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Executive Summary

Cohasset Community Vision

Cohasset’s Master Plan envisions a vibrant and engaging community. Cohasset is a unique seaside community known for its panoramic beauty, plentiful open space, natural resources and a firm commitment to providing a high quality of life for all its residents. As depicted on the town seal, the Master Plan fosters stewardship of Cohasset’s core assets: coastline and topography, town governance, community and education, and our New England heritage. By harnessing these core assets and working with mutual respect, the Master Plan seeks to preserve and promote the ideals that are most highly valued by our community.

Cohasset Today

The Town of Cohasset has a total area of 31.5 square miles. Of the total area, approximately 9.9 square miles is land (31.4%) and 21.6 square miles (68.6%) is water. It is bordered on the west by Hingham, on the northwest by Hull, on the north and northeast by Massachusetts Bay and on the east and south by Scituate. Cohasset is approximately twelve miles east of Braintree and twenty miles southeast of Boston. Cohasset is a residential community with limited commerce or industry.
The Town’s physical coastal character consists of rocky shores and shoals, numerous coves, wetlands, and protected harbors. The Town of Cohasset shares features to the north in Hull and to the south in Scituate, including Straits Pond, Bassing Beach, the Gulf River and Rocky Beach. Away from the coast, the Town shares regional open space resources such as the forests of Wompatuck State Park, Whitney and Thayer Woods (including portions known as Turkey Hill and Weir River Farm) and the Aaron River and Lily Pond watersheds with Hingham and Scituate.

When considering the character of Cohasset, a number of factors come into play such as the nature of the residential development, Cohasset Village, the Town’s coastline and waterfront resources, its natural beauty and open spaces, and the commercial districts along Route 3A. Many historic buildings and sites have also been preserved for future generations. Cohasset Village serves the community with the variety and number of successful businesses appropriate to its scale and character. The active harbor reflects Cohasset’s heritage as a fishing village, as well as providing for recreational boaters and commercial fishermen, community meeting places and outdoor public spaces for residents and visitors.

Key Findings

Land Use

The Town has experienced substantial new growth during the last 15 years, particularly in terms of residential development. Over half of the residential land identified in the draft 2003 Master Plan build-out analysis has been developed.

The 2019 build-out analysis shows that there is potential for a maximum of over 470 new homes if all potentially developable land is developed pursuant to the current zoning bylaw. This does not include the potential development of over 150 acres currently designated undevelopable.

Nearly half of Cohasset’s land mass is categorized as open space, much of which is permanently protected. There is a desire by the community to continue to find ways to protect and put additional land into conservation.

Housing

Cohasset is a small town that has experienced population growth in recent years, which is projected to continue. Its largest age groups are children under the age of 20 and adults aged 40-59, though the share of seniors over the age of 60 is projected to increase in the coming years.

Cohasset’s median income roughly doubled in the past three decades, and is now substantially higher than that of the state and region. However, Cohasset is not universally affluent; 21% of all households are low-income. In general, senior households in Cohasset earn less than the overall population.

While Cohasset’s housing stock has grown and diversified in recent years, including an increase in the number of multifamily and rental units, the majority of Cohasset’s housing is still large, detached, single-family housing.

The median home price in Cohasset is substantially higher than in the surrounding area. Even with Cohasset’s high median income, a family earning Cohasset’s median income could not afford to purchase a house at Cohasset’s median home price. One-third of Cohasset households experience some degree of cost burden.
Cohasset should continue to seek opportunities to expand the diversity of its housing stock to meet the needs of households of varying sizes, incomes, tenures, and ages, with a particular focus on low-income families and downsizing seniors.

**Economic Development**

Cohasset has a modest local economy and a low jobs-to-resident ratio of 0.32. Employment opportunities are primarily in the retail sector, and of those jobs, mostly pay lower than average wages. Less than 15 percent of people who work in town live in Cohasset. A large share of the Town’s labor force commutes to Boston.

The Town primarily relies on the property tax to fund public services and schools. Only a small share of total tax value comes from commercial, industrial, and personal property funds. Economic development planning should focus on “branding” Cohasset more effectively, highlighting the many available resources, history, aesthetics, and wilderness experiences attractive to residents and visitors alike. To build a stronger economy, the community needs to effectively communicate the virtues of the Town as a whole and shape the story in-line with the Town’s collective aspirations.

Growing the Town’s economy is a strong desire expressed by residents who are seeking opportunities to enjoy the Village and the harbor areas.

Revitalizing the Town’s economic development committee is critical to enhancing the availability of goods and services as well as entertainment options for families and visitors. Linking the production of affordable housing within walking distance of the Village will help boost demand for goods and services while providing ease of access for residents, especially the elderly.

Improving the visibility of the Town’s many attractive qualities including its historic Village Common, Harbor and coastline requires connecting to economic development resources and organizations around the state and by expanding the variety of business opportunities for local residents.

**Historical & Cultural Resources**

Cohasset will celebrate and commemorate its 250th anniversary in 2020 with a variety of community activities. First settled in 1670, a century later, the Town officially separated from Hingham. Cohasset’s subsequent growth as a vibrant community centered around the Village and Harbor, Beechwood and North Cohasset with year-round residents who worked in local industries such as agriculture and fishing.

More than 2,200 historical properties have been inventoried and a significant number of historic properties have been preserved and well maintained, but a demolition delay, affirmative maintenance bylaw, and other recommendations could help ensure that the historic town centers continue to exist.

A variety of longstanding cultural activities and annual traditions continue to operate in the Town, but more could be done to cross-promote and highlight complementary resources during those events.

**Open Space & Recreation**

Cohasset has approximately 2,900 acres of open space and recreational lands (including public and private conservation land), which comprises approximately 46% of the Town’s total land area (excluding coastal waters such as Cohasset Harbor). 1,965 of those 2,935 acres of
Key Findings

open space is permanently protected.

The number of children and elders in Cohasset grew from 2000 to 2010. To meet the needs of its population, the Town’s recreation and open space resources must serve both an older adult population and a growing number of families with children.

Cohasset’s Department of Public Works (DPW) has the primary responsibility for maintaining the Town’s parks and open space. More resources are needed to effectively manage these properties.

Transportation & Circulation

Route 3A is the Town’s most important roadway. State and municipal efforts to reconstruct the roadway will result in it being safer and more comfortable for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists.

Although driving is the most common means of commuting to work, a higher percentage of Cohasset residents use public transportation (commuter rail and ferry) than in the South Shore Coalition subregion and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) metropolitan Boston region.

The top transportation needs, as cited by participants in the Master Plan public input process, relate to pedestrian and cycling improvements, including new sidewalks, crosswalks, and other facilities that improve pedestrian safety.

The high number of private roadways throughout the Town has created unique challenges. Cohasset has developed a policy related to private roadways and should continue to improve the mechanisms for maintenance and operations.

Public Facilities & Services

The Town benefits from professional and capable staff and volunteers, but the condition of several departments’ facilities inhibit their operational efficiency.

Aging infrastructure and the need for modernization of key municipal facilities in the next 10-30 years present challenges that will need to be balanced against the Town’s fiscal management policies.

Town residents and organizations have generously provided material philanthropic support for capital improvements to Town facilities.

Communication between Town officials and residents is a critical component of building support for major projects. Opportunities to expand and improve upon existing outreach and education strategies should be pursued.
Energy & Sustainability

Participation in the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) Green Communities program has helped Cohasset better track its energy use and provide significant grants to fund energy-saving projects. Cohasset will need to pay careful attention to and monitor energy use to ensure that recently implemented measures perform as expected and deliver substantial savings. Energy efficiency should be a top consideration in any building construction or renovation project going forward.

Cohasset’s municipal landfill solar project represents a great success for the Town’s budget and the environment. Serious consideration should be given to constructing additional solar projects, particularly rooftop arrays, whenever a municipal roof is replaced or updated. Opportunities to further promote residential and commercial solar installations should also be pursued.

Cohasset’s coastal location leaves it particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and sea level rise. Cohasset should continue its planning processes to prepare for the specific severe weather possibilities, and include consideration of climate change and rising sea level in all local planning and permitting processes.

Public Health

Cohasset is served by strong Health Department and Board of Health that addresses environmental health and community health issues.

Residents of Cohasset generally enjoy healthier outcomes and engage in healthy behaviors more than residents of other towns in the Commonwealth.

Health issues that could pose potential risks include premature mortality, substance use disorder, mental health challenges, an elevated cancer rate, and an aging population.

The Town has the opportunity to explicitly integrate more health considerations into its planning and development processes in order to reduce the risk of injury, increase daily physical activity and health eating, and become a more age friendly community.
Master Plan Goals

In light of the public input from the community, the analysis of past and current economic, housing, natural resources, infrastructure and land use trends and needs, the Master Plan sets out the following goals for each chapter in the Plan. These goals drive the specific strategies and action items that are designed to implement the Plan.

**Land Use Goals**

In Phase I of the master plan process, the citizens of Cohasset identified several opportunities including: developing a land use plan before the Town is overdeveloped, increasing affordable housing for people with lower incomes, and retaining the traditional small town feeling.

- **Goal 1**: Plan and invest strategically for smart growth in order to preserve Cohasset’s community character
- **Goal 2**: Revitalize the Harbor area in accordance with the Harbor Plan vision and landside development and infrastructure recommendations
- **Goal 3**: Protect open space in all town-wide land use decisions in order to preserve access and scenic beauty in accordance with the OSRP
- **Goal 4**: Attract and retain diverse business in Cohasset while retaining small town character

**Housing Goals**

The analysis of housing needs and development constraints, as well as input from the public forums, indicate the need for more housing options in Cohasset, whether that be increased affordability, additional rental opportunities, more housing appropriate for smaller households, or more options for seniors. These goals will position the Town to best address these needs in a way that complements its unique character.

- **Goal 1**: Diversify Cohasset’s housing stock and promote increased options for households of varying sizes, incomes, tenures, and ages
- **Goal 2**: Increase the supply of deed-restricted affordable housing qualified for the state Subsidized Housing Inventory
- **Goal 3**: Support seniors as they age and provide housing options that will enable them to live and thrive in Cohasset
Economic Development Goals

During the public comment period, residents spoke of the desire to have more and varied types of economic activities in the Village and around the Harbor, especially those that cater to families and children and can support tourism. Evidence derived from commercial real estate studies suggest there is room for a more diversified commercial and retail sector. The high percentage of residents who work from their homes and the Town’s limited supply of rental office space suggest more and varied accommodations may improve the business climate in town.

- **Goal 1:** Create a variety of economic activities in town to satisfy citizen’s desires for more varied experiences in the Village, the Harbor and along the commercial corridor of Route 3A
- **Goal 2:** Reimagine the Town’s Engagement with Economic Development
- **Goal 3:** Strengthen the traditional economic development organizations including the Cohasset Chamber of Commerce and the local Downtown Business Association (DTBA)
- **Goal 4:** Increase the number of visitors traveling to Cohasset for enjoyment and to use the Town’s resources
- **Goal 5:** Implement the economic development recommendations of the Master Plan and the Harbor Plan, focusing on the greatest strengths of businesses that operate formal and informal establishments, including in-home enterprises

Historical & Cultural Resources Goals

Documentation of the Town’s historic properties has created interest in preserving them. Furthermore, the historic consistency of the built environment may be maintained through the enactment of regulatory guidelines that include design standards. Additionally, more programs could be developed by the Historical Society, the Historical Commission, and the Cohasset Common Historic District Commission to connect town residents who are interested in preserving the historic character of their homes with information and coordinated planning efforts to celebrate the Town’s rich history and cultural heritage.

- **Goal 1:** Preserve the historic residential character of Cohasset
- **Goal 2:** Develop additional local capacity to manage and enhance historic and cultural resources
- **Goal 3:** Enhance Cohasset’s historic and cultural resources
- **Goal 4:** Enhance creative and cultural economic development

Open Space & Recreation Goals

Cohasset recently completed an update to their Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). The OSRP provides a comprehensive overview of the Town’s natural history, a detailed inventory of all open space and recreational resources in Cohasset, and recommendations for protecting and improving these resources. During the public input process for both the OSRP and the Master Plan, the residents of Cohasset expressed concern about encroachment of new development on the scenic vistas and character of the Town and its quality of life.

- **Goal 1:** Make protection of open space and the character of the town a priority in all town-wide land use decisions, in keeping with citizens’ wishes, to preserve access and scenic beauty
- **Goal 2:** Protect and maintain the natural environment
- **Goal 3:** Improve recreational opportunity and access

Transportation & Circulation Goals

Cohasset residents want to think creatively and holistically about the Town’s transportation network, creating a multi-pronged strategy both to address major concerns and to improve Cohasset’s quality of life. Improving pedestrian and bicycle connectivity enhances safety, positively impacts economic development in commercial areas, and reduces congestion. While Cohasset deals with typical issues related to maintaining and operating its roadways and parking lots as other communities, it also has a high number of private roadways.

- **Goal 1:** Improve pedestrian connectivity throughout the Town
- **Goal 2:** Improve bicycle access and safety
- **Goal 3:** Improve how roadways in Town operate
Public Facilities & Services Goals

Regular assessment of and investment in the Town of Cohasset’s physical facilities are required to support the efficient operation of the staff who rely on them, and their use as community resources. Efforts to maintain and improve Cohasset’s public facilities should continue to be guided by well-developed capital planning and budgeting processes which identify future needs, as well as wants, while offering a framework to evaluate individual priorities in the context of Town wide planning activities. Effective service delivery relies on the availability and provision of operational resources, such as sufficient funding, personnel, and access to appropriate work space. Effective communication and transparent working relationships between Town departments, boards, committees, and the broader public is important in achieving these goals.

- **Goal 1:** Ensure Cohasset’s public infrastructure and facilities meet community and departmental needs
- **Goal 2:** Secure and supply adequate resources to provide high quality facilities, services, and programs that serve the needs of Cohasset’s residents
- **Goal 3:** Enhance communication and improve transparency of town processes
- **Goal 4:** Explore collaborative solutions to address regional issues facing the Town of Cohasset and neighboring communities

Energy & Sustainability Goals

There are many opportunities for residents, businesses, and the Town to reduce their use of energy, including electricity, heating oil, natural gas, and gasoline. The goals focus on reductions in energy use, switching to cleaner sources of energy, and increasing resiliency in the face of a changing climate, while taking advantage of existing state programs and incentives.

- **Goal 1:** Reduce municipal energy use
- **Goal 2:** Reduce residential and commercial energy use
- **Goal 3:** Prepare for climate change and increase Town resiliency
- **Goal 4:** Promote the use of additional renewable energy to reduce emissions and costs
- **Goal 5:** Reduce vehicle fuel use, support transition to electric vehicles (EVs)

Public Health Goals

Current conditions suggest that the Town of Cohasset’s residents experience physical, social, and mental health outcomes that are equal to or better than the average of the Commonwealth. The Town’s economic, housing, and environmental conditions support these beneficial outcomes and represent conditions that are supportive of wellness. Although residents in the town generally enjoy better health, there are actions that Cohasset can undertake to prevent future threats to the health of residents and help all enjoy greater wellbeing.

- **Goal 1:** Sustain and expand access to locally produced and healthy foods in town
- **Goal 2:** Sustain support for actions to monitor and respond to issue related to the mental and emotional wellness of residents, particularly that of youth and older adults
- **Goal 3:** Prioritize active transportation (walking, biking, and transit use) and open space access to promote physical activity and exposure to outdoor natural environments
- **Goal 4:** Address environment hazards to reduce resident exposure to substances that reduce the quality of life in town
- **Goal 5:** Assess potential health impacts of proposed projects and policies by integrating a health and equity lens into local decision-making
Introduction

As stated in the draft 2003 Master Plan:

The ocean, natural resources, open spaces and cultural legacy inherited from the past are the dynamic context for the many activities that make up how people live and work in Cohasset. In some respects, Cohasset has avoided the worst manifestations and consequences of suburban sprawl. The town center has retained a viable business mix with stores and services for the local market and the residential areas around the Village and Harbor reflect the compact and walkable character of their pre-twentieth century origins. The newer residential areas and the commercial strip on Route 3A have the more sprawling appearance of post World War II development.

Preserving the community character of Cohasset has been a common theme throughout the visioning process that preceded the development of this Master Plan and has been echoed at the public meetings during the planning process.

The Land Use element of this Master Plan provides additional focus on the Town’s overall land use policies. Land use refers to the development character within a municipality after consideration of the amount, type, and intensity of commercial, industrial, residential and institution development, as well as open space, and key natural resources features. This chapter provides an analysis of current overall land use within the Town of Cohasset and the Town’s potential build-out.

Key Findings

- The Town has experienced substantial new growth during the last 15 years, particularly in terms of residential development. Over half of the residential land identified in the draft 2003 Master Plan build-out analysis has been developed.
- The build-out analysis shows that there is potential for a maximum of over 470 new homes if all potentially developable land is developed pursuant to the current zoning bylaw. This does not include the potential development of over 150 acres currently designated undevelopable.
- A substantial portion of Cohasset is categorized as open space, much of which is permanently protected. There is a desire by the community to continue to find ways to protect and put additional land into conservation.

Geographic Characteristics

The Town of Cohasset has a total area of 31.5 square miles. Of the total area, approximately 9.9 square miles is land (31.4%) and 21.6 square miles (68.56%) is water1 - mostly territorial ocean boundaries. It is bordered on the west by Hingham, on the northwest by Hull, on the north and northeast by Massachusetts Bay and on the east and south by Scituate. Cohasset is approximately twelve miles east of Braintree and twenty miles southeast of Boston. Cohasset is a residential community with little commerce or industry.

1 Territorial water extends three miles off the coast and include waters of Massachusetts Bay.
The Town’s physical coastal character consists of rocky shores and shoals, numerous coves, wetlands, and protected harbors. Features to the north in Hull and to the south in Scituate shared with the Town of Cohasset include Straits Pond, Bassing Beach, the Gulf River and Rocky Beach. Away from the coast, the Town shares regional open space resources such as the forests of Wompatuck State Park, Whitney and Thayer Woods (including portions known as Turkey Hill and Weir River Farm) and the Aaron River and Lily Pond watersheds with Hingham and Scituate.

**Land Use**

When considering the character of Cohasset, a number of factors come into play such as the nature of the residential development, Cohasset Village, the Town’s coastline and waterfront resources, its natural beauty and open spaces, and the commercial districts along Route 3A. Historic buildings and sites have been preserved for future generations. Cohasset Village serves the community with the variety and number of successful businesses appropriate to its scale and character. The active harbor reflects Cohasset’s heritage as a fishing village, which supports the needs of recreational boaters and commercial fishermen, and provides community meeting places and outdoor public spaces for residents and visitors. These are values that were confirmed throughout the planning process.

Land use acreage for different land use categories has not changed much in Cohasset since 1971. This is reflected in the breakdown of land uses in Figure 1 below.

- Approximately 1/3 of the land in Cohasset is categorized as residential; however, this land represents over 90% of the total assessed value in Town. In terms of developed land, residential uses are the predominant one in Cohasset.
- Commercial and industrial uses occupy a total of 3.3%, representing approximately 5% of the total assessed land value in Town.
- Almost half of the land in Cohasset is categorized as open space (2,935 acres according to the OSRP). In recent years, the Town has made an effort to increase its inventory of open spaces, some public and some privately owned. Recent acquisitions include Barnes Wildlife Refuge, Ingram Park, Brewster Woods, and land at King St. and Brass Kettle Brook.
- Land characterized as exempt represents 15% of the Town’s land area. Exempt land includes municipally-owned land and institutional uses such as churches.

![Figure 1: Cohasset Land Use Breakdown by Acreage - 2018](source: Town of Cohasset Assessor’s records and Cohasset 2018 Open Space and Recreation Plan)
**Growth and Development**

The earliest settlements in Cohasset were the village center, the harbor, and the Beechwood area, where farms were first carved out. Jerusalem Road began to see the establishment of inns and summer lodging houses in the early decades of the 19th century. This was the area where private summer cottages were first constructed. The arrival of the railroad in 1849 attracted even more summer visitors to Cohasset adding to the already established year-round residents in Cohasset working in farming, fishing and other local industries.

