

Coastal and Marine Working Group Working Waterfront & Infrastructure meeting #6

Wednesday, February 14, 1:00 pm

Next meeting: Thursday, February 15, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm (full CMWG), Thursday, February 29, 1:00 pm (WWF & Infrastructure subgroup)

Links:

- CMWG: <https://cbi-org.zoom.us/j/83347676913>
- WWF & Infrastructure subgroup: [Click here to join the meeting](#)

Link to the strategy template: [2024 Working Waterfront Deliverable - Coastal and Marine WG - v2 - USE THIS ONE.docx - Google Docs](#)

Attendees (* indicates CMWG member):

- Danielle Frechette*
- Jessica Joyce*
- Gabe McPhail*
- Bill Needleman*
- Nick Battista*
- Kathleen Billings*
- Maggie KellyBoyd
- Monique Coombs
- Oliva Richards
- James Guerra
- Nikki Yanok
- Melissa Britsch
- Jared Wildwistle
- Steph Sun
- Abby Westberry

Agenda:

We will talk about the highlighted areas, comments that people have made, and issues raised at the beginning of the call. There is some good discussion in the comments. Absent objections, this is the universe of ideas we will be working with and likely lumping things together/adding detail to the next section instead of the strategy template.

If time, we also start looking at Annex 1 to the template and the questions there to help us articulate the impact of these strategies in the context of the climate action plan. Hopefully on Thursday we will be able to talk a little bit about how to grapple with these questions, strategies, and level of detail we need to hit.

General discussion

- Timeline overview – see other notes for a summary of the timeline

- This effort is focused on helping the state and state agencies frame and direct their work
- Questions about the process?
 - o None

Diving into the strategy template

- Focusing on active questions
- Nick has tried to evaluate whether proposed strategies are related to adaptation or community resilience
- Filling in the table is the first part of the task – GOPIF is also asking for further details and evaluation info lower down in the template

Strategy D discussion:

- The proposed strategies decrease the risk of climate hazards to communities, sectors, and some priority populations
- Question: increasing resilience is an adaptation AND a mitigation strategy. How do we make that clear? Can we have strategies fit into multiple buckets? WWF issues cross categories.
- Question: are we depending on GOPIF and their narrative to tie things together? How do we lead GOPIF to understanding this?
 - o We need to clarify the major benefits and the secondary benefits (space later in the template). Noting linkages will help turn our strategies into the plan.
 - o Important to have a single, most important reason, to make sure our ideas make it into the plan
- Question: with respect to eligibility for the potential WWF resilience infrastructure tax credit. We need to clarify what eligibility means and be restrictive but not too restrictive, so we don't inhibit business development. Sometimes the criteria tie people's hands too much, which makes diversifying and adapting challenging. What will WWFs look like in 10 years? Businesses need to survive and be creative.
 - o Concern about percentages or restrictive criteria causing unintentional issues
 - o For a policy document, specific numbers probably aren't helpful. We should describe our intent, like "predominantly commercial marine use" or something like that to exclude other uses we don't want to see.
 - "Primarily" and "predominantly" are used with the Current Use Tax
 - Note: Maine communities can be very diverse with respect to how much commercial use takes place at properties. An inventory could help us clarify the language.
 - Clarifying what is and isn't working waterfront will be important. Land use can be a helpful tool for these definitions and criteria for what is and isn't working waterfront.
 - If businesses leave the coast, what replaces them? What are acceptable uses for coastal spaces?
 - o Note from the Google Doc: Housing intersection Re: eligibility – I've heard arguments that (short-term) rentals should be considered WWF... "if rentals are housing for sternmen shouldn't they be considered WWF?"

- o **To-do:** have a broad view of eligibility for now, but make it clear that we are thinking about working waterfronts. Mention some of these important considerations that we just discussed, since we can't define everything and design plans right now.
 - Note that local implementation is part of this since zoning and land use take place at the local level.
- Question (about the "prioritize clean energy projects on the WWF" idea): we want to see this built into other working group strategies as a mitigation tool. Or are we pushing grid resilience as an adaptation strategy for WWFs?
 - o Both
- Question (about voluntary migration of other uses away from the immediate coast idea): this could be an option to expand WWFs.
 - o Communities need industrial spaces away from working waterfronts (like trap storage) to keep that stuff safe
 - o Communities need land use and zoning to allow WWF activities to migrate inward when needed
 - Not being able to migrate is a risk. Inadequate zoning to allow for industrial use pushes industrial uses into vulnerable areas.
 - This is a planning strategy
- We need to tighten our ideas to make them actionable
 - o Better not to leave too much to interpretation
 - o Some of the details we are discussing will go into the later sections of the strategy template
 - o Add a bullet point for tools for each strategy (or a new column?)
 - o The narrative and implementation sections create space for details to help GOPIF write the narrative

