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Abstract

The Long Island Sound Coastal Management Program offers a comprehensive vision for the preservation and development of the Long Island Sound coast in the State of New York. It focuses on four main issues: “The Developed Coast,” which seeks to incorporate the natural landscape of the sound with community development; “The Natural Coast,” which aims to achieve sustainable use of the Sound’s natural resources; “The Public Coast,” which has the goal of providing more public access to the Sound; and finally, “The Working Coast,” which encourages the reinvigoration of the Sound’s working waterfront by providing more infrastructure to promote jobs and products.

Resource

LONG ISLAND SOUND
Coastal Management Program
your coast, your future

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Introduction 1

INTRODUCTION

The Waterfront Revitalization of Coastal Areas and Inland Waterways Act, Article 42 of the Executive Law, is the foundation for the New York State Coastal Management Program. The legislative findings declare that: The social and economic well-being and the general welfare of the people of the state are critically dependent upon the preservation, enhancement, protection, development and use of the natural and man-made resources of the state's coastal area and inland waterways. The legislature further finds that it is in the interest of the people of the state that coordinated and comprehensive policy and planning for preservation, enhancement, protection, development and use of the state's coastal and inland waterway resources take place to insure the proper balance between natural

resources and the need to accommodate the needs of population growth and economic development.

THE LONG ISLAND SOUND COASTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The Long Island Sound Coastal Management Program builds on the long-standing partnership of state and local government in the management of coastal resources. The program draws its authority from Article 42 of the Executive Law. It refines the existing New York State Coastal Management Program and incorporates the existing array of programs and laws governing activities in the coastal area. The Long Island Sound Coastal Management Program is based on public consensus and close consultation with the state agencies whose programs and activities affect the coast. Finally, it integrates capabilities of state and local government into an enforceable program for the Sound. The Long Island Sound Coastal Management Program replaces the state Coastal Management Program for the Sound shorelines of Westchester County, New York City to the Throgs Neck Bridge, Nassau County, and Suffolk County. Its specially tailored standards are used for consistency decisions made by the Department of State and other state agencies except where there is an approved Local Waterfront Revitalization Program. The program defines what constitutes a balance between appropriate and needed economic development and protection and restoration of the natural and living resources of the Sound. It complements the Long Island Sound Study Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan, which focuses on water quality in the deep waters of the Sound, by addressing the upland watershed and harbor and nearshore waters. Local government priorities for the coast, expressed in local plans and in Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs, are supported by the Long Island Sound Coastal Management Program in two important ways. First, it establishes priorities and targets state capital and program efforts to better reflect approved Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs. Second, it provides resource protection and development information for use in periodic updates of approved Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs and in the development of new Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs within the region. Currently, of the 50 municipalities along the New York State Long Island Sound shore, ten have approved Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs and 14 are in various stages of developing 2 *Introduction* a local program. These communities, listed below, contain approximately 82 percent of the 304 miles of shoreline in the region.

- Village of Port Chester*

- Town of Mamaroneck*/

- Village of Larchmont*

- Village of Mamaroneck*

- City of Rye*

- City of New Rochelle

- City of New York*
- Town of North Hempstead
- Village of Manorhaven
- Village of Sea Cliff
- City of Glen Cove
- Town of Oyster Bay
- Village of Bayville
- Town of Huntington
- Village of Old Field
- Village of Lloyd Harbor*
- Village of Northport
- Town of Smithtown*
- Village of Nissequogue*/
- Village of Head-of-the-Harbor*
- Town of Brookhaven
- Village of Port Jefferson
- Town of Riverhead
- Town of Southold

*approved Local Waterfront Revitalization Program

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Chapter 1

CHARTING the COURSE

Long Island Sound is one of New York State's great treasures. The Sound and the land surrounding it is a complex area of natural beauty, bountiful resources, and a rich living

history found in its buildings, villages, and harbors. It is one of the most intensely populated areas in the nation, and one of the wealthiest. These qualities continue to attract people and development to the Long Island Sound coast, placing demands on both the natural and built environments. Decisions made today will affect how the Sound will look in the future. All New Yorkers must meet the "challenge of the coast" to restore and preserve its benefits for present and future generations—to achieve a clean environment while providing opportunities for economic growth.

A VISION FOR LONG ISLAND SOUND

The vision for the Long Island Sound coastal area encompasses the tapestry of natural, economic, and cultural resources that make it unique—

A Long Island Sound coastal area enriched by *enhancing* community character, *reclaiming* the quality of natural resources, *reinvigorating* the working waterfront, and *connecting* people to the Sound.

