



Shore and Harbor Planning Grants

City of South Portland

Portland Street Pier – master plan and feasibility (Fiscal Year 2018, project awarded 2019)

Portland Street Pier design (Fiscal Year 2019, project awarded 2018)

“The funding from the Shore and Harbor Planning Grant was invaluable for the planning process. It helped us understand the opportunities and constraints of our municipal pier, and this information will contribute to our long-term planning and eventual re-development of the pier.”

– Josh Reny, South Portland Assistant City Manager

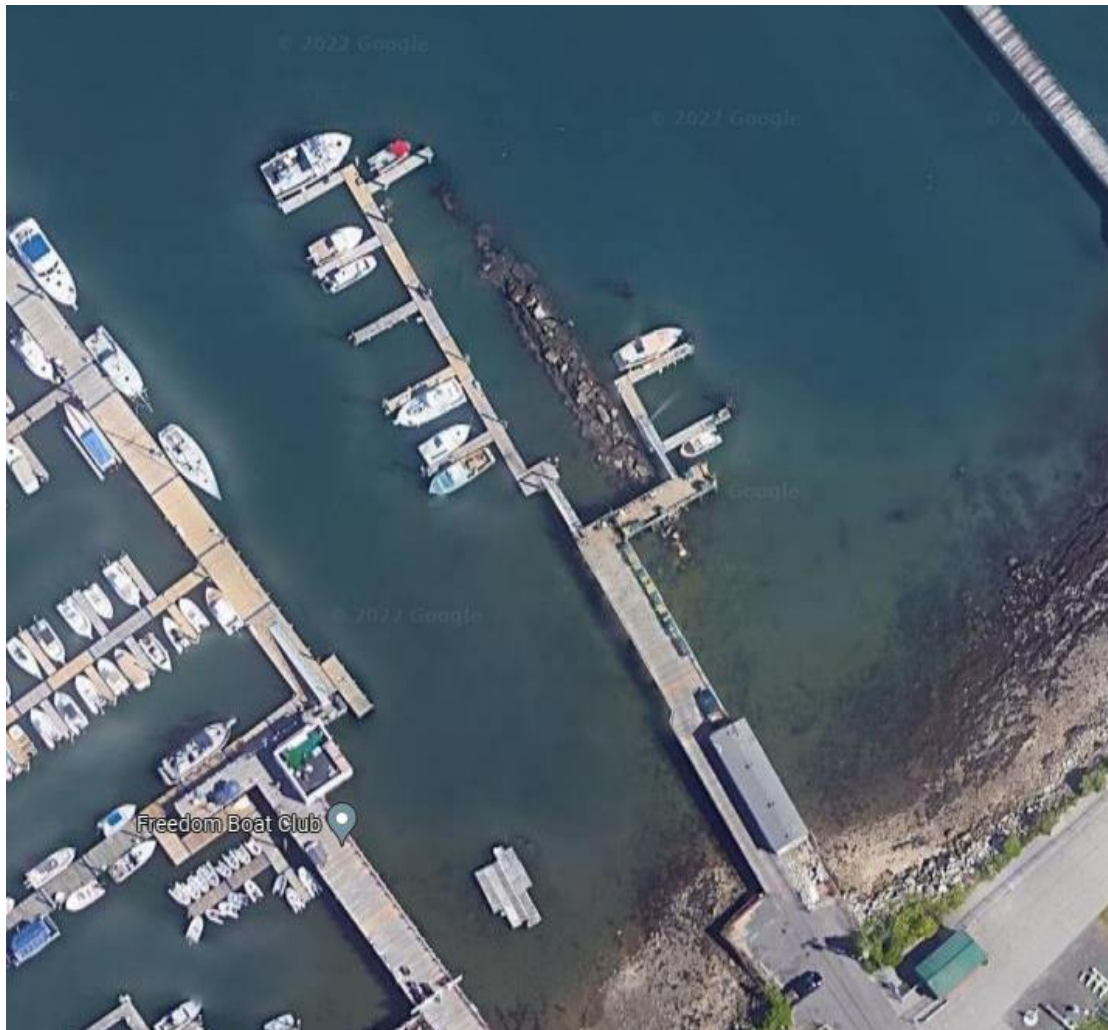


Photo: Google Maps

Project Description

The Portland Street Pier is a seasonal pier providing commercial fishing and aquaculture access to Casco Bay from South Portland. The City wanted to explore expanding the pier to provide additional opportunities for commercial fishing and the growing aquaculture industry. The project grew into a larger discussion involving many groups and discussions about how the pier could be used. The City created a Master Plan and completed an economic feasibility analysis to guide future decisions about capital improvements, design, and expansion plans. Improving and maintaining the pier will help prevent the property from being redeveloped and increase public water access.

