Acknowledgments

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Sean M. Kenealy, Sailing Club Representative
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Francis Collins
Jacqueline Dormitzer
Suzanne Wadsworth
Peter J. Wood

Town Staff
Chris Senior, Town Administrator
Peter Matchak, Director of Planning
Lorren Gibbons, Harbormaster
Chief Quigley, Cohasset Police Department
Chief Silvia, Cohasset Fire Department
Brian Joyce, P.E., Director of Public Works
Pamela Fahey, MPH, Health Agent

A special thank you to the members of those groups who contribute so much to the vibrancy of Cohasset Harbor and who contributed their time to the planning effort:

Members of the Cohasset Commercial Fishing Fleet
Cohasset Yacht Club (CYC)
Cohasset Maritime Institute (CMI)
Cohasset Sailing Club (CSC)
Cohasset Center for Student Coastal Research (CSCR)

Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management
Lisa Berry Engler, Acting CZM Director

Jason Burtner, South Shore Regional Coordinator

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
Ben Lynch, Program Chief, Waterways/Chapter 91

Prepared By:
Harriman
FXM Associates
GEI Consultants
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OVERVIEW

The people and Town of Cohasset have created this Municipal Harbor Plan to guide the future use and character of the Harbor. The Plan is intended to determine strategies and actions to support commercial and recreational activity on the waterfront, while strengthening the local economy. The Plan identifies potential land uses, solutions for transportation and environmental issues, enhancements to the existing character and beauty of the area, and establishes better links between the Harbor and the neighboring Cohasset Village. In addition, this Plan provides background regarding the underlying conditions within the Planning Area – economic, physical, and regulatory – that identify the opportunities to support the community’s vision and the potential barriers to achieving that vision.
OVERVIEW

The Town of Cohasset received an $80,000 grant from the Seaport Economic Council to produce a Municipal Harbor Plan (MHP) as part of its efforts to plan and set priorities for future work in the Harbor work. This Plan was prepared in accordance with state regulations governing the preparation of Municipal Harbor Plans (301 CMR 23.00, Review and approval of municipal harbor plans). More detailed information on the regulations, their purpose and application is provided throughout this Plan.

PLANNING AREA

The 134-acre Planning Area includes the watersheet (68 acres) and land (66 acres) immediately along the shoreline between White Head island to the area of Bailey Creek. The upland boundary is defined by the parcels’ boundaries and the public roadways (e.g., Howard Gleason Road, Margin Street, Border Street) closest to the water’s edge. The Planning Area contains three specific areas:

- **COHASSET HARBOR** A large shallow bight located southwestward of the Minot’s Ledge Light and about six miles southeastward of Point Allerton. The Harbor is frequented by numerous yachts and fishing craft. A prominent lookout tower is near the summit of a hill eastward of the Glades, on the east side of the Harbor.

- **COHASSET COVE** The inner harbor, protected by a breakwater which extends about 0.1 mile northward from near the westerly end of Bassing Beach. The breakwater is partially covered at high water. A dredged channel leads southward from the outer harbor to an anchorage basin southward of the Cohasset Cove anchorage.

- **BAILEY CREEK** A dredged anchorage area located in the southeastern part of the inner harbor.

In addition to consideration of these areas, the Plan has considered the relationship between the Planning Area and the Village to ensure proper coordination with other planning initiatives linked to the Harbor and the recommendations of this Plan.

BACKGROUND TO THE PLANNING PROCESS

Cohasset seeks to redirect investment to support the existing lobster fleet and marine-related retail businesses, enhance public access to the waterfront, link economic development in the Harbor to the Village, and create a more vibrant Harbor.

The Harbor today faces significant challenges, such as limited space to accommodate multiple and varied user groups, overlapping and competing uses, and vulnerability to climate change. The Harbor needs to support the existing fishing fleet and enhanced public access to the waterfront, while protecting its capacity to endure environmental pressures and projected sea level rise.

