



Shore and Harbor Planning Grants

City of Rockland

Rockland Harbor Management Plan (Fiscal Year 2019, project awarded 2018)

"When we can focus first on the positive and the things that unite us – anything is possible." – Julie Hashem, Rockland Community Development Director



Aerial view of Rockland Harbor

Project Description

The Shore and Harbor Planning Grant helped the City of Rockland develop a new Harbor Management Plan, which was unanimously supported by the Rockland City Council and the Rockland Harbor Management Commission.

The earlier Harbor Management Plan was over 20 years old, and since then the face of the waterfront had changed in many ways. Commercial fisheries and marine uses changed, fish processing decreased, annual festivals on the waterfront expanded, recreational boating and foot traffic increased, and cruise ships and transient yachts discovered Rockland as a port of call. Projects and activities consistent with the goals of the old Harbor Management Plan faced

opposition, with the goals themselves forgotten. Additionally, the need to redevelop aging infrastructure, adapt to sea level rise, and the desire to improve recreational, commercial, and visual access were creating other challenges and opportunities for the City.

The City recognized the need for an updated plan that considered the needs and perspectives of current stakeholders. The Shore and Harbor Planning Grant allowed the city to hire professional assistance to develop a common understanding of facts, facilitate a public engagement process, and develop consensus around a modern Harbor Management Plan to help guide future decision making related to harbor use, infrastructure, and access.

The City created an ad hoc Harbor Planning Committee, appointed by the City Council, to represent diverse harbor interests and act as the project steering committee. The Committee included representatives from the City's Harbor Management Commission, Comprehensive Planning Commission, and Economic Development Advisory Committee, as well as members of the general public. The Musson Group was hired to work with the Committee to develop a shared understanding, consult with the community, and draft the new plan.



Rockland Breakwater Lighthouse

Project results

The new Harbor Management Plan was completed and received unanimous approval. It is available at this link: [Rockland Harbor Management Plan](#). The plan created a vision for the future of the harbor and provided goals and objectives to help guide decision making about harbor use, infrastructure, and access.

Project follow-up

The Harbor Management Plan is a living document that will be regularly reviewed and updated by the City's Harbor Management Commission.

Among other things, the plan includes a variety of recommendations related to the future of City-owned parks and multi-use piers, and preparing for sea level rise. The City used this information to successfully apply for an additional Shore and Harbor Planning Grant to develop a community vision for these properties and a practical roadmap for achieving it.

Lessons Learned

The plan update process intentionally used a consensus-building process, where stakeholders first worked together to gather facts and develop a common understanding about the harbor. The discussion of specific goals took place after that common understanding was reached.

“When setting goals, the process focusses on finding areas of agreement and building on those – rather than starting from areas of disagreement, and finding compromise. We found that this consensus-building approach was an effective way to bring stakeholders with very different perspectives together around a common vision.” – Julie Hashem, Community Development Director



Diverse uses of City-owned piers.

Thank you to Julie Hashem for her time and assistance preparing this document.

