

## Introduction

### What is a Master Plan?

This document presents Black Point's first community Master Plan. The Master Plan is intended to reflect the community's values and enables the Black Point Beach Club Association (BPBCA) to define its own strategy for maintaining a **Continuity of Purpose** and sustaining the high quality of life offered by the community for the next ten years and beyond. The Master Plan also contains a road map consisting of objectives, and action items that the community can implement to achieve its goals. This document is intended to be a "living document" that codifies existing or ongoing initiatives and serves as a blueprint for future decision making, while also maintaining flexibility to address unforeseen future challenges.

### Master Planning Process

The development of the Master Plan was overseen by the Master Plan Steering Committee made up of representatives from the Board of Governors and the community at large. Technical assistance was provided by the consulting firm, The SLAM Collaborative. The Steering Committee reviewed technical materials, provided feedback and direction to the consultant, and served as project ambassadors.

The Master Plan was developed over a roughly 18-month process. The project began in the summer of 2022 with an inventory of existing conditions and community assets. This was a "point in time" inventory that evaluated information related to land use, natural resources, coastal resources, infrastructure, and community facilities. This task identified key trends and conditions and potential focus areas that warranted a deeper dive as part of the planning process. For the full existing conditions report, please refer to Appendix B.

As a community-driven Master Plan, it was important that the planning process capture the opinions and concerns of residents. There was community involvement throughout the planning process. An online community survey was launched in fall of 2022 and 388 residents responded. Of those responses, there were 300 unique IP addresses.<sup>1</sup> It is estimated that roughly half of BPBCA households participated in the community survey.<sup>2</sup> The survey covered a broad range of topics including community strengths and weaknesses; beaches, boating, and piers; community facilities, and recreation; infrastructure; and land use and zoning. The community survey allowed the Steering Committee and consultant team to understand community sentiment and values that helped identify the Plan's focus areas. Survey results are included within the following narrative report; for full community survey results, please refer to Appendix A.

Based on aggregated feedback from the community survey, the consultant team formulated initial ideas for goals, objectives, and actions. Four overarching goals were developed, workshopped, and finalized by the steering committee with public feedback throughout the process. These goals focus on the themes of financial planning, governance, the waterfront, and quality of life.

- Improve the Financial Sustainability and Fiscal Accountability of the Association

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<sup>1</sup> In simple terms, an IP address, or Internet Protocol address, is like a unique home address for your computer or device on the internet. It's a set of numbers assigned to your connection location. This address is used for routing data to and from your device so that information can be sent and received accurately across the internet. IP addresses are not considered identifying information as they may change from time to time depending on your internet connection provider.

<sup>2</sup> No restrictions were placed on number of respondents per household. To retain anonymity, only IP address information was logged by the survey system. Typical expectations for online survey participation ranges between 20-40% depending on audience interest, demographics, and length of survey. As an approximate metric, 300 households out of 578 properties is 52%. It is worth understanding that of the 578 properties, several are empty lots or second properties.

- Strengthen and Build Organizational Efficiency and Structure to Support a Proactive, Collaborative, and Accountable Association Governance
- Invest in and Improve the Waterfront to Support Long-Term Resiliency and Community Access
- Foster a Healthy and Vibrant Lifestyle for All Community Members through Safe and Comfortable Access to Resources
- Invest, and Maintain our Land Based Community Assets and Right of Ways
- Maintain the Association's Rights and Assets as Set by Our Charter with the Legislature of the State of Connecticut to remain a private, Quasi-Municipality

Under each goal, a series of more detailed objectives and action items were developed. These items were reviewed by the Steering Committee and by the community at large. A public workshop to review the draft goals and objectives and capture valuable input on priorities was held on June 15, 2023 in the Association's clubhouse. Approximately 50 people attended in-person, and another 30 people participated in the online versions of the exercises. Participants shared their vision for the community, prioritized potential capital improvements, and provided feedback on the initial goals, objectives, and actions.

Incorporating feedback from the community survey, public workshop, and the Steering Committee, the consultant team developed the Master Plan inclusive of key findings and trends, a vision statement, goals, objectives, and actions.

