

DEP comments, 11/15/2021:

1. To what extent will the project result in an increase in the number of large vessels in Rockland Harbor? The goal of this project is to increase available slips for transient boaters and will appeal to a range of vessel sizes, not just large vessels. There is a lot of focus on the large vessels in the received comments, but it is interesting to note the average size of vessel visiting the Safe Harbor marina facility last summer in Rockland was 55.98' -and it should be noted that the proposed Dock C will provide dedicated slips for twenty-six (26) 30' to 40' boats.

It will be difficult to predict if the number of large vessels will increase in Rockland Harbor, but according to the Harbor Master there was a boat over 70' anchored about 5 days a week during the summer and multiple vessels per day in the height of the season. The point being, that the large boats are already coming to Rockland Harbor and by making docks available for them it would be an improvement for the following reasons:

- Reduced congestion in the channels and at the City docks. Anchored vessels require dinghies or tender boats to shuttle people and goods back and forth from the boat to land. If a vessel is at a slip this congestion is alleviated.
- Reduced risk of pollution. When a vessel is at a slip, its wastewater can be pumped directly to the city sewer via Safe Harbor's marina pump out system, waste oil can be disposed of properly on shore, bagged garbage can be disposed of properly on shore, grey water can be pumped into the city sewer and on-board diesel generators can be shut down as the boat can be plugged into shore power.
- Reduced impact on views. When at anchor, larger vessels can be anywhere in the outer harbor, which could impact specific views of the bay or the historic break water and light house. When at a slip the impact to view is limited by the existing pier, but beyond the pier the impact to view is limited to a bit of forested Owls Head shoreline, the cement barge, or the fish pier (from sandy beach), No significant scenic views from either the public landing or Sandy Beach are impacted by this project.

It should also be noted that even the larger boats are transient. Based on Safe Harbor data from last season, there average stay of vessels over 70' was 2.6 days.

2. Approximately how many moorings would need to be moved for the project, and who is responsible for the cost of relocation? According to the harbor master there are 16 moorings that will be displaced at a cost of \$500 per mooring. Safe Harbor has stated that they will cover the cost of the relocation. Additionally, there has been some conversation that the relocation process could be the "first step" of a mooring field reorganization throughout Rockland Harbor that the is badly needed and fully endorsed by the Harbor Master.

3. If fuel were brought in by trucks, how often would that occur, and for how long would the trucks be in place? Would the trucks be idling during that time? There is concern about the noise, traffic, and fumes from fuel trucks. Fuel lines are not currently part of the project under consideration, but it may be brought forward as part of a future project with other landward improvements. The marina received 6 requests for fuel last season. If provided, the fuel delivery would occur at off-peak times, like early in the morning or late at night to minimize disturbance to the public (harbor walk) and the parking area. This procedure would be no different than fuel delivery to the State of Maine ferries or filling tanks at a gas station. Fumes during these similar activities are not a problem. It should be noted the more environmentally risky, on-site tanks that were originally part of the larger project have been eliminated.
4. What effect would the project have on the number and frequency of tour buses parking near the project site? Accommodations for busses, is not currently part of this application. However, if it should be necessary, it would be incorporated into landward improvements submitted with subsequent permitting.
5. Will the Harbor Walk remain open to the public? Is there any mechanism (agreement with the Town, for example) that will ensure public access into the future? The Harbor Walk is in no way part of this project, but Safe Harbor has said publicly that they are committed to continued public access to the Harbor Walk and will work toward memorializing an agreement with the City for its continued use. Also, it should be noted that part of the project is landward extension to the pier specifically to increase public access to the waterfront by providing a public viewing area and the gated portion of the pier will be moved to the seaward side of the restaurant, resulting in 120' of additional public access to the waterfront along the pier. As such, public access to the waterfront via the Harbor Walk will be significantly improved as a result of the project.
6. Please describe the lighting that will be used at the marina at night, including from vessels docked there. Does the marina have rules about lighting from vessels at night? Is lighting regulated by local ordinance? Similar to the existing facility, the new floating docks will utilize lighting built into the utility pedestals (i.e. – the cabinets that house water hose connections, electrical receptacles, etc.). These pedestals are specially designed for use at marinas, are intended primarily to light the dock walking surface for safety. Additional low voltage curtesy/safety lighting directed at the floats and water surfaces may also be incorporated.
7. Several commenters are concerned that the marina expansion would interfere with use of the harbor by kayaks, row boats, and paddleboards. Please describe how the project will be compatible with these uses. As mentioned above, berthing at the marina reduces the amount of traffic in the harbor because the amount of tender and dinghy traffic that is generated by anchored vessels will be reduced. Any vessel traffic to and from the marina will be in the designated channels, as is the current case. It is inherently incumbent upon small craft, like kayaks and paddle boards to remain diligent when navigating within the marked harbor channels, and this will continue to be the case.

