

BPBCA PATTAGANSETT ESTUARY PIER GRANT PROJECT – draft 021126

TOTAL PROJECT COST - \$237,000

GRANT REQUEST - \$118,500

APPLICANT: Town of East Lyme

AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE: Gary Goeschel, EL Town Planner

ADMINISTRATIVE POINT OF CONTACT: Meg Parulis, BPBCA Grant Coordinator

PROJECT POINT OF CONTACT: Meg Parulis, BPBCA Grant Coordinator

FINANCIAL POINT OF CONTACT: Kevin Gervais, Jr., EL Finance Director

LEGAL POINT OF CONTACT: Tracy Collins, Town Counsel

PROJECT NARRATIVE

The .17 acre project site is located on the western side of Old Black Point Road in the Town of East Lyme, adjacent to the Pattagansett River Estuary in Long Island Sound. It consists primarily of tidal marsh and is currently undeveloped except for the partial remains of an old wooden walkway/dock structure that existed over 30 years ago. There is an existing kayak rack for the few residents hearty enough to traverse the marsh to access the water. (see attached existing conditions map & photos).

In 2022, the Board of Governors embarked on an effort to develop a Community Master Plan which was adopted in 2024. Based on a survey of members that was conducted as part of the planning process, improvement of the estuary property for access to the waters on the west side of Black Point is listed as one of the top priorities for the community in the Master Plan. Following the adoption of the plan, a group of enthusiastic residents (Friends of the Estuary Gateway) developed a concept plan and lobbied to move the project forward. The Board of Governors assigned the project to the Waterfront Task Force that was created specifically to address coastal infrastructure needs. The Task Force members include individuals with Planning, Engineering, Construction and Finance backgrounds. In the Fall of 2024, the Task Force issued a Request for Qualifications for On-Call Design & Permitting Services for Waterfront Infrastructure and selected Coastline Consulting and Development with a group of sub-consultants including Sound Engineering Associates to serve in that capacity.

Work on the Pattagansett Estuary Pier Project began in the Spring of 2025 with an existing conditions survey to determine feasibility of the project and to develop design drawings which has been completed. The project is currently undergoing a Pre-Application review

with the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. It is anticipated that a Structures, Dredge and Fill Permit Application will be filed by March 2026.

The project consists of the construction of an ADA compliant 4' x 102' pier with an 8' x 8' overlook and a 12' x 20' floating dock with integrated 4' x 12' kayak launch. (see attached design drawings) The pier will be used by the 574 property owners in the Black Point Beach Club Association and their guests to enjoy the scenic views, birdwatch and access the Pattagansett River Estuary and Long Island Sound for recreational uses such as kayaking, paddleboarding, canoeing and crabbing. The estuary's 170-acre tidal marsh is designated by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) as a natural area of statewide significance and provides important habitat especially for breeding, migrating and overwintering waterfowl and birds.

Additionally, it is envisioned that the pier will be used for our active youth summer program to offer teaching units around nature, the estuary environment and water safety, specifically kayak use. This program serves nearly one hundred children each year.

If the grant is awarded, funding for the required match will be included in the FY26/27 Budget proposal to be voted on at the annual meeting in May. Funding for the survey work, preliminary design and permitting was approved in FY25/26.

This project is consistent with state maritime policies to improve safe access to navigable waterways. The residents who live in waterfront communities such as Black Point Beach Club support the local maritime industry. Many keep boats at surrounding marinas and the Niantic Bay Yacht Club. Maintaining and enhancing the property values of the community contributes to the local tax base.

The site in its current condition severely limits the number of users. To access the water, one must traverse over 100' of slippery, muddy marsh. There have been reports of injuries, including cuts and infections by users.

If the project is not completed, the property will remain underutilized and continue to pose risks to users. Further, the quality of life and property values in the Association will not be enhanced.