The Harbor Committee identified four specific topics of concern, based on current conditions within the Harbor:

- **COMMERCIAL FISHING** Preservation of the water-dependent fishing fleet in Cohasset has strong support in the community and meets the goals of economic diversity and preservation of the Town’s historic character as a fishing village. In addition to the preservation of moorings for commercial fishermen, the Town needs to preserve the landside support system and infrastructure for the fishing fleet.
• **RECREATIONAL BOATING** Cohasset Harbor has been at capacity for some time with approximately 200 recreational and commercial boats, and the Harbormaster maintains a long waiting list for slips and moorings. The only public boat launch is at the end of Parker Avenue.

• **LANDSIDE DEVELOPMENT** Not all the landside parcels are owned by the Town, and the proximity of residential and commercial interests in the Harbor has led to past contentious discussions about physical improvements and changes in use.

• **COASTAL INFRASTRUCTURE** Sixteen structures within the Harbor are either publicly owned or of unknown ownership, including seawalls, bulkheads, wharfs, docks, and piers; these structures provide significant coastal protection.

The Board of Selectmen reappointed the Harbor Committee in July 2017 to begin the pre-planning process prior to hiring a consultant for the MHP process. The Harbor Committee developed objectives for this planning process based on previous plans and studies conducted for the Harbor and the Town.

The August 16, 2017, meeting of the Harbor Committee, posted by the Town Clerk, included an “Issues Analysis” for the Harbor. The Committee’s description of the event notes that 25 people attended, although the names for the attendees, other than the Committee members, are no longer available.

The primary goal for the MHP planning process that emerged from that session was to make “Cohasset Harbor the best possible resource for the Town of Cohasset.” Ten areas of concern were identified as part of the analysis, including access to the Harbor, access, shoreline development, commercial fishing fleet, environmental, and infrastructure issues.

The following list of goals is based on this analysis, subsequent meetings and conversations, and public feedback and comments received during the MHP process:

• Support the Cohasset Commercial Fishing Fleet
• Support public use of and access to the Harbor
• Identify and plan for appropriate improvements to landside and waterside infrastructure
• Support public use of the Harbor, including support for those town and civic organizations that enable such use
• Improve the geographical relationship between the Village and the Harbor
• Identify and improve commercial landside and waterside commercial activity
• Integrate and improve Harbor management and uses
• Identify and address improvements to ecosystem and environmental issues
• Provide recommendations for a recurring dredging plan (areas/frequency/dredge type/potential funding sources)
• Provide an action plan and steps to implement the MHP recommendations, identifying responsible entities, timeline, and available funding mechanisms
The Town of Cohasset is conducting a public process to plan for the future of its harbor. This process will look at the future of the land and water in the harbor in terms of commercial, recreational, and environmental uses and connections to the rest of Cohasset, including the downtown. The Support Economic Council has provided a grant to support this process.

The Harbor Committee has selected a consultant team, led by Harriman and including GEI Consulting and FXM Associates, to assist with the collection and analysis of data, public engagement, and the preparation of the final report. The process will be completed in Fall 2019.

Questions? Please email Peter Matchak, Town Planner:
PMatchak@cohassetma.org

Additional information can be found at:
https://www.mass.gov/service-details/czm-port-and-harbor-planning-program-municipal-harbor-plans

The workshop will address the initial themes:
• Balance between Recreation and Commercial Needs
• Impact of Sea Level Rise
• Environment of the Harbor
• Infrastructure
• Harbor Management and Governance

The Harbor Committee has selected a consultant team, led by Harriman and including GEI Consulting and FXM Associates, to assist with the collection and analysis of data, public engagement, and the preparation of the final report. The process will be completed in Fall 2019.

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The Town of Cohasset Planning Board Office served as the Town’s lead department. Harriman, an urban planning, design, and engineering firm, was the lead consultant. GEI Consultants and FXM Associates also provided supporting data, analysis, and recommendations for waterfront infrastructure and the implications of climate change and economic development, respectively.

