Uses on the land support and enhance the watersheet uses. Commercial fishermen require additional infrastructure to support their businesses. Residential recreational boaters are supported by the Town and members of a number of organizations in the Harbor, nonresidential boaters are also supported by those facilities, but there is less support for transient boaters.

Restaurants are often a draw for residents and visitors, but the Olde Salt House is closed due to the state of its sea wall and the Atlantica and the Cohasset Harbor Inn are just under new management. Connections to Cohasset Village exist, but are not well-marketed.
LAND USE

The number of historic assets in and around Cohasset Harbor is a testament to the Harbor's status as a central element of Cohasset's history. Land use around the Harbor was much more intense in the past, including a significant fishing industry, supporting industrial uses, and, in later years, stores, restaurants, and a hotel. Recreational boating has been a part of the Harbor since the 1800s.

Today the waterside uses include water-dependent uses such as the facilities to support commercial fishing and recreational boating and the scientific research of CSCR. The Atlantica, the Olde Salt House, and the Cohasset Inn are both remnants of the Harbor's past and important components of its future: the restaurants could draw transient boaters and inland visitors while anchoring physical and economic links to the Cohasset Village. Redevelopment of Cohasset Harbor Inn has the potential to transform the hinge of the waterfront, opening up views of the Harbor from Elm and Margin Streets while adding new life to the Harbor economy.

ZONING AND OWNERSHIP

Cohasset Harbor includes five zoning districts, as shown on the next page. The majority of the land in the area is zoned for residential use; that use is unlikely to change. The Town owns a significant amount of land, primarily Government Island, but including other parcels in the area. Cohasset Harbor has a limited amount of land available for any type of redevelopment. Only four areas are likely to change:

- **THE COHASSET HARBOR INN** The ownership changed during the study process, and the new ownership team is considering a mixed-use building that would incorporate a restaurant and residential condominiums. A change to the Waterfront Business District (WB) zone is under discussion; redevelopment may also have implications for the modifications to Chapter 91 presented in this Plan.
Listed Historic Points and Areas - MHP Planning Area

Legend

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MAP BASE

- Parcels
- Town Boundary

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• **ATLANTICA/THE OLDE SALT HOUSE** The same ownership team as the Cohasset Inn also acquired these two businesses, but have no plans to redevelop the site at present. These parcels are in the velocity zone for flooding and would have to meet a more stringent set of regulations for redevelopment. Any zoning change to the WB zone would also apply to these parcels. A portion of the buildings are on piers and would have to meet Chapter 91 regulations regarding development on piers. The seawall next to the Olde Salt House collapsed and is under temporary repair.

• **MILL RIVER BOATYARD/COHASSET LOBSTER POUND** This cluster of buildings is also within the WB zone and would be included in any zoning change. The majority of the site is on piers and the Gulph River flows under the buildings. Public input suggested the possibility of hydroelectric power at this site.

• **COHASSET HARBOR MARINA** This site is within the Light Industry zone and is a water-dependent use. Data for Chapter 91 jurisdiction was not available on MassGIS; any redevelopment plans for this property would require due diligence on the applicability of Chapter 91. The possibility of future rezoning was brought forward as part of the public input process to accommodate some of the land uses discussed during this planning process. A rezoning process should be a partnership between the Town and the landowner and include a proposal for land uses and development density that is consistent with the goals of this Municipal Harbor Plan.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE LAND**

• **MODIFY WATERFRONT BUSINESS DISTRICT ZONE** Modify the WB Zone to update the zoning to reflect the goals of this Municipal Harbor Plan and the demand for alternative uses along the water’s edge. Zoning mortification should be consistent with the requirements of Chapter 91 in the Harbor and be flexible enough to respond to market demand for different land uses over time. Any zoning modification should address potential redevelopment of the Cohasset Harbor Inn (as discussed during this planning process) and other properties in the WB Zone.

• **ADD PARKING** Additional activity in the Harbor is dependent upon appropriate parking. One possibility is the extension of the current parking area at the Lightkeepers’ Cottage where overflow parking is accommodated in a grassy field next to paved parking.

• **IMPROVE THE STREETSCAPE** The next section of this report discusses the connections between Cohasset Village and Cohasset Harbor; as the principal connection, Elm Street requires modification to make it a pleasant pedestrian environment to draw people from one area to the other. The sidewalks along Border Street are painted in many areas and should be reconstructed to increase the safety of pedestrians. Consistent street furniture, street lighting, and other elements would reinforce the identity of the Harbor as a distinct area.

• **INSTALL SIGNAGE** Wayfinding and informational signage is critical to the overall experience of the Harbor and in linking the Harbor to the Village. Wayfinding signage provides direction: to the Harbor from the Village and vice versa, to parking and dock access within the Harbor, and to specific destinations within the Harbor. Informational signage provide information about the natural, cultural, and historic resources of the Harbor.

• **ESTABLISH GATEWAYS** These define the entrance to the Harbor and are identified by signage, a change in the streetscape, a change in landscape elements, or other signifier that someone is moving into or out of a specific place.

• **EVALUATE ZONING CHANGES TO THE LIGHT INDUSTRY ZONE** During the public engagement process, the idea of a ship’s chandlery, or small store providing supplies to boaters, was identified. A chandlery would be allowed in the Light Industry District, but might require additional zoning changes to implement.
THE HARBOR AND THE VILLAGE

Cohasset Harbor does not exist in isolation. Elm Street is a direct physical connection between the Harbor and the Village, but this connection is a problematic one. From the Cohasset Harbor Inn to South Main Street is less than half a mile, but no signs inform the visitor to one of the attractions of the other; Elm Street is broad and not completely friendly to either pedestrian or bicyclist; the Cohasset Harbor Inn blocks the view of the Harbor from Elm Street as it joins with either Margin Street or Summer Street; and the businesses in the Village and the businesses in the Harbor do not jointly market their offerings.
CONNECTIONS

Elm Street is the major connection between the Village and the Harbor for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles; but its current design privileges the movement of cars over people.