The Town continued to grow and, in the last quarter of the 19th century, new roads were laid out. Between 1876 and 1891, Doane Street, Forest Avenue, Atlantic Avenue, and Nichols Road were built. The last three were planned to accommodate summer houses, which in some cases took several decades before houses were constructed.

By the end of the Korean War, the Town of Cohasset began to transition to a bedroom community. While a small fishing industry, agricultural, and summer colony continued to operate as before, the Town increased its population in the post-World War II era. Summer cottages and other buildings were adapted into year-round residences, historic preservation emerged as a priority, and additional cultural institutions sprang up to provide cultural enrichment for local residents.

**Residential Development**

The combination of large areas of public land in the southern part of the town and environmental constraints, both wetlands and rock ledge, has historically limited the opportunities for large development projects. Septic requirements, especially with the more stringent Title 5 regulations now in force, have posed another barrier to development. Recently, new construction techniques have allowed development on properties that previously could not pass percolation tests. Additionally, a sewer treatment facility expansion facilitated connections to existing residences along Little Harbor and Atlantic Avenue and has added 150,000 gallons per day of excess capacity that has allowed for further residential development.

In recent years, the issuance of building permits for new residential construction has increased. Between the years of 2006 and 2009, an average of twelve permits for new housing construction were issued annually. Between 2010 and 2015, building permit issuance for new housing construction increased to 26 permits per year, in part due to the permitting of larger residential projects such as the Cook Estates on Sohier Street, the Toll Brothers development (Estates at Cohasset) off lower Beechwood Street, and the Avalon multi-family development on Route 3A. Over the last five years, excluding these large developments, the Town has averaged 17 new building permits per year. The size of single-family homes has increased as well resulting in the adoption of the Large Home Review provision in the Zoning Bylaw. As shown in Figure 2 below, the average permit value for new house/construction has increased from an average of $460,000 to an average of $720,000 since 2013.

**Commercial Development**

**ROUTE 3A CORRIDOR**

Commercial development along Route 3A has increased substantially since the 1990s and that section represents the most concentrated area for retail and personal services in Cohasset. Larger developments including Stop & Shop, Shaw's and Cohasset Storage have been built along the Route 3A corridor. Other commercial developments that have been constructed or approved in recent years along Route 3A include Old Colony Square Plaza, Hingham Lumber Company, King Jewelers Company, Aubuchon Hardware, and the Rosano office/residential mixed-use building. Avalon recently developed a residential complex on Route 3A that is the Town’s most densely developed residential project. Sunrise of Cohasset is an assisted living facility is located just north of the Avalon project.
COHASSET VILLAGE
Additional commercial development can be found in Cohasset Village, a small downtown center with smaller scale retail shops, real estate offices and restaurants with some residential development around the periphery. Participants in the visioning phase for the Master Plan valued what Cohasset Village offers to residents, as well as its character, and suggested that the plan include policies that preserve and enhance that part of town. This includes preservation of existing buildings, particularly if found to be historically or architecturally significant, while allowing for some more densely developed mixed use buildings where appropriate.

HARBOR AREA
Cohasset has an active harbor area which reflect Cohasset’s heritage as a fishing village. Starting in 2018, the Town began work on a Municipal Harbor Plan. Currently the land around the harbor includes 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 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 the 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 and anchoring Elm Street as a physical connection between the Village and the Harbor.

Cohasset Zoning
The Town of Cohasset Zoning Bylaw was first adopted in 1955. Numerous additions and amendments have been made over the years, with the latest revisions having occurred at the 2019 Annual Town Meeting. Recent amendments included adjustments to the use and dimensional regulations, inclusionary housing, medical and recreational marijuana, scenic roads and large house plan review.

The Zoning Bylaw establishes ten districts and five overlay districts. Most of the Town is zoned for residential use, primarily as Residence B (R-B). There are three residential districts (R-A, R-B, and R-C). The minimum lot size in the R-A district is 18,000 sq. ft. (0.4 acres); in the R-B district it is 35,000 Sq. ft. (0.8 acres); and in the R-C district, the minimum lot size is 60,000 sq. ft. (1.38 acres).
There are five business districts:

- The Downtown Business (DB) District includes three smaller nodes along upper Beechwood Street, Summer Street (Cohasset Harbor), and Route 228 (West Corner) near the Cohasset-Hingham-Hull town lines.
- The Waterfront Business (WB) District is generally located in the area surrounding Cohasset Harbor.
- Village Business (VB) encompasses the area known as Cohasset Village, which is generally located in the area immediately adjacent to the intersection of N. Main Street, Elm Street, and Ripley Road.
- The Highway Business (HB) District are generally located along two sections of Chief Justice Cushing Highway (Route 3A). The north and south sections of this district are separated by land zoned Residence B.
- The Technology Business (TB) District is located along west side of the northern portion of Chief Justice Cushing Highway between Sohier Street and Whitney Spur Rail Trail.

Additionally, there is one light industrial zoning district:

- The Light Industry (LI) District is generally located in the area west of King Street between N. Main Street and Chief Justice Cushing Highway.

The overlay districts include:

- Floodplain and Watershed Protection District
- Water Resource District
- Residential Cluster Development District
- Senior Multifamily Residence Overlay District
- Transit-Oriented Development Overlay District
- Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installations Overlay District

### Residential Zoning

The Residence A (R-A) District allows single-family dwellings on a single lot by right and community facilities that include but are not limited to religious institutions and nonprofit educational organizations. Pursuant to §300-4.3E of the Zoning Bylaws home occupations are also permitted in the district. The minimum lot size is 18,000 sq. ft. (0.4 acres) with a minimum frontage of 50 feet and a 30% maximum lot coverage. Accessory dwelling units are allowed by Special Permit granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA).

The Residence B (R-B) District allows single-family dwellings on a single lot by right and community facilities that include but are not limited to religious institutions and nonprofit educational organizations. Pursuant to § 300-4.3E of the Zoning Bylaws home occupations are also permitted in the district. The minimum lot size is 35,000 sq. ft. (0.8 acres) with a minimum frontage of 50 feet and a 30% maximum lot coverage. Accessory dwelling units are allowed by Special Permit granted by the ZBA.

The Residence C (R-C) District allows single-family dwellings on a single lot by right and community facilities that include but are not limited to religious institutions and nonprofit educational organizations. Pursuant to § 300-4.3E of the Zoning Bylaws home occupations are also permitted in the district. The minimum lot size is 60,000 sq. ft. (1.38 acres) with a minimum frontage of 50 feet and a 30% maximum lot coverage. Accessory dwelling units are allowed by Special Permit granted by the ZBA.

### OTHER PROVISIONS OF NOTE

The zoning bylaw includes a provision for a large house plan review to be conducted by the Planning Board when new construction or “an exterior alteration, expansion/extension/enlargement, reconstruction or replacement of an existing residential building” exceeds the greater of 3,500 square feet or 10% of the area of the lot up to a maximum of 6,000 square feet. In conducting its review, the Board can review the scale of the building, preservation of landscape, lighting, and circulation. Almost
Figure 3: 2015 Cohasset Official Zoning Map
Figure 4: 2015 Cohasset Zoning Map (Residential)

Cohasset Residential Zoning

[Map showing Cohasset Residential Zoning with different districts labeled: Residence A, Residence B, Residence C]
Figure 5: 2015 Cohasset Zoning Map (Commercial and Industrial)

Cohasset Commercial Zoning

The information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. It is not adequate for legal boundary definitions, regulatory interpretation, or parcel-level analysis.

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Date Sources
Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)
Massachusetts Geographic Information System (MassGIS)
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

May 2019
50 large home reviews have been conducted over the last ten years and concerns are frequently raised that many of these expansions are out of character with the surrounding neighborhoods. These sentiments were echoed by the public at the forums for both the visioning process and the Master Plan.

A number of vacant residential lots do not meet the minimum lot size requirements of their respective zoning districts. The single lot exemption provides that a single-family dwelling may be allowed on lots that have “less than the required area, width, depth and/or frontage”, if the land was laid out in a plan and recorded at the Registry, was in conformity with applicable regulations at the time of the recording, and still met minimum lot size requirements set forth in this section of the bylaw (9,000 square feet in the RA district, 15,000 square feet in the RB district and 20,000 square feet in the RC district).

**Commercial Zoning**

**VILLAGE/DOWNTOWN BUSINESS**

Zoning for Cohasset Village is within the Downtown Business (DB) and the Village Business (VB) Districts, where the following uses are permitted by right: retail stores and service establishments; professional offices; banks; restaurants, catering services and other places where food is served for consumption on the premises; religious and nonprofit educational organizations; parking areas or garages; and medical uses. The ZBA may allow single-family dwelling, boat yard or marina uses by Special Permit. The Planning Board may issue Special Permits for multi-family “including those in combination with stores or other permitted uses...” in the VB district. The minimum lot size in this district is 5,000 sq. ft. with a maximum building height of 35 feet and lot coverage of 80%. Article 18 of the bylaw sets forth performance standards for special permits in the Village Business district regarding floor area ratio.

Note that according to the zoning map, there are two other small areas designated as Downtown Zoning. The use and dimensional regulations are virtually the same between the Downtown Business and Village Business districts, with the exception of jurisdiction over certain special permit reviews.

In 2017, the Planning Board adopted the Village Business District design guidelines to be used by the Board in its review of special permit applications in the Village Business District. The design guidelines address factors such as building materials, height, massing, facades, roofing, windows and doorways. They also incorporate site design features including pedestrian networks, signage, landscaping, parking, lighting, and stormwater management.

The general policy objectives of the guidelines are to:

- Preserve and enhance the historical and cultural heritage of the Village
- Promote the mix of uses
- Promote variety in future development
- Encourage sustainability
- Promote coordination with infrastructure improvements
- Encourage affordable and moderately priced housing
- Create open spaces and pedestrian accessibility
- Encourage sensitivity to adjacent residential neighborhoods.

**HIGHWAY BUSINESS**

The Highway Business district covers the north and south sections of the Route 3A corridor. Uses permitted by right include retail stores and service establishments; restaurants without entertainment; retail sale of marina supplies; building supplies showroom; miscellaneous trade and repair service and shops; business offices; banks; printing establishments; and community facilities such as religious institutions. Special permit uses include single- and multi-family dwellings; hospitals; restaurants
that include entertainment; automobile sales; hotels and motels; and auto service stations and repair garages. The minimum lot size in the district is 10,000 square feet, although if housing is included, the minimum lot size is 88,000 square feet. There is a 25% maximum structural coverage standard, or 60% for the entire lot (including all impervious surfaces such as parking lots). The maximum building height is 35 feet.

**WATERFRONT BUSINESS**
The Waterfront Business district generally includes the area around Cohasset Harbor. Uses allowed by right include retail sales of marina supplies and community facilities such as religious institutions. Additionally certain uses such as retail stores; restaurants; and hotels and motels may be allowed by special permit. Residential uses currently are not allowed within this district. There is no minimum lot size in this district. The maximum building height is 35 feet and the lot coverage maximum is 80%.

A small portion of this district includes land subject to Chapter 91, which governs the use of Commonwealth tidelands and protects the public’s right to access those tidelands. The regulations governing Chapter 91 land requires that the land be preserved for water-dependent uses and designates land that can provide direct access to the waterfront. According to the Municipal Harbor Plan, the primary parcels affected are the Cohasset Harbor Inn, Olde Salt House, and Atlantica sites, and three Town-owned properties: the site of the John Smith marker, the war memorial, and Government Island. The zoning changes proposed in the Municipal Harbor Plan and described below would require changes to the Chapter 91 license that governs this area, which is described in more detail in that plan.

At the 2019 Town Meeting, the Town adopted changes to the Waterfront Business District. The zoning amendment would create a new Harbor Village Business Overlay (HVB) district that will allow multifamily residential uses in a mixed-use building within the boundary of the overlay district. Allowed commercial uses include retail, professional offices and services, seasonal and permanent public amenities, and restaurants. A Planning Board special permit would be required along with conformance with applicable dimensional and design standards.

**TECHNOLOGY BUSINESS**
The Technology Business (TB) District is located along Route 3A north of the intersection with Sohier Street. Permitted uses by right include retail stores and service establishments; retail sales of marina supplies; nursing home; medical offices; miscellaneous trade and repair service and shops; boat yards; business offices; and banks. Special permit uses include restaurants; automobile sales; and auto service stations and repair garages. The minimum lot size is 80,000 square feet. The maximum building height is 45 feet. The lot coverage standard is 25% for structures and 60% for all impervious surfaces on a lot.

**Industrial Zoning**
In the Light Industry (LI) District, business and/or professional office buildings with a maximum building height of 45 ft. are allowed by right. Additionally, wholesale and manufacturing enterprises; home occupations and agricultural uses; community facilities that include but are not limited to religious institutions, nonprofit educational organizations, and golf courses are permitted. Special permit uses, if approved by the Planning Board include but are not limited to cemeteries; hospitals; solid waste facilities; kennels; veterinary hospitals; and fast food restaurants. The minimum lot size in this district is 80,000 sq. ft. with a maximum lot coverage of 60%.

**Overlay Districts**

**FLOODPLAIN AND WATERSHED PROTECTION DISTRICT**
The Floodplain and Watershed Protection District includes all special flood hazard areas within the Town of Cohasset designated as Zone A, AE, AO, or VE on the Norfolk County Flood Insurance Rate Map issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the administration of the National Flood Insurance Program. The purpose of the district is to protect persons and property from the hazards of flood and pollution; to protect, preserve, and maintain the Town’s water table and water recharge areas; to assure the continuation of the Town’s natural water flow patterns and to provide adequate and safe water storage and runoff capacity. The Special Permit Granting Authority in this district is the Zoning Board of Appeals. Allowed uses include outdoor recreation including, but not necessarily limited to boating, golfing, fishing, hunting, nature study, and bicycle and horseback riding; wildlife conservation shelters; and dams and other water control devices.

WATER RESOURCE DISTRICT
The Water Resource District includes all areas designated on the Zoning Map. The purpose of the district is to preserve, protect, and maintain an adequate quality and quantity of drinking, ground and surface water for the residents, institutions, and businesses of the Town of Cohasset; as well as conserve natural resources and prevent temporary and permanent contamination of the environment. The Special Permit Granting Authority in this district is the ZBA. This section of the bylaw includes a list of uses that are deemed to be hazardous to the Town’s water supply and are prohibited.

RESIDENTIAL CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT
The Zoning Bylaw provides for a Residential Cluster Development (RCDD) District by Special Permit and Site Plan Approval from the Planning Board in a R-B or R-C District. As described in the bylaw, the purpose of the district is to encourage the more efficient use of land in harmony with its natural features; encourage creativity in the design of developments through a carefully controlled process; encourage a less sprawling form of development, a shorter network of streets and utilities, more economical development of land with less consumption of open space; permanently preserve natural topography and wooded areas within development areas and to preserve usable open space and recreation facilities close to homes; provide an efficient procedure to ensure appropriate high-quality design and site planning to enhance the neighborhoods in which they occur and to the Town as a whole; and promote diverse and energy-efficient housing at a variety of costs. The RCDD requires a minimum area of 10 acres and a maximum building height of 35 ft. Additionally, the minimum width of open land between any group of lots and adjacent property shall be 30 ft. and between each group of clustered buildings shall be 30 ft. Single- and multi-family dwellings are allowed however, multi-family dwelling units cannot exceed 30% of the units in a residential cluster development.

SENIOR MULTIFAMILY RESIDENCE OVERLAY DISTRICT
The Senior Multifamily Residence Overlay District (SMRD) was allowed until 2018 with the issuance of a Special Permit and Site Plan Approval from the Planning Board in a R-B or R-C District. The purpose of a SMRD was to provide alternative housing for residents who are 55 years in age or older. The bylaw required that at least 25% of the dwelling units be affordable to persons who met or qualified under the bylaw’s definition of low- or moderate-income housing for a period not less than 30 years. The minimum acreage for such a development was 10 acres with a maximum density of 10 dwelling units per acre and a maximum building height of 35 ft.

Pursuant to §300-16.10 of the bylaw, the Planning Board provided a density bonus of two units per acre when at least 25% of the dwelling units, in addition to affordable units as per Subsection A, were affordable to persons who met or qualified under the bylaw’s definition of median-income housing for a period not less than 30 years.

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT OVERLAY DISTRICT
The Zoning Bylaw provides for a Transit-Oriented Development Overlay (TOD) District by Special
Permit and Site Plan Approval from the Planning Board. The district’s boundaries include the Light Industry District to the north of Chief Justice Cushing Highway (Route 3A) as designated on the Zoning Map and encompasses the area around the MBTA commuter rail station. The purpose of the TOD district is to reduce automobile dependency; encourage a mix of moderate- to high-density development near transit, and create safe and pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods. Allowed uses include retail, civic, office, and multi-family dwellings.

**GROUND-MOUNTED SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC INSTALLATIONS OVERLAY DISTRICT**

The purpose of the Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installations Overlay District is to create a zoning overlay district that allows the installation, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of ground-mounted solar photovoltaic (GMSP) arrays. The Planning Board is the site plan review authority in this district.

**Recent Zoning Amendments**

In recent years, the Town considered and adopted the following amendments to the Zoning Bylaw:

- Scenic byways – designated four roadways with scenic attributes where stricter regulations apply to residential development to protect the character and environment of the Town
- Medical and recreational marijuana uses – regulates where such uses can be located in Cohasset
- Zoning for wind energy – accommodates the construction of wind turbines in appropriate locations
- Zoning Bylaw reconciliation and recodification – make the bylaw easier to read and use
- Miscellaneous changes to definitions and dimensional regulations

**Potential Build-out in Cohasset**

**Residential Build-Out**

Based on data reviewed from the Long Range Planning Group and the Assessors’ Office, MAPC identified a total of 103 residential parcels as vacant, covering 357 acres. There were 96 parcels, totaling 204 acres classified as either developable or potentially developable and were included in the future build-out analysis for residential land (Assessors’ codes 130 and 131).

Ten of those lots or a total of 157 acres, are classified as undevelopable according to the Assessors’ records. While the undevelopable land (Assessor’s Code 132) is not included in the build-out analysis, it is certainly possible that a portion of this land does convert into further residential development. During the period 2004 to 2018, 280 acres designated code 132 became developed.

**Figure 6: Lots per Residential Zoning District**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zoning District</th>
<th>Min. lot size (sq. ft./acres)*</th>
<th>Developable lots</th>
<th>Potentially developable lots</th>
<th>Area (sq. ft.)</th>
<th>Area (acres)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td>18,000/0.41</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>437,072</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RB</td>
<td>35,000/0.8</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5,825,833</td>
<td>133.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RC</td>
<td>60,000/1.38</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2,622,830</td>
<td>60.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>66</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,885,735</strong></td>
<td><strong>203.9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 1 acre = 43,560 square feet
The 204 acres classified as developable or potentially developable were further refined when examining the Assessors’ data in more detail. Despite being listed as developable or potentially developable, a number of lots fell below the minimum lot size for the district in which they are located, including those that fall below the threshold for consideration under the single lot exemption clause of the zoning bylaw. See Figure 6 below for the breakdown of lots within each zoning district.

In assessing the potential build-out in Cohasset, it is important to understand the existing zoning regulations, especially those governing permitted uses and the dimensional regulations (frontage; front, side and rear yard setbacks, lot coverage, height, etc.). It is important to note that this analysis is based on the current zoning provisions. The vacant parcels fall within each of the three residential zoning districts – RA with a minimum lot size of 18,000 square feet; RB with a minimum lot size of 35,000 square feet; and RC with a minimum lot size of 60,000 square feet.

Figure 6: Potential New Units on Parcels Larger than 4 Acres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zoning District</th>
<th>Min. lot size (sq. ft./acres)*</th>
<th>Potential New Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td>18,000/0.41</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RB</td>
<td>35,000/0.8</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RC</td>
<td>60,000/1.38</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>250</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally, residential lots that contain one single-family house but exceed four acres in size were considered as potentially developable under the assumption that the property owner could subdivide the land and build additional houses (Assessor’s land use codes 101-106). In reviewing the relevant parcels and the minimum lot size for each district, environmentally constrained land (wetlands, etc.)