Data collected for use in this Plan came from site visits, previous planning studies, stakeholder interviews, public meetings, and relevant economic and labor databases.

PLANNING PROCESS

The Town of Cohasset, with funding from the Seaport Economic Council, was assisted by a consultant team in the development of this Plan. The Cohasset Planning Board Office served as the Town’s lead department. Harriman, an urban planning, design, and engineering firm, was the lead consultant. GEI Consultants and FXM Associates also provided supporting data, analysis, and recommendations for waterfront infrastructure and the implications of climate change and economic development, respectively.

Data collected for use in this Plan came from site visits, previous planning studies, stakeholder interviews, public meetings, and relevant economic and labor databases.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Harbor Planning Group

The Cohasset Harbor Committee was the Harbor Planning Group, overseeing the development of the Plan. The Harbor Committee was established by §30-62 of the Bylaws of the Town of Cohasset. The Board of Selectmen appoints the members according to the requirements of the bylaw; membership is defined as follows: two citizens-at-large for three-year terms, one representative of the Cohasset Yacht Club (CYC), one representative of the Cohasset Center for Student Coastal Research (CSCR), one representative of the Cohasset Maritime Institute (CMI), one representative of the Cohasset Sailing Club (CSC), two representatives of the commercial fishermen, one independent member, and one representative of the Recreation Commission. The Harbormaster is an ex-officio member of the committee. The Board of Selectmen accepted applications in the spring of 2017 for open positions prior to appointing the current membership of the Committee.
Public Participation Process

Public engagement is a critical component of every planning process. Ensuring that people – residents, business owners, institutions, property owners, elected and appointed officials, and the Town itself – are engaged in the process and have tangible mechanisms for input that are addressed/incorporated during the planning process helps build ownership so that the implementation of the plan begins once it is approved. The Harbor Committee recognized that successful planning involved early and continuing interaction with the public and coordination with the Town’s boards, committees, and officials with jurisdiction. In addition, the Harbor Committee and the consultant team consulted with the relevant state, regional, and federal agencies, including Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management (CZM) and Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). The planning analysis used to develop goals, address potential issues, and assess alternatives involved a thorough public participation program including a written public outreach and engagement plan, regular meetings of the Harbor Committee, two public meetings, two public outreach events, and stakeholder interviews.

To involve the public in the process and encourage attendance at the Harbor Committee meetings and the public workshops, the Town worked with the Harbor Committee to develop physical outreach methods, such as flyers, and coordinate social media outreach.

- **HARBOR COMMITTEE MEETINGS**  Held regularly and open to the public, the meetings of the Harbor Committee included an update of the MHP planning process and discussion with stakeholders regarding the existing conditions of the Harbor. The dates and times of all Harbor Committee meetings were posted on the Town website.

- **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT 1**  Held April 25, 2018, at Cohasset Lightkeeper’s House. During the annual CSCR State of the Harbor community outreach and education event, representatives from the Harbor Committee, consulting team, and Town staff and officials
participated in a panel discussion of the ongoing planning efforts regarding Cohasset Harbor.

- **PUBLIC MEETING 1** Held May 31, 2018, at the Cohasset Senior Center. This meeting introduced the planning process to the public and allowed for a discussion of perceived positive aspects, opportunities, constraints, and the community's vision within the study area. Comment cards were also distributed and collected for community members to provide additional feedback and ask questions.

- **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT 2** Held December 8, 2018, at the Cohasset Library. This Open House solicited feedback from the community regarding draft Harbor Plan recommendations.

- **PUBLIC MEETING 2** Held December 17, 2018, at the Cohasset Senior Center. This meeting reviewed the planning process and existing condition analysis. Interactive exercises allowed for a discussion refining the concepts and strategies for public waterfront access and prioritization of draft Harbor Plan recommendations.

