

Zoning and Development Considerations in the Boothbay Harbor Maritime/Water Dependent District

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Board of Selectmen and Planning Board Charge to LCRPC Staff

- Review and discuss relevant sections of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan as it may relate to development and/or redevelopment on the east side of the harbor
- Identify issues of significance based on that review
- Prepare a list of recommended goals or priorities the Planning board might consider when evaluating changes to zoning on the east side of the harbor
- Review goals and priorities expressed by other parties such as the Planning Board, Mr. Coulombe and others
- If requested, assist the Planning Board in developing suitable amendments to achieve agreed upon goals and priorities

Views of the East Side of the Harbor 1885



Views of the East Side of the Harbor 1910



Sanborn Maps

1931



Sanborn Maps

1931



Sanborn Maps

1931



Sanborn Maps

1931



1957



1960



Today



Current Zoning Along East Side of Harbor



From the 2015 Comprehensive Plan

The Economy.

Will we create our future or stand by and deal with what comes? Choosing to build on our strengths and create opportunities for our future generations, local businesses will adapt to changing trends and market demands within their industries and increasingly connect by technology and capital with state, federal, and global networks. The community will support quality education at all levels, a critical ingredient to economic success. Continual strategic planning can clarify Boothbay Harbor's role in important sectors such as health care, education, marine sciences, fisheries, renewable energy, shipbuilding, and tourism, and determine how, at a municipal level, local officials and citizens can coordinate with state and federal resources to increase local employment and higher wage levels.

From the 2015 Comprehensive Plan

The Economy - We Envision That...

An economic development plan for the Town will help retain and create local jobs. The focus will be on expanding the number and variety of year-round businesses, and encouraging local businesses and entrepreneurs. Community residents and entrepreneurs will find Boothbay Harbor a welcoming place to do business and the number and variety of year-round businesses will grow.

The fishing and boatbuilding industries will adapt to the changing ocean environment and local and national economies and thrive in new sectors (aquaculture, for example) and new technologies.

Boothbay Harbor will continue to be a premier destination for travelers, known for its high-quality experience, service, lodging, dining, and events.

From the 2015 Comprehensive Plan

The Community.

How do we change to stay vibrant and unique, yet protect these special qualities ... We can build on Boothbay Harbor's ability to attract young families and to sustain older generations by better utilizing existing resources and creating the right mix of affordable housing, employment, health care, and transportation resources. As inevitable and unexpected change occurs, Boothbay Harbor will find tools to support a community where our older residents thrive in their later years, where young people come to work and raise families, and where the past is still present in our residential and commercial neighborhoods and along the waterfront.

From the 2015 Comprehensive Plan

We Envision That...

Young families will choose to stay in or move to Boothbay Harbor and become active participants in community life by taking advantage of all available employment, affordable housing, job training and educational opportunities.

Visitors and residents will continue to enjoy the historic character of the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods and scenic views to the harbor from streets and public spaces.

From the 2015 Comprehensive Plan

The proposed land use plan is based on the following principles:

Boothbay Harbor is a small town with limited, vacant developable land. This means that land must be used wisely;

The creation of sustainable, year-round jobs and year-round businesses and services is critical to maintaining a year-round, age-diverse community;

The town's marine resources and their allied industries are essential to Boothbay Harbor's prosperity;

Due to the vulnerability of fresh and saltwater resources, all development must be subject to careful review of storm water runoff and other drainage impacts and be consistent with the low impact development standards recommended in the goals and objectives;

Development practices must avoid costly extension of services to areas where minimal tax revenue can be expected; and

The Town is pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly.

From the 2015 Comprehensive Plan

The Maritime-Water Dependent District is a “Growth” District

The plan recommends that it continue. Given the importance of the working waterfront to the town’s economy, however, the standards for land uses that do not require waterfront access should be reviewed. Continued capital investment in harbor facilities is important but, while the working waterfront is primarily focused on meeting the needs of maritime businesses, the waterfront itself is a significant attraction for both residents and visitors. The plan recommends that provisions be added to the land use ordinance to preserve physical and visual access to the harbor. Such provisions may include establishing a maximum height in the Maritime-Water Dependent District and maintaining sightlines from existing public streets and parks.

From the 2015 Comprehensive Plan

Boothbay Harbor's waterfront is a defining characteristic of the community. The shoreline is used by lobstermen, commercial fishermen, marinas, and companies and individuals specializing in the building, maintenance, repair, and storage of boats. It is also used by tourism-related businesses such as inns, restaurants, charter boats, recreational boats, marinas, and specialty retail shops.