Figure 7: Potential New Units on Parcels Larger than 4 Acres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zoning District</th>
<th>Min. lot size (sq. ft./acres)*</th>
<th>Potential New Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td>18,000/0.41</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RB</td>
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<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RC</td>
<td>60,000/1.38</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>250</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Single lot Exemption units are based on lots that are at least 9,000 sq. ft. in RA; 15,000 sq. ft. in RB; and 20,000 sq. ft. in RC, but do not meet the minimum lot size for the district.
was subtracted to determine how much land would be potentially developable. The numbers below are the potential new houses if the remaining land was to be subdivided (they do not include the existing structure).

The build-out for residential properties is summarized in the table below. For each of the three residential zoning districts, the build-out is shown for developable lots, potentially developable lots and the number of lots that could potentially be approved pursuant to the single lot exemption provision of the bylaw. (Note that this analysis does not include a review of any recorded plans for these undersized lots to determine whether the lots comply with the standards for the exemption.)

Thus the total build-out for the number of residential units (developable and potentially developable) is 195 units. For parcels that exceed four acres in size that could be subdivided, and additional 250 units could potentially be constructed, although it is unlikely that all of these properties would be subdivided and built-out. When all of the single lot exemption lots are added, the build-out reaches 474 single-family units.

In contrast, the build-out potential as analyzed in the draft 2003 master plan, 374 units were projected on vacant residential parcels plus 607 homes on potentially land that had potential to be subdivided for a total number of 981 new single-family homes. These updated build-out projections suggest that approximately half of those parcels with build-out potential have been developed although a strict comparison is difficult since different methodologies were employed in the analysis.
Commercial Build-Out

The commercial build-out is based on the assessment of 14 vacant developable lots in the Highway Business District. This covers approximately 1,585,649 square feet of land or 36.4 acres. There are a few lots that are split between two zoning districts, so only the land actually within the HB district was counted. The minimum lot size within the HB district is 10,000 square feet. For the build-out calculation, it was assumed that any development would be built to maximize the 25% structural coverage standard in the dimensional regulations. Although many of the buildings within this district are one- or two-story buildings, build-out projections are also made for buildings that reach the 35 foot maximum height standard (equivalent to three stories). The build-out is summarized in the table below.

Another factor to consider regarding potential build-out along Route 3A is the ongoing feasibility study for the construction of a new sewer line along the roadway corridor. Connecting commercial properties along 3A to the sewer system would support existing business that have struggled with septic issues and may create an opportunity for more intensive development that could result in greater build-out potential by opening up land for development that might otherwise be constrained by the necessity of siting a septic system. The ramifications of running a sewer line along Route 3A should be considered as part of the feasibility study.

To illustrate recent commercial developments on Route 3A, a mixed-use building was permitted 132 Chief Justice Cushing Highway after Cohasset adopted the Transit Overlay District. The development created a two-story building containing 34,000 sq. ft. of ground floor retail space and 23,000 sq. ft. of residential space on the second floor. After receiving a Special Permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals allowing the combination of commercial and residential land uses on the site, the Planning Board approved a mixed-use development at 380-400 Chief Justice Cushing Highway. This approval allowed a 60,000 sq. ft. two-story building comprised of retail space and 20 local action rental-housing units, which will be included in Cohasset’s Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI).²

Land Use Goals and Recommendations

Goal 1: Plan and invest strategically for smart growth in order to preserve Cohasset’s community character

In Phase I of the master plan process, the citizens of Cohasset identified several opportunities including: developing a land use plan before the Town is overdeveloped, increasing affordable housing for people with lower incomes, and retaining the traditional small town feeling. Identify environmental constraints

² 2018 Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan
to prevent development of unsuitable parcels.

**Strategy 1.1: Complete study of Cohasset residential land use patterns**

Develop clearer picture of maximum build-out potential of Town including strategies to manage growth and impact to specific neighborhoods of potential regional sewer agreement.

**Strategy 1.2: Review existing zoning bylaw on accessory dwelling units (ADUs)**

Encourage ADUs as an additional way to create more alternative housing options (see Housing chapter).

**Strategy 1.3: Review zoning bylaw to allow greater housing options in certain areas along Route 3A and near the train station (see Housing chapter)**

This could include more diverse housing types such as cottage-style development, clustered single-family housing, townhouses, single-family on smaller lots, and mixed-use developments.

**Strategy 1.4: Review and revise the zoning bylaw to ensure desired smart growth and enforcement of zoning bylaws**

- Consider separating zoning enforcement from building inspector function.
- Review and discuss increasing RB and RC frontage requirements
- Update the use regulations to delete out-of-date uses and include new land uses that the Town might expect and consolidate zoning districts, especially the DB and VB districts since the use and dimensional regulations are virtually the same.
- Review parking requirements.
- Evaluate pros and cons of a Demolition Moratorium Bylaw.
- Evaluate pros and cons of a Ledge Removal Bylaw.
- Evaluate pros and cons of eliminating the Single Lot Exemption.
- Evaluate pros and cons of expanding the Transit-Oriented Development Overlay District.

**Strategy 1.5: Improve planning and permitting process by educating community through zoning clinics**

Conduct periodic public forums to assist potential applicants and educate them regarding the Town’s zoning bylaw and environmental permitting.

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**Goal 2: Revitalize the Harbor area in accordance with the Harbor Plan vision and landside development and infrastructure recommendations**

The vision for the Municipal Harbor Plan 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. The 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 with physical, visual, and economic components.
**Strategy 2.1: Support public use of and access to the Harbor**

Additional activity in the Harbor is dependent upon appropriate parking. One possibility is the extension of the current parking area at the Lightkeepers’ Cottage.

**Strategy 2.2: Identify and plan for appropriate improvements to landside and waterside infrastructure**

Specific suggestions in the Municipal Harbor Plan include improving streetscape, installing signage, establishing gateway. For example, Elm Street as the principal connection to the Harbor requires modification to make it a pleasant pedestrian environment to draw people from one area to the other.

**Strategy 2.3: Improve the interconnectivity between the Village and the Harbor**

A key element in linking the Village and the Harbor will be to develop enhanced streetscape guidelines for connections while allowing each to have its own identity. For example, enhancements could include street lighting and furniture, using similar paving materials in the same family and colors in both districts, having similar signage and using other elements such as banners and planters.

**Strategy 2.4: Explore zoning changes to the Harbor to reflect the goals of the Harbor Plan and the demand for alternative uses along the water’s edge**

Specific suggestions include modifying Waterfront Business district zone and evaluating zoning changes to the Light Industry zone. As the master plan was concluding, the Town of Cohasset adopted a HVB District, which will allow multifamily residential use in a mixed-use development pattern within the Harbor area.

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**Goal 3: Protect open space in all town-wide land use decisions in order to preserve access and scenic beauty in accordance with the OSRP**

**Strategy 3.1: Develop a set of criteria for ranking and evaluation of future open space acquisitions by the Town**

**Strategy 3.2: Develop and maintain a list and priorities of properties suitable for potential acquisition or conservation by the Town and make recommendations**

Note that this recommendation appears in the OSRP as well. Create a GIS layer specifically designated to open space.

**Strategy 3.3: Request comment from the OSRC on permitting and land acquisition and disposition matters before the land use permitting boards**
Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting

Strategy 3.4: Increase public awareness of tax incentives available to private landowners who preserve open space

Encourage the use of MGL chapter 61, 61A and 61B (forestry, agriculture and recreation, respectively) for the benefit of property owners and the Town.

Strategy 3.5: Increase public outreach on the value and importance of open space, including the benefits of public-private partnerships dedicated to preserving and enhancing open space.

Goal 4: Attract and retain diverse business in Cohasset while retaining small town character

Strategy 4.1: Develop plans for joint economic development of the Harbor area and the Village

This joint campaign hinges on two objectives articulated in the Harbor Plan of drawing transient boaters from the Harbor to eat/shop in the Village and encouraging visitors to the Village to eat/play in the Harbor area.

Strategy 4.2: Complete study of commercial build-out analysis including impact of potential regional sewer on economic development along Route 3A

Strategy 4.3: Establish design guidelines that can be adopted for the Route 3A corridor

These guidelines should include landscape and streetscape design standards, regulation of curb cuts, pedestrian enhancements, design guidelines for the location and design of parking lots, etc.

Strategy 4.4: Consider ways in which to introduce more housing in Cohasset Village as a way to enhance market opportunities in that district (see Economic Development chapter)

Encourage new upper-story residential and commercial development within Cohasset Village that is consistent with its historic character.
Introduction

Like many other municipalities in the greater Boston region, in recent years Cohasset has experienced both renewed population growth and a matching expansion of its housing stock. However, both older and newer housing in town does not necessarily align with the needs of all its residents. Cohasset’s housing is generally large and expensive, and there are limited options for renters, low- and moderate-income households, and those looking for smaller housing options, whether young families starting out or longtime residents looking to downsize.

Despite these challenges, the Town has many tools at its disposal to address housing need and demand, and has made progress towards key housing benchmarks, including currently meeting the state goal of 10% subsidized housing per Chapter 40B. The Town’s ability to continue to meet Chapter 40B targets in the future will be dependent on many factors, which are currently being analyzed in greater detail as part of a Housing Production Plan (HPP). This chapter of the Cohasset Master Plan will analyze demographic and housing data to assess housing need, will review municipal tools and resources, and will conclude with housing goals and strategies.

Key Findings

• Cohasset is a small town that has experienced population growth in recent years, which is projected to continue. Its largest age groups are children under the age of 20 and adults aged 40-59, though the share of seniors over the age of 60 is projected to increase the coming years.

• Cohasset’s median income roughly doubled in the past three decades, and is now substantially higher than that of the state and region. However, Cohasset is not universally affluent; 21% of all households are low-income. In general, senior households in Cohasset earn less than the overall population.

• While Cohasset’s housing stock has grown and diversified in recent years, including an increase in the number of multifamily and rental units, the majority of Cohasset’s housing is still large, detached, single-family housing.

• The median home price in Cohasset is substantially higher than in the surrounding area. Even with Cohasset’s high median income, a family earning Cohasset’s median income could not afford to purchase a house at Cohasset’s median home price. One-third of Cohasset households experience some degree of cost burden.

• Cohasset should continue to seek opportunities to expand the diversity of its housing stock to meet the needs of households of varying sizes, incomes, tenures, and ages, with a particular focus on low-income families and downsizing seniors.

Demographics

Population

Housing demand in any given area is driven in part by the people who live there, so an understanding

1 As prescribed by Chapter 40B, the percentage of subsidized housing units is based on the total number of housing units in Cohasset as of the most recent census, which occurred in 2010. When using Cohasset’s current number of housing units or the anticipated number of housing units as of the 2020 census, the percentage of subsidized housing units drops below 10%. See the Affordability section of this chapter for a more detailed discussion.

2 Because of Cohasset’s small size, the margins of error for much of the data available are sometimes higher than what would typically be seen in larger geographies. Margins of error greater than 2% are noted in the footnotes throughout this chapter.
of Cohasset’s population is necessary to understand current and future housing need (note however that demand is also driven by those who do not currently live in Cohasset, but would like to). Cohasset is a small town, but has seen its population grow in recent years: the town’s 2017 population of 8,342 represents a 14.9% increase since 2000, and the town’s 2,949 households represent an increase of 10% during the same period.

MAPC projects that the Town will continue to grow in the coming years. MAPC’s projections include two scenarios: a Status Quo scenario, which is based on the continuation of existing rates of births, deaths, migration, and housing occupancy; and a Stronger Region scenario, which explores how changing trends could result in higher population growth, greater housing demand, and a substantially larger workforce for the greater Boston region. MAPC’s Status Quo scenario projects a 2030 Cohasset population of 9,332. Under the Stronger Region scenario, MAPC projects a slightly higher population of 9,476 in 2030. The Status Quo scenario aligns more closely with previous planning work done by the Town, so the analysis in this Plan will rely on that scenario.

Consistent with national and regional trends, Cohasset is expected to see its senior population increase. Based on population analysis done by Cohasset’s Long Range Planning Group (LRPG), the number of residents aged 60-74 has grown at a 4% compound annual growth rate (CAGR) from 2007-2016. MAPC projects that the number of residents over the age of 60 will continue to grow, reaching 2,878 by 2030 and increasing the share of older adults in Cohasset from 22% in 2010 to 31% in 2030.

**Figure 10: Population Projections**

*Source: U.S. Census, MAPC projections*

Consistent with national and regional trends, Cohasset is expected to see its senior population increase. Based on population analysis done by Cohasset’s Long Range Planning Group (LRPG), the number of residents aged 60-74 has grown at a 4% compound annual growth rate (CAGR) from 2007-2016. MAPC projects that the number of residents over the age of 60 will continue to grow, reaching 2,878 by 2030 and increasing the share of older adults in Cohasset from 22% in 2010 to 31% in 2030.

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4 The number of households, which are defined as a group of people living together within a housing unit, is not necessarily equal to the number of housing units in Cohasset. For example, an unoccupied house would count as a housing unit, but would not include a household. However, it is worth noting that the household data used here is from 2012-2016, whereas housing unit data is from 2017. Given the recent increase in the number of housing units in Cohasset, it is likely that the current number of households is higher than what is represented in the 2012-2016 data.
The projected share of older adults is slightly greater than that projected for the entire region, which is expected to increase from 18% to 28% of the total population over the same period.

However, an increasing share of seniors is not the whole story; the number of young adults aged 20-39 is expected to double from 2010-2030. This is consistent with the LRPG’s analysis of town census data from 2007 to 2016, which found that the number of young adults aged 18-29 grew at a CAGR of 4%, outpacing overall adult population growth over the same period (1.5% CAGR). Even with the projected growth of this age group, the share of young adults in Cohasset (21% of the Town’s population) is expected to be less than that of the entire region (28%). During the same 9-year period, the number of adults aged 30-59 experienced a 0% CAGR. This is consistent with MAPC’s projection that adults aged 40-59 are expected to decrease slightly, but still remain a substantial share of the population.

Finally, MAPC projects that number of children aged 19 and younger is projected to decrease slightly by 2030. However, this is at odds with the LRPG’s analysis, which found that the number of children aged 17 and younger grew at a 0.9% CAGR from 2007-2016. The LRPG’s analysis was based on Massachusetts Department of Secondary and Elementary Education reporting, and found that the number of school-aged children had been understated in the U.S. Census data. Given that MAPC’s projects are in part based on U.S. Census data, it is possible that the projections also underrepresent the number of children. In both cases, the number of children will continue to represent a substantial share of Cohasset’s population.

**Households**

When assessing housing needs, the number of households is as important as the total population. Each household resides in one dwelling unit, regardless of the number of household members, so the number of projected households can serve as a proxy for how many housing units are needed. In keeping with recent population growth, the number of households in Cohasset has increased by 276, or 10.3%, since
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Households</th>
<th>Average Household Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2,949</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2,722</td>
<td>2.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2,673</td>
<td>2.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>2,590</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 13

Figure 14
Source: U.S. Census

Figure 15
Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey.
2000. MAPC projects an increase in the number of households living in Cohasset in the coming years, rising to 3,750 households in 2030, an increase of 801 households over 14 years.

The number of households is projected to increase faster than the overall population, indicating decreasing household size over time. This likely reflects an increased number of aging households without children, as well as smaller families and young households without children. However, it is worth noting that in recent years Cohasset’s average household size has increased slightly, unlike trends in many Boston-area communities. This likely reflects the strong appeal that Cohasset holds for families with children. It is also worth noting that household size differs substantially based on tenure: the average household size for Cohasset homeowners is 3.0, whereas the average household size for Cohasset renters is 1.96. The Town will need to consider all of these household sizes when planning for future need.

Cohasset’s households can be divided into family households (those with two or more related persons living together) and nonfamily households (those with either one person, or with more than one non-related person living together). Nearly three-quarters of Cohasset’s households consist of family households, which is higher than Massachusetts overall (63% of households). Of these, just over half have children under age 18. The remaining family households include both couples living without children and families with children over the age of 18. Although the Town’s share of family households with children is relatively high compared to the state overall, it is important to remember that more than half of Cohasset’s households do not have young children in residence, and these households will likely have different housing needs.

Race and Ethnicity

Cohasset has limited ethnic and racial diversity. The vast majority of the population (98%) is white; Hispanic and racial minorities comprise only 2% of the population. By contrast, minorities account for 30% of Greater Boston’s population and 26% of the state population.8

Income

Income is an important consideration in assessing housing need because it determines what a household can afford to pay for housing. It also determines what type of housing is affordable: rental or ownership, single-family or multifamily.

On the whole, Cohasset residents are well-off: the Town’s median household income of $128,224 is substantially higher than that of Norfolk County ($90,226) or Massachusetts ($70,954),9 and 29% of Cohasset households (868 households) earn more than $200k/year.10 Though Cohasset’s median income is substantially higher than the state and region, this relative affluence is fairly recent. Twenty-five years ago, the Town’s median income was nearly equal to that of the state, but it has risen at a much faster rate. However, Cohasset is not universally affluent; 620 households, or 21%11 of all households, are considered low-income. Additional details about Cohasset’s low-income households, and the

6 2012-2016 American Community Survey. Margin of error for average renter household size is 0.38.
7 2010 U.S. Census.
8 2012-2016 American Community Survey.
9 2012-2016 American Community Survey. Margin of error for Cohasset median income is $19,660.
10 2012-2016 American Community Survey. Margin of error 6%.
12 A four-person household in Cohasset earning less than $81,100 is considered low income (2018 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development).
ways that income levels relate to subsidized housing options and eligibility, are discussed in the “Affordability” section later in this chapter.

A subset of Cohasset’s low-income population that is particularly vulnerable to housing instability is those living in poverty. Three hundred eighty-six residents, or 4.7% of the population, live below the poverty threshold, fewer than the county (6.7%) and state (11.4%) overall. While this represents a substantial increase from the Town’s poverty rate of 1.1% less than a decade ago, it is not necessarily a trend; in 2000, 2.8% of the Town’s population was below the poverty level. The town should watch this number in the coming years to understand whether the number of residents in poverty is trending upwards.

In general, senior households in Cohasset earn less than the overall population. This is unsurprising given that most seniors are retired or work fewer hours, and many rely solely on social security for income. Renters are also more likely to be low-income than homeowners.

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13 The poverty threshold for a four-person family varies depending on the number of children present, but was approximately $25,000 in 2017 as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau.
14 2012-2016 American Community Survey. Margin of error 2.7%.
15 2005-2009 American Community Survey. Margin of error 1%.
16 2000 U.S. Census
17 2010-2014 HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy.
Housing Characteristics

Cohasset has just over 3,300 housing units, nearly three-quarters of which are detached, single-family dwellings. This is slightly higher than the percentage of single-family housing found in the South Shore Coalition Subregion (70%), and is roughly consistent with other developing suburbs in the MAPC region (73%). Cohasset also has a significant number of units classified as condominiums, though many of these are detached structures located in condominium subdivisions, which are effectively single-family structures. The remainder of Cohasset’s housing is mainly in two-unit buildings or in larger multifamily buildings. The latter are located almost entirely in the 2013 Avalon Bay development, which consists of 220 apartment units. Cohasset is also home to one group housing facility and one assisted living facility, which combined make up two percent of the Town’s housing stock.

Cohasset’s housing stock includes a large number of older homes; roughly one quarter are at least a century old (built in 1918 or earlier) and over half were built before 1960. Residents of Cohasset appreciate these buildings for their aesthetic and cultural value; however, these homes may have increased monthly utility costs, which can impact affordability. These buildings are also typically not compliant with modern accessibility requirements, making them challenging for older residents who wish to age in place.

