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Peaks Island, Portland, Me., Neighborhood-Based Plan (2002).

Peaks Island Neighborhood Association

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This Peaks Island Neighborhood-Based Plan represents literally thousands of volunteer hours and contributions from a wide range of citizens. More than 500 islanders responded enthusiastically to a comprehensive six-page survey developed by the Peaks Island Neighborhood Association. Thirteen task teams meticulously investigated specific aspects of the island. More than 150 year-round and seasonal residents engaged in spirited dialogues at a community planning workshop on August 4, 2002. Finally, materials were presented on-line and in public forums to solicit full participation by all Islanders.

We face the pressures of development and sprawl that threaten many Maine communities. But, the small size of our island exaggerates the impact of these forces. For instance, the demands of tourists and seasonal populations often conflict with an aging year-round population while traffic and crime have begun to change the Island’s traditional culture and environs. Despite the diverse and sometimes conflicting interests of two different groups of residents, year-round and summer people, there is a strong consensus to work together to preserve those qualities cherished by all: a quiet, affordable, community-oriented neighborhood with a historic character and abundant open space. This year-long neighborhood planning process has been a chance for us to discuss our vision for the future of our community and work together to produce a document that outlines how to reach that goal. Throughout the process, we have scrupulously adhered to State of Maine and City of Portland guidelines to present these considerations in the proper format. We appreciate the opportunity to be heard and to suggest a guide for the journey ahead.

This Plan suggests that many Islanders feel that these pressures threaten our community. Nonetheless, they earnestly believe they can proceed with a Plan for the future that combines the needs of the City and State with the needs of the Islanders.

Marine and natural resources define the island. Protecting our fragile natural resources by combating invasive species, stringent wetland regulations, proper hazardous waste disposal and protection of community forests requires continued vigilance so that the beauty of the Island that is cherished by so many is preserved. Furthermore, this Plan calls for a wide range of measures to maintain and expand public access to the shore lands, public docks, and fishing resources. The Plan also suggests a wide range of tests and protective measures to sustain important potable water resources.

The Plan also urges a study of equitable alternatives to the real estate based tax system, one that has become especially onerous to coastal residents.
Peaks Island’s recreation and land use plan compliments the mix of public, membership-based and business-provided programs. However, the Plan strongly urges immediate attention to existing problems, especially the dearth of activities for Island youth.

Traffic and transportation issues are addressed in detail. The Island’s popularity, evidenced by more visits and visitors, has placed a strain on existing parking and increased the amount of traffic. Education programs and more alternative transportation options will help reduce the number of cars on the island. The Casco Bay Lines ferry service, the primary ‘highway’ to Peaks Island, receives considerable attention in the Plan, which suggests a wide range of service improvements.

The Island’s historic and architectural resources are under attack by development. Each time a 125-year-old summer or seasonal cottage is converted to a modern, year-round house, the Island loses an important piece of its past and its character. Several groups support public and private institutions that preserve the Island’s heritage. These efforts must continue. The Plan notes the need to balance the needs of year-round residents with tourists and other visitors by adding public restrooms. It also recommends expansion of the library to help retain young families and to support the Island’s population diversity.

Population demographics for the Plan illustrate the uniqueness of the full-time and part-time residents. Year-round residents are now older and the number of people per household has decreased. The Island’s school population has decreased considerably, prompting concerns about its future viability. All agree the high cost of housing is the root of this phenomenon. Portland’s severe housing shortage is exacerbated on Peaks Island. Conversions of summer cottages to full-time, year-round homes, is one answer. However, those homes affect the environment and are costly, both in terms of construction and the subsequent revaluations and tax burdens on residents and neighbors. Taxes, zoning and land use are key issues addressed in the Plan’s economy section. Commercial enterprise and business are encouraged, but in the context of sustaining the Island’s character and supporting its year-round residents.

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Peaks Island
Neighborhood-Based Plan

TASK TEAM LEADERS/ADVISORS

I. Vision for 2020
   Cynthia Cole/Robin Walden/Others
   Curtis Rindlaub/Nate Gray/Jamie Carlson

II. Marine Resources
    Lynne Richard/Joeye Leslie/Charles Enders/
    Nate Gray/Johan Erikson/Val Hart/
    Art Astarita

III. Natural Resources

IV. Water Resources
    Don Stein/Carol Baker/Nancy Hall
    Dick Springer/Nate Gray/Brenda Buchanan

V. Recreation and Open Space
    Barbara Strout/Nate Gray/MJ Burnette/
    Charles Enders/Gene Taylor

VI. Land Use

VII. Transportation and
     Casco Bay Lines
     Kim MacIsaac/Doug MacVane/John Erdman

VIII. Historic/Architectural Resources
      Peter Deane/Nate Gray/Bill Hall/Chris Hoppin
      Nancy Hall/Nate Gray

IX. Public Facilities
     Marjorie Phyfe/Keith Hults/Dick Reed

X. Population
     Nate Gray/Louis Mandeville

XI. Housing

XII. The Economy

NEIGHBOR Newsletters
Cynthia Cole/Elinor Clark
Bill Hall/Jadine O’Brien

Relations with the City of Portland
Chris Hoppin/John Erdman/Nate Gray/
Bill Hall/Cynthia Cole

Coordinators

###
I. Peaks Island Vision 2020

"To a visitor standing on the deserted shore, the scene is the quintessential Maine Coast dream," which at the same time is "Peaks' finest asset and the root of its most pressing dilemma."

Down East Magazine 1984

Without a doubt, Peaks Island’s “most pressing dilemma” in 1984 is still unresolved today. Yet now, developmental pressures and the ensuing effect on the community are accompanied by a number of other issues: an increase in seasonal and year-round population; traffic; lack of parking; crime; youth boredom; and changes to the Island’s culture, to name a few. While each of these certainly is troubling, together they provide the necessary focus for a comprehensive planning effort. If we are to preserve the aspects of the community that we cherish so much, we must work together to develop a vision for Peaks that springs from the community.

The Peaks Island Neighborhood Association (PINA) began a neighborhood planning process in January 2002 in an effort to address the concerns of Island residents. Originally, the City of Portland approached PINA about neighborhood planning due to a mandate from the State of Maine to update the City’s own comprehensive plan. The City is relying on Peaks Island to develop a vision and plan for itself through a neighborhood-based planning effort. The intent of a neighborhood planning process is to allow for broader public participation, create plans that are conscious of unique neighborhood character, help form bonds among community members, groups, and businesses, provide a voice for the neighborhood with City staff and the City Council, and shape a set of neighborhood visions. Throughout 2002, volunteers have diligently worked towards developing that vision for Peaks Island by fostering community discussion around a set of fourteen task teams. Their reports and plans appear in the following pages.

Each chapter includes objectives that we hope to achieve during the life of this neighborhood plan. These objectives frame a vision of Peaks Island during the coming years. The quote above summarizes one problem we face as the result of our most obvious strength, a beautiful setting. However, in the years ahead, our community will continue to grow, and our greatest strength, a close, tight-knit community, will be even more essential. To support a healthy community, we must work together and with the City of Portland to manage our growth effectively so that we can protect and maintain:

- A livable community that is affordable for working people, young families, and seniors.
- A healthy balance of year-round, seasonal, and tourist residents supported by recreational programs and facilities for all age groups.
- Affordable housing and rental prices that encourage young families to live on the Island, supported by what they need.
- Rural and abundant open spaces that provide quiet for our residents, while respecting traditional trails and water access.
- The historical character of the Island.
- A community encouraging small businesses focused on services for year-round residents.
- A community that encourages alternative modes of transportation by walking, bicycling, carpooling, and taxi use.
- The health of our environment in order to preserve our finite resources for future generations.
II. Marine Resources

Introduction:
Peaks Island's very islandness is defined by the marine resources that surround it. They include the immediate coastal waters and the shoreline that rings the Island. The marine resources are both physical and aesthetic; they provide the physical boundary between land and sea and the psychological boundary between the Island and the rest of the world. They are used and enjoyed for recreation, commercial business, and for Island services.

This chapter catalogues the Island's marine resources and how they are used today, as well as how they have been used in the past and hopes to crystallize the opinions of today's Islanders on how these resources should be used and protected in the future.

Data Sources:
2002 Portland Tax Maps
Observations
Portland Harbor Master

Findings & Analysis:
A) Coastal Features and Public Access
Peaks Island is blessed. Over half of the Island's coast is accessible to the public and/or preserved from development, and some of the privately owned waterfront has a long history of permissive public use. This makes it the rare exception along the New England seaboard, and even among Maine islands, where private coastal ownership has dramatically restricted public access to the shore.

Not only is the public allowed to enjoy a large portion of the shore, it is allowed to enjoy a large variety of shore types, from the bold rocks and cobble beaches of the Backshore to the soft sand of Sandy Beach to the grassy hummocks of Picnic Point. These points of coastal access are catalogued in appendix 1, based on the 2002 Portland Tax maps.

Peaks Island also has a unique history of both a permissive public use of private property for coastal access, as well as a tradition of private use of public coastal property. For example, generations of families have used the Central Maine Power plant both for access to Centennial Beach, but also to store boats and docks. The public freely uses the mostly private Evergreen Beach and sections of Centennial Beach. Conversely, private boats are stored and docked on city land by the ferry landing, on the Army Wharf, and by Picnic Point.

1) Objective for Coastal Features and Public Access: Every effort should be made to preserve the physical and aesthetic character of Peaks Island's shoreline. Where possible, the rights of the public to enjoy and use the coast should be bolstered, either by the City or by conservation organizations such as the Peaks Island Land Preserve (PILP) or the Oceanside Conservation Trust.
Recommendation (Short term): If and where possible the permissive public use of private waterfront should be documented and the right of the public to use these areas should be legally secured.

Recommendation (Long term): The city, conservation organizations, and the Islanders themselves should also be on the alert for opportunities to add more public access to Peaks' shore, and a legal and financial mechanisms for securing them should be developed.

B) Offshore Features and Public Access

Peaks Island’s offshore marine resources include the waters that surround the Island and beyond. They are used both for recreational boating and for commercial fishing, as well as for essential Island services and transportation. Public access to these resources exists on the Island in the form of boat launching, mooring, and docking facilities, as detailed in the appendices. Similar facilities currently exist in the Eastern Promenade Park of the City of Portland. However, these Portland facilities are threatened with closure. The East End Master Plan is considering this option.

Peaks Island’s mooring fields seem ample for the current number of commercial and pleasure boats, with room to expand in the future. There is a shortage, however, of dinghy access to these moorings. To address this problem, the southeast corner of the town float was designated in 2003 for dinghy tie-offs. The Army Wharf, though ostensibly public, is and has been reserved by private individuals by the placement of private floats along its length.

There is also a shortage of protected dockage, particularly in the winter months, due to Peaks Island’s exposure to extreme weather. Such weather causes a significant amount of wear and tear on docks and pilings. Winter dockage is vital to commercial fishermen and Island residents who need to commute to Portland for jobs that require them to travel during hours when ferry service is not available (for example: firemen, nurses, doctors, etc.) and should be prioritized.

The paved public ramp at Centennial Street is a crucial Island link to the mainland for freight and equipment, as well as a great public asset for private boat launching and hauling. The ramp is limited by tide, but a recent extension to the ramp last year has extended its length and allowed it to be used at lower tides. The power and guy wire that crosses Centennial just above the ramp poses a great danger to masts of sailboats. It also ties up the ramp on busy weekends by forcing sailboat owners to step or unstep their masts on the ramp side of the wire, rather than farther up the street.

2) Objective for Offshore Features and Public Access: Maximize the amount of dinghy dockage at the public Army Wharf and at the town float.

