

Memo

To: Rockport Select Board

From: Harbor Strategic Task Force

cc: Jon Duke (Town Manager)
Orion Thomas (Director of Planning & Development)
Abbie Leonard (Harbormaster)
John Viehman (Select Board liaison)

Date: October 14, 2025

Re: Final Recommendations

The Harbor Strategic Task Force (Task Force) has reviewed the October 7, 2025 Final Rockport Harbor Resilience Concept Plan (Plan) submitted by the consulting team of Richardson & Associates and WSP and recommends that the Town implement the Plan as written. The Task Force worked extensively with the consulting team to develop a strategy that improves both the short- and medium-term resilience challenges in the harbor resulting from sea level rise and observed increases in the frequency and severity of storm events.

The Task Force further recommends that the Plan be implemented as soon as possible, given the high likelihood of additional damage from future storm events. As such, the next step is to develop a project implementation plan to address scope of work prioritization and funding source identification, focusing on the recommendations for (i) improving long term resilience of the commercial area, including elevating the Rockport Boat Club building, (ii) protecting the bulkhead walls and caps throughout the harbor, including hardening the ground surface immediately inbound of the bulkhead to reduce storm scour, and (iii) improving public access and use of Marine Park, which includes creating “floodable surfaces” as part of the overall “hardening” of the park infrastructure. To maintain project momentum, the Task Force recommends that an implementation task force be appointed as soon as possible to assist the Town with Plan implementation.

In addition, based on extensive interviews and internal discussions, the Task Force has the following recommendations on harbor-related elements that were not included in the consulting team’s scope of work:

1. Private float storage should be on the east side of the Goose River, generally located north of the Boy Scout path. If insufficient room is available, then the area located south of the Boy Scout path should be considered, as needed. No private floats should be stored on the west side of the Goose River (*i.e.*, within Marine Park). Town-owned floats will continue to be stored on the west side of the Goose River in areas generally not accessed by the public during the winter season. Finally, it is recognized that some flexibility in this policy may be necessary during the upcoming reconstruction of the Goose River bridge; any flexibility needed during construction shall be at the sole discretion of the Harbormaster.
2. Winter boat storage should remain on the east side of the Goose River, generally located south of the Boy Scout path.
3. The stormwater outfall currently discharging through the end of the pier adjacent to Goodie’s Beach should be extended further into the harbor as part of an overall strategy to improve the

water quality at the beach. The final location of the stormwater outfall will be the result of stormwater discharge modeling and discussions with applicable regulatory agencies, including the United States Army Corps of Engineers and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection.

4. Mast stepping operations should remain on the western side of the harbor. Previous attempts to relocate those operations to the eastern side of the river were not successful due to operational and safety concerns related to boat navigation and congestion in that area of the harbor/Goose River. To that end, the Task Force supports the hardening of the ground surface that is in the Plan (*i.e.*, paving, asphalt, concrete, etc.) in the area where the crane is currently operating.
5. To improve the overall aesthetics within Marine Park, securable trash dumpsters should be located on the eastern side of the Goose River as soon as practicable. As part of the relocation, harbor staff will need some type of motorized utility cart to move trash to the selected location.
6. Areas for food trucks and similar operations should be incorporated into the final design for Marine Park. Preliminary locations are shown on the concept plan; however, the final area(s) will depend on detailed design elements for parking, the access road, and utility placement.
7. Accommodation should be made for other private events and functions within Marine Park, subject to approval by the Select Board and/or the Harbormaster. These include weddings, yoga and similar classes, and other activities consistent with the use of the park. Usage rates shall be established by the Select Board, and the Harbormaster shall have final review and approval for any proposed activity.
8. The kayak storage racks should be located in the same area of Marine Park where they currently reside (*i.e.*, alongside the boat ramp), subject to proposed changes in the access pathway from Pascal Avenue. Specific kayak storage policies should be governed by the Harbormaster, in consultation with the Harbor and the Parks and Beautification Committees.
9. The unpaved area located generally between the Rockport Boat Club and the Goose River Bridge is critical to commercial operations and should remain unpaved following the proposed two-foot increase in grade elevation. By way of explanation, due to the use of various types of heavy equipment in that area, any paving would be routinely damaged and require frequent, costly repair.

Finally, we would like to thank everyone who provided input for our work, including, but not limited to, Rockport residents, Town Committee members, and Town Staff. We would also like to acknowledge the partnership, commitment and effort put forth by Blake Sanborn of Richardson & Associates and Todd Coffin of WSP.

Sincerely,

Bill Bow (Chair)
Josh Gerritsen (Vice-Chair)
Doug Cole (Secretary)
Bob Kollmar
Sam Temple
Nancy Albertson
Jennifer Seavey
Brad Scott
W. Davis Lee
Kerry Keefe