Cohasset’s housing consists of generally large homes. Nearly half (49%) of the Town’s housing is four or more bedrooms, and only 11% are studios or one-bedrooms. In terms of overall size, housing built in the past two decades tends to be larger than that built in previous years. This indicates that much of the Town’s new housing, while meeting demand for larger or higher-end units, is not necessarily addressing the needs of smaller or lower-income households.

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18 This number includes unoccupied housing units
19 The South Shore Coalition Subregion consists of the towns of Braintree, Cohasset, Duxbury, Hanover, Hingham, Holbrook, Hull, Marshfield, Norwell, Pembroke, Rockland, Scituate, and Weymouth.
21 2017 Cohasset Assessor’s Office.
22 2017 Cohasset Assessor’s Office.
23 2012-2016 American Community Survey. Margins of error 6% and 3% respectively. These number cover 2012-2016 and only partially include the 2013 Avalon Bay development, so the actual number of smaller units may be higher.
24 2017 Cohasset Assessor’s Office
Cohasset’s housing is primarily ownership: 80% of units are owner-occupied. This is slightly higher than the ownership rate for the Subregion (76%), and substantially higher than the County (69%) and the State (62%). Though high, Cohasset’s rate of homeownership has actually decreased by 5% in the past five years, primarily due to the Avalon Bay development, which is entirely rental. Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of single-family households (98%) are owned rather than rented. The converse is also true; the majority of multifamily units, few as they may be, are rentals.

### Housing Market

In 2017 the median home price in Cohasset was $874,750, far higher than Norfolk County’s median price of $459,000. The Town’s 2017 median price also represents a considerable increase from 2000, before the housing bubble and ensuing recession, when the median sales price was $584,487.

One interesting trend in town is that the cost of a condominium, which is typically a more affordable

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25 2012-2016 American Community Survey. Again, these numbers cover 2012-2016 and only partially include the Avalon Bay development, so the actual number of rental units may be higher.

26 2007-2011 American Community Survey.

27 2012-2016 American Community Survey.

28 2017 Warren Group. All prices are adjusted for inflation to 2017$. 

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homeownership option, has been increasing faster than the cost of a single-family house. In 2001, the median condominium price was just over half that of a single-family house, but by 2017 it had risen to over 80% of the median single-family price. This rapid increase is likely influenced by recent condominium subdivision developments consisting of large detached homes.

This trend could also indicate that the demand for smaller, more affordable housing in Cohasset has driven the cost up for this segment of housing.

The number of home sales in Cohasset has been steadily rising for the past several years, reaching just over 200 sales in 2017. This is double the number of sales seen at the tail end of the most recent recession, but is only a slight increase over the volume of sales during the real estate peak in the late 1990s. These sales numbers include both single-family homes and condominiums, though single-family homes make up the bulk of home sales in Cohasset, which is unsurprising given the high proportion of single-family homes overall.

During the first half of 2018, the median rent in Cohasset was $2,310 for a one-bedroom apartment and $2,500 for a two-bedroom apartment. However, there are an exceptionally small number of rental units available in Cohasset (16 units total were listed in the first two quarters of 2018, including only one three-bedroom unit), so a few units can have an outsized influence on the median rent. Specifically, the 220-unit Avalon Bay development accounts for a large proportion of the Town’s rental housing, and thus has a marked influence on rental prices. The number of listed units reinforces the scarcity of rental housing options in Cohasset, affordable or otherwise.

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30 2018 MAPC Rental Listings Database.
Cohasset's housing stock has grown and diversified in recent years, though much of the growth has occurred within a small number of developments. The most notable change has been a substantial increase in the number of multifamily units; more than half the new units built since 2010 have been in large multifamily development of more than eight units each. Nearly all of these are in the 220-unit rental development completed by Avalon Bay in 2013 under Chapter 40B.

The number of single-family units (including single-family detached condominiums) has been steadily growing by an average of 17 per year, with a total of 121 new units since 2010. Several luxury single-family developments have garnered much attention in town, including the 41-unit Estates at Cohasset, a high-end subdivision recently developed by the Toll Brothers, and the Cook Estate subdivision, which were sold as single-family detached condominiums.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single Family</td>
<td>2,263</td>
<td>2,277</td>
<td>2,292</td>
<td>2,298</td>
<td>2,312</td>
<td>2,320</td>
<td>2,331</td>
<td>2,350</td>
<td>87</td>
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<tr>
<td>Condo (includes detached condominiums)</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two houses on one lot</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Family</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>(26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Family</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-8 units</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 8 units</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Use</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Housing</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Housing</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Housing</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,982</td>
<td>2,989</td>
<td>3,009</td>
<td>3,244</td>
<td>3,264</td>
<td>3,274</td>
<td>3,279</td>
<td>3,311</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in Total Units</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 21: Number of Units by Building Type
Source: 2017 Cohasset Assessor's Office.
Cohasset has also seen some mixed-use development in recent years. In the Village, the Homes at Cohasset Village combined Site Plan Review and a Village Business District Special Permit to enable the construction of 11 townhomes on James Lane in 2014. The renovation of 1-3 Brook Street, completed in 2017, included commercial space on the ground floor and three residential condominiums on the upper floors. Though slightly older, another notable mixed-use development, Old Colony Square, is located on Chief Justice Cushing Highway. The project, which includes 34,000 square feet of ground floor retail space and 17 residential units on the second floor, was developed in 2007 after Cohasset adopted a Transit Overlay District.

Cohasset has one notable project advanced in predevelopment. A proposal to construct an additional building on the site of 380-400 Chief Justice Highway (the site of the Stop & Shop plaza) received approvals from the Planning and Zoning Boards in 2018. The project consists of a mixed-use building that will include approximately 20 rental units. The project will include 4-5 affordable units, making all 20 units eligible for inclusion on the Subsidized Housing Inventory (this will be discussed in greater detail in the “Chapter 40B” section).

When considering future development, it is worth noting that the 2019 Cohasset Municipal Harbor Plan is currently in the final stages. Though no specific projects have been approved to date, zoning changes associated with the plan included consideration of a Harbor Village Business Overlay (HVB) District, which will allow multifamily residential use in a mixed-use development pattern within the boundary of an overlay district. This zoning change was approved at the April 2019 Town Meeting.

Of the Town’s land that is classified as residential, 12.5% is undeveloped. This includes 107 acres of developable land in 63 parcels. It also includes potentially developable land (93 acres) and
undevelopable land (157 acres), as defined by the land use codes assigned by the Assessor’s Office. The largest developable site contains 31 acres and the largest potentially developable site contains 45 acres. This land amounts to a development potential of up to 224 units, as described in the Land Use chapter. In addition, the Land Use chapter also discusses the potential sub-division of already developed residential parcels (greater than 4 acres), which could result in further development of up to 250 units. Although current requirements for septic systems as well as the presence of wetlands and ledge have precluded development of many sites in the past, installation of sewer systems for several areas of Cohasset and the development of new technologies for waste treatment and ledge removal will surely open up many of the undevelopable sites. Given this development potential, it is important that the Town continue to consider the location and type of development that should be prioritized and the methods to see it through.

### Affordability

#### Eligible Households

One metric of affordable housing need is the number of households who qualify for housing assistance. This is typically determined by a household’s income in relation to the Area Median Income (AMI), which is defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for every metropolitan region in the country. For the Boston-Cambridge-Quincy metro area, of which Cohasset is a part, the median income is $107,800 for a family of four. Because this number reflects incomes across the entire region, it is lower than Cohasset’s median income of $128,224.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Level</th>
<th>Includes incomes up to:</th>
<th>Number of Cohasset Households</th>
<th>Percent of Cohasset Households</th>
<th>Percent of MA Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Low Income</td>
<td>30% of Area Median Income, or $22,650 - $34,950</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Low Income</td>
<td>50% of Area Median Income, or $37,750 - $58,250</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Income</td>
<td>80% of Area Median Income, or $56,800 - $87,600</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Income</td>
<td>120% of Area Median Income, or $90,600 - $139,000</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 23*

Note: The low end of the income range shown in this table is for a one-person household; the high end of the income range is for a five-person household. For the greater Boston region (including Cohasset), the area median income is $107,800 for a family of four. Source: 2010-2014 HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy, 2018 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
To determine eligibility for assistance, HUD uses income categories that are adjusted based on household size (see table below for more details). Though income limits vary depending on the program, typically incomes under 80% AMI qualify for assistance.

As discussed previously, although Cohasset is an affluent town overall, 21% of all households\textsuperscript{32} are considered low income, meaning that they earn less than 80% AMI. While this is substantially below the percentage of low-income households for the South Shore Coalition Subregion and the state, it is critical to consider the needs of these households, as they are more likely to struggle with housing costs.

Although middle-income households are not eligible for most housing assistance programs, many middle-income households in more expensive areas experience housing insecurity or limited opportunity. Nationwide, an increasing number of municipalities are considering housing policies aimed at retaining their middle-income households.

**Cost Burden**

Households that pay more than 30% of their income towards housing are considered cost burdened. Cost burdened families, especially those with lower incomes, are less likely to be able to afford other expenses such as transportation or medical care. In Cohasset, 34% of households experience some degree of cost burden, and 15% are severely cost burdened, or pay more than half of their income towards housing.\textsuperscript{33} The percentage is even higher for seniors.

Unsurprisingly, lower-income households are far more likely to be cost-burdened. In Cohasset, 90% of households that earn less than $35,000 are cost burdened.\textsuperscript{34} However, cost burden is not limited to low-income households: 22% of households earning over $75k are cost burdened.\textsuperscript{35} Nor is the issue limited to renters; 33% of owner households are cost burdened.\textsuperscript{36} In some cases cost burden is a matter of choice, though this is less likely to be the case for renters and lower-income households.

**Chapter 40B**

Under M.G.L. Chapter 40B, affordable housing is defined as housing that is reserved by deed restriction for income-eligible households earning at or below 80% AMI. If a rental housing development includes a certain percentage of affordable units, all the units in the development are eligible for inclusion on the state’s Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). It is the state’s goal that 10% of housing in each municipality be included on the SHI.\textsuperscript{37}

A municipality’s SHI percentage fluctuates with new development of both affordable and market-rate housing. The percentage is determined by dividing the number of Chapter 40B affordable units (those included on the SHI) by the total number of year-round housing units according to the most recent decennial Census. As the number of new market-rate units increases, or if affordable units are lost, more affordable units must be produced to reach, maintain, or exceed the 10% threshold.

\textsuperscript{32} 2010-2014 HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy. Margin of error 6%.
\textsuperscript{33} 2012-2016 American Community Survey. Margin of error 6% and 5% respectively.
\textsuperscript{34} 2012-2016 American Community Survey. Margin of error 13%.
\textsuperscript{35} 2012-2016 American Community Survey. Margin of error 8%.
\textsuperscript{36} 2012-2016 American Community Survey. Margin of error 7%.
\textsuperscript{37} A rental development is eligible for inclusion on the SHI if 25% of its units are affordable to households earning 80% AMI or less, or if 20% of its units are affordable to households earning 50% AMI or less. For an ownership development, only affordable units are eligible for inclusion on the SHI.
As of 2017, 311 units of Cohasset’s housing are included on the SHI, largely due to the 220-unit Avalon Bay development. Also included are 64 units of senior housing owned and operated by the Cohasset Housing Authority. Based on the number of housing units from the most recent (2010) census, as prescribed by Chapter 40B, this amounts to 10.7% of Cohasset’s housing stock. Because it has reached the 10% threshold, Cohasset has safe harbor from 40B development, which means that developers of housing that includes an affordability component cannot bypass local zoning bylaws. However, given the amount of growth since the 2010 Census, the Town will need to add additional units to its SHI to retain this status. Based on the 2017 total unit count of 3,311 housing units, only 9.4% of the Town’s housing is on the SHI. At least 20 additional units will need to be added to the SHI by the 2020 Census to maintain safe harbor. This number will increase as the Town continues to grow in the coming years.

There are a few potential projects that could increase Cohasset’s SHI percentage enough to remain above 10% after the upcoming 2020 Census. These include the proposed addition at 380-400 Chief Justice Highway referenced in the ‘Development’ section of this chapter. However, neither of these projects are assured, and the Town will continue to consider development opportunities that will enable it to remain above the 10% threshold prior to the upcoming Census, which will be conducted in April of 2020 with data released in 2021. The Town will need to consider and evaluate their 40B projects in locations not use appropriate for such developments.

It is laudable that Cohasset has met, and is actively working towards maintaining, the 10% SHI goal. Achieving safe harbor enables Cohasset to consider how it will meet its housing need in a way that is best suited for the Town and out of the hands of developers bypassing the zoning bylaws. Despite having 10% of its housing units on the SHI, housing need persists: as discussed above, there are 620 low-income Cohasset households eligible for subsidized housing, twice as many households as the 311 housing units on the Town’s SHI. Additionally, it is important to point out that not all of the units on the SHI are actually affordable; because the Avalon Bay development was a rental project, all 220 units are included on the SHI even though only 55 of the units are affordable.

In short, compliance with 40B is a first step towards meeting Cohasset’s housing need. Having reached safe harbor allows Cohasset to be in control of and focus on proactively defining and meeting its own unique housing goals.

**Affordability Gap**

Another way to gauge affordability is to consider the gap between median household income and median home price. This tells us whether the average Cohasset family could afford to move into the average Cohasset house.

In short, it would be difficult for the average Cohasset family to move here today. A household earning Cohasset’s median income of $128,224 would be able to afford a house costing about $610,000, assuming good credit, minimal existing debt, and a down payment of 20% of the cost of the average Cohasset house. In this case, the affordability gap is $264,750; the average household would need access to this much capital to afford the median home price of $874,750. Of course, in today’s market a 20% down payment is rare; if a household does not have this level of savings, the amount they can afford to pay for a house is even less.

A renter household earning Cohasset’s median income could afford to pay approximately $3,200 per month towards rent. This is higher than Cohasset’s median rent ($2,500/month), so the average Cohasset household could comfortably afford to rent an apartment in Cohasset.

Of course, the above calculations are generalizations, and do not give a complete picture of need. As noted previously, the rental units available in Cohasset in the first half of 2018 were almost entirely
one- and two-bedroom, and would be inappropriate for a larger family even if the price was affordable. Likewise, a large single-family house might not be the best option for a single senior, regardless of available income.

**Municipal Tools**

**Affordable Housing Steering Committee**

Formed in 2016, the Cohasset Affordable Housing Steering Committee (AHSC) is charged with reviewing the Town’s housing stock, projecting affordable housing needs, ensuring compliance with Chapter 40B, developing affordable housing policy, maintaining town housing data, and serving as a resource on local, state, and federal funds. The AHSC has been active in seeking to advance both housing policy and affordable housing production. In terms of production, the AHSC has identified a number of sites for potential affordable housing development and is communicating with South Shore Habitat for Humanity in an effort to increase the affordable housing supply and add units to the SHI. In terms of policy, the AHSC drafted a long-range plan for affordable housing that will serve as a foundation for a Housing Production Plan (HPP), described in greater detail below. MAPC has begun working with the town to develop an HPP, for which the AHSC is serving as an advisory committee.

**Cohasset Housing Authority**

The Cohasset Housing Authority (CHA) owns and manages 64 one-bedroom housing units for seniors and residents with disabilities, located at 60 Elm Street. Using Community Preservation Act funds (see following section), this development has undergone various upgrades in recent years, including kitchen and bathroom renovations, mechanical and electrical systems upgrades, and building envelope improvements. The Town has recently acquired a parcel of land adjacent to the CHA property, and anticipates constructing three additional units of senior housing that would be managed by the CHA.

**Community Preservation Act**

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) allows Massachusetts municipalities to create a local Community Preservation Fund, which collects and distributes resources for open space, recreation, historic preservation, and affordable housing. CPA funds are generated through a local property tax (1.5% in Cohasset) as well as a partial state match. At least 10% of CPA funds must be used for affordable housing.

Cohasset adopted the Community Preservation Act in 2001, the year after it was signed into state law. In Cohasset, CPA funds are also referred to as ‘CPC,’ after the nine-member Community Preservation Committee that oversees the funds. To date, the CPA has generated over $8.4 million in revenue in Cohasset, which has been spent on a variety of projects across the four disciplines. Funds used towards housing have focused primarily on improvements to the Cohasset Housing Authority’s 64-unit senior housing development. Funds were also used to develop two moderate-income units in the historic Pratt Library building. In recent years, the funds have not been fully disbursed, though the AHSC is pursuing proposals to bring to the Community Preservation Committee for potential funding.

One limitation of CPA funds is that they must be approved at Town Meeting, which in Cohasset typically occurs twice each year. Nearly all real estate transactions must happen on a much more compressed timeframe than six months, which has made using these funds for land acquisition and housing production difficult. Activation of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, discussed below, will enable Cohasset to be more nimble in disbursing the housing portion of its CPA funds.
Housing Choice Community Designation

The Commonwealth’s Housing Choice Initiative includes a new set of incentives and rewards for municipalities committed to sustainable housing growth in their communities. Cohasset was named a Housing Choice Community by the state in 2018, one of 67 Massachusetts municipalities\(^{38}\) to achieve this designation. As such, it is eligible to apply for funding reserved specifically for Housing Choice communities. In August 2018, the Town submitted an application to fund the construction of sidewalks connecting existing housing development to Route 3A. Although funding was not awarded for this project, the Town plans to apply for subsequent funding rounds.

Affordable Housing Trust Fund

Section 55C of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 44 enables the creation of a Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund. A housing trust allows municipalities to collect funds for affordable housing and separate those funds from the general municipal budget. These funds can then be used for affordable housing production and preservation programs. Approximately 80 communities across the state currently have affordable housing trusts. CPC funds are the most common source of funding; other common sources include inclusionary zoning payments, other developer fees, a municipality’s general fund, tax title sales, donations, and payments from special bylaws.\(^{39}\)

Although Cohasset’s Bylaws establish an Affordable Housing Trust Fund, it is currently inactive. The Affordable Housing Steering Committee is currently working with the Board of Selectmen to appoint trustees for the fund, and several seats have already been filled. Once a sufficient number of trustees have been appointed, anticipated in May 2019, Cohasset’s Affordable Housing Trust Fund will be able to receive and disburse funding. Because the trust fund expenditures do not require Town Meeting approval, the trust would be capable of acting quickly to facilitate time-sensitive real estate opportunities for affordable housing.

Zoning

There are several pieces of Cohasset’s Zoning Bylaw aimed at encouraging affordable housing and smart growth. It contains an inclusionary zoning bylaw that requires 10% of units be affordable in developments of five units or greater. Alternatively, a developer has the option to pay an in-lieu fee equal to the cost of developing the required number of affordable units. This portion of the Bylaw is relatively recent, so few units have been built under the inclusionary provision to date. The Bylaw also allows accessory dwelling units by special permit (Article 15 of the Zoning Bylaw), though the conditions under which the special permit is granted are stringent and the Town has seen only one accessory dwelling units permitted. It includes provision for cluster zoning (Article 10 of the Zoning Bylaw), which enables development to “cluster” buildings together on smaller lots while preserving the remaining project area as open space, as described previously in the land use element; this provision has been utilized for several recent subdivision projects. The Senior Multifamily Residence Overlay District, also discussed previously in the land use chapter, allows for age-restricted senior housing with an additional affordability component.

Just as zoning can serve as a tool to promote affordable housing development, it can also be a constraint. For example, although multifamily and mixed-use development are permitted by special permit in some nonresidential zones (including the Town Center, along part of Route 3A, and in the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) overlay district at the train station), only single-family houses are permitted as new construction in all residential districts. Likewise, large minimum lot sizes may

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\(^{38}\) Out of a total of 365 Massachusetts municipalities.

\(^{39}\) Massachusetts Housing Partnership, “Municipal Affordable Housing Trusts,” July 2013.
Housing Production Plan

A Housing Production Plan (HPP) is a locally-adopted, state-approved planning document that assesses housing need and capacity to meet it, establishes clear goals (including a numeric production goal, areas of the town identified for development, and policy adjustments), and identifies roles for municipal entities and partners to advance these goals. Cohasset began working on its HPP in the fall of 2018 with technical assistance from MAPC. The 5-year plan will help Cohasset better understand its housing needs and establish strategies for meeting these needs.

