility	All	Ongoing
8,9,10	Annually review harbor related fees to ensure they are fair and competitive; identify opportunities to appropriately raise revenues where appropriate	HMC	Short Term (1-2 years), Ongoing
8,9,10	Improve tracking of harbor related revenue and expenses through the budgeting process	HM, S	Short Term (1-2 years), Ongoing
8,9,10	Seek federal, state, private or other funds and partners where applicable to support implementation of the Plan	All	Ongoing