

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### *Public Landing*

**1. Why are we changing the Public Landing? It serves our parking needs and we continue to be voted Best Harbor.**

It is important to first point out that this report is design recommendations not construction plans. If we were to pursue any of these recommendations, further work would need to be conducted. This is providing us with information to decide what, if any, changes we want to pursue. The idea of revisiting the best uses of the Public Landing is not new. It came up as a significant topic during the creation of the Downtown Master Plan in 2012. A group had been formed several years ago to look into possible changes. In fact, some of the notable individuals in Camden's history (i.e. Mary Louise Bok and the Olmstead Brothers) envisioned the Public Landing having more plantings and green elements.

Camden has been named Best Harbor for a number of years but the harbor is separate from the Public Landing. In its current form, the Public Landing is a large, asphalt parking lot. Over the years, other public parking has been added such as at the Public Safety Complex and now behind the Knox Mill. The idea of changing the Public Landing is based on listening to the community and imagining what that space could look like. By making it more appealing to spend time in and relax, it would encourage more people to come to Camden year round and spend more time in the downtown. It also would be an amenity for residents to be proud of and enjoy. This then assists all of us, from businesses, to property owners, to residents.

**2. How is this being paid for? Are my taxes going to increase?**

This project is strictly to create schematic designs, cost estimates, and economic impact for a redesigned Public Landing so we can have good information to decide what our options are. The current project does not involve construction. A \$15,000 grant was obtained from the Maine Coastal Program and matched with \$5,000 from the Economic Development Reserve fund. Therefore, your property tax has not changed to support this effort. If any of the recommended design changes are pursued at a later date, we will look for other sources of funds to support the changes. The report contains sources to consider in order to fund changes.

**3. Who is deciding what the design should be?**

Four public, community-wide meetings have been held to hear and collect suggestions concerning changes in design. Also, one on one interviews were held with anyone who expressed an interest. Some suggestions have been to make no changes, some have been to remove all parking and replace with green

space, and some have been a balance of the two. In addition, a work group was formed at the beginning of the project with representation from town committees, businesses, property owners, and town staff. This work group also provided input to assist in guiding Town staff and the consultants. We have taken all of this input and come up with the report that has been delivered. The Select Board will decide at their November 12<sup>th</sup> meeting whether to accept the report and what the next steps will be.

**4. I've heard there will be a bridge. Is that true?**

The design report does include information about a bridge, if we decide to have one built. Some like the idea, some do not. This will now give us insight as to whether it's feasible, cost, and what considerations we would need to keep in mind if we do pursue it.

**5. I've heard there will be railings along the boardwalk/pier. Is that true?**

Similar to the question about the bridge, the report does contain information about railings including cost. The recommendation is that we install railings in certain areas of the boardwalk. With the report, we now have the information to make a more informed decision. Community input indicated, in general, cable railings would be preferred as they would minimize views being blocked while still providing safety for residents and visitors.

**6. Somebody told me there is a dog park being added?**

A dog park is not recommended on the Public Landing but you will see a smaller, dog rest area has been included as a recommendation. The size will not be conducive for dogs to run around but will be an area so they can "do their business". Through the public process, we heard a number of suggestions along these lines on behalf of residents, visitors, and those arriving from the water side. Proper signs, dog mitts, and trash receptacles will be provided and screening will be in place so nearby businesses and their customers will not be impacted.

**7. Where will everybody park if all those spaces go away?**

The Public Landing currently has a total of 99 spaces which includes handicap accessible and motorcycle. As you read through the report, you will notice there are 3 different schematic designs. The consultants crafted the designs so they are scalable. The least change removes 09 spaces and the greatest change removes 31 spaces. We want to point out that the most change actually triples the amount of green space however, compared to one-third reduction in parking. Therefore, it is important to see the other enhancements made as spaces are recommended for removal.

The Town has been proactive since the creation of the Downtown Master Plan with looking for alternatives to immediate downtown parking. In 2012, we gained 106 spaces for all day, free parking behind the Knox Mill complex. Those who

work in the downtown are strongly encouraged to use this space rather than parking along the downtown streets or on the Public Landing. We will continue to pursue shared parking arrangements with other property owners in an effort to reduce some of the congestion, particularly during the busier months, so that pedestrians will be able to comfortably enjoy all of the many unique shops, restaurants, professional services, lodging, and natural beauty of Camden Harbor that our downtown offers.