After an HPP is adopted by Planning Board and Board of Selectmen (anticipated adoption for Cohasset’s HPP is summer 2019), it is submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for approval. After this, if a town has made progress towards meeting the 10% SHI goal (specifically, if the number of units on the SHI has increased by at least .5% within a calendar year), the HPP can be certified by DHCD, providing an alternative path to temporary safe harbor under Chapter 40B.

Public Input

Master plan outreach in Cohasset began with a first phase in 2016, which sought input from residents to understand their vision for the Town in the future. The second phase of the master plan process began in 2018 with the formation of the Master Plan Committee and a public forum in February, which focused on a vision statement and ‘hot topics’ including Route 3A, walking and biking opportunities, smart growth, climate change, and Cohasset Harbor. Several common themes related to housing emerged from the 2016 and early 2018 outreach:

- Desire to preserve Cohasset’s historic buildings and the small-town atmosphere
- Concern over the impacts of larger new development on traffic and neighborhood character
- Concern over the high cost of housing and the need for more affordable options, especially for families and downsizing empty-nesters
- A desire for cultural, racial, and economic diversity
- Interest in mixed-use, village-centered retail with strong pedestrian connections
- Need to minimize development in flood zones
A second Master Plan forum, held in May 2018, focused on transportation, open space, clean energy, and public facilities. Although there was little input directly related to housing, many of the issues that were discussed overlap with housing, including reducing residential energy usage, encouraging pedestrian and bicycle connections, and concern about crowded or dangerous intersections.

A third forum, held in June 2018, focused on housing, economic development, historic resources, and public health. At this forum, residents were shown demographic information and projections as well as housing trends in town. Consistent with previous themes, input included a desire for more diversity and affordable housing; preservation of historic housing and neighborhood character; and options for seniors.

In one exercise, residents were asked to vote on the objectives that they think are most important for the Town to prioritize in its housing planning. The results of the exercise show that those attending the meeting have a wide range of priorities, with the highest interest around preserving historic housing and the need for affordable housing. The priorities are shown below with the number of votes each received:

- Preserve historic housing (12)
- Affordable housing (10)
- Range of housing types for different needs (8)
- Increase economic, cultural, and racial diversity (7)
- Focus development to preserve open space (7)
- Complement neighborhood character (6)
- Manage growth (6)
- Smaller-sized housing (square footage per dwelling) (5)
- Smaller lot size (1)

A second exercise asked participants to vote for the types of housing that they think are most needed to meet Cohasset’s needs. Input on this exercise was more decisive, with a clear preference for options for empty-nesters and more affordable options. Complete responses are shown below:

- Options for empty-nesters looking to downsize (13)
- Affordable housing options (11)
- Smaller residential options (one- or two-bedrooms) (7)
- Veterans housing (6)
- Housing near train station or mixed-use development near retail (5)
- More housing near retail or mixed-use development (4)
- Homes for municipal employees and their families (3)
- More rental housing (2)
- Senior housing (age-restricted) (2)
The forum also included land use maps showing potentially developable land, where residents were invited to comment on the locations where development should be prioritized. Residential development was supported in the Village Center and along 3A, though the sentiment was also expressed that the Town has reached capacity and should not be focused on additional development.

## Housing Goals and Recommendations

The analysis of housing needs and development constraints, as well as input from the public forums, indicate the need for more housing options in Cohasset, whether that be increased affordability, additional rental opportunities, more housing appropriate for smaller households, or more options for seniors. The goals and strategies articulated below will position the Town to best address these needs in a way that complements its unique character.

### Goal 1: Diversify Cohasset’s housing stock and promote increased options for households of varying sizes, incomes, tenures, and ages

#### Strategy 1.1: Consider amending the Zoning Bylaw to allow context-appropriate increases in density in key areas of town, such as along Route 3A, near the train station, in the harbor area, or near the village center

Depending on location, this could include cottage-style development of single-family houses on smaller lots, multi-family structures, or mixed-use development with multifamily apartments above retail or office. A 40R Smart Growth Zoning Overlay District, which incentivizes zoning districts that permit additional density with affordable housing in suitable locations, is one tool that is available to accomplish this type of development.

#### Strategy 1.2: Identify areas to use zoning or other incentives to encourage “missing middle” typologies – buildings that fall between single-family houses and small-scale multifamily buildings

These building types are often more naturally affordable for moderate- and middle-income households, and many would be consistent with Cohasset’s small-town character. These can include courtyard or “garden” apartments, bungalows, townhouses, or two- or three-unit buildings that are consistent with Cohasset’s built environment. Any of these building types could be rental or ownership.

#### Strategy 1.3: Review the zoning regulations to more fully encourage the construction of accessory dwelling units (ADUs)

ADUs are typically smaller and more naturally affordable than single-family housing. They can provide independent accommodations for an older relative or an adult child, and they can provide additional income to the homeowner. Although Cohasset’s zoning bylaw was amended to allow ADUs in 2002, the conditions are restrictive and few units have been built.

#### Strategy 1.4: Develop a local program to support first-time moderate-income homeowners seeking to purchase a home in Cohasset.
First time homeowner programs are a common tool at the local level, and typically cover a percentage of a home’s downpayment or closing costs. Most require participation in homeownership education classes. Such a program would be a way for Cohasset to support residents that earn too much to qualify for deed-restricted housing, but who cannot necessarily afford to purchase a house in Cohasset.

**Strategy 1.5: Develop a plan to outreach and engage with residents to promote a greater understanding of housing need and goals**

Community awareness of housing need will help the Town proactively address concerns and build support for housing programs. Strategies to promote community awareness and engagement will be explored further as part of Cohasset’s Housing Production Plan, which is currently underway.

**Goal 2: Increase the supply of deed-restricted affordable housing qualified for the state Subsidized Housing Inventory**

Beyond maintaining safe harbor under 40B, increasing the amount of deed-restricted affordable housing is a critical piece of addressing the need of Cohasset residents experiencing housing insecurity and ensuring economic diversity in town.

**Strategy 2.1: Utilize CPA funds to support new affordable housing projects**

Funds could be used to acquire land, to provide predevelopment or gap financing for affordable housing developers, or to encourage additional affordable housing in market-rate development beyond that required by inclusionary zoning. Pursue additional funding opportunities as they arise, such as future Housing Choice funding rounds.

**Strategy 2.2: Fund and empanel the Affordable Housing Trust Fund**

Cohasset’s administrative bylaw establishes an Affordable Housing Trust, but it is currently inactive. The Town should take the steps necessary to re-form the Trust, including appointing Trustees, ensuring that a Declaration of Trust has been recorded, and establishing a municipal account.

**Strategy 2.3: Continue to seek partnerships with nonprofit developers and Community Development Corporations**

Work with the Affordable Housing Steering Committee (AHSC), and support the AHSC as it pursues affordable housing opportunities. Nonprofit developers will bring technical and financing expertise to the table, and when paired with the local expertise of the AHSC, can help the Town better understand how to most effectively take advantage of affordable housing development opportunities.

**Strategy 2.4: Provide municipal support to the prospective affordable housing developments**

Examples include predevelopment funding, public outreach and messaging, and technical assistance regarding traffic or other potential impacts.

**Strategy 2.5: Develop policies and programs that will aid Cohasset’s neediest residents**
This can include the use of layered funding (such as Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program project-based vouchers) that offer deeper levels of affordability.

**Strategy 2.6: Complete a Housing Production Plan, currently underway, by summer 2019**

Cohasset’s Housing Production Plan will build on the foundational long-range housing plan developed by the Affordable Housing Steering Committee, and will expand Cohasset’s understanding of its housing needs, refine housing goals, set a goal for affordable housing production, and identify locations where development should be focused. Make a particular effort to reach out to families, renters, and low-income residents.

**Strategy 2.7: Maintain safe harbor under Chapter 40B**

Add additional affordable units in advance of the 2020 Census to ensure that 10% of housing stock is on the Subsidized Housing Inventory.

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**Goal 3: Support seniors as they age and provide housing options that will enable them to live and thrive in Cohasset**

This should include support for seniors who wish to stay in their homes, as well as options for those who wish to downsize to smaller housing while remaining connected to their community in Cohasset.

**Strategy 3.1: Explore tools to help residents age in place**

Promote state programs that help income-eligible homeowners maintain their homes or renovate for accessibility, such as the Massachusetts Home Modification Loan Program, the Massachusetts Weatherization Assistance Program, or MassHousing’s Home Improvement Loan Program; or consider using local funds to develop additional resources.

**Strategy 3.2: Promote age-friendly development that is sized for smaller households**

Such housing is accessible, is within walking distance of amenities, and maximizes opportunity for community and support. In addition to the zoning amendments discussed in Strategy 1, incentives including expediting review or waiving certain special permit requirements can encourage age-friendly development.

**Strategy 3.3: Adopt visitability or universal design guidelines that encourage architectural approaches to new homes and home improvement projects that would increase accessibility for older adults and people with disabilities**

Consider providing incentives for use of the guidelines.
Introduction

Cohasset is known for its classic New England small-town charm. Memorable features are the town’s abundant environmental resources and assets and a long picturesque coastline opening onto a quaint working harbor, and the Town Common that serves as a gathering place for regularly scheduled events including a local farmer’s market, an annual arts festival, and the occasional Carillon concert wafting from St. Stephen’s bell tower. Over the last thirty years, growth along the Route 3A corridor and in the surrounding communities combined with the advent of Internet sales and delivery have diminished the Town’s commercial and retail center. At public meetings accompanying the Master Plan process, residents expressed a strong desire to see investment made by the Town and private businesses to increase opportunities to experience living in a well-resourced and vibrant small town.

Key Findings

• Cohasset has a modest local economy and a low jobs-to-resident ratio of 0.32. Employment opportunities are primarily in the retail sector, and of those jobs, mostly pay lower than average wages. Less than 15 percent of people who work in town live in Cohasset. A large share of the Town’s labor force commutes to Boston.

• The Town primarily relies on the property tax to fund public services and schools. Only a small share of total tax value comes from commercial, industrial, and personal property funds. Economic development planning should focus on “branding” Cohasset more effectively, highlighting the many available resources, history, aesthetics, and wilderness experiences attractive to residents and visitors alike. To build a stronger economy, the community needs to effectively communicate the virtues of the Town as a whole and shape the story in-line with the Town’s collective aspirations.

• Growing the Town’s economy is a strong desire expressed by residents who are seeking opportunities to enjoy the Village and the harbor areas.

• Revitalizing the Town’s economic development committee is critical to enhancing the availability of goods and services as well as entertainment options for families and visitors. Linking the production of affordable housing within walking distance of the Village will help boost demand for goods and services while providing ease of access for residents, especially the elderly.

• Improving the visibility of the Town’s many attractive qualities including its historic Village Common, Harbor and coastline requires connecting to economic development resources and organizations around the state and by expanding the variety of business opportunities for local residents.

Town Profile

Throughout this process, MAPC and town staff reached out to various businesses in Cohasset to gauge their thoughts on town business-friendliness and compared Cohasset to other neighboring communities.

The Town’s population today is 8,316 people with a median age of 43 and a median household income of $128,224. Between 2010 and 2016, the town’s population increased by more than 10 percent, adding 882 people. Over the last decade, Cohasset’s population grew faster than the state and the nation (compared to a 3.9 percent increase for Massachusetts and a 4.5 percent increase in the US). Over that same time period, the Town overall became wealthier. Median household income grew by $14,010 from $114,214, a 12.3 percent increase (compared to a state increase of 10 percent and US
increase of 15.2 percent\(^1\)). Average household income exceeds median household income indicating that Cohasset is a town of high wealth residents. Households in Cohasset have a higher median annual income than Norfolk County ($88,262), Massachusetts ($68,563), and the United States as a whole ($53,889). The percentage of households with income levels below $100,000 saw a decline by about 10 percent, compared to those who made $100,000 or more, growing about 10 percent.

As discussed in the Housing Chapter, not every household in Cohasset either owns a home or is particularly wealthy. Approximately one-fifth of the town’s households are considered low-income\(^2\) and nearly four hundred residents are living below the poverty line.\(^3\) While the Town’s poverty rate is lower than the surrounding county and state (6.7 and 11.4 percent, respectively), nonetheless, even comparably low rates of household poverty among the town’s residents is of concern. Residents of limited means faced with high-cost housing are particularly susceptible to economic insecurity given the continually rising cost of rental housing or homeownership. The doubling of the percentage of households reporting income levels below the poverty line over the 2010-2014 period reflects a more than doubling of the household poverty rate when compared to the rate reported in the 2000 census. A rise in the poverty rate for households is critical to track as the American Community Survey data characterize a period of economic growth well past the effects of the financial recession of 2007-2009. The Housing Chapter examines the relationship between economic vulnerability and the need for and the importance of the Town’s supply of affordable housing.

The 2016 median property value of owner-occupied homes in Cohasset is $847,100, and the homeownership rate is 80 percent. Compared with its nearest neighbors Hingham and Scituate, Cohasset’s median property value of owner occupied homes has increased substantially. Over the last decade the Town has become wealthier and properties have become more valuable.

Housing costs as a percent of household income vary by whether one owns a home, pays a mortgage, or whether they rent. In general, homeowners without a mortgage pay a lower percentage of their income for housing compared with renters or mortgage-holders. Cohasset households without a mortgage spend less than 15 percent of their household income on monthly owner costs. Whereas a majority of renters pay over 25 percent of their household income to gross rent, a third spend more than 35 percent, and twenty-five percent of renters living in Cohasset pay more than 50 percent of their income for rent. These figures together indicate that homeownership is an essential indicator of economic security. Not all town residents enjoy such security, further supporting the findings of the masterplan housing element indicating the importance of expanding the availability of housing options to meet the needs of residents.

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1. According to the Census, the 2016 national median household income was $57,617 and the state median household income was $70,954.
2. A four-person household in Cohasset earning less than $81,100 is considered low income (2018 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development).
Residents of Cohasset primarily commute to destinations outside of town. Most people (about 70 percent) drive alone to work with an average commute time of 36 minutes. About 18 percent of the population took public transit to work. An estimated 81 percent of the people employed were private wage and salary workers; 13 percent were government workers; and six percent were self-employed in their own (not incorporated) business.

Approximately 13 percent of the labor force in Cohasset is comprised of Cohasset residents, whereas 87 percent live outside of town. Additionally, 90 percent of Cohasset residents work outside of town. This is compared to Hingham, where 93.3 percent of employees lived outside of town and 91.1 percent of residents worked outside of town. Scituate, on the other hand, has 58.7 percent of workers living outside of town and 84 percent of residents working somewhere else.

According to FXM Associates, Cohasset has a relatively high concentration of jobs in the Retail Trade sector (22% of all jobs compared to 15% in Norfolk County overall) and a relatively low proportion of health care and social assistance jobs (10% compared to 16% in Norfolk County overall). All other industries besides healthcare and social assistance and manufacturing lag in wages when compared to the county.

Where Cohasset residents work has a strong bearing on the mode they use to commute. If employees work in areas well-served by transit, then many may be able to use alternative forms of transportation, reducing reliance on automobiles. If the percentage of commuters utilizing transit is low compared to the number of jobs served by transit, it may suggest that the Town can make transit a more attractive and accessible choice. More Cohasset residents work in Boston (33%) than in any other single municipality. Quincy is second with only 4%, followed by Weymouth, Braintree, and Cambridge at approximately 3% each. All other municipalities comprise less than 2% of employment destinations. (See Figure 24).

Given the high percentage of residents working in Boston, it follows that a relatively high percentage (19%) take transit. Approximately half of Cohasset commuters that take transit do so via ferry. The
difference between the 33% who work in Boston versus the 19% who take transit could be due to several factors, including job location not located near the transit stops (i.e., South Station, Long Wharf, or Rowes Wharf), free or subsidized parking, etc. Through better connectivity to the Cohasset Station and improved amenities, there may be an opportunity to increase this percentage even more.

Tax Structure

Given the Town’s relatively small commercial/industrial tax base, 6.9 percent of its total tax value comes from commercial, industrial, and personal property funds. Residential taxes account for 93.1 percent of Cohasset’s tax base, making it the 82th highest residential tax rate out of 351 municipalities in the state, tied with Ashby and Oakham.
Cohasset’s total assessed value of more than $2.7 billion in 2017 is considerable given that the Town is the 197th most populous municipality, but has the 116th highest total assessed value, even with a small industrial tax value and no open space tax. Cohasset’s commercial assessed value of about $163 million makes it the 135th highest in the state, whereas its total residential value of $2.6 billion ranks it as the 110th highest rate.

Within the immediate region, Hingham had the highest assessed value at about $6.5 billion. This was due to a combination of its population, size, and proximity to Boston, as well as its larger share of residential, commercial, industrial and personal property tax revenue. Hull had the lowest total tax value, and the lowest values in residential and commercial tax. It is also the only regional community with no industrial tax, given its small population and geography and lack of industrial spaces. Cohasset was generally in the middle in each tax value, although it ranked lowest in personal property taxes at approximately $26 million. None of these communities had an Open Space tax.

Cohasset’s 2017 commercial and residential tax rates were 13.06, a 4.1 percent increase from 2014 rates of 12.54. This is lower than Scituate’s rates of 14.09, but higher than Hingham’s rates of 12.25. Cohasset’s residential rate was also lower than the state average of 14.63, and the state median rate of 15.58. Furthermore, regarding commercial taxes, Cohasset’s rate of 13.06 was also lower than the state average of 17.86 and state median of Tyngsborough at 17.16.

**Existing Conditions**

Cohasset benefits from its proximity to high tech, higher education, health care and financial sector employers in metropolitan Boston. As of 2017, the Town’s per capita income of more than $108,063 is nearly three times the statewide average, according to the Mass. Department of Revenue. The income is concentrated in a few high income sectors. While many of the Town’s residents work in other communities, for a town its size, Cohasset is home to an unique mix of local businesses, including the South Shore Music Circus, the South Shore Arts Center, the headquarters of Pilgrim Bank, an active fishing fleet, and the Sunrise of Cohasset assisted living facility.

**Private Sector Employment Structure**

The 2016, Cohasset’s population 16 years and over was 6,325, of which the labor force participation rate was at 65 percent. The local economy employed an average of 4,461 people, both inside and outside of Cohasset. The largest private employers in Cohasset are South Shore Music Circus, Stop & Shop, and Shaw’s Supermarket. The largest industries are Leisure & Hospitality (700 employees), Education & Health Services (675), and Trade, Transportation & Utilities (613), and the highest paying industries were Financial Investment ($162,552), Management & Technical Consulting Services, ($143,780) and Insurance Agencies ($119,808). A majority of employers in Cohasset are within the retail and service industry, keeping in mind that this list does not include the public administration sector. Also, as FXM has stated, most industries except healthcare, social assistance, and the small manufacturing sector have lower wages compared the Norfolk County average.

About 332 businesses operate in Cohasset, with the service industry having the most firms at 159, or 48 percent. The combined service industry sector consists of Professional & Technical Services (50 businesses), Accommodation & Food Services (26), Administrative & Waste Services (23), Educational Services (8), and other private sector services (52).

According to Infogroup USA, the majority of private sector jobs in Cohasset are found in small businesses with fewer than 25 employees. In fact only a little under a dozen of businesses employ more than 50 people. This is not surprising given Cohasset’s relative location along the coast and away from more densely populated areas. Large employers typically locate facilities adjacent to regional
### Table 1: Industry Employment in Cohasset, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Type</th>
<th>Number of Jobs</th>
<th>Percent of Jobs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total, All Industries</td>
<td>2,904</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Retail Trade</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>19.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Accommodation and Food Services</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>16.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Educational Services</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>11.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Health Care and Social Assistance</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>11.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Administrative and Waste Services</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>8.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>7.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Other Services, Ex. Public Admin</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>6.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Professional and Technical Services</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>3.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Finance and Insurance</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>2.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Construction</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>2.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other Jobs</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>8.63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 30:** Cohasset Businesses and Employment, 2016 (Infogroup USA)

**Figure 31:** Average Private Employment by Industry Sector in Cohasset, 2016 (InfoGroup USA)
transportation networks that offer access from multiple directions to maximize employee convenience and/or provide convenient truck access for shipments. However, a few manufacturing and contracting firms have operations in Cohasset, as shown in the following table.