## **History and Background**

The Black Point Beach Club Association was chartered by the Connecticut State Legislature in 1931. This charter establishes the community as a private community with membership based on property ownership within the established boundaries. The Association enjoys the rights of a special taxing district providing for the annual assessment of taxes upon the property owners with the proceeds directed toward the overall maintenance of the community's assets.

While this Master Plan reflects the first plan of this magnitude, this is not the first planning effort launched by the Association. Significant work was undertaken in the early 1980s to develop a coalition of beach associations within the town to address taxing concerns and water and sewer infrastructure. These efforts, led by longtime Black Point resident Mary Cahill, positioned the Association to enjoy significant growth and maintain the important community elements such as the beaches, groins, clubhouse, recreational opportunities, etc.

In 1984 a Long Range Planning Committee (Matthew Borelli, Chair) mailed a survey to 523 residents. (Appendix C) With 249 responses, the general themes were quite similar to those generated from the 2022 survey. BOG minutes in the 2000s periodically refer to long range planning and capital improvements (e.g., 2010 – Tom Kelly & Daniel Lemieux).

In 2020, a Long Range Planning group (Phil Lombardo, Rick Diachenko, et. al) engaged an engineer to assess the waterfront infrastructure and provide broad recommendations and cost estimates for maintenance and improvements to waterfront infrastructure. (Appendix D) Following on the heels of the Steel Groin rehabilitation (Steve Beauchene, et. al.) this information resulted in increasing a line in the annual budget for securing long-term capital improvement funding. Subsequent budgets have increased that funding line with the understanding that planned contributions to infrastructure funding are more palatable than significant one-off assessments.

Those previous efforts have provided an important foundation for this Master Plan and the Steering Committee is grateful to these earlier efforts and hopes this effort will continue to help the Association continue to thrive for generations to come.

## **Key Findings and Trends**

Throughout the Master Planning process, several key findings and trends emerged that informed the development of the goals, objectives, and actions. These items are summarized below.

### **Focus on the Beaches and Waterfront**

Throughout the Master Planning process, the beaches and waterfront were identified as the central element of the Association's identity. These assets serve as the recreational and social hub for the community and contribute greatly to Black Point's quality of life and sense of community.

As a coastal community, there are ongoing impacts of storms, coastal erosion, inundation, and intermittent flooding at beaches, sea walls, groins, and related infrastructure, and adjacent property. This results in a variety of short and long-term maintenance requirements, as well as potentially urgent damage of a less-predictable nature. Black Point will continue to experience - and will need to respond to - the impacts of these ongoing storms and coastal erosion.

Black Point must maintain and enhance the beaches and coastal infrastructure such as groins, seawalls, and stormwater infrastructure to avoid catastrophic property damage and loss of existing resources, as well as to protect against these natural threats. Many of these investments will be expensive and will require greater financial planning and foresight by the Association than has been done in the past. While financial planning for these necessary investments has accelerated over recent years, this Plan is intended to inform these necessary capital planning and implementation efforts.

### **Changing Demographics and Shift to Year-Round Living**

Historically, Black Point was primarily envisioned as a seasonal community. However, in recent decades there has been a growing shift towards year-round living. The community survey conducted in the fall of 2022 indicated that about half of the nearly 400 survey respondents were year-round residents. This is compared to the 1984 survey where 31% of the respondents were year-round residents. As Black Point's year-round population continues to grow, there may be increasing demand for services and facilities that support year-round use. The clubhouse is heated and recent efforts to provide additional insulation and temperature controls have been made. Additional investment may be necessary to support all-season programming and must be considered and balanced as part of the comprehensive needs and priorities of the community. Over the next ten years, Black Point will need to continue to balance the needs of its growing year-round population while still maintaining its accessibility for seasonal residents.

Black Point has a high share of residents over age 65. About 44% of survey respondents were age 65 years old and over, making it a more mature community than the state and Town as a whole.<sup>3</sup> Investments in facilities and infrastructure should be planned to support this aging population in the coming decade, as well as to provide amenities that meet modern living standards including increased accessibility, ensuring that Black Point continues to be an attractive place to live for residents of all ages and abilities.

### **Preserving a Sense of Community**

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<sup>3</sup> This characterization may not fully represent the overall age range in the community, but more likely represents the degree of time, engagement, and overall investment in the future of the community.