8. Does the marina have any rules for length of stay at the pier for vessels over a certain size, or can they stay as long as they want to pay? The majority of the dockage at the marina will be dedicated to transient berthing in accordance with the federal grant funding associated with the project. Specifically, the USFWS (the federal agency responsible for administration of the Boating Infrastructure Grant [BIG] program) requires that dockage dedicated to transient dockage and funded by the BIG program may stay no longer than fifteen (15) consecutive days. As previously mentioned, last year the average stay was 2.6 days for vessels over 70'

9. Alternatives:

- a. Could the project purpose be achieved (or could the proposed dock system be reduced) by establishing an alternative system of moorings in the outer harbor?

This could happen now by simply anchoring of vessels in the outer harbor. The purpose of this project is to provide slips for transient boaters, so more people can access and enjoy what Rockland has to offer. As such, anchoring or moorings for transient boaters (large or small) is an unacceptable option because it does not fulfill the purpose and need of the project. It should also be noted that providing dedicated dockage for vessels at the marina will allow for proper trash, wastewater, and other disposal in a controlled environment and further allow vessels to plug into shore power eliminating the need for the constant running of diesel generators to meet their power needs.

“During the time I had a boat in the harbor, there was a steady effort to move moorings closer to each other. It became impossible to sail onto or off your mooring without the risk of ramming a neighboring vessel. The harbor is increasingly congested. The large yacht mooring system planned for the marina expansion could easily be accommodated with a system of moorings in the outer harbor. All these big yachts have adequate tenders allowing them otherwise free access to the rest of the harbor. In any case increased use of the harbor as intended will create navigation problems not previously encountered.”
-(Levine comments, 10-27-21)

“...instead of crowding Rockland's inner harbor with oversized view-blocking graywater-discharging megayachts, all visiting mega yachts have the alternative of safely mooring in the outer harbor, with easy access to Rockland by watertaxis, launches and other private vessels.”
-(Huber comments, 11-04-21)

Larger vessels have on-board grey water systems that capture and recycle the water. Vessels at a slip in the marina will be able to discharge wastewater into the public sewer system which is not an option for a vessel on a mooring. Additionally, larger vessels are strictly regulated both by their flag states (typically foreign flagged cruising Maine on a cruising permit), the IMO, SOLAS and international admiralty law. What most people don't understand commenting

on the “fear” of larger traffic is that they are all staffed by competent, licensed, and professional crews. The first officers’ job on any larger yacht is primarily administrative accounting for every single bag of trash that leaves the boat, every gallon of waste oil disposed of and any operations of the bilge pumping systems, most of which have an inline centrifuge eliminating even the possibility of an oily water discharge. These vessels also carry full time engineers that keep all equipment running in perfect order, tanks and bilges all coated in shiny white paint (surfaces you can literally eat from) and engine rooms of shiny stainless steel equipment.

- b. Dragon Cement pier – Please discuss the viability of the Dragon pier for use in docking large vessels, rather than docking them at the SHM pier.

Safe Harbor does not own the Dragon Cement property nor have any plans for its re-use been made public or offered for sale. This alone limits its viability. The Safe Harbor property, on the other hand, is already an established marina with long standing plans for expansion (some of which were previously approved in 2008) and it is the beneficiary of a significant BIG grant that will bring much needed capital improvement to the City of Rockland.

“Dragon Cement stops shipping their products by sea next year and decommissions their deeper-water pier in Rockland’s South End. Rockland and Safe Harbor work with Dragon Cement to convert the barge pier to the better location for docking cruise ships and large yachts. Smaller boats can use the existing Safe Harbor facility in the inner harbor without crowding the inner harbor and obstructing the public’s visual access to the water. The need to dredge would be reduced or eliminated, and the swimmers at the public beach don’t have to worry about the proximity of the large ships and won’t hear the noise of the tour buses that service the cruise ships.” –(Jim Rigassio comments, 10-30-21)

- c. North End Shipyard/Steel Pro/Schooner Wharf parcel (Map 14, Lot B2) – This parcel is currently for sale. Please discuss the viability of acquiring and using this area to achieve the project purpose. (see Swan comments, 10-27-21)
<https://www.newenglandcommercialproperty.com/listing/30727005/725-771-779-Main-Street-11-Front-Street-Rockland-ME-04841>

Safe Harbors has looked at this property and the \$13.9 million purchase price was found to be cost-prohibitive because it does not have any of the infrastructure, amenities, or proper setting for transient boaters. It would be more well suited for commercial boating activities or a shipyard. Additionally, since there are no marina facilities at that site, starting from scratch for dredging, piers, and floats would create much more environmental impact and would duplicate some of the infrastructure that already exist at the Safe Harbor site. The use of this alternate site is not economically viable and would result in significantly more potential environmental impacts than the proposed expansion of the existing SH Rockland facility.