Recommendation: Develop an equitable and enforceable solution to the problem of private floats claiming public space at the Army Wharf. Enforce the new dinghy regulations at the town dock.
3) Objective for Offshore Features and Public Access: Assure that commercial fishermen and island residents who need to travel during hours when the ferry does not run have protected winter dockage for their boats.

Recommendation: These concerns should carry great weight in resolving the use of the Army Wharf, above.

4) Objective for Offshore Features and Public Access: Maximize the use and safety of the Centennial Street boat ramp.

Recommendation: Work with Central Maine Power to remove the guy wire that crosses the street at the head of the ramp. Assure a maintenance program for the ramp.

Recommendation: Keep the Centennial Street boat ramp clear of ice.

5) Objective for Offshore Features and Public Access in Portland: Assure that Peaks Islanders have access to an acceptable commercial boat ramp that is accessible at all tides and times.

Recommendation: Assure that Islanders' concerns about public access in Portland are respected.

C) Commercial Fishing Resources

Peaks Island’s marine resources include the extensive Centennial clam flats (currently closed), mussel beds, seaweed fields, lobster and urchin habitat, as well as a variety of fishing grounds. These resources are used by commercial fishermen as well as recreational anglers and clam diggers.

6) Objective for Commercial Fishing Resources: Maintain the cleanliness and the sustainability of Peaks Island’s commercial fishing resources.

Recommendation: Work with the Department of Marine Resources and Friends of Casco Bay to create a clam-flat management program that can be monitored by islanders. Work with the City of Portland to minimize storm sewer and road run-off in these areas (see “Environmental Concerns,” below). Ideally, harvesting preference would be given to Peaks Island residents, much the way lobster resources within certain zones are controlled by those living and working within those zones.

Recommendation: Continue allowing public docks and wharves to be used for mackerel fishing, a happy pastime for generations. Sport fishing laws, such as stripers regulations, should be enforced.

D) Uses and Users of Peaks Island Marine Resources

There is a diversity of uses for Peaks Island’s marine resources. The recreational uses include walking, viewing, cookouts, swimming, fishing, sport diving, and boating. Commuters, who use their own boats to travel to Portland, either by necessity or by choice, also use the
resources. Commercial fishermen use the resources to moor or to dock their boats and dinghies and for the fish they harvest. The resources are used for transportation by Casco Bay Lines, the water taxis, by city services and public utilities, and by private barge contractors as well as for emergency transportation by the fireboat or police. The resources are used for businesses based on boat tours and instruction, particularly in kayaks. Finally, the resources are used by underwater utilities such as telephone and power cables and the water main from Portland.

All of these diverse uses should be encouraged. However, private or commercial use of public resources should not unduly affect the public use or enjoyment of those resources. Nor, however, should they be prohibited. The storage of private docks and floats or boats or fishing gear on public shorefront, for example, should not impede the use or the beauty of that shore. Likewise, commercial use of public shorefront should not detract from public use. Kayak tour operations, for instance, should not be so large that landing or launching or instruction from public beaches detracts from the public use of that beach.

While Peaks Island’s resources are currently used predominantly by Peaks Island residents, summer visitors, and support services, Islanders will face increasing pressures of use from the mainland population. As moorings and dockage become scarce in Portland Harbor, for example, mooring a boat off Peaks Island will appear more and more attractive to a Portlander. The same is true for Peak Island’s beaches and picnic areas and other marine resources.

7) Objective for Uses and Users of Peaks Island Marine Resources: Encourage diverse and equitable uses of Peaks Island’s marine resources by Islanders and off-Islanders alike, while ensuring that vital uses of the resources by Islanders are preserved.

Recommendation: In anticipation of increasing use of Peak Island’s marine resources, mechanisms should be explored now to equitably control future use. These might include working with the Harbormaster to develop a priority system for moorings for Islanders in waters adjacent to Peaks Island and working with the City to address the commercial use of public resources.

E) Environmental Concerns

Peaks Island’s marine resources are under constant threat from pollution, erosion, aesthetic disturbances, and over-use. Pollution is generated both from the Island and from elsewhere. Island source pollution includes litter, human waste, oil, pesticide, and fertilizer runoff; among other sources. Erosion occurs naturally, but humans can adversely encourage it by removing rocks from the shores or by dumping yard refuse on unstable embankments. The vistas that are a large part of our Island experience can be inadvertently marred by the placement of plaques, benches, trashcans and signage. The over-use of our shores affects all of the concerns above. It can lead to erosion, and often results in charred rocks from fires, and trash left on the beaches.

The increasing affluence of Island residents will probably bring with it an increased use of fertilizers and pesticides in this fragile Island environment. Peaks Island’s long history of dumping brush and yard refuse over shoreside embankments should be discouraged. The brush prevents the growth of weeds and grass and brush on the embankment, the roots of which help
stabilize the soil and prevent erosion. This issue is of particular importance on the western side of the island. In addition, the brush often floats away, posing a navigational hazard or becoming entangled in moorings and outauls. While shellfish come from the sea and their cooked shells do no environmental damage when they are thrown back into the sea, the shells are often not thrown below the tide line or they wash back ashore, resulting in smelly refuse along the shoreline that attract flies, encouraging rats, which dogs often eat at great gastrointestinal peril.

8) Objective for Environmental Concerns: Protect our marine resources from degradation and overexploitation so that future generations can enjoy our precious marine resources.

Recommendation: Develop an educational program or pamphlet to inform residents and summer visitors how to care for their shorelines, for their groundwater, and for the ocean around us. Trash dumping and fertilizer use should be discouraged. The heavy use of soaps and detergents in cottages with cesspools should be kept to a minimum. Oil-absorbent pads should be used in the bilges of all boats. Cookout fires should be made in existing firepits. Placement of signs, benches, and cans should be done judiciously so as to keep their aesthetic impact to a minimum.

Recommendation: Groundwater and runoff should, wherever possible, be protected. The use of the wastewater treatment facility should be maximized. Oil leaks in cars, particularly older uninspected “island cars” should be addressed immediately. If possible, the highly polluting fuel additive MBTE should not be allowed on the Island. See “Water and other Natural Resources” for more information.

Recommendation: Bring a chipper to the transfer station to discourage the dumping of yard brush along the shoreline. Wood chips could be available to the public.

F) Valuations of Waterfront and Waterview Property

No issue is more likely to change the character of Peaks Island more dramatically than the valuation of and taxes on those properties that command some part of Peaks Island’s marine resources, either as direct waterfront, as deeded access, or as a water view. Prices being paid for waterfront property and properties with views of the water have shown a dramatic increase in the last five years. A driving economic force for this increase has been the robust economy coupled with the desirability of second homes. More often than not, the high prices these properties fetch are supported by economies other than those of Peaks Island, even Portland. While the real estate taxes assessed on these highly valued properties help our City and school budgets, the desirability of Island property by those who can afford to pay much more for them than the local economies can generally support results in valuations and corresponding taxes that residents can no longer afford. Ironically, the marine resources that define Peaks Island and that attract and hold us in this beautiful spot may be what eventually drive some residents from their Island.

9) Objective for Waterfront and Waterview Valuations: Minimize the effect of high waterfront and waterview valuations on the taxation of Island residents to preserve Peaks Island’s broad demographics and strong community.
Recommendations: Organize Peaks Islanders and residents of other islands and coastal communities to reconsider study of equitable alternatives to the real estate based-tax system with the objective of devising a solution which can be presented to our legislators in Augusta. Reconsider the State law that forces all Maine towns and cities to tie their tax base to real estate. Consider hybrid taxation systems where real estate valuations are a less important component of town and city taxes.
III. Natural Resources

Introduction:
Peaks Island comprises 720 acres, with a year-round population of over 800 residents. In the face of changing demographics, building and development pressures, and a shift away from environmental protection priorities at the federal level, there is concern that without adequate attention, Peaks Island’s fragile habitats could suffer permanent, irreversible damage. This tiny piece of the earth frequently holds several thousand people during the warm-weather months. Each resident and visitor impacts the Island. Some only leave the after effects of daily lives: trash, waste, fuel emissions, building debris. Others make more lasting contributions: careful, thoughtful, comprehensive stewardship to preserve the Island’s health and habitability.

The environmental task team intended to analyze existing environmental conditions, identify real and perceived threats to Peaks Island’s natural resources, identify issues of concern to Island residents, assess habitat types and threats, and to propose realistic measures to protect the Island.

Most natural resource management issues are caused by the way people use the resources. As a consequence, most solutions will impact peoples’ lifestyles and habits. By understanding the various facets of the threats, Islanders can work toward achievable goals to preserve resources. We believe we have proposed a collaborative, practical set of recommendations for natural resource protection strategies on Peaks Island.

Data Sources:
Base Maps: Topo, parcels-Mitchell Geographics
Peaks Island/ Island Institute- James Essex data
Portland Island Groundwater Study, 1986
Portland Land Use and Zoning Study, 1986
Peaks Island Neighborhood Survey, 2002
Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Land & Water Quality, various publications
Department of Environmental Protection's publication, Protecting Maine’s Natural Resources.
Field Checks; Spring/Summer 2002
City of Portland, Forests Division, Jeffrey Tarling; Forestry Division Manager
Maine Natural Areas Mapping Program
United States Environmental Protection Agency, various publications and websites
Department of Environmental Protection- Homeowner's Guide to Environmental Laws Affecting Shorefront Property

Findings & Analysis:
A) Invasive Species
The most frequent concern about the environment expressed by Peaks Island residents at the Community Planning Workshop was the proliferation of invasive vegetative species throughout the Island. Four species are of particular concern: Bittersweet (Celastrus scadens),
Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*), Phragmites (*Phragmites australis*), and Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*).

In the 1940's, the government planted Bittersweet and Bamboo (Japanese Knotweed) as coverage for the concrete structures housing military buildings on the Island. Bamboo and Bittersweet are still rapidly spreading, strangling desirable plants such as Birch trees and Beach Roses. The unwanted species have steadily invaded all areas of Peaks Island, and threaten to create a monoculture. It is only with extreme diligence that residents are able to prevent a complete take-over of individual properties, but large tracts of city and conservation land on the Island contain unrestrained populations of these plants.

A small number of Peaks Island wetlands are infested with Phragmites, a large reed that gradually crowds out native wetland species, and acts to collect shoreline sediments, which diminishes the affected habitat, unless appropriate measures are undertaken. Phragmites will not remain confined, and will eventually spread to all of the wetlands on the Island.

Recently, Purple Loosestrife was introduced to the Island. Loosestrife is a threat particularly to wetland areas. A field survey in the spring of 2002 concluded that most infestations are between three and five years old, and exist primarily at the perimeters of affected locations. Left unchecked, this invasive species would permanently change the character of Peaks Island by eliminating all cattail marsh wetlands, and obligate or facultative wildlife.

The Purple Loosestrife infestation is within residents' management capabilities, but only if action is immediate and prolonged. A citizens' campaign to hand pull the plants was moderately successful during the late summer of 2002, resulting in removal of the plants entirely from two marsh areas, and removal of flower heads from another. Eradication of Phragmites, Bittersweet, and Bamboo will require more severe measures. Island residents have expressed the desire to eliminate invasive species, but do not wish to employ chemical methods of control. Therefore, the community must work together and continue the citizens' campaign to hand pull plants.

1) Objectives for Invasive Species: Protect Peaks Island's habitat diversity by control and/or elimination of non-native invasive species.

Recommendation (Immediate): Provide public education about invasive species and eradication methods through educational pamphlets and other information that is available at the Library.

Recommendation (Immediate): Encourage property owners to avoid use of chemical controls of plant species. This will help protect our aquifer and avoid dangerous run-off that can pollute our marine resources.

Recommendation (Immediate): Map current locations and densities of Bamboo, Bittersweet, Purple Loosestrife, and Phragmites. Include this information in the Peaks Information Exchange.
Recommendation (Immediate): Work with Island organizations, such as PILP and PINA, and volunteers to initiate measures to cut down Bamboo, Bittersweet, and Phragmites plants from infested areas on a yearly basis.