ALIGNMENT WITH EL HARBOR MANAGEMENT PLAN

The East Lyme Harbor Management Commission has jurisdiction over the waters adjacent to the Black Point Beach Club Association. The project is located in the Pattagansett-Rocky Neck Harbor Management Sub-Area and within the Pattagansett River Estuary

Planning Unit. The project is consistent with the following East Lyme Harbor Management Plan goals:

"Maintain and support a diversity of viable water-dependent uses that individually and collectively enhance the quality of the East Lyme Harbor Management Area and shoreline, the local and regional economy, and the quality of life in the Town."

"Provide safe and enjoyable opportunities for long-term public access to the East Lyme Harbor Management Area for active and passive recreational uses, consistent with the capacity of coastal resources to accommodate public access in an environmentally sound manner." The project will provide active and passive recreational uses. The active uses are limited to non-motorized watercraft that will not create excessive noise, wakes or risk any fuel spills which could damage the tidal wetlands. There will be no lighting at the site.

"Maintain and where feasible improve the quality of existing water access areas, including publicly owned properties and water-access right-of-ways, and provide new areas, as such need may arise, in appropriate locations." The location of the proposed pier will provide an alternate access for 574 Black Point Beach Club Association families to the Pattagansett River and the Estuary. There is only one other public access area to the Pattagansett Estuary at the end of Huntley Court which has very limited on-street parking.

"Plan and maintain opportunities and facilities for public access to the HMA in a manner that is consistent with and does not unduly conflict with the littoral rights of waterfront property owners for reasonable access to navigable water." The project will not interfere with the littoral rights of any adjoining property owners for reasonable access to navigable waters. The proposed pier was angled for that purpose.

"Protect and enhance the existing quality of life and traditional character of shorefront residential neighborhoods." The new pier will enhance the quality of life of the Black Point Beach Club Association residents.

Further, the pier has been designed in accordance with the Harbor Management Plan Waterfront Use and Development Policies for Construction of In-Water Structures as outlined in Chapter 5.

Another important concern of the Harbor Management Plan is the avoidance of water use conflicts. The Pattagansett River Estuary is most suitable for non-motorized watercraft or smaller motorized watercraft due to its shallowness. As such, there is less opportunity for conflict with motorized watercraft.

SAFETY

The proposed pier will provide a safe walkway to the water and a floating dock to facilitate the launching of small, non-motorized watercraft. A more formalized drop off area will also be created to improve traffic safety.

ADA COMPLIANCE

The pathway from the drop off area to the pier will be suitably surfaced (firm, stable and slip resistant) and will not exceed a 1:12 slope to the access ramp and to the end of the pier. The pier will be over 36" wide and there will be an area sufficient for turning of a wheelchair exceeding 60" at the end. The railings on the access ramp will have a min. 1 1/4" diam. gripping surface and run without interruption on the top or sides by posts or other obstructions. The gangway to the floating dock would need to be extended from 22' to 30' to be considered ADA compliant. If required, this change can be made and reflected on the permit drawings.

TIMELINE

Preliminary Design – 6 mos.	Apr 2025 to Oct 2025
CTDEEP/USACE Permitting – 18 mos.	Oct 2025 to Mar 2027
Local Permitting – 3 mos.	Jun 2025 to Aug 2025
Final Design – 2 mos.	Mar 2027 to May 2027
Construction – 6 mos.	Jun 2027 to Nov 2027

FINANCIAL LEVERAGE STATEMENT

The Black Point Beach Club Association can provide the required funding match through any/or a combination of the below mechanisms, all subject to approval by an Association member vote at the May annual meeting:

- a) A one-time special assessment
- b) An assessment carried out over several years
- c) A low-interest, multi-year construction loan not to exceed \$1.5 million, or
- d) A withdrawal from the Association's Long-Term Capital Fund Balance

The current Long-Term Capital Fund Balance is \$420,871 – see attached BPBCA 2025 Compiled Financial Statement