Throughout the Master Planning process, the strong sense of community was cited as a cornerstone of life in Black Point. The sense of community is fostered by Black Point's people, places, organizations, and events. Black Point has many multi-generational residents, and Black Point is rooted in history, traditions, community spirit that enhances the quality of life for residents of all ages. Community spaces such as the beaches, clubhouse, recreational facilities, walkable streets, and beach access ways serve as social hubs of the community and provide space for local organizations, social clubs, and seasonal community events. Over the next decade Black Point will continue to focus on maintaining its strong sense of community and supporting the places, organizations, and events that make Black Point a great place to live.

### **Vision Statement - Where Are We Going! Guiding Light!**

The Black Point Beach Club Association is a welcoming, year-round, private, beach community committed to providing a safe, healthy, and vibrant lifestyle for its residents. ~~We are committed to~~ **Our legacy and destiny commits us to** responsibly maintaining and improving our collective assets and fostering and growing our community's ~~social connections~~.

### **Mission Statement - Actionable Roadmap for the Vision - Purpose and Focus**

**The Black Point Beach Club Association implements sustainable short & long term financial plans to maintain and improve waterfront assets, recreational facilities & equipment and BPBCA public access ways! The BPBCA membership (home owners) rights and assets are enhanced by a responsive Board of Governors that keeps our Club private for the use of their members and guests.**

### **Goals, Objectives, and Actions**

#### **Goals - Outcomes Desired**

The Master Plan is organized around four overarching goals, which are described in detail on the following pages:

1. Improve the Financial Sustainability and Fiscal Accountability of the Association
2. Strengthen and Build Organizational Efficiency and Structure to Support a Proactive, Collaborative, and Accountable Association Governance
3. Invest in and Improve the Waterfront to Support Long-Term Resiliency and Community Access
4. Foster a Healthy and Vibrant Lifestyle for All Community Members through Safe and Comfortable Access to Resources
5. **Invest and Improve the Club House, Recreation Areas, Undeveloped BPBCA Areas, Public Access Areas**
6. **Maintain the Association Rights and Assets as Set by Our Charter with the Legislature of the State of Connecticut, to remain a Private, Quasi-Municipality with a responsive Board of Governance.**

#### **Master Plan versus Implementation**

The intent of the Master Plan, as stated in the beginning of this document, is to establish a "Continuity of Purpose" to reflect the values of the Black Point Beach Club Association. The Master Plan sets a vision/framework of the outcomes desired by the community

The Board of Governors takes the Master Plan framework and designs various processes and strategies to achieve these goals.

The implementation of the Master Plan can include , but is not limited to the following steps:

- **Strategies** - Series of ways to achieve stated goals (Approaches or Processes)
- **Objectives** - Measurable steps to achieve strategies
- **Tactics** - Creative roadmap of messaging & leverage in achieving objectives

**To assist in the process, this Master Plan contains current data from surveys of the Black Point Beach Club Association community.**

### **Community Input**

Goals are not listed in order of importance. However, the Master Plan recognizes that many of the financial and governance actions under Goal 1 and Goal 2 are needed in order to support the infrastructure and facility investments envisioned in Goal 3 and Goal 4. Goal 5 is included in sections 3 & 4 below. Goal 6 is an overreaching goal which gives our community a right to governance for all the following as mentioned in the History and Background section.

Under each goal, there are a series of more specific objectives and action steps that the Association can take to achieve each goal. A rationale is provided for each objective that describes the impetus for the objective along with any supporting data. Detailed action items are organized under each objective. For each action item, the responsible entity is identified, and the relative priority of the action is noted.

High Priority Items should be addressed in the next three years.

Medium Priority Items should be addressed in four to six years.

Low Priority Items should be addressed in seven to ten years.

The relative priority of each action item list in this Plan should be taken as a general guide, rather than a rigid ranking. The relative priority of each action item should be revisited periodically to make sure these priorities align with current conditions. Some elements listed as “ongoing” should be a routine part of the everyday operation of the Association and attention to these items should continue on a periodic basis (e.g., annually, every 3-5 years, etc.). Further, the successful completion of any action may require ongoing monitoring and tweaking to ensure success continues.