Recommendation (Immediate): Obtain permission/exemption to remove these particular plants from areas that grow in protected shoreland zones.

Recommendation (Immediate): Aid existing Purple Loosestrife management with support and manpower from City sources.

B) Wetlands

Wetlands play a critical role in various natural systems including water storage, flood conveyance, groundwater recharge and discharge, shoreline erosion control, and improvement of water quality. In addition, wetlands provide nursery areas for an assortment of wildlife species, and contribute to a healthy diversity of natural habitat types. Peaks Island contains a number of freshwater wetlands, one channelized salt marsh, and some small tidal wetland areas. While Peaks Island wetland areas may be small compared with those found on the mainland, they influence a significant fraction of the overall total area of the Island. Therefore, relatively minor actions can have a disproportionately larger impact.

Regulatory means to protect wetlands include the Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA), administered by the State of Maine, and the City of Portland Shoreland Zoning provisions. Unfortunately, these measures fall short for Peaks Island. Most wetlands on Peaks Island are smaller than the minimum permitting process cut-off size of 4300 square feet, and are exempt from permitting requirements. Activities such as dredging have been allowed to occur.

Specific threats to Peaks Island’s wetlands include activities such as drainage of existing wetlands, clearing of surrounding vegetation, adjacent development, stormwater run-off, other non-point source pollution, dumping of trash into remote wetland areas, and proliferation of invasive species. Most of Peaks Island’s wetlands have incurred one or more insults.

2) Objective for Wetlands: Regularly provide education and information to all residents, especially new residents who may not be aware of protective regulations, to raise public awareness about best management practices in order to prevent wetland degradation.

Recommendation (Immediate): Create a leaflet or brochure explaining location of wetland areas, environmental regulations, threats to our wetland areas, and important numbers to call. Make the brochure available at Island meetings, realtor offices, in the Library, and on-line.

Recommendation (Immediate): Present information about wetlands at various Island organizational meetings.

Recommendation (Long Term): Work with local organizations, such as the PINA, PILP, Peaks Island Elementary School, and the Peaks Environmental Network (PEN) as well as local and regional organizations, such as Friends of Casco Bay, Lobster Conservancy, and
Island Institute, to form a non-profit Peaks Island EcoCenter whose main goal is educating the public about Peaks Island’s environment.

3) Objective for Wetlands: Protect our wetlands, which play a critical role for the Island’s ecosystem, for future generations by vigilant adherence to local and state laws and regulations concerning wetlands.

Recommendation (Long Term): Work with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the City of Portland to strengthen the municipal response to violations of existing laws and regulations.

Recommendation (Long Term): Work with the Maine DEP and the City of Portland to enact ordinances or regulations more strict than those applicable to mainland wetlands.

4) Objective for Wetlands: Provide technical training to City Public Works employees assigned to Peaks Island, to avoid compromising wetland integrity during completion of city projects.

5) Objective for Wetlands: Conduct a formal watershed survey and develop a watershed protection action plan for the Island.


Recommendation (Immediate): Work with Island, City, and State organizations to develop an action plan and present at a community meeting.

Recommendation (Long Term): Update survey every 5 years with help from Island organizations and volunteers.

Recommendation (Long Term): Implement a “Bayscaper” program at the Island level, to reduce non-point source pollution.

C) Hazardous Waste

   Hazardous waste poses a grave threat to all of Peaks’ natural resources. Currently, there is no regularly scheduled, periodic collection system for household hazardous waste on Peaks Island. Presently, residents stockpile such materials or add them to the regular waste stream. Existing household waste disposal methods may not provide adequate safeguards for the proper handling of potential toxic waste. Island businesses must continue to properly manage the storage and distribution of petroleum products.

6) Objective for Hazardous Waste: Ensure that hazardous waste does not pollute our natural resources.
Recommendation (Immediate): Educate residents to identify and properly dispose of household hazardous waste.

Recommendation (Short Term): Work with City and State agencies to develop an emergency response plan for reacting to chemical or petroleum spills. Once completed, post information on-line and in the Peaks Island Library.

Recommendation (Short Term): Develop a regular household hazardous waste collection system.

D) Municipal Community Forests

Since the middle of the nineteenth century, Portland has been referred to as the "Forest City". During the closing years of the nineteenth century, the City actively planted trees on Peaks Island, and in the last decade, City arborists managed a response to Browntail Moth infestation. Presently, the City's Forestry Division responds to citizen requests for public tree care, but does not address forestry issues on Peaks Island in any systematic fashion.

Forested areas provide soil erosion protection, nutrient cycling through ecosystems, windbreak and cooling effects due to canopy cover, habitat diversity, and scenic beauty. Peaks Island contains large tracts of forested land, located throughout the central part of the island. About 100 acres of the forested land is in conservation trust, a small number of acres are held by the City and by the State, and the rest is on private property. The forests are comprised primarily of trees only 30-40 years old at most, older specimens having been lost due to fires that burned as recently as the late 1950s. There are, however, a few trees greater than 100 years old, considered to be special Island treasures.

Peaks Island's forests consist mostly of oaks, maples, birch, poplar, and spruce. Most areas lack a healthy understory of saplings, herbaceous plants, and shrubs, but it is expected that diversity will improve because of deer control measures currently in effect. Islanders have expressed an interest in cataloguing and protecting specific trees of age or unique heritage.

7) Objective for Municipal Community Forests: Ensure that Peaks Island's forest areas are managed to ensure a healthy habitat and sustained resource for future generations.

Recommendation (Immediate): Inventory and map trees of interest for protection due to age or species type.

Recommendation (Immediate): Leave standing dead wood to encourage wildlife habitation.

Recommendation (Immediate): Continue to manage the deer herd, to encourage ecological integrity.

Recommendation (Immediate): Enact ordinances regulating tree removal during construction.
E) Miscellaneous environmental issues

Peaks Island residents have raised concerns that are outside the scope of this planning initiative. Environmental issues to be explored include air quality, soils contamination, clean up of pipes and metal waste from beaches and other areas, roadside mowing practices, automobile emissions, alternative energy development, and others.

Peaks Island's finite resources and remote location necessitate special management methods for the Island that may not be applicable to other City neighborhoods.

Recommendation (Long Term): Provide financial support for an Island resource coordinator to improve communication between City officials and Island groups, businesses, agencies, schools, and the public. The coordinator could serve to coordinate and manage Island data, and would provide groups and residents with technical assistance, resource materials, education, etc.

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IV. Water Resources

Introduction:

Peaks Island surface water and groundwater are vital to the wellbeing of the Island. Water resources sustain both wildlife and human habitats. Groundwater is used for drinking water in about 10% of the Island homes. On Peaks Island, there are approximately 25 surface macro-watersheds and countless micro-watersheds.

The fluctuation of seasonal population can cause shocks to the Island's watersheds and general water systems. Historically in winter months, the systems have time to heal. Within the past 20 years, residential footprints have expanded on the Island. In response to this human expansion and other climatic changes, the Island water systems can be impacted.

This study attempts to create a baseline for future comparison by documenting observations, offering recommendations for further data gathering and suggestions for general educational outreach. By assembling these data, emergency response can be improved. Also, long-term budgeting can be implemented by forecasting and prioritizing neighborhoods with critical needs.

Data Sources:

Water well data was collected initially from a request from area drilling companies, the Maine Department of Conservation, and Island residents. The author, with help of Jay Desmond, took measurements of the pond depths. A kayak was used to make a number of linear transects based on the size of the water body. Generally, over 30 points were measured in both the Brackett and Ice Ponds. In Trout Pond, over 150 points of measurement were made. The author's 27-year experience as a professional geologist serves as a foundation for interpretation of both surface and subsurface fluid movements. The author mapped the Island watersheds using a 2-foot contour topographic map. Bradstreet Consultants produced the topographic map within a City contract using aerial photos flown in the spring of 2001. Personal geological observations and discussions with Professors Arthur Hussey II (retired, Bowdoin College) and Dr. Mark Swanson (USM-Geology) along with historical publications including "The City of Portland Island Ground Water Management Study" by Robert Gerber(1986) also serve as a basis for the author's interpretations.

Findings & Analysis:

A) Surface Water

Current interpretation shows 25 watersheds with the (Trefethen) Ice Pond watershed the largest with a perimeter of 2.58 miles. It's estimated there are 16 ponds and 9 wetlands. Average pond depths range from 2.5 feet to 7.5 feet. Pond size ranges from 0.536 acres to 3.078. Trout Pond is both the largest pond and the deepest. Peaks Island's tidal area includes both public and private beaches.

B) Ground Water

As of the year-end 2001, there are slightly more than 110 wells on the Island. Eighty-three (83) are used for domestic water, about 10% of Island homes. Nine (9±) are monitor (City) wells (old dump, downfront), thirteen (13) or more are abandoned, and five (5) have not been confirmed. The average well depth is 188 feet of the wells recorded with an average yield of 8 gallons per minute of the wells recorded.
There are three major fracture trends that allow water into the bedrock ("ledge") aquifer and also account for spring outflow. The major two trends are North 35° East (NNE) and North 120° East (ESE). A set of secondary fractures are sub-horizontal (related to glacial weight unloading). Generally, groundwater discharge can occur on long, steep slopes especially where horizontal fractures are exposed. Groundwater recharge areas are all those areas not covered by pavement and buildings.

1) Objective for Surface and Ground Water: Protect our surface and ground water from degradation.

Recommendation (Immediate): Sand and salt piles should be covered and on an impermeable base to prevent run-off.

Recommendation (Immediate): Review biannual hazardous material pickup.

Recommendation (Short Term): Assemble household wastewater system inventory.

Recommendation (Short Term): Distribute a questionnaire about household water use during next revaluation or another appropriate time.

Recommendation (Short Term): Review soils and geology. Copies of the information should be kept in the Peaks Information Exchange.

Recommendation (Long Term): Review heating oil storage tank inspection practices.

Recommendation (Long Term): Review wetland determination regarding Island environment.

2) Objective for Surface and Ground Water: Integrate and analyze data from water sampling and watersheds.

Recommendation (Immediate): Create volunteer groundwater well monitoring network, as recommended by the *Gerber Report*.

Recommendation (Immediate): Reenact testing schedule for existing monitoring wells (City Landfill, Downfront, Old Seashore Dump). Copies of information should be kept in the Peaks Information Exchange.

Recommendation (Short Term): Assemble resident type and wastewater disposal condition in each watershed.

C) Water Resource Hazards

There are numerous threats to our water resources. Thin soils (0-20 feet gross) lead to erosion, washouts, and immediate penetration of contaminants where fractures occur. Since almost 80% of Island homes are not on sewer, inefficient septic systems or cesspools are a large
and potentially disastrous threat to our water resources. Non-point sources of pollution, such as runoff from lawns, rooftops, parking lots, gardens as well as oils, gasoline, antifreeze, power steering fluid, and fertilizers, pose an additional threat. There is some evidence from well drilling that marine intrusion is occurring. Slope or shore instability – erosion of coastline and damage of property is a problem at various sites around the Island, such as, Island Avenue north of Trefethen Avenue, Oaklawn Road, City Point Landing to Greenwood Gardens, Ryefield Cove, and parts of Seashore Avenue along the Backshore. Building construction within flood zones, particularly Seashore Coves, is another water resource hazard.

3) Objective for Water Resource Hazards: Ensure sustainability of our water resources.

Recommendation (Immediate and On-going): Sample water in Casco Bay, channels, & coves.

Recommendation (Immediate): Gather shipping and Inner Bay moorings projections of both type and frequency.

Recommendation (Immediate): Review building practices and setback guidelines in flood areas.


Recommendation (Short Term): Collect sea bottom bathymetry data.