Some of the largest private employers in Cohasset range from schools to supermarkets to assisted living facilities. Stop & Shop and Shaw’s both number over a hundred full-time and part-time employees. The largest employer, however, is South Shore Playhouse Associates, the parent company of the South Shore Music Circus, a popular event venue in Cohasset. Another entertainment facility, the Cohasset Sports Complex, also employs over 100 people in town. Both tend to have a large seasonal staff, so employment numbers can fluctuate.

According to the FXM Associates report, “office-using industries are projected to add nearly 200 jobs in Cohasset over the next 5 years, generating projected demand for about 43,000 square feet of office space.” Both Norfolk and Plymouth Counties overall projected increases in employment and projected demand for office space suggest additional opportunities for Cohasset to capture a greater share of regional growth in office space.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company Name</th>
<th>Business Type</th>
<th>Employee Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Shore Music Circus</td>
<td>Tent Theatre Offering Live Entertainment</td>
<td>100-150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohasset Sports Complex</td>
<td>Promoters With Facilities</td>
<td>100-150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop &amp; Shop</td>
<td>Grocery Stores</td>
<td>100-150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hingham Lumber</td>
<td>Hardware Stores</td>
<td>50-99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohasset Jr &amp; Sr High School</td>
<td>Elementary &amp; Secondary Schools</td>
<td>50-99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohasset Knoll Skilled</td>
<td>Vocational Rehabilitation Services</td>
<td>50-99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chartis Group LLC</td>
<td>Health Services</td>
<td>50-99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deer Hill School</td>
<td>Elementary &amp; Secondary Schools</td>
<td>50-99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graham Waste Service Inc</td>
<td>Garbage/Waste Collection</td>
<td>50-99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 32: Largest Private Full-time Part-time and Seasonal Employers in Cohasset, 2016 (Infogroup USA)

Selected Trade Area

Overview

A balanced mix of retail and service variety is important to the health of a thriving community. In order to create focus on Cohasset's largest industries, retail and food service, it was determined that a retail opportunity gap analysis should be developed. A retail leakage (a.k.a. gap) analysis essentially compares consumer expenditures sorted by NAICS codes in a trade area (demand) with the corresponding retail sales of trade area stores (supply). A retail gap analysis provides a comparison of demand within a geographic area, defined as the estimated spending potential of area residents for various types of goods and services, and supply, identified as sales of those goods and services. The size
of the difference between the estimated demand and actual sales is the “retail gap” (represented as demand minus supply).

Where estimated purchases by area residents exceed estimated sales, the retail sector is described as having “leakage”; that is, residents on balance leave the trade area to make purchases. A “surplus” occurs where estimated sales exceed estimated expenditures by residents, indicating that customers come from elsewhere to make purchases in the trade area. It should be noted that the gap analysis does not include competition from online retail sales, which have been upending traditional retailers, especially those that do not have a significant online presence.

In order to estimate the amount of additional retail and services that Cohasset can support, it is important to first identify a trade area. The trade area is the geographic area from which a retail business generates sales. There are many factors to consider when determining a primary trade area including the distance and time that people may be willing to travel in order to reach a destination, any physical or geographic barriers as well as regional competition. Defining the trade area is critical because it defines the boundaries for which data is gathered and analyzed to identify retail opportunities. Increasing suburbanization in towns like Cohasset had residents who were once connected to their communities became isolated from many of their basic needs and activities, including work, school, shopping, eating out and more. These days, heavy traffic and long commutes are the new norm. Life in a mixed-use development duplicates the kind of convenience that has long been the hallmark of small towns and heavily urban areas but not often found in suburbia. In neighborhoods that are compact, pedestrian-friendly, and mixed-use, many activities of daily living can be within a fifteen minute walking distance. Outside of Cohasset Village, few areas currently have this sort of density and walkability in town.

The local trade area is a fifteen minute walk from Cohasset Village, which is also around a five minute drive. It is reasonable to assume that people would be willing to walk this distance in order to obtain goods and services near Cohasset Village. The primary trade area for this is a ten minute drive. At this point in time it is not a particularly walkable area from a design standpoint as there are a lack of sidewalks and as a result, more people travel by car, which needs to be taken into consideration when determining which businesses to attract and what potential infrastructure improvements should be undertaken to improve walkability and foot traffic.

Support for more sidewalks comes from both a commercial and recreational point of view. Not only do sidewalks provide for leisure but are good for business as well. Most US consumers say they typically travel 20 minutes or less to make everyday purchases, taking into account regional traffic conditions, a more conservative fifteen minute drive from Cohasset Village is used to determine secondary trade area.

Figure 33: Cohasset Local Trade Area Walk Times (from 5 South Main Street with 5, 10, and 15 minute walk times in red, green, and blue, respectively)
For comparison and to account for a town-wide and regional draw, MAPC also considered a secondary, or regional trade area of a fifteen minute drive time off peak hours. Within the fifteen minute drive time, there is also significant competition outside of Cohasset with a number of other shopping areas and significant concentrations of suburban commercial strip retail. Municipalities within the fifteen-minute drive time include Hingham, Hull, Marshfield, Norwell, and Scituate.

According to ESRI (Environmental Systems Research Institute) data, the population within the local trade area (444) is smaller compared to town centers in Hingham (1,553), Hull (1,812), and Scituate (1,374). The median income of those living within the local trade area is higher than that of those living within the primary and secondary trade areas, presenting a potential opportunity for businesses in the local trade area to capture those customers. However, the population within the local trade area is substantially lower than the other areas.

The ESRI Tapestry Segmentation provides geo-demographic intelligence on how clusters of people make lifestyle choices. It profiles consumers into 68 distinct market segments in the United States. These market segments are typical lifestyle choices that each cluster of people are more likely to make. This could be anything from the type of car they're likely to buy or if they are more likely to have their newspaper delivered or to read online.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2018 Trade Areas (From 5 South Main St)</th>
<th>2010 Townwide Decennial Census</th>
<th>2018 Townwide ESRI Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local 15 minute walk</td>
<td>Primary - Regional 10 minute drive</td>
<td>Secondary - Regional 15 minute drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>1,167</td>
<td>17,172</td>
<td>44,911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Households</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>6,503</td>
<td>16,835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Size</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Age</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income</td>
<td>$179,232</td>
<td>$124,396</td>
<td>$114,924</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 35: ESRI Tapestry Demographics on Household Spending Habits
In addition to the opportunities for specific types of potential retail businesses identified by the retail sales gap figures, the ESRI Tapestry consumer spending habits listed below can potentially offer insight to existing and prospective businesses, zoning regulatory bodies, and the local Chamber of Commerce, and inform a local-business outreach strategy for permitting and attracting specific types of retail investment.

The following table highlights the four main tapestry segments in the Cohasset trade areas: Top Tier, Exurbanites, Golden Years, and Pleasantville. Both Top Tier and Exurbanites fall under the Affluent Estates category, educated homeowners with established wealth and generally married couples with children ranging from grade school to adulthood. Spending habits include purchasing high-quality items, investing in time-saving services, and enthusiasm for community participation and traveling.

The Golden Years segment consists of households that are commonly married empty nesters or singles living alone, generally living in single family homes (including seasonal getaways). Many tend to prefer print to digital media and subscribe to cable television. Pleasantville households are located within a fifteen minute drive of Cohasset Village and include the most populous and fast-growing group in the nation, consisting of one-third of the population. They are general commuters that value low-density living, but demand proximity to jobs, entertainment, and the amenity of an urban center. They are well-educated, two-income households, accept long commute times to raise their children in these family-friendly neighborhoods.
### Local 15 minute walk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary - Regional 10 minute drive</th>
<th>Secondary - Regional 15 minute drive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90 percent or 400 households</td>
<td>40 percent or 2,622 households</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**“Top Tier” – Segment 1A**

"... a highly educated, successful consumer market. Socially responsible consumers who aim for a balanced lifestyle, they take an interest in the fine arts; read to expand their knowledge; and consider the Internet, radio, and newspapers as key media sources. They regularly cook their meals at home, attentive to good nutrition and fresh organic foods."

| 10 percent or 44 households | 24 percent or 1,527 households | 17 percent or 2,824 households |

**“Exurbanites” – Segment 1E**

"...are active in their communities, generous in their donations, and seasoned travelers that take advantage of their proximity to large metropolitan centers to support the arts, but prefer a more expansive home style in less crowded neighborhoods. They have cultivated a lifestyle that is both affluent and urbane. Consumers are more interested in quality than cost."

| 16 percent or 1,039 households | 17 percent or 2,823 households |

**“Golden Years” – Segment 9B**

"...primarily singles living alone or empty nesters. These consumers are well connected: Internet access is used for everything from shopping or paying bills to monitoring investments and entertainment. They are generous supporters of the arts and charitable organizations. They keep their landlines and view cell phones more as a convenience."

**“Pleasantville” – Segment 2B**

"...are spenders... fashion-conscious residents that shop for essentials at discount and warehouse stores but buy branded apparel. They prefer fashion that is classic and timeless as opposed to trendy. They also shop online and in a variety of stores, from upscale to discount, and use the Internet largely for financial purposes."

Figure 36: ESRI Business Tapestry Segmentation for Cohasset Trade Areas
Retail Gap Analysis

A retail gap analysis provides a snapshot of potential opportunities for retailers to locate within an area. MAPC analyzed ESRI Business Analyst data within the defined trade area in order to conduct a retail gap analysis. A retail opportunity or gap analysis looks at the overall demand for retail goods and services within a designated trade area based on the spending potential of the households (demand), and the actual sales for those goods and services within the market area (supply).

The difference between the demand and supply is called the retail “gap.” If the demand exceeds the supply, there is “leakage,” meaning that residents must travel outside the area to purchase those goods. In such cases, there is an opportunity to capture some of this spending within the market area to support new retail investment. When there is greater supply than demand, there is a “surplus,” meaning consumers from outside the market area are coming in to purchase these goods and services. In such cases, there is limited or no opportunity for additional retail development. Thus, the retail gap analysis provides a snapshot of potential opportunities for retailers to locate within an area.

The following table provides a summary of the retail opportunity gap analysis by industry group and trade area. In addition to information on the primary and secondary trade areas, data on the retail gap for the local trade area (or a fifteen minute walk time) is also included as a comparison. Figures in red are negative numbers that indicate there is a surplus of sales within the trade area. In other words, there are a significant number of businesses in the trade area within that industry group. Figures in green are positive numbers that indicate a retail gap or leakage and represent potential opportunities for more retail in the area. It should be noted that the gap analysis does not include competition from online retail sales.

The table indicates that the local and primary trade areas present some opportunities for additional mixed-use oriented retail. When considering a fifteen minute drive time (or secondary trade area), the ability to support additional retail businesses downtown substantially decreases due to there being more businesses within the trade area, which reduces residential spending power.

Instead, increasing the amount of residential units within the local trade area would help to bolster retail market opportunities. Some exceptions to this are clothing stores and food and drinking businesses, for which there is an opportunity for development.

Additionally, business types that would fit well within a mixed-use development were compared as well.
These include auto parts stores, clothing stores, food and beverage stores, and supply shops. Included in Miscellaneous Store Retailers were florists, office supplies, stationaries, and gift stores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Summary</th>
<th>LOCAL TRADE AREA 15-minute walk time</th>
<th>PRINCIPAL TRADE AREA 10-minute drive time</th>
<th>SECONDARY TRADE AREA 15-minute drive time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Retail Trade and Food &amp; Drink</td>
<td>$4,145,070</td>
<td>$2,464,413,366</td>
<td>$683,744,547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Retail</td>
<td>$4,322,784</td>
<td>$2,253,712,126</td>
<td>$639,881,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Food &amp; Drink</td>
<td>-$177,714</td>
<td>$2,104,320</td>
<td>$43,862,946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mixed-Use Oriented Industry Groups</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor Vehicle Parts Dealers</td>
<td>$511,809</td>
<td>$5,002,565</td>
<td>$13,607,152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture &amp; Home Furnishings Stores</td>
<td>$413,892</td>
<td>$9,488,982</td>
<td>$21,538,314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronics &amp; Appliance Stores</td>
<td>$1,677,965</td>
<td>$17,064,421</td>
<td>$40,022,643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. &amp; Supply Stores</td>
<td>$1,912,620</td>
<td>$17,271,829</td>
<td>$44,136,215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Beverage Stores</td>
<td>-$10,157,221</td>
<td>-$15,537,063</td>
<td>$38,593,293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Personal Care Stores</td>
<td>$240,769</td>
<td>$10,512,895</td>
<td>$27,331,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing &amp; Clothing Accessories Stores</td>
<td>-$341,389</td>
<td>$13,013,294</td>
<td>$46,786,267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Merchandise Stores</td>
<td>$4,661,213</td>
<td>$51,688,397</td>
<td>$119,857,744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous Store Retailers</td>
<td>$844,299</td>
<td>$12,129,886</td>
<td>$29,368,985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonstore Retailers</td>
<td>$1,556,180</td>
<td>$16,330,133</td>
<td>$38,207,059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Food Services</td>
<td>-$102,881</td>
<td>$21,043,240</td>
<td>$43,862,946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages</td>
<td>$256,532</td>
<td>$850,028</td>
<td>-$103,135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurants/Other Eating Places</td>
<td>-$323,261</td>
<td>$1,977,569</td>
<td>$5,615,539</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 38: Cohasset Retail Opportunity Gap Analysis

The primary local retail trade area, a fifteen minute walk from 5 South Main Street, by the eponymously-named restaurant and St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church is an area that lends itself to mixed-use oriented industries, given its centralized location and relative density. The local trade area largely contains the main roadways in Cohasset Village, from Gammons Road to Westgate Lane. As highlighted in the bullets below and in the table above, Cohasset’s experiences leakages (green figures in the table) and surpluses (red) in the following:

- **The Town is strongest in jewelers, food and beverage stores as well as drinking places.** Cohasset has a number of grocery stores within the Local and Primary Trade areas. The Local Trade Area in Cohasset currently has a surplus in beer, wine, and liquor stores. The Cohasset market is also well represented by specialty food stores (which are different than specialty food services in that they generally are a retail business) in all three trade areas, though specialty food stores tend to vary in the products and clientele. In particular, Cohasset has a seafood market at Mullaney’s and coffee shops. Additionally, local jewelry store demand is generally met by the four stores within the town limits.

- **Cohasset is underserved in building material, gardening, and supply stores, electronics and appliance stores.** General merchandise stores had the highest amount of leakage. General merchandise stores include retail stores which sell a number of lines of merchandise, such as dry goods, apparel and accessories, furniture and home furnishings, small wares, hardware, and food. However, competition with online retailers paints an uncertain future for the electronics industry, not only in Cohasset, but in the region and the nation as a whole. Although traditional retailers,
without their own brands, or without a focus on e-commerce or a dedication to specialty products that are not carried by online retailers, have been seeing a significant decline nationwide.

- **Within the Local Trade Area, there are opportunities for smaller-scale businesses that can serve the local market, making an argument for a walkable, livable Cohasset Village with additional housing options.** Whereas the Secondary Trade Area has more opportunities for what can be considered larger-scale businesses (automobile vehicle and parts dealers and department stores), the Local Trade area has greater opportunity for niche clothing stores, furniture stores, hobby and sporting goods stores, and nonstore retailers. Nonstore retailer businesses engage in the direct sale (i.e., nonstore) of products, such as party planners, home delivery sales, and home heating oil dealers.

- **The Town has the most potential in restaurants and food and drink services when it comes to the larger Secondary Trade Area.** This would be within a fifteen minute drive, where certain parts along Route 3A can be driven to within 15 minutes during non-peak or low traffic hours. Given that this area of Cohasset already has many different types of commuters passing by, these businesses may be able to catch consumers if they are given a reason to stop by. According to the ESRI restaurant market potential survey, in 2017, more than three-quarters of Cohasset residents went to a family restaurant in the past six months. Furthermore, 25 percent of residents went to a fine dining restaurant within the last month.

- **Cohasset’s economy has many strengths, particularly given the median income, the concentration of higher income individuals near the local trade area and the current business mix.** Given the relatively small amount of developable land, the Town has some key decisions to consider regarding future investments to attract businesses for which there is currently a gap, as well as ways to build on the existing small and medium-sized businesses in the Town. According to input received at the public open house, there is a strong draw towards keeping and expanding retail and dining options in Cohasset Village and making Route 3A North and South locations for office/residential mixed-use developments.

### Economic Development Goals and Recommendations

Public engagement as part of the Master Plan highlighted citizens’ wish to enjoy the benefits of living in a small town. During the public comment period, residents spoke of the desire to have more and varied types of economic activities in the Village and around the Harbor, especially those that cater to families and children and can support tourism. As part of the two Master Plan comment exercises, demand studies highlighted multiple opportunities to increase the variety and vitality of economic activities in Cohasset including the Town’s lobster industry. The success of the Town’s co-working space located adjacent to the train station combined with evidence derived from commercial real estate studies suggest there is room for a more diversified commercial and retail sector. The high percentage of residents who work from their homes and the Town’s limited supply of rental office space suggest more and varied accommodations may improve the business climate in town.

Economic development recommendations draw upon the findings of both the Master Plan and the Harbor Plan. Recommendations made in other parts of the Master Plan are vital to the economic development of the Town. The public’s desire for walkable access to commercial and retail areas of the town depend on higher levels of residential density which are in turn dependent upon the development of varied housing options in core economic centers. To enliven new areas of diverse and inclusive housing requires better promotion and utilization of the Town’s cultural resources, coupled with flexible transportation amenities and land use activities to reduce car dependence.

The recommendations utilize tag lines (create, cultivate, coordinate, communicate, connect and collaborate) to encapsulate major themes embedded in the five goals.
CREATE

Goal 1: Create a variety of economic activities in town to satisfy citizen’s desires for more varied experiences in the Village, the Harbor and along the commercial corridor of Route 3A

Strategy 1.1: Increase density in the Village by building more mixed-use developments

Foot traffic in and around the Village and the Harbor is key to broadening and expanding the goods and services available in the town’s main commercial areas. Increasing the availability and variety of housing types in the Village and around the Harbor will build consumer demand. Assess land and open lots in proximity to the Village and confirm its availability for reuse and infill housing.

Strategy 1.2: Pursue development of a Cohasset Cultural District through the Massachusetts Cultural Council

Cohasset has a remarkable collection of unique historical assets and attractive venues for arts and entertainment. Create and maintain a website of "Arts Around Town" and link it to region-wide community bulletin boards. Expand the number of reoccurring events that attract visitors and coordinate their occurrence with complementary activities. See Historic and Cultural Resources Chapter.

Strategy 1.3: Create a Village-Harbor Vision

Commission an economic development plan that emphasizes aesthetics and the environment specific to the Harbor Village Corridor. Engage in a community visioning exercise to identify the sentiment needed to support successful project design and execution. Create a community improvement fund to support the revitalization of the Harbor and its integration with the Village through the beautification of the Elm Street Corridor.

CULTIVATE

Goal 2: Reimagine the Town’s Engagement with Economic Development

Strategy 2.1: Develop a comprehensive economic development plan that melds the Town’s sites of economic and social activity into a broader framework

Identify the qualities of the Village, Harbor, and Route 3A corridor that together comprise a compelling story about the town’s economic base. Build from experiences of similarly situated Villages and towns that exhibit demonstrated success in enlivening their economic base. Increase the availability and variety of affordable housing types to promote a more diverse community and enable current residents to remain in town as their housing preferences change. Build off of the intimate nature of the Village center, to draw out potential consumption opportunities for social interaction.
**Strategy 2.2: Rejuvenate the Economic Development Committee (EDC) to implement this plan**

The EDC should advocate for, and make improvements town-wide, and serve as a booster organization for Cohasset. The economic development committee should work with businesses, developers, and town government to advance the economic development goals of town.

