

Waterfront Central Zone Business Survey

Business Profile:

1) **Business Name:** 41 businesses, or 30% of the WCZ's businesses, responded to the survey.

2) **Contact Person:** Varied responses

3) **Type of Business:**

18% Vessel Services
 13% Other Marine-related Services
 11% Business Services
 11% Retail
 9% Wholesale seafood
 9% Government/Non-profit
 6% Manufacturing
 5% Harvester
 4% Marina
 2% Restaurant
 13% Other

4) **Service/Product Description:** Varied responses

5) **Market area for product or service:**

22% Portland
 19% New England
 18% National
 14% Southern Maine
 12% Maine
 10% International
 5% No response

6) a. **Does your business demand water access?** 56% Yes 39% No 5% No response

b. **Does your business serve the marine or fishing industry?** 76% Yes 24% No 5% No response

c. **How much of your business is dependent on marine related activities?**

22% None 2% Less than 10% 10% Between 10% to 49% 2% Between 50% to 74% 61% More than 75% 2% No response

7) **How long have you been in your current location?** Median = 12 years; Average = 20 years

8) **Why did you choose your present location on the Portland Waterfront for your business?**

Varied responses

9) **How many employees work at this location?** Average of 11 Full Time Average of 3 Part time

10) **Does the number of employees depend on the season?** 29% Yes 12% No 59% No response

Buildings and Land:

11) a. **What is the square footage of the floor space that you occupy?** Median of 1,700 Square Feet

b. **Where do your customers park?** Various responses

c. **Where do your employees park?**

85% On the pier or property owned or leased by your business

6% On site AND/OR leased lot

2% No off-street parking provided

7% No response

12) **Do you own or lease this space?** 17% Own 90% Rent

13) **Is your current space adequate for your business needs for the next three years?**

68% Yes 24% No 7% Not Certain

Business Plans:

14) **What are your business plans for the next three years?**

51% No changes anticipated 17% Expand space 0% Change mix of goods/services

37% Add employees 10% Renovation 0% Reduce employees

27% Invest in new equipment 7% Relocate away from the waterfront 0% Go out of business

24% Expand your market area 5% Relocate along the waterfront

15) **What is the most important business decision that you will make in the next three years?**

7	Relocation	2	Financing/investment
6	Expand	2	Future of fishing industry
3	Retirement	3	Other

Business Needs:

16) What are the benefits of your current business location? Varied responses

17) Are there any problems affecting your business in your current location?

7	Parking	3	Traffic	3	Lack of space	1	Other
5	Fishing regulations	3	High rents	2	Zoning		

18) Are there any goods, services or industries that would be helpful to your business?

Natural gas terminal, hardware store, repair, Xerox, Post Office, marine insurance, marine gear and supplies, small business & financial services, more mixed use on 2nd floors, anything other than marine

19) Are there any public infrastructure improvements that would be helpful to your business?

5	Parking	3	Utility improvements	2	Dredging	5	Other
3	Fish pier maintenance	2	Dockage	2	Marine waste disposal		

20) Are there any public services that would be helpful to your business?

Public relations, parking garage for aquarium, faster Fish Pier maintenance, traffic control & parking plan, predictable regulatory environment

21) Which are your most urgent financing priorities?

24%	Working capital
20%	Machinery & equipment
15%	Pier/wharf improvements
10%	Building
5%	Legal & accounting
2%	Land
0%	Technical assistance
44%	None identified

22) Have you encountered or do you expect to encounter any obstacles in financing your business expansion needs?

17% Yes 57% No 26% No response

23) If you have had trouble financing your business expansion needs, was it because:

3	Lenders were not familiar with the characteristics of your industry
2	Lenders were not able to finance the full amount needed for your project
2	Terms of loan programs were unacceptable
4	Other: Permitting, zoning, soft money

24) Would you use any of the following services if they were available free of charge in a facility on the waterfront?

7	Access to loan programs
6	Business counseling
6	Assistance with marketing
2	Access to computers
4	Access to the Internet
3	Access to business software applications
3	Other Business Services

Waterfront Central Zone Property Owner Questionnaire

9 of 26 property owners responded to the survey via mail or interview.

1. What are the occupied building uses on your property?

Lease rates range from a low of \$10 per month for first floor marine to a high of \$25 per square for first floor retail.

2. What space is currently vacant on your property?

6 Property owners reported no vacancies.
3 Property owners reported vacancies on the first floor as well as upper stories.

3. What types of parking do you provide?

8 Property owners provide on-site parking for marine and non-marine tenants.
3 Property owners lease parking off site.

4. What types of berthing do you provide?

3 Property owners provide berthing for commercial fishing.
3 Property owners provide berthing for commercial marine services.
2 Property owners provide berthing for recreational use.

5. What improvements have you made in the last five years?

5a. Have you deferred any necessary investments? What? How much? Why?

6. Are you planning to change or improve this property in the future?

	Improvements Accomplished			Deferred	Future	
	Piers	Average value	Purpose	Piers	Piers	Purpose
Buildings						
Renovation	6	\$100,000	Mixed	2	3	
New construction	3	\$3,466,000	Marine		2	Commercial offices/hotel
Expansion	1	\$150,000	Non-marine		2	Marine use
Replacement	1	\$150,000	Marine		2	
Pier						
Pilings, Decking & Fendering	4	\$153,000	Maintenance	2	4	
Floats	3	\$333,000	Replacement			
Dredging	2	\$35,000	Maintenance	1	1	
Extension	None					
Roadway	2					
Parking	2				1	Parking garage
Utilities	1					
Other	1		Hi-speed Internet			
Subdivide or sell property	None					

7. What challenges do you face in maintaining the viability of this property?

- 5 Property owners were concerned about generating enough revenue for on-going maintenance.
- 4 Property owners identified business attraction issues – 2, the lack of marine tenants, and 2, the desire to attract commercial and retail tenants.
- 2 Property owners cited the lack of parking.
- 2 Property owners were concerned about meeting expansion needs – their own and those of their tenants.
- 1 Property owner cited the high cost of dredging.

8. Is the current zoning in the Waterfront Central Zone helping you to protect marine-related uses on your property? Are there specific zoning changes you would like to recommend?

- 3 Property owners desired no changes.
- 2 Property owners identified some changes.
- 4 Property owners called for significant change.