Recommendation (Short Term): Collect sea bottom sediment data.
V. Recreation and Open Space

Introduction:

Peaks Island is a relatively small island in terms of acreage, yet it serves as host to large numbers of people throughout the year (year-round residents, part-time residents, tourists and day visitors). These individuals have varied needs and interests. Consequently, there are many, sometimes conflicting, demands placed on the Island in relation to the provision of recreational opportunities and open space. In particular, these demands are unique compared to many other Portland neighborhoods due to Peaks Island serving as a true recreational destination. The purpose of the Recreation and Open Space Task Team was three-fold:

1. Describe existing recreation, park and open spaces, and significant points of public access to shore lands on Peaks Island;
2. Identify future directional patterns for recreation and open space as identified by multiple data sources;
3. Identify significant issues/problems/gaps associated with recreation and open space.

Data Sources:
The committee gathered and analyzed data from a variety of sources in order to gain as complete a picture as possible of the way things are and the way people would like them to be in terms of recreation and open space. These data sources included:

1. Year 2000 City of Portland tax assessor data
2. 2002 Peaks Island Community Survey
4. 2002 GIS Peaks Island map
5. Walking the Island and talking to property owners
6. Comments from August, 2002 Community Planning Workshop

Findings:

A) Recreational Opportunities

Peaks Island is blessed with a number of diverse recreation areas and opportunities that range from public areas to membership and business-provided opportunities. The list below details the different types of opportunities.

1. Public recreation areas/opportunities:
   --School playground
   --Outdoor basketball courts at the school and TEIA
   --Children’s Workshop playground
   --Ball field
   --Boat ramp at the foot of Centennial Street
   --Boat moorings through the Harbormaster
   --Library (reading, movies)
   --Walking and hiking (roads and trails)
   --Picnicking
   --Bicycling
   --Fishing
   --Bird watching
   --Swimming
   --Cross country skiing
2. Summer membership-based areas/opportunities:
   --Sailing and tennis at TEIA
   --Boat docks at Plante Associates
   --Museum tours, historical and educational programs at the Fifth Maine Museum

3. Business-provided opportunities:
   --Bicycling (Brad's Bike Shop)
   --Kayaking (Maine Island Kayak, Casco Bay Kayak Rentals)
   --Yoga (Diamond Center)
   --Jeannie Alves O'Toole Hall's Island Horse Camp

The mix of public, membership-based and business-provided recreational opportunities is
a positive feature of the Island, and multiple provider sources should continue to be encouraged.

Existing recreation locations on the Island sometimes lead to conflicting needs and
potential problems. There are no areas large enough, safe enough, and close enough to
downfront for the children of Peaks Island to use for recreation such as skateboarding. As a
result many young people skateboard in the streets, particularly at the intersection of Welch
Street and Island Avenue. The American Legion and a group of concerned adults and Island
youth have done a significant amount of work to raise money for a skateboard park.
Unfortunately, an available piece of land for the park has not been found and the costs of buying
a piece of property are prohibitive, but there is strong Islander sentiment for the park in order to
avoid an accident. Resolving this issue will alleviate a significant safety hazard and provide a
great recreational opportunity for the Island's youth. There is the need for young and old users to
have a place to play basketball out of doors on the one hand versus the need of neighbors
surrounding the schoolyard area to have peace and quiet on the other. Recent land use changes
have also impacted the community's recreational options. Private ownership of ponds formerly
used in the winter for ice-skating has closed off the opportunity for this recreational activity.
Finally, the City of Portland has no plans for additions or upgrades to recreational facilities or
parks on the Island over the next 10 years, except for the school/community playground
currently in design.

The lack of relevant, appropriate recreational locations and opportunities for the children
of the Island must be addressed immediately. The range of problems produced, in part, by this
lack is beyond the scope of this report, but it is clear that the community and the City must
address this issue. Various attempts have tried and failed thus far. Those involved in such
attempts should identify the reasons for the failures and come up with a concrete plan to address
these reasons. At the very least, key figures, both on the Island (leaders of organizations such as
the Lions Club, business owners, informal parent leaders, leaders representing the Island
children), and representatives of the City (School principal, Island administrator, Planning
Department representative, Department of Public Works, etc.) need to be involved in this effort.
The efforts by the Island "Youth Initiatives" are to be commended and, hopefully, the dialogue
generated at these meetings will create a force for positive change. Increasing the number of
recreational opportunities for our youth is a critical way to avoid the types of problems that have arisen recently on the Island, such as teen drinking.

1) Objective for Recreational Opportunities: Work with Island youth, Island organizations, and City officials to address a lack of recreational opportunities for Island youth.

Recommendation (Immediate): Continue discussions with Island youth about what are their recreational needs and how the community can meet them.

Recommendation (Immediate): Work with Island youth, private landowners, Island organizations and the City to find a suitable site for the skateboard park.

Recommendation (Immediate): Continue talks with community members and City officials about future uses of the former gravel pit at the end of Upper A Street.

B) Open Space and Shorelands Access

There are approximately 160 acres of protected open space, including City-owned land, City land with a conservation easement, land trust-owned land both with and without conservation easements and State of Maine land. This land provides a wonderful mixture of forests, wetlands, and the rocky ocean coastline for people to enjoy. The land is used for activities ranging from taking in the magnificent vistas at the top of Battery Steele, to hiking, to examining the woodlands vegetation to having picnics on the backshore. Results from the community survey and the August community planning workshop indicate that there is very strong sentiment by Islanders to continue to preserve and protect additional open space on the Island.

The public has access to the shoreline at many different places around the Island, such as several beaches including Centennial, Sandy and Evergreen, the rocky shoreline along the Backshore, as well as multiple access points around the remainder of the island. There is one designated park on the Island: Reed, comprising 1/4 acre.

There are a number of problems associated with open space and shoreland access that need to be addressed. Recent land use changes have blocked some map-designated points of access to the shore, or, in some cases, the access ways are no longer readily detectible. There is a significant parking problem on the backshore, particularly in the summer. The number of turnouts can't support the number of vehicles that stop to enjoy the opportunities on the backshore. Therefore, people park wherever they like, often without regard for safety or the rights of landowners. Many areas of open space property are treated with disrespect. Debris, large and small, toxic and non-toxic, is often dumped at various sites. Vehicles travel over wetlands, thus degrading them by destroying vegetation and changing land contours. Unauthorized vehicle traffic has also stripped hillsides of vegetation thus leaving them vulnerable to erosion. Fires are often set without regard to safety or the impact on the immediate environment.

2) Objective for Open Space and Shorelands Access: Ensure that points of access to the shore, if blocked, are reopened and remain open.
Recommendation (Short Term): Conduct deed research and, if needed, carry out survey work to determine which access ways to the shore need to be re-opened/unblocked.

3) Objective for Open Space and Shorelands Access: Provide educational opportunities for the public that promote stewardship of our open space.

Recommendation (Long Term): Conduct a significant education campaign around the appropriate use of open space and treating the island with respect. Encourage a "leave no trace" mentality for the entire Island, as well as open spaces, similar to Monhegan Island's.

Recommendation (Long Term): Focus educational outreach efforts on the use of alternative forms of transportation. (please refer to the transportation section for greater detail; the map of Peaks Island by Map Adventures has started the educational effort by encouraging people to leave their cars on the mainland and walk/bike around the Island.) Coordinate educational outreach efforts with proposed Peaks Information Exchange.

###
VI. Land Use

Introduction:
The Land Use Task Team sought to determine Peaks Islanders’ wishes and concerns, to evaluate the adequacy of existing codes, and to suggest changes that would foster what Islanders desire. How owners, including private parties, the City of Portland and the State of Maine, use their property profoundly affect the quality of life on Peaks Island. Several tools exist to influence land use in the future. Zoning codes are the primary governmental tools regulating development and land use. The tax code contains some disincentives to achieve the goals many Peaks Islanders desire. Environmental rules and the installation of sewage and water lines, the construction or not of roads and the standards they must meet, and conservation and other privately created easements and covenants all may be used to promote desirable land use.

Findings & Analysis:
A) The Current Zoning Code
Peaks Island land use is regulated by special island zones of the City of Portland’s zoning code. The current versions were adopted in 1985 and have been modified in minor ways since then. Overlaid on these regulations are rules for the shore land zone, which consists of areas adjacent to wetlands and bodies of water. Peaks has an island business (IB) zone, a recreation-open space zone (R-OS), two island residential zones (IR-1 and IR-2), and small resource protection zones. The IB zone covers the down front business district and some adjacent residential areas. The R-OS zone consists mostly of City-, State-, or land preserve-owned open space. The IR-2 zone covers most of the traditional built-up residential areas of the Island, and the IR-1 zone covers newer developed areas on the Backshore and the Island interior. Required lot sizes for new subdivisions in the IR-1 zone are much larger than in the IR-2 zone. However, the IR-1 zone contains many smaller “grandfathered” lots in subdivisions created before modern zoning codes were adopted. Many of these lots are on non-existent paper streets in what is now woodland or open space.

B) Peaks Islanders’ Wishes and Concerns
The 2002 Comprehensive Community Survey revealed a strong consensus on the goals for Peaks Island land use policies. Preservation of open space and protection of ground water were given the highest priority. Respondents supported protecting views, discouraging sprawl, preserving the architectural character of neighborhoods, controlling new development, and protecting existing Island businesses. Encouraging affordable housing had strong support from the year-round community but was not a priority of summer residents. Protecting property values had general support, but where means to do so conflicted with the other goals, the other goals were given preference. The conclusions from the survey have been reinforced by public input during the Community Planning Workshop, which included many specific suggestions. There is little dissent among Islanders from the wishes and concerns expressed here. Conflict will arise over specific measures because changes in laws and policies directly affect the value of individual properties.

Recommendation: Relax some dimensional requirements on lots in the IR-2 zone, the traditional built-up parts of the Island.
Recommendation: Allow “in-law” apartments without present restrictions on accessory dwelling units.

Recommendation: Increase the discretion of the Zoning Board of Appeals to allow reasonable exceptions to restrictions in the IR-2 zone on a case-by-case basis.

Recommendation: Legislate a maximum house size.

These changes would facilitate affordable development in the currently built-up parts of the Island and thereby reduce pressure to build on grandfathered, undersized lots in the IR-1 zone. Most of the Island lots not now built upon are in these areas, which, as noted above, are presently woodland or other open space. The minimum buildable lot size for these lots is 10,000 square feet, allowing densities near those of the IR-2 zone. For newly created subdivisions in the IR-1 zone, the minimum lot size is 60,000 square feet unless public water is available, in which case it is 40,000 square feet.

Finding ways to preserve open space in the IR-1 zone is a challenge. It frequently would not be economically feasible to provide necessary streets and utilities for isolated single-family homes in these areas; multi-home developments are more likely and would be less consistent with island character. It would be desirable to control such developments without preventing any individual family with sufficient assets from building its dream house.

Recommendation: Eliminate the special rules in the zoning code providing for planned residential unit development in the IR-1 zone.

The Backshore is a unique Island resource with an ambiance enjoyed by many, both Islanders and visitors. This ambiance would be destroyed by new construction too close to Seashore Avenue. Such construction could be prevented by a zoning change with no significant effect on present property owners.

Recommendation: Prohibit the construction on the Backshore of any house closer to the shore than the existing house on the property, or, if there is no house on the property, closer than the average distance of the two adjacent houses.

###
VII. Transportation

Introduction:
A reliable, efficient transportation system is a key component of a community. Local streets help provide access to local goods and services and to neighboring communities. While our transportation network shares many similarities with other towns, Peaks Island's is different from most communities because we are connected to the outside world not by a road but by the Casco Bay Lines ferry: our "highway" to the mainland.