To better understand the significance of and opportunities presented by the land and water resources of the Sound, the region is viewed from four perspectives—the developed coast, the natural coast, the public coast, and the working coast. Each coast must be considered for both its own intrinsic value, and its interrelationship with the other coasts. These four coasts are the organizational foundation of the Long Island Sound Coastal Management Program.

THE DEVELOPED COAST

Theme: Enhance community character by improving the quality of existing development, promoting a sense of connection to the Sound, and focusing growth and investment to preserve the positive relationship between the built and natural landscapes and between existing and new development.

A unique sense of place is captured in the mix of historic structures, traditional harbors, residential areas, open spaces, working waterfronts, agricultural land, and tree-shaded country roads that makes up the landscape of the Sound communities. These and other valuable characteristics contribute to "a sense of the Sound" that must be protected and enhanced.

Improving the quality of existing development. Long Island Sound is a largely stable, developed coast. Existing development can be enhanced to improve environmental quality throughout the Sound and to meet the demand for more liveable communities along the Sound's shoreline.

Promoting a sense of connection to the Sound. Within each community, links to the Sound's rich cultural and natural legacy should be forged at every opportunity. Development should create a coastal focus that emphasizes its connection to the Sound.

Waterfront uses should contribute to the coastal ambiance of a community and substantially advance physical and visual access to the shore for the general public.

4 Charting the Course

Focusing new growth and investment. The natural and working landscapes along the Sound's shore frame and define communities. The contrast and interplay of the green and the built environment should be maintained and celebrated as essential components of community character. The quality of existing development and of new growth and investment must emphasize excellence in design in order to enrich the Sound's communities. New development, redevelopment, and existing development, both public and private, should:

- protect vistas and views of the Sound and its embayments
- provide a sense of continuity with the past
- emphasize massing and clustering of structures and uses
- consider relationships among buildings, open spaces, and the water
- maintain a scale compatible with the surrounding community or landscape
- include a range of landscapes from wild and natural to designed
- minimize conflicts with neighboring uses
- respect and incorporate cultural and built heritage
- protect distinctive places

THE NATURAL COAST

Theme: Reclaim the value and achieve sustainable use of the Sound's natural resources by improving the quality and function of ecological systems, respecting the dynamics of shoreline change, and providing high quality coastal waters.

The Sound's ecological systems, shoreline, and coastal waters sustain and complement human activities throughout the Sound. The bond that connects people to the natural world and their responsibility as members of the natural world must be recognized.

Improving the quality and function of ecological systems. The Sound's major ecological systems must be restored and stewardship of the living mantle overlying both the Sound's natural and developed landscapes must be improved. Enhancing the Sound's ecological systems should be based on principles of:

- preserving the diversity of native plant and animal species
- protecting wetlands and significant habitats
- restoring native plant and animal populations and biological productivity
- safeguarding vulnerable species and rare or exemplary communities
- managing potentially imperiled natural areas

Respecting the dynamics of shoreline change. The coast is not inherently hazardous: more often, it is the inappropriate human interventions in the natural coastal processes of the shoreline that create a hazard for human life and property. Avoiding inappropriate decisions for locating structures is the first and most reasonable way to respect the dynamics of changing shorelines.

Allowing the Sound's shorelines to operate as natural dynamic systems and restoring these natural processes also provide benefits of public access, scenic beauty, wetland and water quality improvements, and erosion and flood protection. Human interference with the Sound's shoreline dynamics will continue to result in a loss of these and other benefits—at public cost. Accepting these costs is only appropriate in areas where public benefits clearly outweigh public costs.

Providing high quality coastal waters. Both watershed approaches and efforts targeting specific pollution sources are necessary to reverse the pervasive pollution that continues to degrade the Sound's waters. Improving the Sound's water quality will depend on reducing pollutants arising

Charting the Course 5 from existing development and will require participation of all levels of government, and the private sector. Several sources of pollution will need to be reduced to improve water quality, including:

- nitrogen loads from municipal treatment facilities
- combined sewer overflows
- vessel waste discharges
- discharges of floatable materials
- nonpoint sources

THE PUBLIC COAST

Theme: Connect people to the Sound and its public resources by improving visual and physical access and by providing a diversity of recreational opportunities.

The Sound coast is one of the most densely populated landscapes on the eastern seaboard, but few people are able to enjoy the expanses of the Sound's shoreline and waters. Only three state recreational facilities exist. Communities providing waterfront access based on residency requirements and overused public facilities are common. Each of these conditions inhibits connection of the public to the Sound. Increasing access for the public will require innovative approaches.