**Strategy 2.3: The EDC should develop working relationships with local, state and regional entities to provide resources and technical assistance to enhance the Town’s economic base**

In consultation with EDC, the Board of Selectmen should become knowledgeable about and conversant in the concerns of local business and be a proponent for the current and prospective companies of Cohasset.

**COORDINATE & COMMUNICATE**

**Goal 3: Strengthen the traditional economic development organizations including the Cohasset Chamber of Commerce and the local Downtown Business Association (DTBA)**

Reenergize the Chamber of Commerce and the DTBA and encourage the groups to hold events that highlight local businesses. Partner with the Chamber to raise funds to support business-related activities and to draw residents to the Village. Work with the Chamber and DTBA to create business development and management programs including networking experiences for existing and future, entrepreneurial businesses.

**Strategy 3.1: Broaden public knowledge of Cohasset’s environmental, historical, and community assets by connecting with regional organizations such as the Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau**

Key to growth is expanding demand for goods, services, and experiences produced in Cohasset. Partner with the South Shore Chamber of Commerce to update the town website every year. Encourage Cohasset Chamber of Commerce to develop tours of the Town’s historic assets and other tourism resources including the South Shore Arts Center and the Music Circus. Work with local news organizations to promote the Town’s resources and activities.

**Goal 4: Increase the number of visitors traveling to Cohasset for enjoyment and to use the Town’s resources**

**Strategy 4.1: Identify ways of increasing access to town by improving connections between public transit and the Village**

Couple with the Complete Streets Program to capitalize on the value of the MBTA Commuter Rail service to attract transient visitors from the rail station to the Village and Harbor. Develop a marketing
campaign that targets commuter rail passengers. Attract services such as Blue Bike and other transient transportation services to enable the visiting public to move around town and neighboring communities. Consider relocating or adding a second train stop in Cohasset Village center to improve transportation access to the Village core.

**Strategy 4.2: Connect the Village and the Harbor**

Create a comfortable and attractive connection, either by walking paths, a summer bike share, or a summer shuttle between the Harbor and the Village. Add sufficient parking in both the Village and Harbor for nonresident non-boaters.

**Strategy 4.3: Create partnerships with surrounding seaside towns to connect tourism-related activities**

Small towns often lack the capacity to handle large flows of tourists by themselves, but can build a successful tourism economy by connecting and coordinating with efforts among its nearest neighbors. Apply to the MAPC for state development funds to support regional cooperation.

**COLLABORATE**

**Goal 5: Implement the economic development recommendations of the Master Plan and the Harbor Plan, focusing on the greatest strengths of businesses that operate formal and informal establishments, including in-home enterprises**

**Strategy 5.1: Identify a location where an in-Village collaborative workspace can attract and serve business professionals**

Locate in the workspace resources and advisory services that support local businesses. Encourage the growth of new locally-owned enterprises.

**Strategy 5.2: Engage Village banking institutions to serve as financial intermediaries and sources of business planning advice**

The Town’s local banking institutions are relevant sources of business management expertise. Partner with these organizations to provide technical assistance and offer services to local businesses and merchants to enhance their productivity. Financial institutions can provide training on tools and strategies to manage cash flow, payroll, and other workplace benefits, and can provide links to reputable service providers.

**Strategy 5.3: Increase new business formation by identifying complementary activities that match the needs of existing businesses**

Conduct interviews with local entrepreneurs to catalog goods and services purchased from outside of town. Identify opportunities to utilize the purchasing power of local merchants and retailers to reduce the costs of widely used products and services. Provide Retail Incentives Programs to attract retailers.
Create advertising materials that focus on the unique qualities of local businesses. Utilize Internet capabilities to disseminate information about the local business community strategy.

**Strategy 5.4: Harness local goodwill by developing strong brand recognition of locally produced goods and services**

Establish and grow a “Buy Local” campaign to support existing businesses, especially in the Cohasset Village. Utilize social media to disseminate knowledge of local merchants and entrepreneurs. Spotlight and advertise vital assets of the town including ample open space, the Holly Hill organic farm and the lobster pound.

**Strategy 5.5: Streamline the steps required to start and sustain a new business**

Establish a “Business” section of the town website that includes a database of commercial and vacant properties that may be available for redevelopment and create detailed business guides that go step-by-step through the process of opening a business and receiving the necessary permits to operate a local enterprise.

**Strategy 5.6: Support and where appropriate create water-based economic activities including recreation, commercial, and civic functions. Develop resources to support the continued operation and development of the Cohasset fishing industry**

Work with state institutions to secure the funding to build and maintain needed commercial fishing infrastructure including refrigeration, storage, retrieval, and distribution. Improve the connectivity between the Village and the Harbor to strengthen community awareness and utilization of the lobster fishery.
Historic & Cultural Resources

TOWN OF COHASSET 2019 MASTER PLAN
The Town’s name comes from the word Quonahassit or Conahasset, which means “long rocky place.” Conahasset refers both to the name of the Native American settlement on the rocky ledges of the shoreline as well as to its inhabitants, who spoke Algonquin and were members of the larger Massachusog and Wampanog tribes.

Captain John Smith was the first European to enter the area when he sailed into the harbor in 1614. In the ensuing decades, settlers of Hingham harvested hay from the area’s salt marshes. In 1670 Hingham “proprietors” divided the land into parcels which were given to people to create homesteads and farms. The salt marsh and the area that is now the Town Common were designated as communal property. In 1714 the first meetinghouse was built on the Town Common and was replaced by the current First Parish Meeting House in 1747. By 1770 the growing population wanted separation from Hingham, and Cohasset became its own town.

The mid-1800’s marked a turning point for Cohasset. The fishing industry peaked in the 1850’s, went into a steep decline, and nearly vanished by 1880. In 1851 a major storm washed away the dunes that had formerly separated Little Harbor from the ocean, flooding the area’s 91 acres of communal grazing land with saltwater that quickly became stagnant. Residents were then forced to open up a permanent connection to the sea creating a large body of water and a haven for migratory birds and wildlife.

Furthering the Town’s development, the South Shore Railroad arrived in 1849, opening it up to seasonal visitors. Although Cohasset had been home to the Red Lion Inn since the late 1700’s, more boarding houses and hotels sprang up. By the late 1880’s technological innovations in plumbing enabled fresh water to be delivered to the rocky shoreline, an area that was not conducive to farming, but would soon witness the development of “summer cottages.” These stately homes built with intricate details spanned various architectural styles of the day many of them still stand today.

After World War II, the Town experienced another surge in development, this time of permanent residences for returning veterans. Many of the summer cottages were converted into year-round homes, and the Town began its transition to becoming a suburb of Boston. Residents expanded the number of annual cultural events, and institutions grew and strengthened to support a robust artistic and civic life.

**Key Findings**

- Cohasset will celebrate and commemorate its 250th anniversary in 2020 with a variety of community activities. First settled in 1670, a century later, the Town separated from Hingham, Cohasset’s subsequent growth as vibrant community centered around the Village and Harbor, Beechwood and North Cohasset with year-round residents who worked in local industries such as agriculture and fishing.
- More than 2,200 historical properties have been inventoried and a significant number of historic properties have been preserved and well maintained, but a demolition delay, affirmative maintenance bylaw, and other recommendations could help ensure that the historic town centers continue to exist.
- A variety of longstanding cultural activities and annual traditions continue to operate in the Town, but more could be done to cross-promote and highlight complementary resources during those events.
## Assets

Residents of Cohasset have demonstrated a deep pride in their historic structures, cultural heritage, and annual traditions. The history of the town’s residents and the landscape they shaped is documented in three volumes of the Narrative History of Cohasset, which trace its development from the last ice age to the year 2000.

The Town's historical assets and natural landscape have been preserved by dedicated community members and the organizations they have established. For the past 90 years the Cohasset Historical Society has preserved and promoted the history of the town through its acquisition and conservation of historic properties, sensitively converting them into museums, historic homes, and archival institutions. Town committees such as the Community Preservation Committee, the Historic Commission, and the Cohasset Common Historic District Commission play important roles in preserving and improving historical structures and open space. Residents have also been entrepreneurial and collaborative in supporting a network of organizations such as the Cohasset Conservation Trust, the Trustees of Reservations, the newly reconstituted Harbor Committee, and several civic organizations to preserve the natural landscape of the Town.

The number and quality of historical assets in Cohasset are impressive. The Town Common, the last remaining piece of undivided common land in Massachusetts that dates back to the Colonial era, maintains an array of historic properties along its perimeter making it one of the best-preserved town commons in the Commonwealth. Residential buildings line North Main Street along the Common. The South Shore Community Center and the Carriage House Nursery School occupy two of these buildings. Along Highland Avenue to the east, the Town Hall and Second Congregational Church provide anchors to the residential buildings on either side. The First Parish Meeting House is the only building that occupies space at the center of the Common. Further west in Town, are the historic Beechwood Church, cemetery, and neighborhood. Lastly, many structures within the Government Island Historic District are historically significant, including the Lightkeeper’s Residence, the engineer’s office once used for Minot’s Ledge Lighthouse, a fuel-storage building, and the Minot’s Light replica.

Residents have also maintained a variety of cultural events that attract visitors and provide cultural enrichment for the local community. The Carillon Concert Series has been running annually for over 90 years, and the South Shore Music Circus has been programming events for nearly that long. The South Shore Arts Festival has become a regional institution. And events such as the Little League Parade, the Jingle Bell Walk, and the Memorial Day and 4th of July Parade provide annual opportunities for the community to connect. During the past twenty years, the community has continued to expand seasonal events that promote the Town’s local resources such as the Farmer’s Market, the Cohasset Road Race by the Sea, and the Cohasset Triathlon. Additionally, the Town is preparing to celebrate its 250th anniversary. These cultural activities provide a historical connection to the Town’s past as a regional hub for summer programming and artistic expression, attracting local and regional audiences.
Maps of Existing Resources

Historical Sites
Includes structures, churches, and monuments

Data compiled from the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS), Joy Pratt, Chairman of 250th Anniversary Steering Committee, and Town Planner, Peter Matchak. This list is not a complete inventory of every historical structure; rather it is meant indicate the variety of historical resources in Cohasset.

Figure 39: Historical Sites
### Historical Sites

Includes structures, churches, and monuments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HISTORIC STRUCTURES</th>
<th>ADDRESS</th>
<th>YEAR BUILT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gropius House</td>
<td>357 Atlantic Ave</td>
<td>1938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Olde Salt house</td>
<td>40 Border Street</td>
<td>1760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Cohasset Town Hall</td>
<td>41 Highland Ave.</td>
<td>1867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Bellarmine House</td>
<td>150 Howard Gleason Road</td>
<td>1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Holly Hill Farm</td>
<td>236 Jerusalem Road</td>
<td>mid-1800's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Royal Barry Wills House</td>
<td>419 Jerusalem Road</td>
<td>1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Lightkeepers House</td>
<td>1.5 Lighthouse Lane</td>
<td>1850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The Oaks</td>
<td>49 Margin Street</td>
<td>1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. South Shore Community Center</td>
<td>3 North Main Street</td>
<td>1750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Wheelwright Park &amp; Boy Scouts Land</td>
<td>202 North Main Street</td>
<td>1935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Power and Light Building</td>
<td>365 North Main Street</td>
<td>1920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Paul Pratt Memorial Library</td>
<td>35 Ripley Road</td>
<td>1927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Captain John Wilson House</td>
<td>4 South Main Street</td>
<td>1810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Maritime Museum</td>
<td>26 South Main Street</td>
<td>1754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Red Lion Inn</td>
<td>71 South Main Street</td>
<td>1705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Cohasset Historical Society</td>
<td>106 South Main Street</td>
<td>1903</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHURCHES</th>
<th>ADDRESS</th>
<th>YEAR BUILT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17. Vedanta Centre</td>
<td>130 Beechwood Street</td>
<td>1929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Beechwood Church</td>
<td>51 Church Street</td>
<td>1866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Saint Stephen's Church</td>
<td>16 Highland Ave</td>
<td>1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Second Congregational Church</td>
<td>43 Highland Ave</td>
<td>1824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Pope Memorial Church</td>
<td>811 Jerusalem Road</td>
<td>1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. First Parish Unitarian Church</td>
<td>23 North Main Street</td>
<td>1747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Saint Anthony Catholic Church</td>
<td>10 Summer Street</td>
<td>1964</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONUMENTS</th>
<th>ADDRESS</th>
<th>YEAR BUILT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24. Receiving Tomb at Beechwood Cemetery</td>
<td>67 Doone Street</td>
<td>1884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Celtic Cross in Central Cemetery</td>
<td>1 Joy Street</td>
<td>1914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Minot's Ledge Light Replica</td>
<td>19 Lighthouse Lane</td>
<td>1860/1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. World War I Memorial</td>
<td>10 North Main Street</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 40: Historical Sites Key
Cultural Sites
Includes arts and cultural institutions and events

Data compiled from the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS), Joy Pratt, Chairman of 250th Anniversary Steering Committee, and Town Planner, Peter Matchak. This list is not a complete inventory of every cultural institution and event in Cohasset; rather it is meant to indicate the variety of cultural resources in Cohasset.

Figure 41: Cultural Sites
## Cultural Sites
Includes arts and cultural institutions and events

### ART & CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cohasset Dramatic Club</td>
<td>41 Highland Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Community Garden Club of Cohasset</td>
<td>43 Highland Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cohasset Yacht Club</td>
<td>99 Howard Gleason Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Christopher Gallery</td>
<td>130 King Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Cohasset Sailing Club</td>
<td>19 Lighthouse Lane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Blue Heron Fine Art</td>
<td>31 Nichols Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Cohasset Maritime Institute</td>
<td>40 Parker Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Center for Student Coastal Research</td>
<td>40 Parker Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Paul Pratt Memorial Library</td>
<td>35 Ripley Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>South Shore Art Center</td>
<td>119 Ripley Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Cohasset Swim Center</td>
<td>89 Sohier Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Cohasset Senior Center</td>
<td>91 Sohier Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Cohasset Recreation Department</td>
<td>100 Sohier Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>South Shore Music Circus</td>
<td>130 Sohier Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Captain John Wilson House</td>
<td>4 South Main Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Maritime Museum</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Cohasset Historical Society</td>
<td>106 South Main Street</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CULTURAL EVENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Cohasset Triathlon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Carillon Summer Concert Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Cohasset Farmer’s Market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Jingle Bell Walk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Cohasset Road Race by the Sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Little League Parade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Cohasset Art Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Memorial Day Parade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 42: Cultural Sites Key
Opportunities

While residents in Cohasset take pride in the historic nature of the Town, recent developments pose challenges to preserving its historic character. The reconstruction of the Greenbush commuter rail line to Boston has renewed a connection for people to commute to the Town, not just to visit, but to live and work. Sewer capacity and regional sewer expansion, as well as innovations in building technology, are opening up parcels of land to development that were previously unbuildable.

The attractiveness of the Town has led to an increase in land value, which makes the area appealing to developers. A new era of construction has taken root where large homes have been constructed on relatively small lots in highly visible locations. Old-growth trees and historic rock ledges have been demolished in the process, resulting in dramatic changes to the landscape. The development of these new single-family homes and other developments has created a sense that the Town is being overbuilt. The recent demolition of an historic home on the Town Common has renewed interest in developing creative strategies to preserve and maintain historic properties. Although a Demolition Bylaw was defeated as recently as 2005, residents have expressed an interest in returning to this effort as well as implementing complementary strategies.

Documentation of the Town’s historic properties has created interest in preserving in them. Furthermore, the historic consistency of the built environment may be maintained through the enactment of regulatory guidelines that include design standards. Additionally, more programs could be developed by the Historical Society, the Historical Commission, and the Cohasset Common Historic District Commission to connect town residents who are interested in preserving the historic character of their homes with information and coordinated planning efforts to celebrate the Town’s rich history and cultural heritage.

Residents have also expressed a desire for more biking and walking trails that would connect clusters of historic resources, such as from the Town Center to the Harbor, Sandy Beach, and the Commuter Rail Station. Trail networks are discussed in more detail in the Transportation and Circulation chapter of this plan.

Historic and Cultural Resources

Existing Conditions

EARLY HISTORY: NATIVE AMERICAN SETTLERS – PRE-HISTORY – 1849

Cohasset’s rocky shoreline stands out from the marshy shores to the north and south, leading to development patterns that are connected to the Town’s neighbors but stand out in unique ways. The granite ledge at or below the surface made the land tough for farming and for home construction. As a result the area was not as immediately settled as Hingham to the north or Scituate and Plymouth to the south, but the Town grew as a mid-point between the two.

EARLY INHABITANTS

Cohasset’s earliest inhabitants, the Conahasset, camped along the area’s rocky ledges each summer to fish and live off the land. Evidence suggests that the area currently

Buildings are perched along Cohasset’s rocky coast
known as Quarry Point was a popular location for these seasonal settlements. In winter, the native peoples moved inland where the winds were calmer and where they could hunt game and live off the nuts and vegetables they had collected in the warmer months.

ON THE ROAD TO BECOMING A TOWN

People of European descent first used the land that is now Cohasset for grazing and the cultivation of hay. After the land was divided into parcels in 1680, settlers started to create permanent residences along Main Street, which served as the highway between Hingham and Scituate villages. One such house, which was built in 1704, was eventually converted into an inn by the builder’s great-grandson Christopher James. The Red Lion Inn still operates on that same site today.

THE COMMON COMES INTO FORMATION

The original settlement patterns and land division of 1680 also shaped the Town Common which has retained many of its original buildings and historic character. Since it was originally designated as a communal “plain,” people were encouraged to develop properties around it that reflected the popular styles of the day, including Federal, Georgian, Colonial, Italianate Victorian, and Classical Revival. Today the area is designated as the Cohasset Common Historic District that includes the First Parish Meeting House, the Second Congregational Church, the South Shore Community Center, and the Town Hall, making it one of the finest examples of early New England village greens.

INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE TAKE ROOT

During this early period of development, people tapped into the natural resources of the area to build industrial and agricultural facilities that are still in existence today. The Olde Salt House, a Colonial wood structure that is featured prominently on Border Street, was constructed in 1760 as either a cooper’s shop or a warehouse for salt which was harvested from evaporated seawater on the nearby shores. It was part of...
of a complex of buildings built by Samuel Bates which included a wharf that is still in use by commercial fishermen today, and the buildings have been converted into a popular restaurant. Likewise areas that began to be farmed in this early period are still in active use. While the land that encompasses Holly Hill Farm was likely farmed in the 1700's, credit to its conception goes to Henry Doane. Doane sold the original homestead to Thomas Richardson, who married into the White family in the mid-1800's. The White family continues to operate the land as an organic farm and runs an educational programs and a farm stand.

COUNTRY VILLAGES EMERGE

As settlers built out the areas around Main Street and the waterfront, settlers started to branch out and create country villages in the rural parts of town. The Beechwood neighborhood remained a vibrant village center for the surrounding community of farmers and other skilled workers until small farming became unprofitable in the 1970's. Until then the community made steady progress in developing its farmland and physical structures as well as hyperlocal community traditions. The earliest burials in the Beechwood Cemetery go back to 1734.

Because of its distance to the Town Common, and the church there, a Parish was established in Beechwood in about 1860. In 1866 the Beechwood Church was constructed, obtaining half its funds from the town, and the other sources coming from the community as well as neighboring churches in Cohasset, Hingham and Scituate.

By 1950 Beechwood was a self-contained village center. In addition to the church and cemetery, it supported a general store, post office, fire station, ballfield, library and community center. In addition to fostering traditional sports and recreation, the tight-knit community developed unique annual traditions such as turtle races and annual bonfires on July 3rd. As each village center built robust physical spaces, so too did they develop local economies and social practices.