This report is concerned with the Island road system, vehicles on the Island, both on-Island and mainland parking, and alternative transportation options. Casco Bay Lines will be discussed in the next chapter.

Data Sources:
To address the transportation needs of Peaks Island and provide recommendations for City policy, we inventoried and assessed:
1. Existing road structures and their current condition
2. Number of vehicles on the Island
3. Parking on the mainland and Island
4. Alternative transportation options
5. Quality of Casco Bay Lines' service to Peaks Island

Findings & Analysis:
A) Mainland Parking
Affordability and availability of mainland parking near the Casco Bay Lines terminal is a pressing issue for Island residents. The City of Portland lists 38 different parking lots and garages in the downtown. Each lot offers a different rate structure depending on length of stay, such as hourly or daily rates, while some are restricted to weekly or monthly permits.

According to the Casco Bay Island Resident Parking Survey, price of parking, location, and safety are extremely important to Island residents. These sentiments are echoed in the written comments in the 2002 Peaks Island community survey. Parking fees make life on the Island more expensive than other Portland neighborhoods, and due to the high cost and lack of parking, many residents want the free Islander lot parking returned, and if not, an affordable alternative. Street parking is available and free though hard to find and can result in costly tickets if cars are not moved in a timely manner.

The best option would be a garage that provided free, or drastically reduced-priced, parking for Island residents. Unfortunately, that option may not be viable and we need to work to find other solutions. Residents of other neighborhoods can get neighborhood parking permits that allow residents exclusive rights to certain on-street parking. Exploring if this program could be extended to Island residents, even if only during the off-season, would be a positive step. Tentative designs for the Portland Ocean Terminal that include parking should investigate including Islander sections.

1) Objective for Mainland Parking: Provide Island residents with convenient, affordable mainland parking options.
Recommendation (Short Term): Work with the City of Portland to investigate the possibility of seasonal or year-round remote satellite parking lots with bus service to the Casco Bay Lines terminal. If possible, these lots would be free to Island residents.

Recommendation (Short Term): Working with the City of Portland, Island residents should begin to investigate if Peaks Islanders are eligible for neighborhood parking stickers.

B) On-Island Parking

Parking on Peaks Island, especially in the summer, is a concern because many vehicles on the Island collect in one area: down front. Currently, there are two parking mechanisms in place on the Island: on-street parking and the ferry landing parking lot, which can accommodate 60 cars. Unfortunately, these two options are not adequately meeting the current demand. At certain times, particularly when the ferry lands, parking is very scarce. Lining the parking lot would eliminate five spaces, bringing the total to 55 spaces. There are a number of turn-off spaces along the backshore on Seashore Avenue that are used as parking.

Islanders are split on ways to solve the parking problem. Many of the potential solutions focus on increasing the supply of parking. These comments suggest that the parking lot is not large enough and adding another level onto the parking lot would solve the parking problem. Other ideas include better enforcement of the 48-hour time limit currently in place and towing cars that stay too long. Increasing the number of alternative modes of transportation available to Islanders is an important step. Unfortunately, there is not a panacea for the parking problem; ultimately, the solution lies in a combination of tactics.

C) Vehicles

The number of cars on the Island is a growing concern among Islanders, particularly during the summer. While we can take a number of steps to alleviate the situation here on the Island, it is important to note that our parking troubles are dramatically affected by parking conditions on the mainland. Residents believe that many renters or seasonal residents bring their cars to the Island because in comparison to the high cost of mainland parking, a car ticket for the ferry is minimal. This leads to more cars on the Island, and in turn, more demand for parking space at crucial places, such as at Hannigan’s Market and the parking lot.

2) Objective for Vehicles: Reduce the number of cars on Peaks Island by providing alternative transportation.

D) Alternative Transportation

Peaks Islander’s are very clear about the number of cars on the Island. They want fewer and want to explore ways to mitigate this problem: 75% of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed that traffic has become a threat to the quality of life on the Island, while 68% believe that more alternative modes of transportation would be a good idea for the Island. The loss of taxi service highlights the need for alternative transportation. 65% of survey respondents listed the availability of on-Island taxi service as essential or very important. Taxi service was operated by Town Taxi and staffed by an Island resident, but it is no longer available. Current taxi service is run on a volunteer basis by “Neighbors helping neighbors”, a group formed to provide a short
ten, limited solution. Volunteers are available to drive residents on a need basis, but do not meet every boat. In the fall of 2001, Metro explored the idea of an electric bus running on the Island. The City of Portland traffic engineer noted that there would have to be a change in traffic patterns, possibly blocking access to other vehicles, in order to accommodate the bus.

Survey responses stress that just having a taxi is not enough, the service must also be reliable and available for every boat. Even if this happens there still are a number of issues that need to be addressed in order for a taxi to be successful: Is the fare structure such that a person can make money operating the taxi? What should be the size of the vehicle? Will the taxi also deliver packages or freight? Will the taxi be part of an in-town company or maybe a component of an on-Island organization? How many different drivers will there be? Answering each of these questions, and many others, is a crucial first step towards a viable taxi service.

A freight-carrying service, either by the taxi or another method would also ease some traffic issues. If notified by a resident when the freight was to arrive, a taxi could transport those items from the boat to the recipient and, therefore, relieve people of the need to meet the boat with a car. This would reduce congestion at and around the ferry dock during the times when the boat arrives at the pier. The Casco Bay Island Transit District (CBITD) could help this service as a way to achieve their goal of supporting regional transportation.

Consolidating services so that repair companies can come on one day may also alleviate traffic problems on the Island and space on the boat. Residents with related issues, such as chimney cleaning, could have an in-town company come to the Island at a specific time to service each home with a similar problem. Additional alternative modes of transportation include biking, carpooling, or walking to the ferry landing and other places. In order to make biking a more attractive alternative, a roof over the Peaks Island bicycle rack could be built.

The major factor, though, is personal choice. Individual residents could alter their behavior and leave their cars at home. Building a parking garage, or increasing the size of the current parking lot, could represent a costly and drastic solution to the problem. Additionally a garage may give the impression of abundant parking space, and worsen the traffic situation by encouraging driving to the ferry or down front.

3) Objective for Alternative Transportation: Provide residents with a number of alternative transportation methods.

Recommendation (Immediate): Begin a “casual carpool” system. Designated spots around the Island could serve as pickup locations for those needing a ride to the ferry. At the dock, riders could meet drivers going in their direction, either by establishing a set of signs such as “Backshore” and “near Trefethen” or forming a line at a certain spot.

Recommendation (Immediate): Approach city taxi companies about renewing taxi service on the Island.

Recommendation (Immediate): In order to make a taxi service viable, amend the City Code structure to permit modestly increased taxi fares.
Recommendation (Immediate): Produce a pamphlet outlining the traffic situation on the Island and make this available at the Casco Bay Lines terminal.

Recommendation (Immediate): Build a roof above the Peaks Island parking lot bike rack to shelter the bikes from the weather.

Recommendation (Immediate): Continually stress the importance of car pooling, walking, and biking as a way to improve the traffic situation.

Recommendation (Short Term): Explore forming an Island-owned taxi service, financed through donations and fundraising that would exclusively serve the community.

Recommendation (Short Term): Form a committee to explore the possibility of community car ownership, such as a ZIP car.

Recommendation (Short Term): Create an on-Island freight-carrying service that transports groceries, packages, and/or luggage from the boat to people's homes.

Recommendation (Short Term): Residents should work together to reduce the number of service trucks on the Island by contracting similar work to one company that at a set time could serve everyone who needed work done.

E) The Island Road System

The State classifies roads based upon their function.
- Local roads provide direct access to property.
- Collectors move traffic from local, neighborhood roads to the nearest arterials.
- Arterials provide access into and out of the town.

For many residents, a significant part of the Island's charm is the numerous small gravel roads found throughout the Island. These roads help to reinforce the sense of "islandness" that residents, both seasonal and year-round, cherish.

Since road location also plays a significant role in the position of potential development and growth, having an accurate and up-to-date inventory of the Island's roads and their quality is very important. Information about the number of miles of road by surface type, their location, date of last repair, and current condition should be kept on the Island and made available to Island residents. All of this information should be updated as changes are made.

Three different types of road surface material are used on the Island: reclaimed asphalt, gravel, and asphalt. The number of miles of road by surface material is not known at this time. In order to qualify for reclaimed asphalt use, a street must completely meet the Department of Public Works' "reclaimed material policy petition".

Though reclaim is a cost-effective maintenance solution for our roads, the community has not reached a consensus, and reclaim use remains a contentious issue. The direct impact of reclaim is
on those residents whose streets are maintained with the material. Consequently, a policy that allows local residents, instead of the entire Island, to decide on reclaim use on their roads is very important and a public, participatory policy regarding its use is an important step. Survey responses clearly indicate that residents do not want more paved roads, but greater effort given towards maintaining gravel roads. This should be the focus of Public Works’ efforts and not increasing the number of roads surfaced with pavement or reclaimed asphalt.

4) Objective for Island Roads: Maintain rural quality of the Island road system.

Recommendation (Immediate): If not done already, amend zoning codes to restrict roads to two lanes of travel.

Recommendation (Short term): Ensure that new roads are appropriately designed and do not facilitate driving above 20 miles per hour.

Recommendation (Long term): Ensure that new road construction considers historic and unique characteristics of the Island and are not completely reliant on mainland standards.

5) Objective for Island Roads: Ensure continued community involvement regarding reclaimed asphalt use on the Island.

Recommendation (Short Term): Map all the roads on the Island and classify by surface type, quality, and date of last maintenance. Store this data in the Peaks Information Exchange and update when roads are serviced.

Recommendation (Short Term): Mail City of Portland’s reclaim policy to Island homeowners including list of streets currently surfaced with reclaimed asphalt. Make information available in the Library.

6) Objective for Island Roads: Unless absolutely necessary, the Department of Public Works should maintain gravel roads instead of paving.

Recommendation (Immediate): Each year, the Department of Public Works should apprise the community of their plans either at a public meeting, on the PINA website, or another method that ensures that the community is aware of future efforts by the Department.
VIII. Casco Bay Lines

Introduction:

The importance of Casco Bay Lines to life on Peaks Island cannot be underestimated. It provides Peaks Island with a number of essential services without which we would struggle to survive as a community. The Casco Bay Island Transit District's mission statements is as follows:

*The State of Maine created the CBITD to furnish waterborne transportation to the islands of Casco Bay for public purposes in the interest of the public health, safety, comfort and convenience of the inhabitants of the islands comprising the District. The District operates in accordance with the wishes and expectations of the island residents to preserve island communities and protect the character of island life.*

*CBITD shall provide related transportation services to residents and visitors of the Casco Bay region to enhance the quality and security of the District's ferry service to the islands.*

In 1995, after a year-long process, the CBITD implemented a strategic plan in order to provide guidance for the future development of the District. The plan recommended seven goal areas that the District, as well as a number of objectives and strategies related to each goal. The seven goal areas were:

1. Customer satisfaction
2. Regional transportation
3. Safety
4. Continuous quality improvement
5. Islander ownership
6. Fares
7. Ethics and the environment

A tremendous amount of work was done by the District to create the Strategic Plan. It was updated in 1999 and provides a strong framework for future growth. Island residents are the owners of the District and our views about the efficacy of the Plan's recommendations and objectives are an important way to measure its success. Our team's goal was to evaluate the quality of service provided by the Casco Bay Island Transit District to the Peaks Island community, whether the goals enumerated by the District in their Strategic Plan were being instituted, and if the District has been meeting the expectations of the Peaks Island community. Each section below deals with a goal (in italicized, bold type) outlined in the Casco Bay Island Transit District's Strategic Plan, their recommendations, and issues that have been raised by the community during the Neighborhood Planning process. Goal areas not dealt with in this chapter deal with the internal functioning of the District and are not apparent to the customer.