A walk radius of 0.4 miles defines a walk of between 10 and 15 minutes, depending on the person’s level of fitness. Easy connections are not just about walking, but also about the experience of getting there. An environment that is safe (separation from cars, flat pavement), shaded, well-lit, and with interesting views and a destination at the end seems shorter than a walk of the same distance but that is difficult to maneuver, noisy, hot, and with no sense of progression from one place to the next.
In New England the stereotypical refrain is “You can’t get there from here.” Wayfinding addresses that by providing directional signage that indicates the road or path to a specific destination. Wayfinding signage is often paired with Gateways which are the point of entry into a specific place. Gateways often have specific sign styles paired with landscape elements that call attention to the identity of the area being entered. Gateways may mark a point of transition between lighting and street furniture styles, paving changes for sidewalks, and other design elements.

Informational signage is another component of a place’s identity, calling attention to an area’s unique historical, cultural, and environmental characteristics.
A viewshed is a planning term for a corridor that allows someone to view a feature. The view could be of a building, an object, a landscape, or, in this case, the Harbor itself. Some communities have put protections in place for views that are valued by the community.

Viewsheds can be blocked by other elements. For example, the view from Elm Street to the Harbor is blocked by the Cohasset Harbor Inn. In other cases, the blocking element becomes part of the view. For example, the Cohasset Sailing Club which is part of the view from elsewhere on Government Island.
In 2000, The Cecil Group worked with BSC Group to investigate streetscape improvements to Cohasset Village, the Elm Street connection between the Village and Cohasset Harbor, and Border Street within the Harbor. The study looked at options for improving public access in all three areas.

As shown in the images above, a particular focus was improving the pedestrian experience and safety along Elm Street and establishing a better approach to the Cohasset Harbor Inn and the current three-way join of Elm Street, Summer Street, and Margin Street. Potential redevelopment of the Cohasset Harbor Inn, discussed during the planning process for this Municipal Harbor Plan, offers an opportunity to reconsider this approach, and include a viewshed, and possibly physical access, as an extension of Elm Street through the site of the current inn, and to the Harbor. This viewshed would act as a visual draw to those who approach the Harbor from the Village.
A second focus was the pedestrian experience along Border Street. The studies above suggest options for improving the safety rail, lighting, and sidewalk materials along a waterside pedestrian walkway that connects the Harbor from Margin Street to Parker Avenue.

A key element in linking the Village and the Harbor will be to develop a consistent streetscape language for the connections while allowing each area to have its own identity. The consistency can be accomplished by using the same family of street lighting and furniture while varying the individual elements, by using paving materials in the same family and colors but varying the patterns, by having similar signage, and by using other elements, such as banners or planters, that can express a more individual identity for each area.
CONNECTIONS AND THE ECONOMY

Connections between the Village and the Harbor are about more than Elm Street as a physical link, or the design elements that can reinforce both the joint and separate identities of each. The planning process for this Municipal Harbor Plan provided an opportunity to consider economic connections between the two areas.

The most likely scenario in terms of joint economic development would involve a joint marketing campaign that accomplishes two objectives:

- Drawing transient boaters from the Harbor to eat/shop in the Village
- Encouraging visitors to the Village to eat/play in the Harbor

This approaches relies on the implementation of several improvements:

- Docking/showering facilities for transient boaters
- Easy and attractive connection (walking/summer bike share/summer shuttle) between the Harbor and the Village
- Critical mass of stores and restaurants in the Village
- Critical mass of restaurants in the Harbor
- Connected Harbor walk
- Attractive presentation of historical, environmental, and cultural information about the Harbor
- Sufficient parking in both places for nonresident, non-boaters

Visitors and transient boaters will not be enough to support economic activity in either the Village or the Harbor, especially as this activity is concentrated in the summer. Increasing the number of options that are attractive to residents of Cohasset, and increasing the number of employees in Cohasset and residents in and near the Village and Harbor will help drive demand for goods and services.

According to the report from FXM Associates (see Appendix X), there is a demand for office space in Cohasset over the next five years. At least some of that demand could be captured in the smaller spaces of the Village. These spaces may be appropriate for existing small businesses or as collective third-space offices for those who want to reduce their commute without working from home.

FXM’s retail gap analysis, a snapshot of retail demand prepared for this project, indicates additional demand for limited services eating establishments and small stores that are compatible with existing offerings in the Village.

The economic category of Arts, Entertainment and Recreation lumps together uses that would support additional vibrancy in both the Village and the Harbor; creative collaborations between existing retail and restaurants and local arts, community, and Harbor groups could provide one-off and seasonal events that encompass both areas, adding to the vibrancy of the relationship between the two.

The report also examines the demand for rental housing in the area. Massachusetts has a housing production deficit for all types of housing; as housing in Cohasset is primarily single-family, a variety of housing products attractive to all age groups and all income levels is missing. Rental housing may be more appropriate for the Village; historically, housing with water views has commanded a higher value whether rental or ownership.

FXM’s analysis considers the entire Town of Cohasset, and the projected demand is applicable to all commercial and mixed-use areas within the town.
Hold for additional renderings