**8. Will there be anything done about burying the power lines down there?**

Yes, you will notice the report contains this recommendation as well as what the associated costs would be.

**9. What's happening to the Harbormaster building, Chamber of Commerce building, and hot dog stand?**

The Harbormaster building will be shifted slightly to the left, closer to the commercial fishermen area. Our Harbormaster has confirmed this still provides the views he needs to be effective in his job. The hot dog stand, known as Harbor Dogs, will stay where it is. Additional seating is recommended throughout the Public Landing in order to support not only this business but others who sell food in close proximity of the harbor. The Chamber of Commerce building will stay but is recommended to become a visitor center. The Chamber currently houses its professional staff in 2 locations (here and in Rockland) but is looking into consolidating their professional offices into one location. This seemed like a good time to make better use of the building by keeping its function as a visitor center but also relocating the public restrooms from where they currently are into this building.

**10. Will we still be able to walk down Commercial St, between Cappy's and New England Real Estate?**

Yes. In fact, the recommendations provide a clearly designated area for pedestrians to walk so they are not as likely to wander down the street itself and impede vehicles coming and going, as well as risk their personal safety. In addition, the report recommends improving the alley between Cappy's and Lily, Lupine, and Fern. We heard many requests from our community outreach efforts to make this area more inviting and appealing.

**11. How is this economic development?**

Economic Development is a term encompassing many functions. It can include business development, such as helping new business but also assisting with the retention of existing business. It can also include community development efforts such as assisting with programs and events in the community, building new sidewalks and improving infrastructure, and also working on projects such as the Public Landing and Riverwalk design projects. In its current form, the Public Landing itself is primarily a large parking lot that is adjacent to the natural beauty

of Camden Harbor. Having a redesigned Public Landing will provide another amenity to encourage visitors to stay longer, thus providing more activity to shops, restaurants, and lodging establishments. Providing alternatives for parking helps to mitigate any loss in spaces. Improving the aesthetics of the Public Landing also adds to the overall attractiveness of the community and becomes a draw for new business and entrepreneurs to consider locating here.

**12. When do I get to vote on this?**

There is not a vote scheduled for this report because it is only a series of recommendations of what could be done, what it might cost, and what the benefits would be. Many of the recommendations are stand alone recommendations. They are not contingent on other elements being completed. For example, whether or not we construct a bridge will not impact combining the restrooms with the Chamber's visitor center. A good analogy is a cookbook in that a person does not make every recipe contained in the book. The report will be presented to the Camden Select Board at their regularly scheduled meeting of Tuesday November 12<sup>th</sup> at 6:30PM. This is a public meeting and anyone is welcome to attend. Similar to the Downtown Master Plan process in 2012, the Select Board will decide whether or not to accept the report and what the next steps in the process will be.

**13. Where will the delivery trucks go?**

The consultants were careful to design the vehicular patterns on the Public Landing to support delivery trucks up to a certain size, such as a xx foot box truck. Larger trucks may need to park on side streets, as many currently do now, and walk their deliveries to the respective businesses. While it may have been convenient for large trucks to park on the Public Landing and make nearby deliveries, it is not uncommon in other towns and cities for drivers to walk a certain distance for their deliveries.

**14. What happens to the Public Landing if sea levels rise 2 feet? 3 feet?**

We are in the process of working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to understand possible impacts of flood levels. This is a preliminary issue and may be a non-issue. For example, Portland originally had many areas of their downtown in a potential flood zone but through continued discussions was able to have the zones more accurately drawn. There is always a potential for Mother Nature to cause damage, even unrelated to flood zones. The report does take this into consideration but the type of changes envisioned would not be specific to concerns related to flood zone. For example, moving the Harbormaster building will not be an issue with flood zones because it could be impacted where it is now. Other design change recommendations could also be impacted by other natural damages such as ice storms, heavy rains, etc.