Findings & Analysis:

A) Strategic Plan

**Goal 1: Customer satisfaction:** CBITD will satisfy the expectations of its riders and freight customers on a year round basis with on-time service provided by responsive employees in clean, functional facilities at affordable rates. This high level of satisfaction will be demonstrated by a 95% satisfaction rating on customer surveys.
On-time service, employee responsiveness, clean functional facilities and, notably, affordable rates are the four strategies that the District identified as a means to fulfill the goal of customer satisfaction. Many of the recommendations for each of these strategies concern the internal workings of the District that facilitate professional service and are ones that customers do not explicitly see. One recommendation, though, identified within the “affordable rates” strategy that has been a tremendous success for Peaks Islander’s is the “unlimited” monthly pass. Since passenger and car ticket prices and freight charges add an additional expense for Island residents, any effort to minimize their impact is an important step. Overall, as a way to measure customer satisfaction and their success meeting that goal, the District maintains that they will continually achieve a “95% satisfaction rating on customer surveys”. This is an extremely admirable goal and an excellent way to mark progress, yet how often the surveys will be done or how the results will be made available to the public is not clear. Furthermore, continuous quality improvement, goal 4, highlights the importance of public input and surveying customers as a way “to measure success and customer satisfaction”.

**Goal 2: Regional transportation: The services of CBID will be integrated into the regional transportation system providing the customer with coordinated transportation services.**

Integrating Casco Bay Lines into the regional transportation structure was the second goal established in the Strategic Plan. An important step towards achieving that goal is the Portland Explorer, a bus service that serves the airport, bus stations, and various hotels throughout Portland. Before the creation of the Explorer, if Island residents wished to take public transportation to any of the above locations, they needed to take Portland METRO, which required a great deal of time and possibly a few transfers. Now, they can have direct service.

”Managing island traffic on wharves to reduce potential accidents” is a strategy that needs attention. During the summer, the high number of cars, people, and freight that arrives and departs on each ferry creates an extremely dangerous situation on Welch Street. Currently, Casco Bay Lines deckhands manage traffic and people at the bottom of Welch Street and onto the boat, and they do a fine job, yet problems exist at the intersection of Welch Street and Island Avenue. Long queues of cars waiting for the boat wrap around Welch Street and along Island Avenue, flank cars parked along the street, and create one lane of traffic for cars moving in both directions. Additionally, bicyclists and pedestrians may move out into the road. This is a situation that is ripe for an accident. Managing it goes beyond the duty of the deck hands and requires the help of the Peaks Island police officers. This requires immediate attention and we must work to explore having a police officer or another way to manage traffic and pedestrians near the boat during busy times.

The District recognized that the increasing numbers of cars on the islands is a concern and recommended three strategies to combat the problem: increase car ferry fares, reduce long term mainland parking prices, and form a task force to study the issue. During the past seven years, the number of car trips to Peaks increased from 15,808 during 1995 to 22,827 during 2001 (during February and March of 2001, the Machigonne did not take any cars). Trends for 2002 point to another increase in car trips to the Island. Between January and July, there were 14,305 car trips to the Island, which outpaces any same time period during the past seven years by 695 cars. Furthermore, February, March, and April each set record number of car trips while the other four months had the second highest number. This data indicate that rising car ticket prices
are not deterring car trips to the Island, and other factors, most importantly the price of parking, influence one’s decision to bring a car to the Island. It is important to note that the District recognizes that cars are a problem and that they recommended organizing a task force to study the problem, yet the results of this task force have not been made public. Since Peaks receives the vast majority of cars served by Casco Bay Lines the results of this survey are extremely important and if it has not been formed, should as soon as possible. Once completed the results should be made available to Peaks Islanders during a community meeting, on the PINA website, and in the Peaks Island Library.

**Goal 5: Islander ownership: The residents of Casco Bay’s islands will feel a strong sense of ownership in the CBITD and believe that the service is supporting their way of life.**

A distinct problem is that many Peaks Islanders do not feel any ownership of the District and believe that they are unable to affect change. This runs counter to the fifth goal outlined by the Strategic Plan and is a concern that needs to be addressed immediately, though much of the effort needs to be undertaken by Island residents. One of the strategies designed to achieve a greater sense of Islander ownership, “increase knowledge and use of Board members”, needs to be utilized to a greater extent in order to maximize a sense of ownership amongst Islanders. Clear channels of communication are essential to guaranteeing that the Transit District meets our needs as owners.

**Goal 6: Fares: Fares for islander residents will rise no faster than the Consumer Price Index, sustained by CBITD’s ability to maximize appropriate additional sources of revenues.**

The District recognizes that ticket prices contribute to a higher cost of living on the Island compared to the mainland and have pledged that, “fares for island residents will rise no faster than the Consumer Price Index, sustained by (the District’s) ability to maximize appropriate additional sources of revenues”. Striving to achieve this goal is an important and necessary step to assure that families have the ability to make a home on the Island and continue a way of life that is important to so many. Since 1990, the annual increase in cost of a commuter book has remained below the national consumer price index.

One recommendation is to provide customers with a variety of ticket options so that they can “self select” a ticket that suits their needs. For instance, an everyday commuter might select a monthly pass, while a visitor has the option of a single ticket. The plan suggests taking a step further with the creation of a three-month pass. This option could help to alleviate a cost burden for many commuters. Another step might be the creation of a six-month pass and extremely discounted rates for students.

**Recommendation (Immediate): Make the results of all customer surveys available to the public by presenting results at a PINA general membership meeting, posting on the PINA website and each ferry boat.**

**Recommendation (Immediate): Place a list of the Peaks Island representatives on the PINA website and on ferries that serve Peaks Island.**

**Recommendation (Immediate): Peaks Island District representatives should make a presentation of the Board’s activities at each PINA general membership meeting. If this is**
not possible a report should be made available in the Peaks Island Library and on the PINA website.

**Recommendation (Immediate):** Place copies of the *Bayliner* on each boat.

**Recommendation (Immediate):** Place safety instructions throughout each boat.

**Recommendation (Immediate):** Include more information helpful to Islanders on Casco Bay Lines website, such as meeting minutes and agenda, fare information, meeting schedules, and strategic plan.

**Recommendation (Immediate):** Post complete fare information in terminal lobby.

**Recommendation (Short term):** Assemble task force, as suggested in the District’s Strategic Plan, to study the effect of cars on the Island. Include a broad representation of Island stakeholder groups.

**Recommendation (Long Term):** Continue to explore the option of another Peaks Island dock that could be a stop along the inter-island or down bay ferry runs. This may only be needed during the high traffic summer months.

###
IX. Historic and Architectural Resources

Introduction:
Peaks Island has a rich and unique heritage that is, in many respects, unknown or misunderstood by the community and the general public. It is also a tourist destination and a very desirable area in which to live. Preserving the community’s character and the architectural and historic resources that shape its character is most important. Given the changes that have occurred in recent years, the Island is in danger of losing its character; those very things that make it an attractive place to live and raise families. If the community’s heritage and, thus, its character, are lost, it may well become another Nantucket or Martha’s Vineyard, affordable only by the wealthy.

This plan will assess the existing historic and architectural resources on Peaks Island, make recommendations to preserve them, and attempt to make the public aware of the benefits to the community of preserving its past.

Data Sources:
This plan is based on data gathered from conversations with residents, materials contained in the Fifth Maine Regiment Museum’s archives, and conversations with representatives of Greater Portland Landmarks, Maine Preservation, and the Maine Historic Preservation Commission.

Findings & Analysis:
A) Architecture
A community’s buildings reflect its heritage. They show how earlier residents lived, the things and ideas they valued. They are the most visible evidence of a community’s past. Peaks Island has nearly 1,000 structures including about 871 dwelling units (seasonal & year-round), two churches, commercial and municipal buildings, two Civil War regimental halls, assorted sheds, garages, and outbuildings, and the concrete towers and bunkers remaining from World War II. In 1920 the total number of dwelling units equaled 880. Commercial, religious and municipal structures numbered about 50. Some 668 of these dwellings were built between 1880 and 1920, primarily as seasonal cottages. The number of buildings has remained relatively stable for several reasons:

1. Fires have destroyed a number of buildings.
2. During World War II the military demolished many buildings to make way for construction of the Peaks Island Military Reservation.
3. The number of new buildings constructed over the last 80+ years has more or less equaled the number lost.

The pre-1880 buildings were constructed by the handful of families who settled Peaks Island. They tend to be substantial structures that speak to the hardiness and commitment to the community of these early residents. Few Island buildings constructed between 1880 and 1920 were designed by architects. Most may be considered vernacular architecture – that is, built by individuals to suit their own needs. The architectural elements and styles of the turn-of-the-twentieth century buildings are typical of the styles being built in the United States. The seasonal cottages were built in the styles found in seaside resorts along the
New England coast. A large number of the seasonal cottages have been converted to year-round use.

At this time an architectural survey of Peaks Island buildings has not been undertaken. Only one building, the Fifth Maine Regiment Memorial Hall, is recognized as historically significant. It is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and is designated a Greater Portland Landmark. Several other structures on the Island may well be eligible for similar recognition.

**B) Historic Resources**

Peaks Island is a community rich in historic resources. Three organizations - the Fifth Maine Regiment Museum, the Eighth Maine Regiment Memorial Association and the Peaks Island School Alumni Association - actively collect and preserve materials related to the history of the Island. The Trefethen-Evergreen Improvement Association maintains an archival collection covering the years 1912 through the present time. Several residents have amassed collections of historical materials and many individuals have researched the history of their homes. Other historic materials related to Peaks Island may be found at the Maine Historical Society and Greater Portland Landmarks, both in Portland, and at the Maine Historic Preservation Commission in Augusta.

Historic resource materials include images (photographs, paintings, post cards etc), domestic items, textiles, furniture, paper-based items such as maps, diaries, letters, manuscripts, scrapbooks, and ephemera (that is, playbills, invitations, ferry schedules etc). These materials may be found in homes, attics, basements and barns around the Island as well as in the collections of the above named organizations.

Other, less tangible, historic resources are the traditions that have been carried on in the community for generations. This resource is much more difficult to define but it is at the heart of what makes Peaks Island such a special community. It defines the character of the community. Residents’ perception of the community’s character may differ. Yet, when asked, people use similar terms to describe what makes the Island unique. Concern for the welfare of neighbors, acceptance of different lifestyles, tolerance, and diversity are most often mentioned. At the same time, people speak of the ways in which the community comes together, whether for social occasions like public suppers or breakfasts, fairs, concerts, holiday celebration or in formal organizations that work to benefit the community.

A third resource and one that is not often considered historic, is the amount of undeveloped land on the Island. Currently, about 160 acres of land are owned and/or held in conservation easements by the Peaks Island Land Preserve, Oceanside Trust, the City of Portland and the State of Maine. Public access to open space is a long-standing tradition on Peaks Island whether for walking the trails, biking, picnicking, berry picking, or simply enjoying the quiet and solitude of being in the woods and near the sea.

Architecture, traditions, open space, being separated from the mainland by three miles of water yet still being close enough to partake of “city life” create our community’s character and
unique lifestyle. The challenge is to preserve our character and lifestyle without impeding progress and change.

C) Current Preservation Efforts

Many of the recommendations included in this report must be initiated and carried out by Peaks Island residents, both year-round and seasonal. Others require collaborating/coordinating with the City and local/statewide preservation organizations. It is an on-going process that can successfully co-exist with progress and change, if approached with the proper mindset. Several initiatives to preserve architectural and historic resources are underway.

1) Objective: Retain the Island's character.

Recommendation (Immediate): Printed materials from the U.S. Department of the Interior, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Maine Preservation, and the Maine Historic Preservation Commission should be available at the Peaks Island Library, the Fifth Maine, and Peaks Information Exchange.