Improving visual access. Visual access to open waters of the Sound, expanses of natural resource areas including wetlands and forest lands, village waterfronts, and working coastlines are all important reliefs to densely developed areas. Limited physical access to the shore heightens the importance of maintaining and creating visual access to the Sound. The following opportunities must be advanced to increase visual access:

- Public areas offering views of the Sound should be incorporated into a visual access system that includes scenic roads and viewing points.
- Waterfront development, including landscaping, should not create a visual barrier or intrude on the water's edge or surface.
- Vegetation, particularly mature trees, should be retained as elements that frame vistas of the Sound, its embayments, and landscapes.

Improving physical access. Creative partnerships with local government and land conservation groups that would provide access must be advanced. Public open spaces should be connected through a system of greenways and blueways to expand access opportunities beyond a series of unrelated access points. Existing public access areas must be protected and improved, and new public access areas developed. Existing public access facilities should be upgraded and expanded through maintenance and capital improvement programs. Additional opportunities on state-owned land that may be suitable for public access should be advanced. Access along public lands and waters is a right that must be protected. Uses that unreasonably interfere with appropriate public use of its foreshore, underwater lands, or the water's surface directly impair the public's right to enjoy their resources.

Providing a diversity of recreational opportunities. The public lands and waters of the Sound offer a significant recreational resource which is fundamental to the character of many of the communities along its shore. Recreational and access facilities should reflect the myriad active and passive recreational opportunities that the Sound offers. The needs of an aging population and expanded opportunities for disabled users should be highlighted. In this area of the state's coast, with limited recreational facilities in relation to its potential and demand, a broad array of recreation and access options will be created by recognizing and seizing the many small and nontraditional opportunities present along the Sound shore.

THE WORKING COAST

Theme: Reinvigorate the Sound's working waterfront, its jobs and products, at appropriate locations by protecting uses dependent on the Sound, furnishing necessary infrastructure, providing business and marketing assistance, and promoting efficient harbor operation.

The Sound and its embayments are valuable components of the state's economy. The waters of the Sound are heavily used for commercial navigation and recreational boating; the living resources of the Sound are harvested for food; the shoreline provides many locations for waterdependent commercial and transportation uses. Protecting and sustaining this infrastructure will result in both economic and environmental benefits.

Protecting uses dependent on the Sound. Water-dependent uses—waterborne transportation of both passengers and cargo, commercial fishing, aggregate transshipment, ship repair, and petroleum transfer—must be maintained and their economic survival enhanced to ensure that basic regional needs are accommodated.

Furnishing necessary infrastructure. Infrastructure needs for this valuable component of the state's industrial and transportation network vary widely and can best be supported in specific areas where these water-dependent uses are concentrated. Identifying these areas of concentration and coordinating the infrastructure needs is one of the strategies that will support revitalization of the working waterfront. Harbors also require infrastructure to support water-dependent uses. This infrastructure includes commercial fishing docks and facilities; vessel maintenance services for ships, tugboats, and recreational craft; and safe navigation channels.

Providing business and marketing assistance. Waterfront businesses can benefit by locating in developed waterfront centers which do not contain the most important concentrations of natural resources and, therefore, where there are greater opportunities for expansion. Marketing assistance is another means of economic support for the working waterfront, including development of export markets for commercial fishery products. Environmental quality needs to be improved, and simultaneously, regulatory processes can be expedited, if they affect viability of water-dependent businesses.

Promoting efficient harbor operation. Harbor management plans and regulations can be used to analyze, and minimize, the growing conflicts among harbor uses and between harbor uses and natural resources in the harbors. Planning for harbor infrastructure is also necessary, particularly for dredging of harbor channels, shoreline stabilization, and removal or reuse of derelict structures.

IMPLEMENTING THE VISION

The Long Island Sound Coastal Management Program sets a clear direction for state government to coordinate its actions and resources to address environmental and economic concerns of the Sound coast. It also recognizes the critical partnership of the

state and local governments and the public in achieving this vision for the Sound. The Long Island Sound Coastal Management Program sets priorities for state action, in part, by concentrating state efforts on certain special places—waterfront redevelopment areas, regionally important natural areas, and maritime centers. For each of these special areas, and others as appropriate, the basic tools available to the state should be used, in cooperation with local governments, to accomplish agreed-upon, site-specific actions which integrate environmental protection, economic development, and research programs.