After the completion of the Master Plan for the South Portland Pier, the City reapplied to the Shore and Harbor Planning Grant program in 2019. The second project was intended to fund further engineering design work for the pier upgrade after the City chose one of the design options from the initial project. The City needed more detailed engineering plans to file the necessary permit applications.

The City partnered with GEI Consultants, Inc. for the engineering work in both studies, the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI) for the economic analysis, and City of Portland officials provided additional advice on the project.



Photo: GEI Consultants, Inc.

Project results

The FY2018 study resulted in a Master Plan and four pier upgrade and design options. The design options also included an economic analysis outlining the associated costs. The City chose to continue with the fourth design option. The FY2019 study involved an analysis of the existing pier's load capacity and flood risk. The engineering team also created a preliminary design for the pier upgrade and outlined different repair and replacement options and cost estimates for the City.

The work helped the town understand the options for what the pier could look like and what its needs would be in the future. The cost estimates and revenue projections were helpful for the City's long-term planning and their process of determining what would be feasible for the facility.

Project follow-up

The City decided not to move forward with major pier upgrades or a replacement after the conclusion of the FY2019 study. The pier was still operational and will remain so for many years, so the City decided to wait until the pier is closer to the end of its design life before investing in a new pier that is built to withstand future environmental conditions. The current pier has limited parking, which the City is working to address. After the studies were completed, the City dealt with minor repair needs that were identified through the planning process. The City is still maintaining the pier and are invested in its future.

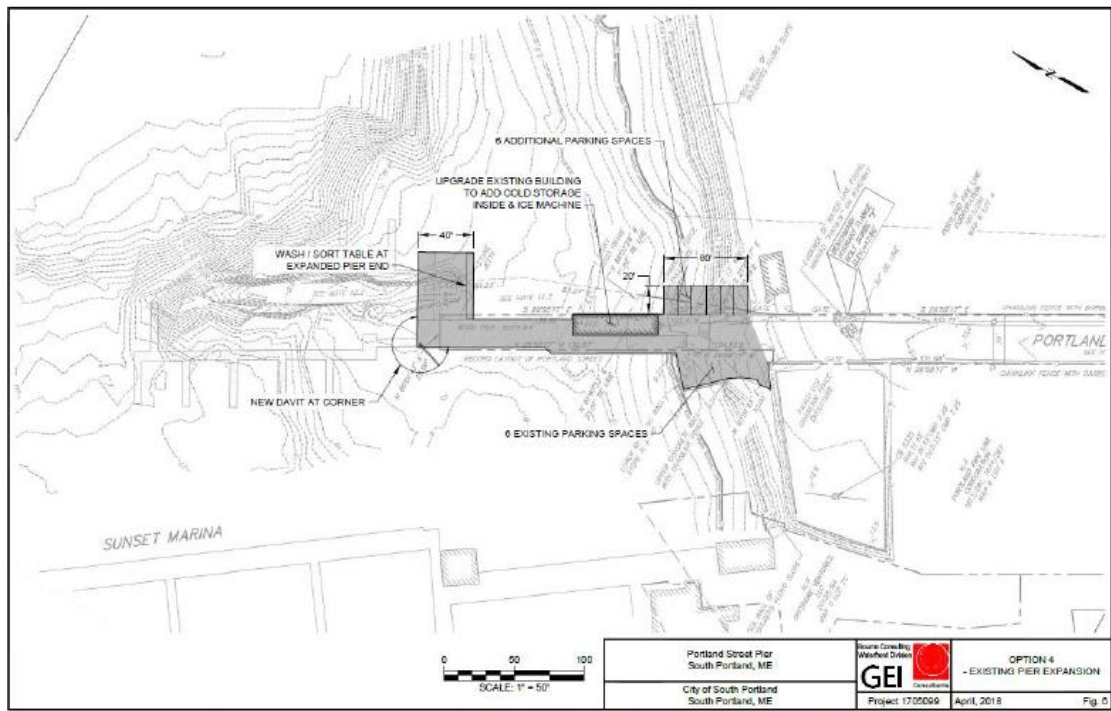


Photo: GEI Consultants, Inc.

Lessons Learned

City staff found the planning process invaluable for understanding what will be needed to keep the pier operational and improve it for the future. Marine properties are used for many things and are complex to manage while balancing the needs of different users. Although the City hasn't made major changes to the facility, the planning process helped them understand the complexity at the site and what might be needed in the future. The projects contributed to long-term planning about land-use in the City and helped town officials consider how to approach similar projects. South Portland's Assistant City Manager, Josh Reny, stressed that it is important to be open-minded about planning projects and to avoid preconceived notions of what should happen. It is important to be creative and to find ways to maximize the benefit for as many users as possible.

Thank you to Josh Reny for his time and assistance preparing this document.