Recommendation (Short Term): The City of Portland's Historic Preservation Committee should be more forthcoming in encouraging Island property owners to preserve their property. It helps to preserve the character of the community and provides economic benefits to the City and to the property owner.

Recommendation (Long Term): Inform the public about the benefits of building/renovating/maintaining structures that are appropriate and complementary to existing structures.

Recommendation (Long Term): Although designation of historic district(s) on Peaks Island does not appear to be feasible, designation of conservation districts, which are far less restrictive than historic districts, may be more appropriate. A group of property owners in the Trefethen-Evergreen neighborhood has had initial talks with the City about this possibility. These talks should be encouraged to be continued.

2) Objective: Increase efforts to inform the public (year-round and seasonal residents and day visitors) of the Island's rich heritage.

Recommendation (Short Term): Encourage the owners of Island "landmarks" (Greenwood Garden, the Eighth Maine Regiment Memorial Hall, the Dayburn Casino[Trefethen-Evergreen Improvement Association], and Battery Steele) to pursue recognition as a Greater Portland Landmark and/or listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Owners of two of these buildings have expressed interest in such recognition.

Recommendation (Short Term and On-going): Encourage residents to actively preserve historical materials and traditions described in the Historic Resources section of this report. Support the Fifth Maine Regiment Museum's efforts to preserve and interpret
Peaks Island history through its sponsorship of guest speakers, exhibits, publications, and other activities.

Recommendation (Long Term and On-Going): Encourage the Fifth Maine Regiment Museum to continue its efforts to establish an historic marker program that will recognize sites/buildings that are historically significant on the Island.

Recommendation (Long Term): Encourage the Fifth Maine, the Peaks Island Land Preserve, and the City of Portland to evaluate the feasibility of converting one of the World War II observation towers to an “educational facility” where the public could learn about open space conservation and the Island’s military past as well as enjoy the magnificent view from the top floor. This could generate revenue if admission were charged to enter the tower.

###
X. Public Facilities

Introduction:
Public facilities affect the lives of all who visit and reside on Peaks Island. The unique nature of Island living places more importance on these facilities than comparable mainland facilities since those residents and visitors have no alternative facilities that are easily accessible. In addition to the usual issues of past practices, cost and maintenance, public facilities on Peaks Island prompt considerable public comment. Much of that commentary centers on the usual conflict of taxes paid and facilities provided. However, more conflict arises when the City adds public facilities to satisfy the Island public’s needs, and more people come to the Island. When facilities are inadequate, those people who visit or reside on the Island are inconvenienced at best. This chapter explores alternatives and offers suggestions.

Data Sources:
The data used to inventory our community’s public facilities came from:
1. City of Portland Assessor
2. City of Portland Parks and Recreation
3. Peaks Island Branch Library
4. Friends of Peaks Island Library Surveys/Focus Groups
5. Peaks Island Elementary School
6. City of Portland Public Works
7. Central Maine Power

Findings & Analysis:
There are 66 tax-exempt buildings or lots on Peaks Island. The City of Portland owns six of the buildings and 19 of the lots, while the others are owned by non-profit organizations such as churches and veteran’s organizations. This report addresses these six buildings, since the public can use them. It also mentions the former electric power plant owned by the Central Maine Power Company.

The Community Building houses the Public Safety Facility, the Library, the Community Room and the Island’s only two public restrooms. The Public Safety Facility, open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, is staffed by two Portland Police officers crossed trained in fire technology. In addition, one officer on each shift is certified by the State of Maine as an Emergency Medical Technician.

The Library is open 20 hours per week and served 20,806 people who borrowed 32,189 items from July 2001 thru June 2002. The Library is also used approximately 38 hours a month during the normal hours for pre-school activities, movies, and discussion groups and on occasion, for small group meetings when the Community Room is not available.

The volunteer Friends of the Peaks Island Library researched the Library’s services as a result of the increased use of the Library’s computers, demand for more audio books, CDs, videos and increased circulation. Research revealed considerable support for opening the Library more days and for increasing its hours of operation as well as for increasing its physical space. More space would enable more room to read, more children’s areas and more room for computers, more books and periodicals and other equipment. Space is also needed for quiet work
and study areas and for enough space to separate adults and children. The Peaks Island Environment Center also needs space to house its operations.

The Community Room is available for meetings and is available by reservation from the City's Parks and Recreation Department. During the month of June 2000 it was used approximately 90 hours by 19 organizations.

The Peaks Island Elementary School plays a critical role in the community and every effort should be made by the City of Portland to keep it open. Having a neighborhood school is a large attraction for young families, families that provide the backbone for sustaining our community. The loss of the School would cause irreparable damage to the community's vitality and stability. The School served approximately 50 students in grades K-5 during the 2001-2002 school year. In addition, the School is used by the Portland Parks and Recreation Department 12 hours per month during the winter. Adult Education classes met 36 hours during the 2001-2002 school year. Summer fish camp was also held for 2 weeks during the summer of 2001.

The Transfer Station on Brackett Avenue is open 7:30 AM to 3:00PM Tuesday thru Saturday from Memorial Day to September 15. From then until Memorial Day, it is open 7:30AM to 3:00PM Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. The Public Works Dept. building is open 7:00 AM to 3:30 PM Monday through Friday.

The City owns the Sewage Treatment Plant and leases it to the Portland Water District. It is not open to the public. Respondents to the 2002 Peaks Island Community Survey and many participants at the August 4th Community Workshop called for more public restrooms. During the Summer of 2002, the City placed two portable toilets beside the Treatment Plant. However, many Islanders want a more permanent solution to this issue. Employees at Island businesses are constantly asked for access to their private business restrooms.

The Peaks Island Health Center building at 26 Sterling Street is owned by the City which provides it rent-free to the non-profit Casco Bay Health Center, which in turn supports a private medical practice and dental clinic.

The Central Maine Power Company (CMP) owns a large, two-story brick building that formerly housed an electric power generating plant that served Peaks Island. Since power now comes from the mainland via undersea electric cables, the CMP building has been stripped and all but abandoned. Its history includes considerable coal dust use, which led to an environmental cleanup in 1999. The building sits on a prime piece of real estate that abuts a handsome sandy beach and faces Little Diamond Island. This plan suggests consideration and exploration of alternate uses for this valuable property, including multi-unit housing or recreation.

The State of Maine, Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, provides Peaks Island with the services of a game biologist to coordinate plans to keep wildlife in balance.

During the past five years a number of infrastructure projects funded by the City of Portland have benefited Peaks Island. These projects include an upgrade of the Army Wharf, a new transfer station and Public Works barn that includes a bay for an additional fire truck,
repairing the Centennial Street boat ramp, sewer extensions, rebuilding the school playground, ordering an additional fire truck, donating the land and value of the Sterling Street Health Center towards the Senior Housing/Health Center project, and placing many city owned parcels under easement. Additional services added during the past five years and funded annually by the City of Portland that benefit the Island, include an Island and Neighborhood administrator to the City Manager’s staff; one full-time and one half-year on-Island Parks and Recreation staff members, and brown-tail moth and deer population control.

As a Housing and Community Development funds-eligible neighborhood, Peaks Island has had access to monies not available for City use in more affluent neighborhoods. The Peaks Island Children's Workshop receives a grant annually from this source, and is likely to continue to be eligible, even as the Peaks neighborhood was deemed ineligible for HCD funds in March 2003.

1) Objective for Public Facilities: Keep the Peaks Island Elementary School open.

2) Objective for Public Facilities: Provide Islanders with public facilities that make the Island more comfortable for both residents and visitors.

Recommendation (Immediate): Create and maintain two permanent, year-round public toilets at the Sewage Treatment Plant and Transfer Station.

Recommendation (Long Term): Explore alternate use of the Central Maine Power plant, such as a community or teen center. This facility could house offices for Island organizations, and an arts center.

3) Objective for Public Facilities: Keep public facilities up-to-date and adequate to their purposes.
XI. Population and Demographics

Introduction:

Understanding Peaks Island’s population, and how it may change, is an integral component of the comprehensive plan. Many of the objectives and recommendations of other task teams depend upon population projections and trends. Anticipating population growth can help us prepare for future changes, such as housing development and land use. The goal of the population task team was to inventory population data to develop recommendations for the neighborhood-based plan.

Data Sources:
1. U.S. Census Bureau
2. 2002 Peaks Island Community Survey

Findings/ Analysis:

A) Population Characteristics

Peaks Island has two sets of population figures, year-round and seasonal. The question of seasonal population is of interest to Islanders, but obtaining accurate information on seasonal residents is beyond our ability at this time. We can assume the seasonal population is sizeable given the fact that 458, or 52.5%, of the Island’s housing units were designated as seasonal in the 2000 Census.

Since 1970, Peaks Island’s population has grown from 749 people to 843, a 12.6% increase. Furthermore, between 1970 and 2000, the average household size on the Island decreased from 2.72 people per household to 2.12, a −6.6% decrease. Additionally, during the same time period, the number of households, or occupied housing units, increased from 346 to 396, a 14.45% increase. A drop in household size combined with an increase in households, increases the demand for housing.

During the 1990s much of Peaks’ 9% population growth was in the 40 to 64 age group, which grew by 60% and now accounts for almost 40% of the population. Explaining the reason for these trends is complicated and requires more data beyond anecdotal evidence, but needs to be explored in order to make predictions about future growth on the Island. In addition, we need to find ways to retain and support our young adults and families.

During the past ten years we have lost population between the ages of 20 and 39. The drop is particularly evident in the 25 to 34 year old age group. This age bracket encompasses the change from young adulthood to the establishment of young families, or potential young families. What can explain the significant drop in numbers among this portion of our population? Many feel that the rising cost of living, particularly taxes and the price of a home, coupled with the lack of affordable year-round rentals, explains the drop in young adults. Other chapters of this document will explore this issue at length but it is important to emphasize that our diversity, including age groups, is an essential component of our community; every effort should be made to preserve it. The continued loss of our young people could spell disaster for the community and
is a pressing problem that will require creative problem-solving by the community as well as the City.

Unfortunately, there is not an accurate measure of the number of people on the Island during the summer at a given time. One rough measure is the total number of passenger trips to and from the Island on Casco Bay Lines during the summer months, which has increased from 231,425 in 1995 to 269,893 in 2001.

The percentage of Island residents that are dependents has remained steady for the past thirty years after a sharp rise between 1970 and 1980. Overall, Peaks Island’s population is older than many other Portland neighborhoods. The median age of residents in 2000 was 42.2 years, while the median age of Portland residents was 35.7. Much of the population growth during the past ten years has been among older members of the community. If this trend continues, we will have a much older population in ten years. Older populations are common to many islands and highlight the need to support aspects of the community that attract and sustain families with children while providing services to our seniors, many of whom are life-long residents, so that they can continue to live on the Island if they so wish. The planned Senior Housing Units are an extremely positive step towards keeping our seniors here on the Island.

Enrollment at the Peaks Island Elementary School, which now serves Grades K-5, has fluctuated over the years. When it served Grades K-8, as many as 100 students attended the school. Over the last few years the average enrollment is 50 students.

The median household income on Peaks Island in 1999 was $40,184. The median for the City of Portland, including Peaks Island, was $35,650.

###
XII. Housing

Introduction:
Historically, Peaks Island cycles through eras of being a popular destination; the consequent building trend that follows is not new. Earlier this century, the absence of zoning and building codes and the abundance of affordable land, encouraged building of lightly constructed cottages and houses built on stone foundations or piers. Most of these scant houses were later improved with electrification, indoor plumbing and rudimentary insulation, thus enabling year-round use. Little, if anything, however, was done to the structures. 2-by-4 joists and rafters were common; but these dwellings have survived well beyond their original expectations. Up until five years ago, many of these cottages offered for sale were the last “starter homes” to be seen on Peaks. The purpose of the housing task team was:
1. Inventory the past and current housing situation on the Island, in order to;
2. Write recommendations that will provide guidance to the community and City officials to assure future housing affordability.