Although the Boothbay Harbor economy is diversified among several business categories, the waterfront represents an important component of the Town's economic base. Jobs associated with marine resources, marine infrastructure repair and service, and the boat trades have been part of the Boothbay Harbor economy throughout the Town's history. Marine resources are also valued for recreation and habitat preservation. The preservation of the community's marine-related activities and the need to create more public access to the shore continue to be priorities.

Some Statistics from the Comprehensive Plan

- The population of BBH is projected to decrease by 26% to 1,463 by 2030 vs. a 12% decrease for Lincoln County as a whole
- The median age in BBH increased from 39.5 in 1970 to 55.8 in 2010 vs. 48.1 in Lincoln County and 42.7 in Maine
- Civilian Employment -
 - 33% - education, health care, social assistance
 - 10% - retail trade
 - 4% - agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting
- “Boothbay Harbor has unemployment rates above the County average, and lower wages than the County as a whole. Perhaps the Town’s biggest challenge is addressing fluctuating employment and the seasonality of much of its economic activity”

From the 2013 Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

Should Boothbay Harbor enact measures to preserve traditional views to the harbor from major local roads such as Townsend Avenue, Commercial Street, Union Street, Atlantic Avenue, West Street, or Western Avenue? (% of only those responding to question)			
Yes	129	81%	
No	8	5%	
Undecided	23	14%	

Would you support policies that promote harbor development for the following: (% of only those responding to question)	Commercial Fishing		Recreational Boating		Marine Support Services		Multi-modal Transportation Hub		Fish Processing		Residential		Cruise Ships		Aquaculture	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Yes	140	83%	136	81%	144	86%	69	41%	104	62%	110	65%	103	61%	109	65%
No	6	4%	9	5%	4	2%	35	21%	27	16%	28	17%	25	15%	21	13%
Undecided	13	8%	12	7%	10	6%	47	28%	26	15%	13	8%	25	15%	23	14%

Selected Economic Development Strategies from the Comprehensive Plan

Seek to preserve its important seasonal sources of employment, seek new tourism markets and encourage home-based businesses, local entrepreneurial activities, and marine resource-based jobs with an emphasis on ocean sciences.

Undertake an economic development strategy that seeks new sources of employment and identifies opportunities for existing business sectors. expands the number and variety of year-round businesses and creates a welcoming atmosphere to do business

Strengthen the tourism sector through facilities upgrades (e.g., accommodations, attractions), infrastructure (e.g. waterfront, sidewalks), workforce training (e.g. customer service), improved regional transportation, and other actions that balance visitor demand/expectations with public-private capacity.

Suggested Goals and Priorities for the East Side of the Harbor

Planning Board Chair, Vice-Chair	Paul Coulombe	LCRPC Staff	Key
Protect and encourage existing maritime/water dependent uses; "do no harm"	Enable Investment and Redevelopment in the East Side – Promote a Broad Mix of Uses, Development and Activities	Expand opportunities for year round employment and expand the "shoulder" season to increase seasonal employment	<i>Protect existing maritime/water depended uses</i>
Allow existing businesses to renovate, relocate, rebuild, and reinvest so that their businesses might flourish.	Support the Working Waterfront and Maritime Businesses	Increase stock of family housing by creating new housing options for residents who are aging out of existing residences yet wish to stay in the community; consider using portion of proposed municipal investment to support affordable housing	<i>Allow existing N/C businesses to grow, rebuild</i>
Create public access to the harbor.	Activate the Waterfront and Connect the Public to the Harbor	Encourage growth and modernization of tourist facilities to maintain and increase competitiveness with other tourist regions	<i>Improve public physical access to the waterfront</i>
Improve pedestrian access and safety along Atlantic Avenue.	Promote Improvements to the Existing Non-Conformities	Address the N/C status of existing businesses	<i>Improve visual access to the harbor</i>
Reduce impervious surfaces and improve stormwater management.	Balance Public and Private Interests	Expand physical access to harbor including a waterfront walk along the leading edge of wharves and piers phased as these structures are redeveloped	<i>Improve public accessibility/safety around harbor</i>
Require new construction to be resistant to sea level rise and storm surge		Give priority to the protection of existing maritime and fishing uses as adjacent properties are redeveloped for commercial or residential uses	<i>Address environmental concerns and SLR</i>
Manage building heights to enhance and/or protect views		Improve views to the harbor from public streets	<i>Set back new construction from high water</i>
Setback new construction from high water.		Incorporate climate resilience into redevelopment planning	<i>Promote new jobs</i>
Reduce setbacks from side yards and streets to encourage flexibility in design		Provide for pedestrian access along the west side of Atlantic Avenue with suitable crosswalks	<i>Increase housing opportunities for young families, summer employees and seniors wishing to transition to new housing choices</i>
Review and amend permitted uses in the district, including residential uses		Conform to MDEP shoreland zoning standards	
Seek to link public access on adjacent properties			