Discussion of the new recommendation for technical assistance and financial support for private WWFs (second bin in the strategy template)

- This is separate since it is about workforce and economic opportunity instead of climate mitigation
- This thread is about businesses, but we need to be clear that some of our ideas are for working waterfront infrastructure and some are for working waterfront businesses
- Question: would public fish piers be excluded from this recommendation?
 - o This is about the gap for supporting private businesses
 - o Public fish piers get included in risk reduction and zoning bins, but it is a good question.
 - **To-do:** Think more about how private businesses rely on public infrastructure that may need financial support. Is excluding fish piers intentional and desired?
 - We don't want to exclude private businesses relying on public infrastructure
 - o **To-do:** change the language to "private businesses and working waterfronts."
- Stonington has a pier ordinance to guide how their fish pier is used. They have to work with their users and balance needs without excluding anyone. The fish piers are unique
- Question (about what the second bin is about – climate resilience, promoting access?): This second bin is not just about climate resilience, but includes things like workforce, access, and other challenges.
- The narrative section of the template will be important

Discussion of the second new recommendation – for preserving and expanding waterfront access

- Rewrite to highlight that access is the primary issue we want to address
- We have a specific bin for fisheries and aquaculture with respect to access. Helping those industries by supporting WWFs
- We need to stress that WWF access is really important. It isn't directly a climate change issue but is affected by processes like gentrification and storms. WWF access is needed to address other climate goals like food and blue carbon
- This bin has some workforce strategies and some adaptation/resilience strategies – two reasons why we are stressing this issue
 - o The narrative will help clarify
- **Issue:** it is expensive to hold on to WWF access. How do we hold on to them? It is hard for people and small businesses to keep what they already have
- **Question and to-do:** Is there a WWF register like how we have Historic Building designations? Look into this. Could a historic preservation approach help protect WWFs?
 - o Having an inventory could help ID critical areas for WWF protection and essential pieces of infrastructure. Preservation starts by knowing what you have.
 - o Comprehensive planning might help us get close to this. Local communities could do their own characterizations and prioritizations.
 - o Places, like waterfronts or boat yards, can be on the Historic Places Register. The template that Jessica and Monique created discusses this – details for the later part of the template!
 - o Issue with historic preservation is that it can be very rigid. We need to know what we have and where, so we can protect it, but WWFs need flexibility
 - o Municipalities can have a “Critical waterfront area” designation: [Title 38, §436-A: Definitions \(maine.gov\)](#)
- **Question:** do we need state-wide or local WWF inventories?
 - o There is a need for both. The state could use an inventory and communities could also use inventories. **To-do:** make this clear
 - o It can be valuable for municipalities to lead the inventory process. A statewide inventory would be a big lift, and expensive.
 - o Do other states have WWF inventories or strategies? Massachusetts has a port inventory, which could be a model.
- **Note:** we need to cross-reference the info coming out of the Community Resilience working group with this bin
- We need to be clear to help GOPIF include the information we want to see in the climate plan
- **Question:** we have a strategy for helping the state and others buy and protect WWFs. Do we need to provide an estimated funding need? Do we have info to back up our ask?
 - o We don't know the number. Preference for a regularly funded program with occasional increases to account for future need (storm escalator since more properties might change hands at that moment).
 - o Agreement that we probably shouldn't guess a number. If we have more big storms in the future, more people might want to sell their WWFs and get out. People are already considering selling because they can't keep up.
 - An inventory could help understand the need.
 - o Regular funding and increases after storms are important. Also encouraging towns to save money on their own to address rapid needs (WWF contingency fund).
 - o [Ports and Commercial Harbors | Ports and Commercial Harbors | RIGIS](#) - work in RI

- o Need for a state WWF GIS layer – big effort, but could help everyone know what exists and where
- Question (about the “support ongoing business operations of WWF infrastructure” and “help municipalities use land use strategies to support WWFs” ideas): these are adaptation and resilience strategies to help build community capacity.
 - o No one spoke up with thoughts.

Next steps:

- Start putting dollar amount guesses to some of these strategies
 - o One-time funding, annually, over xx years? Are people needed?
 - o Where does the funding go?
- How to link this to the NOAA CRRC grant?
- Question: Are we going to get a gut check from GOPIF and/or CMWG co-chairs about the number of strategies and actions we have and whether we have too many or if they are okay?
- Question: much of the work is focused on municipalities, but can we also provide recommendations to counties and regional councils?