Data Sources:
The housing task team gathered data from a number of sources including:
1. 2002 City of Portland tax assessor data
2. 2000 U.S. Census
3. City of Portland Housing Comprehensive Plan
4. 2002 Peaks Island Community Survey

Findings:
A) Housing Units
The number of housing units on the Island has shown a steady increase during the last twenty years. As of May 2002, the City of Portland tax assessor’s office lists 431 single-family homes, 20 two-family homes, and one three-family home. Additionally, there are 467 seasonal homes on Peaks. These homes are not classified as one-, two-, or three-family homes. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there are 871 housing units, a 20% increase from 1980. Almost all, 94%, of these homes are 1-unit, detached dwellings. The median number of rooms per dwelling on Peaks is 5.6. Furthermore, Peaks Island’s housing stock is old; over 82% of the homes on the Island were built before 1959.

Like all other communities, Peaks Island has both renters and homeowners. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there are 300 owner-occupied and 96 renter-occupied units on the Island, a 39.5% and 113.3% increase, respectively, from 1970. There are less than 20 houses that rent year-round. Tenants who rent houses in off-peak typically have to vacate between July and Labor Day.

The increasing number of homes is a concern to many Island residents. As the number of homes increases, particularly on the Backshore, there is a sense that the character of the Island community is changing. 70% of households that responded to the community survey felt that development/new housing starts has become a threat to the quality of life on Peaks; for many the increasing number of large homes that are so different from the historical character of the Island intensifies the sense of rapid community change.
B) Housing Costs

There is no denying that housing on Peaks Island is expensive. The median value of a home on Peaks Island is $152,000. Census data from 2000 illustrates sharply rising housing costs in Portland and Peaks Island mirrors this trend. During much of the 1990s housing prices on Peaks Island remained quite stable followed by a sharp upswing beginning in 1998. Between 1989 and 2000, the sale price for a seasonal home increased from $48,500 to $117,500. The price of a single-family home showed similar growth; the price increased from $128,000 in 1989 to $180,000 in 2001.

Additionally, Peaks Island homeowners pay quite a bit in monthly owner costs. 48% of the homeowners on the Island have a monthly mortgage payment between $700 and $1,499. Furthermore, 40% of homeowners pay over 25% of their household income for monthly owner costs.

Today, virtually all of the starter homes have been purchased and upgraded a little, and were they to be sold, would be out of reach to the middle-income buyer. Because of zoning size and setback restrictions, many of these starter homes on the Island can only be minimally expanded to accommodate an average family.

The lack of year-round rental opportunities on the Island means that a new family must buy or build a new home if they wish to live full-time on the Island. This hurdle is often too hard for young families to surmount and if the lack of affordable housing persists, the population will continue to age and the number of families will decline, thus threatening the viability of the School. Rents for seasonal houses vary from $600 to $1200 monthly and the median is $725 per month. There are about eight non-conforming studio-type rentals, and about 20 one- or two-bedroom apartments within an apartment complex for $550 to $750. If one can find a rental unit on the Island, the cost can be quite a burden: almost one-quarter of renters pay over 50% of their yearly income for rent.

Solutions to the housing situation are fairly limited and some are similar to those for the mainland neighborhoods of Portland. These include “in-law apartments” to make more affordable units available to rent and “infill zoning” designed to promote construction of additional units on existing properties. Task team members have looked at several sites on the Island that might be appropriate for moderate-income, lower-cost housing. Additionally, some preliminary investigations have been undertaken of non-profit housing corporations and what one on Peaks might resemble. An eleven unit affordable senior housing complex is planned for the former site of the City Public Works barn on Brackett Avenue. Groundbreaking is hoped for the fall of 2003, and occupancy in the spring of 2004. It will be built and operated by the non-profit, Volunteers of America.

###
XIII. The Economy

Introduction:

The economy plays an integral role in determining the viability of a community. While it is often difficult to confidently forecast short-term economic changes, the community economy must be understood in order to make household and population predictions.

Peaks Island's close proximity to Portland dramatically affects Islanders' employment options. Unlike other islands, Peaks Island does not rely heavily on one on-Island industry or economic sector for employment, but we are tied closely to the fate of Portland's economy. While this may provide a buffer against drastic cyclical shifts in our economic base, it still is important to grasp the workings of the on-Island economy. The goal of the economy task team was to inventory and describe Peaks Island's economy.

Data Sources:
To assess Peaks Island's economy we utilized data from a variety of sources such as:
1. The U.S. Census Bureau
2. The City of Portland assessor
3. The City of Portland City code
4. The 2002 Peaks Island Community Survey

Findings & Analysis:
A) Zoning

Current zoning laws allow business only within the Island business, or I-B, zone. Two areas on the Island are zoned I-B. One runs roughly parallel to Island Avenue from Torrington/Oak Avenue to the head of Centennial Street rear; the other surrounds the Trefethen Evergreen Improvement Association property. The purpose of the Island business zone is to provide an area for retail and service businesses that serve the Island. In addition to the restrictions enumerated by the I-B zoning laws, shore land regulations apply to any land use within 250 feet of the high water line.

Results from the community survey and community planning workshop indicate that City zoning laws should focus on protecting existing Island businesses, while discouraging business expansion into residential zones. These results indicate that the goals Peaks Islanders have for our zoning laws mirror those prescribed by the City.

1) Objective for Zoning: City of Portland zoning laws need to help sustain existing Island business while discouraging business expansion into non-business zones.

2) Objective for Zoning: Zoning laws should limit business location in IR-1 and IR-2 zones, while encouraging business location in the I-B zone.

Recommendation (Long Term): City of Portland officials should work with community members to investigate possibility of adding further restrictions to the IR-1 and IR-2 zones.

3) Objective for Zoning: Ensure that zoning laws never permit the creation of an industrial zone on the Island.
Recommendation (Immediate): Community groups such as PINA and PILP should work with City officials to amend the zoning laws to forbid the creation of an industrial zone.

B) Where do Peaks Islander’s work?
The majority of Islander’s make their living by working in Portland. According to the Community survey, the bulk of commuters to the mainland are year-round residents, yet there are a fair number of seasonal resident commuters, 22% of the respondents.

Between 1994 and 1999, the number of residents that made their living on the Island remained steady, while the number of establishments has fluctuated. The number of employees on the Island increased during those five years from 53 to 59, though this number may actually underestimate the real number of workers. There are many people who are self-employed or make their living providing services that may not show up in census figures and therefore the U.S. census figures may not accurately reflect the total number of individuals who make their living on the Island. During the same period, the number of businesses on the Island increased both in number and type.

4) Objective for Where Peaks Islander’s work: Peaks Island should support a healthy, vibrant on-Island economy that provides community members with quality jobs.

Recommendation (Immediate): Periodically survey residents, both seasonal and year-round, about preferences in order to gauge the economic needs of the community.

Recommendation (Immediate): Encourage Island residents to shop or purchase items from local merchants.

5) Objective for Where Peaks Islander’s work: Ensure that Peaks Island residents are able to maximize the capability of new technologies to work from their homes, if they so desire.

Recommendation (Long Term): Work with Portland Adult Education to bring information technology courses to Peaks Island.

C) Work Force Characteristics
The work force is the number of people in the community who are able to work, not the number that is employed. There may be people who for whatever reason do not choose to work, people still in school or raising children, but who could work if needed.

On Peaks Island, there are 543 people, 294 females and 249 males, that fall between the ages of 15 and 64. 369 of these people are estimated to have completed up to high school and 174 to have completed college or higher. 365 people were estimated to be employed either on the Island or the mainland.

D) Economic Climate
A community’s economy can be separated into two pieces: the export base and the secondary, or service base. The export base is comprised of businesses or services that bring
dollars into the community from the outside. Economic growth depends on the amount of money a community earns through the export of goods or services.

The secondary base provides the community with day-to-day services and goods. The health of the secondary base is strongly tied to the strength and success of the export base. If the export base grows, there is a subsequent increase in demand for goods and services provided by the secondary base, which in turn helps the secondary base grow.

The two largest sectors of the on-Island economy are the service and retail trade industry; between 1994 and 1999, the majority of business establishments on Peaks Island were related to either of those two industries. During those years each has remained extremely prevalent, but there has been a shift in the number. The number of service industry businesses has shown a sharp increase while there has been a corresponding decrease in the number of retail trade businesses. A related drop in the percentage of total businesses that are either retail or service-related is seen as well.

Because the census data related to this subject lags two years behind, it is difficult to determine if this trend has continued. Furthermore, a five-year window does not provide an adequate frame of reference to conclude if this trend represents a structural or cyclical shift in our economic base. More data needs to be collected before a determination can be made.

The vast majority of businesses on the Island employ between 1 and 4 employees. Whereas the number of businesses employing more than that number has remained minimal and quite constant, the number of “1-4” employee businesses has fluctuated greatly, mirroring the fluctuations for the entire Island. Current trends suggest that if economic growth continues, it will be either self-employed individuals or small businesses employing few people. This highlights the fact that decisions, zoning or otherwise, need to be made that support small business operation on the Island; even the addition of four jobs on the Island is a significant increase.

Due to the fact that Peaks Island is a popular tourist destination, the export base is not comprised of manufacturing or agricultural activities that one might find in a mainland community. The majority of the export base on Peaks Island is retail businesses only open during the summer. An important next step is determining how many people these businesses employ, how much income these businesses receive, and how these numbers have changed during the past 10 to 15 years. Results from the zoning section of the community survey indicate a strong feeling that Islanders want the number of businesses to remain near the present number, but the type of business that Islanders want is not clear. This is an important question to answer because ensuring that the secondary base remains a viable and healthy component of the economy is vital to maintaining a year-round community.

Both first quarter payroll and annual payroll increased between 1994 and 1999, most notably between 1997 and 1999. The source of this trend is not clear. In addition to the rapid increase in payroll from 1997 to 1999, there is an increase in the number of employees from 51 to 59. Furthermore, between 1998 and 1999, four more businesses were established, including two more “1-4” employee type and one “5-9” employee type. Though these increases appear to
be linked with the rise in payroll, further studies need to be undertaken to fully grasp the relationship.

6) Objective for Economic Climate: Ensure that Peaks Island has a mix of businesses that focus on the year-round population.

E) Cost of Living

The rising cost of living, and the consequent detrimental effect on the community, is one of the greatest concerns for the community. A number of issues affect the cost of living on Peaks Island. The price of parking in town and shipping an item as freight adds a cost to almost every purchase, and these factors, combined with high property taxes make Peaks an expensive place to live. Comparable homes are more expensive on the Island than in the City. The price of Casco Bay Lines summer commuter boat tickets has risen four of the past ten years. Winter commuter book ticket prices have remained unchanged since 1988. Within the last eight months Islanders lost what was once a free parking lot on India Street. Survey responses emphasize that the rising cost of living is forcing working people, young families, and seniors on a fixed income off of the Island, with grievous implications for the future of the community.

Property taxes have risen significantly in the past decade and will continue in wake of the budget crisis facing the City of Portland. The response, “high taxes are driving people off the Island” is found throughout the community survey. No longer can a family hope to live and work on Peaks Island and still afford a home here. As a result, more and more homes are bought by people “from away” who can afford the high price. Revaluation promises to exacerbate an already precarious situation for many residents if property taxes increase dramatically.

7) Objective for Cost of Living: Steps must be taken to prevent rising cost of living from drastically changing the community’s character, particularly rising property taxes.

Recommendation (Immediate): Write, call, and e-mail our City, State, and National representatives and implore them to seek solutions to the property tax issue, so that Island residents are not forced from their homes.

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