- **PUBLIC HEARING WITH BOARD OF SELECTMEN** During a public hearing with the Board of Selectmen, Town Staff, the Harbor Committee, and consultant team will present the findings and recommendations from the MHP planning process and the draft MHP to the Board of Selectmen for final approval.

The public meetings were designed to appeal to the widest audience and attract the most people. The meeting structure included an opening presentation that set the base of information and framework for the discussion, question session, and interactive exercises. The interactive exercises were designed to guide discussion toward productive feedback that informed the direction of the Plan. Consideration was given during the venue selection and scheduling to ensure the meetings were accessible to the greater Cohasset community.

The MHP planning process also included targeted stakeholder focus groups and interviews to engage local business owners, property owners, community and neighborhood organizations, commercial fishermen, individuals familiar with real estate and development within the study area, and Town staff. Stakeholders were not limited to those within Cohasset’s borders. The Harbor Committee and the consultant team also held discussions with CZM, DEP, and other affected state agencies and the Town of Scituate. Cohasset Harbor is divided by the town boundary between Cohasset and Scituate; Bassing Beach, the breakwater, and certain parcels adjacent to the Harbor are within Scituate’s borders.

**Stakeholder Interviews**

The consultant team interviewed the following people during Summer and Fall 2018:

- Lorren Gibbons, Harbormaster
- Chief Quigley, Police Department
- Chief Silvia, Fire Department
- Representatives from the Commercial Fishermen
- Cohasset Yacht Club
- Brian Joyce, DPW Director
- Susan Bryant and Jack Buckley, CSCR
- CMI Board Members
- Cohasset Sailing Club
- Jeffrey Summers, Conservation Agent
- Pamela Fahey, Health Agent
- Cohasset Historical Commission

Some of these stakeholders, members of the Harbor Committee, and members of the consultant team also participated in a site walk with CZM and MassDEP in October 2018.
VISION

Cohasset Harbor is a jewel-box of a harbor. This small area supports a variety of users – commercial fishermen, recreational boaters, sailors, rowers, scientists, dog-walkers, coffee-drinkers, diners, and those just hanging out and enjoying the beautiful sunrises, sunsets, and breezes off the water.

The vision for this Harbor is simply to enhance the land, the water, and the edge in between to support access to and enjoyment of the Harbor for all ages, interests, and abilities. They key is to balance the needs of the variety of uses to ensure a safe and pleasant experience for all.

Part of that enhancement is a strong link between the Harbor and the Village – a link with physical, visual, and economic components.
The Implementation Plan for this vision draws together the investment, regulatory changes, and other actions needed to support the recommendations of this Municipal Harbor Plan for improvements to infrastructure that will implement the goals for the Harbor. Modifications to the requirements of Chapter 91 are included to address future development to strengthen the Harbor economy.
CONCEPTUAL PLAN

1. Stone Breakwater
2. Cohasset Yacht Club
3. Cohasset Harbor Inn
4. Atlantica Restaurant
5. Mill River Marine Boatyard and Railway Facility
6. Harbor Master
7. Cohasset Town Pier
8. Cohasset Sailing Center
9. Cohasset Maritime Institute
10. CSCR
11. Parker Avenue Boat Ramp
12. Cohasset Harbor Marina
13. Lightkeeper’s Cottage

- Repair Seawalls
- Improve Facilities for Commercial Fishermen
- Add Public Safety Boat

Legend:
- Future Connected Walkway
- Gateway Improvements
- Potential Development
- Approximate Dredge Area
- Wayfinding/Interpretive Signage
- Existing Open Space
- Existing Town Parking
- Water-dependent Use Zone
- Location of Water-dependent Use Zone not Calculated
- Facilities of Public Accommodation Zone
- Chapter 91 Jurisdiction
- Parcels
- MHP Boundary

Progress Set for Harbor Committee Meeting November 14, 2018

• Confirm Dredge Area with Town and GEI
• Add Infrastructure Improvements from GEI Memorandum
• Complete Transfer of Data from Interviews
Note: Adjust per final recommendations for Harbor Committee.