

Mapping Portland's Working Waterfront: A Spatial History

Jenny Ibsen, Class of 2018

In 1987, Portland voters approved a zoning referendum, with a 2:1 margin, declaring that only buildings dedicated for marine activity are permitted on the waterfront. Since then, the city zoning has undergone several changes to its newest form, mandating that over half of the ground floor space on the central wharves is used for marine activity. These regulations are monumental in shaping the waterfront we recognize today. Since this referendum, the City of Portland has reinvested in its waterfront space to keep its harbor functional, and at the same time, has dramatically redeveloped its private real estate for economic growth. Its current form reflects the tension between new, rapid development and the effort to preserve a working waterfront.

This summer, I have been conducting archival and social research to gather a history of the waterfront since the 1940s. I have been exploring the shifting role of the harbor as an industrial hub, a commercial fishing base, and its newer identity as a tourist attraction. More specifically, I'm looking at what community exists around the harbor, how this has changed over time, and how the perception of the harbor can be expressed through mapping.

Over the course of the summer, I collected articles via microfilm from the archived *Portland Press Herald*, along with numerous sources located in the Portland Room of the Portland Public Library. In addition to this, I conducted 15 interviews, lasting an hour on average, capturing a variety of stakeholders in the waterfront, including a boat captain, the harbor master, a restaurant owner, and a lobsterman. During each interview, I prompted the interviewee to draw a map of Portland's waterfront, bounded by what they consider the "waterfront." On this map, they are told to include important landmarks, significant changes, and places they interact with, or have interacted with, on a regular basis. Each mental map produces a unique piece of data that represents one's relationship with the waterfront – their uses, their perception, their memories. Collectively, these maps are indicative of how various stakeholders perceive the function of the waterfront and its change over time.

Ultimately, these maps, along with historical zoning maps, will be incorporated into my larger capstone project for the 2017-2018 year on Portland's working waterfront. The data collected throughout this summer will be used as the groundwork for a written piece about Portland's history and an interactive website, stitching together city documents, archived articles, personal anecdotes, hand drawn maps, and official city maps.

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