THE TOWN BEGINS TO TAKE SHAPE - 1849-1953

By the mid-1850's the railroad had arrived, and with it the population surged, especially in the summer months. Wealthy Bostonians escaped the hot city and flocked to the Town. They erected large homes on the rock ledges overlooking the ocean where they could benefit from the cool breeze. This oceanfront property also provided unobstructed views of migratory birds, so those lucky enough to stay until the fall could go coot hunting, competing for the most birds felled in one day. To service all of these new residents, public works were built and civic organizations were established (such as the Yacht Club, the Music Circus, the Fire Department and more), forming the backbone of the Town’s civic life and inspiring the growth and development of new public amenities.

THE ERA OF THE SUMMER COLONY

Cohasset is endowed with a large number of impressive structures from the era of Victorian “summer cottages,” many of which have since been converted into permanent residences. A large
concentration of these homes are located around Jerusalem Road, Atlantic Avenue, and the Harbor. Many were designed by the most prominent architects of the day, such as George Newton, who designed Torrebianca, an extravagant villa on Atlantic Avenue, J.A. Schweinfurth, who designed a home at 215 Atlantic Avenue, H.H. Richardson, who designed Bellarmine House on Cohasset Harbor, as well as landscape designs by Frederick Law Olmsted. Architectural innovation continued into the modern period when Walter Gropius was commissioned to design a signature property near Sandy Beach in 1938.

**MINOT’S LEDGE**

1849 was not only the year the railroad came to town, it was also the year of the horrific sinking of a ship on the Grampus Ledges where nearly 100 Irish immigrants perished within sight of their final destination in America. The first lighthouse on the submerged ledge was built the following year, but in 1851 it fell into the ocean during a storm. In 1855 construction began on a new, granite lighthouse that still stands today. The signature flash pattern from the Lighthouse is 1-4-3, which has the same numerical count as “I love you,” giving rise to its nickname “Lover’s Light.”

Supporting the lighthouse is a series of buildings which were erected at the same time comprising a mainland station that is currently designated as the Government Island National Historic District. Some of these buildings include the Lightkeeper’s Residence, Minot’s Light Watch Room Replica, and an oil storage building that dates from around 1900.

**MEETING HOUSES**

In the mid-1850's and again around 1900, a suite of meeting houses were erected in Cohasset. In 1857 the Town Hall was built on the Town Common. This space has supported numerous civic and cultural activities, from town meetings to theatrical performances by Humphrey Bogart and more recently by the Cohasset Dramatic Club, which is currently celebrating its 96th year. In 1866 residents in the Beechwood section of town erected a church so they too could have a meeting space in their area. 1900 saw the erection of two stately stone churches – Saint Stephen’s Church on the Town Common, and the Pope Memorial Church (currently named the Panagia Greek Orthodox Church) at the end of Jerusalem Road. Cohasset’s peaceful landscape also gave rise to the Vedanta Society which established a non-denominational retreat in the Town in 1929. These places of worship have also become hubs of cultural activity.

**CELEBRATING THE OUTDOORS**

As people enjoyed their summers in Cohasset, they also began to establish institutions to support their lives outdoors. Both the Yacht Club and Golf Club were established in 1894. Additionally the Works Progress Administration helped build Wheelwright Park as one of only a handful of sites on the South
Shore that were built during the New Deal. Since that time even more land has been added to the park by various owners and operators, reinforcing Cohasset’s commitment to natural preservation and conservation.

**CIVIC LIFE ARISES: 1952 – PRESENT**

**BECOMING A BEDROOM COMMUNITY**

By the end of the Korean War, the Town of Cohasset began to transition to a bedroom community. While a small fishing industry, agricultural, and summer colony continued to operate as before, the Town increased its population in the post-World War II era. Summer cottages and other buildings were adapted into year-round residences, historic preservation emerged as a priority, and additional cultural institutions sprang up to provide cultural enrichment for local residents.

**PARLORS TO BEDROOMS**

By the 1950’s construction of grandiose summer cottages began to give way to a new, more modest style of housing for returning veterans. The houses built on the streets adjacent to Cohasset High School marked a shift from the past in terms of their size and level of detail.

Many of the architecturally significant buildings constructed during this period reflect a movement towards a simpler local lifestyle. Architect Royal Barry Wells designed numerous homes in Cohasset in his signature Cape house style, one of which still stands today on Jerusalem Road. More recently the historic Power and Light Building which used to power all the street lights in Cohasset, was converted into a home with a studio and sculpture garden. The renovation of this notable building on the edge of Sanctuary Pond is a prime example of the ways in which historic buildings may be adapted to modern times with new additions that respect and preserve their historic integrity.

The most recent trend in home construction, however, seems to take more inspiration from the Victorian era. Modest houses are being replaced by large, luxurious homes in prominent locations.

**PRESERVING HISTORY**

Historical preservation has increasingly become a priority for Cohasset residents throughout this contemporary period of development. While the Cohasset Historical Society was established in 1928, it was not until more recent times that the organization acquired its four properties and converted them into their headquarters, an historic home, and two museums.

During this period the Town moved to create numerous historic districts of varying types. The Cohasset Common Historic District is a local historical district. Government Island was designated a National
Historic District, and the Cohasset Central Cemetery was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2002. Since the Cohasset Common Historic District has a local historic designation, only properties within those boundaries are restricted to the bylaws as laid out by the Local Historic District Commission. However, all of these designations portray a deep respect for the character of the Town and provide a means for historic preservation.

**CONNECTING TO THE SEA**

Interest in associating with the Town’s heritage is evident in the rise of organizations that connect people to the water through educational and recreational activities. In 1970 the Sailing Club joined the Yacht Club as another resource to teach town residents how to sail. The Maritime Institute, which began in 1994, provides rowing and ship-building opportunities for people of all ages and abilities. And in 2000, the Center for Student Coastal Research was established to explore the scientific significance of the Cohasset watershed.

**ARTISTIC INSPIRATION**

Motivated by its magnificent ocean vistas, Cohasset has long been home to artists and has supported artistic expression. In the 1950’s three local residents - Tom Lucas (an art teacher at Cohasset High), MacIvor Reddie (a local artist), and Helen Vosoff (the first president of the new South Shore Playhouse Associates) - met and began to organize a new art center in Cohasset. By 1955 the Art Center settled into its first home at 15 Brook Street, and the following year the founders organized the first South Shore Arts Festival, which has now been running for over 60 consecutive years. In 1958 the South Shore Art Center was officially incorporated as a non-profit, and by 1987 the organization had raised enough funds to construct the building in which they still operate today. Currently the Art Center boasts over 1200 members and attracts a regional population from the entire South Shore. Programs are offered throughout the year.

The South Shore Music Circus is also dedicated to supporting the arts, cultural, and educational institutions and was officially incorporated just prior to the South Shore Art Center. However, the Music Circus traces its roots further back to 1932, when Raymond Moore brought stage shows to the Cohasset Town Hall. The following year Alexander Dean took over and established the South Shore Players, bringing notable acts and stars of the era such as Humphrey Bogart, Sylvia Sydney, Thornton Wilder and Sinclair Lewis. By 1949 the Players had outgrown their home in the Town Hall and in 1951 they set up a tent on former horse show grounds to house their productions. Upgrades were made to the tent in 1977 and
CIVIC LIFE CONTINES TO BLOSSOM

A variety of civic spaces and events keeps Cohasset residents busy with seasonal activities throughout the year. The Cohasset Swim Center was established in 1975 to provide yet another water-based activity for local residents. The Senior Center was built near the Swim Center in 2014. The Cohasset Recreation Department was also moved to the former Joseph Osgood School after the building had been converted into the Pratt Memorial Library in 2003. The Pratt Memorial Library provides the community with a wide variety of programming for adults, young adults, and children year round.

In addition to these permanent civic spaces, events consistently bring the Town – especially its youngest members – together for annual traditions. Cohasset has celebrated Memorial Day with not only a community parade participated in by veterans, youth organizations and local citizens, but also more recently a healing field of flags by the War Memorial near the harbor. The Little League Parade draws families each year to watch their youngsters parade through town in their uniforms. And for the past 23 years, Santa has arrived on a signature lobster boat for the Jingle Bell Walk from the Harbor to the South Shore Community Center.

The community continues to add activities which provide great season opportunities for residents. At twenty-two years running, the Farmer’s Market is a relatively new
addition to the annual calendar in Cohasset. The Triathlon and the Cohasset Road Race by the Sea provide further recreational opportunities for people to enjoy the area’s scenic beauty.


Historic & Cultural Resources Goals and Recommendations

Cohasset could enhance its cultural and historical resources through a series of recommendations which may be summarized in the following four goals:

Goal 1: Preserve the historic residential character of Cohasset

Cohasset is defined by its residential character set in scenic beauty. The natural and built landscape are intertwined in a way that residents may maintain one by preserving the other.

Strategy 1.1: Celebrate the Town’s comprehensive historical record

- Continue to inventory structures that retain historic character and significance. Cohasset has inventoried more than 2,200 historic properties on an online database on MACRIS website. An expanded version of Cohasset’s Heritage Trail booklet will be available for the 250th anniversary of the Town.
- Establish a validation program for historic homes. Retaining historic architectural character will help celebrate exemplary landowners and spread best-practices.
- Establish a consistent, opt-in signage program for historic properties. Property owners can celebrate the historic character of their buildings, and provide a signal to potential developers to consider historic character in new developments.
Strategy 1.2: Establish vision and priorities to guide historic preservation planning efforts

- Adopt guiding principles for preservation. Defining values and gaining consensus on a vision will help ensure that historic preservation is valued by the majority of Town residents.
- Develop criteria for evaluating preservation priorities. This will create a standardized process to assess the historic significance of historic properties.
- Incentivize preservation of historic structures along scenic byways. This will focus historic preservation in high visibility locations and help preserve the character of the Town.

Strategy 1.3: Strengthen the Local Historic District Commission with the adoption of additional bylaws such as an Affirmative Maintenance Bylaw

The purpose of such a bylaw is to ensure that property owners maintain their properties to a minimal standard so they will not fall into disrepair.

Strategy 1.4: Establish a Demolition Delay Bylaw.

Bylaws may be enacted for 6, 12, 18, or 24 month periods, providing time for a more thorough assessment of a property's historical significance.

Strategy 1.5: Explore the expansion of the Local Historic District

This could ensure that additional properties are protected, and maintain high historic standards for redevelopment.

Goal 2: Develop additional local capacity to manage and enhance historic and cultural resources

Residents of the Town have made concerted efforts in preserving the historic and cultural resources, but more could be done to create partnerships to leverage and strengthen these efforts.

Strategy 2.1: Expand partnerships among historic and cultural organizations through development of a Historic Preservation Plan

A preservation plan will assist in identifying historic and cultural resources, assessing their current status and recognizing issues and opportunities to better protect those resources. Such a plan would include an inventory of important resources, review relevant local regulations, assessment of management issues regarding those resources, and the creation of an action plan to implement recommendations. A Historic Preservation Plan can create more collaboration among local organizations and can identify concrete strategies to ensure historic properties are well prioritized for preservation. Hanover and Sandwich have recently prepared such plans.

Strategy 2.2: Implement new partnerships among organizations within historic and cultural asset clusters for programming, maintenance, fundraising and promotion

Cohasset maintains numerous cultural organizations with overlapping missions, so carrying out
collaborative projects (such as planning for the 250th anniversary) may help define roles for each organization.

**Strategy 2.3: Establish programs such as land alteration management to prevent clear cutting and the alteration of natural rock ledges**

**Strategy 2.4: Expand Design Review Board purview to include residential properties**

The Design Review Board currently only has jurisdiction over commercial properties, so expanding their purview to residential properties would add a level of oversight to ensure that community character is taken into account in future developments.

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### Goal 3: Enhance Cohasset’s historic and cultural resources

Cohasset has a wealth of historic and cultural resources that are presently undervalued by some in the Town. By following a series of recommendations, Cohasset residents may acquire new processes by which historic resources may not only be preserved and maintained, but appreciated and celebrated by all.

**Strategy 3.1: Revitalize and restore Town Common to historic standards**

An updated plan can ensure that the Common remains relevant into the 21st Century by providing for the needs of passive recreation by Town residents while embedding the necessary resources (such as sprinkler systems and outdoor outlets) for the continued success of the Art Festival and other events.

**Strategy 3.2: Continue Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding for maintenance and restoration of historic properties**

**Strategy 3.3: Provide best practices information through the Town’s Historical Commission about how to research house histories.**

Links may be provided to the National Park Service Preservation Briefs, which offer detailed guidance in how to maintain historic properties: [https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve.htm](https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve.htm)

**Strategy 3.4: Review zoning in Cohasset Common Historic District**

Ensure that requirements respect historic building form, lot size, and lot layout. Using the recent demolition of an historic property on the Common as a case study, the Historic District bylaws may be amended to ensure a more thorough process for future renovation efforts. The Massachusetts Historical Commission has prepared a guidebook with numerous examples of zoning tools and techniques for historic preservation (Preservation Through Bylaws and Ordinances – 2009).

**Strategy 3.5: Highlight historic and cultural resources during annual cultural events**

For example, the South Shore Arts Festival takes place on the historic Common, and additional signage may promote the Town’s historic character.
Goal 4: Enhance creative and cultural economic development

Cohasset has numerous longstanding events and vital institutions that are known locally and regionally, but more could be done to elevate and cross-promote these resources.

Strategy 4.1: Celebrate the upcoming 250th anniversary by highlighting local cultural and historic resources

Walking tours, publications, and other collateral can stand alone or function as a complement to preexisting cultural activities. Long after the anniversary is past, these publications may remain as resources for residents to learn about the Town.

Strategy 4.2: Explore economic development strategies that highlight local artists and food producers

For example, the Town can host an annual Harbor Festival that celebrates the working harbor, farms, and local food systems.

Strategy 4.3: Develop a process to establish a cultural district

Such districts can be created by working with the Massachusetts Cultural Council, which allows the Town to take advantage of technical assistance and grants. This process will ensure that cultural resources are mapped and valued as a crucial element of the Town.

Strategy 4.4: Commemorate notable historic achievements

Unique, long-running events such as the Carillon Concert Series not only increase Town pride but may become opportunities to increase the visibility of the Town's cultural assets.
**Introduction**

The Town of Cohasset is a unique coastal community with lush forests, quiet coves, scenic vistas, open spaces and a variety of recreational amenities. Located approximately 23 miles south of Boston, this strikingly beautiful community is an attractive place to live. Due to the preponderance of both wetlands and rock ledge, development in Cohasset has historically been limited. However, since land is a finite resource, competing needs for housing, recreation, wildlife habitat and open space preservation exist. This has been further exacerbated as Cohasset is experiencing growth in areas that were previously undevelopable.

At the time of writing this Plan, the Town of Cohasset had just completed updating its Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP), which expired in 2017. The following information is taken primarily from the now complete 2018-2024 OSRP, which was prepared with the assistance of Beals and Thomas, Inc. and should be consulted for further detail. The OSRP provides a comprehensive overview of the Town’s natural history, a detailed inventory of all open space and recreational resources in Cohasset, and recommendations for protecting and improving these resources. A Seven-Year Action Plan provides detailed steps for achieving the plan’s goals and objectives, timeframe for achieving the action, and potential funding sources. This chapter of the Master Plan provides a summary of the recently completed OSRP and highlights its key recommendations, particularly those that pertain to other Master Plan elements such as transportation, housing, economic development, and land use.

The purpose of the OSRP is to:

- The OSRP update is also meant to detail local open spaces, natural resources, and recreational amenities to help guide the Town during the next seven years regarding how to best enhance and protect those resources.
- Recommend additional opportunities for acquisition, additional protection, or enhancement through the addition of specific facilities/amenities.
- Inform and educate local residents about their community and existing open space, natural resources and recreational amenities and why they are important.
- Create the momentum needed for the Open Space & Recreation Committee to begin implementation of the action items detailed in Section 9 of the OSRP.
- Make the Town eligible to receive grant funding that can cover some of the cost for open space acquisition and park renovations, once the plan has been approved by the Division of Conservation Services.

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**Key Findings**

- Cohasset has approximately 2,900 acres of open space and recreational lands (including public and private conservation land), which comprises approximately 46% of the Town’s total land area (excluding coastal waters such as Cohasset Harbor). 1,965 of those 2,935 acres of open space is permanently protected.
- The number of children and elders in Cohasset grew from 2000 to 2010. To meet the needs of its population, the Town’s recreation and open space resources must serve both an older adult population and a growing number of families with children.
- Cohasset’s Department of Public Works (DPW) has the primary responsibility for maintaining the Town’s parks and open space. More resources are needed to effectively manage these properties.

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1 The Division of Conservation Services conditionally approved the OSRP in April 2019.
Existing Conditions

Geology, Soils, and Topography²

GEOLOGY

The majority of Cohasset’s bedrock is comprised of Dedham granite. The prevalent bedrock within Cohasset has historically represented a development constraint, although more recent blasting capabilities, Town sewer capacity and advances in septic technology have made previously undevelopable areas available.

Glacial action is responsible for the town’s surficial geology; glacial retreat approximately 12,000 years ago carried soils, rocks and boulders, and, as the glaciers melted, deposited glacial till on the ground surface. Cohasset contains many boulders transported by glacial action and then perched atop one another, or “glacial erratics”. Rooster Rock, Bigelow Boulder, and Ode’s Den, all in Whitney and Thayer Woods, and Big Tippling in Wheelwright Park are among the most well-known glacial erratics. Cohasset’s present swamps and marshes were formed from small water bodies created during the extended process of glacial retreat that became vegetated.

TOPOGRAPHY

The rocky topography prevalent in Cohasset produces many small changes in elevation, while more significant changes in elevation due to the town’s glacial past create a ranging topography that includes features from coastal estuaries to inland hills. “A number of the oval, rounded hills known as drumlins, which were also created during the retreat of the glaciers, can be found in the vicinity of Route 3A. These include Turkey Hill, Scituate Hill, Deer Hill, Bear Hill, James Hill, and Walnut Hill. Turkey Hill, on the border with Hingham, is the highest point in Cohasset at 187 feet above sea level.“

SOILS

The majority of soils within Cohasset represent a constraint for development as they generally either contain prevalent stones and boulders or are poorly drained.

MassGIS indicates that approximately 40 different soil types occur in Cohasset. Prime soils constitute those exhibiting the most advantageous combination of physical and chemical characteristics for farming use. Important farmland soils include soils that nearly qualify for prime status, and that “economically produce high yields of crops when treated or managed according to acceptable farming methods.”

Of the soils occurring in Cohasset, the two most prevalent (by acre) soil types are Hollis-Rock outcrop-Charlton complex (HrC) and Rock outcrop-Hollis complex (RoD). Although neither of these soil types are considered prime farmland soils, there are other important farmland soils present throughout the...
The most dominant soil type in Cohasset is HrC, which is described as “gently sloping and strongly sloping soils and areas of exposed bedrock on hills and ridges where the relief is affected by the underlying bedrock...The shallow, somewhat excessively drained Hollis soil is on the tops of ridges or is near rock outcrops. The very deep, well drained Charlton soil is in low pockets and saddles. Stones and boulders 10 inches to 10 feet in diameter cover 0 to 15% of the surface.” Additionally, depth to the seasonal high water table occurs at greater than 6 feet with HrC soils. Slope and shallow bedrock depth are the main development limitations associated with HrC soils.

RoD soils are generally unsuitable for development, mainly due to prevalent bedrock exposures. Seasonal high water and wetland characteristics associated with the mucky soils (Sw, Fm and Fp) also represent significant development constraints. Seasonal high water and slow to very slow permeability represent the main limitations of RgB soils, especially with regard to installation of septic systems, although development can be accommodated with consideration of mechanisms to avoid water damage. Seasonal high water and slow permeability are also constraints for NpC and NpD soils.

**Water Resources**

**WATERSHEDS**

Cohasset has a number of fresh and salt water resources and a varied natural landscape that includes harbors, rivers, estuaries, marshes, ponds, and wildlife habitats. According to the 2018 OSRP, the Town is located within two major watersheds: South Coastal and Boston Harbor. The majority of Cohasset lies within the South Coastal watershed. However, the northern portion of the Town and those areas draining to Great Swamp, Turkey Hill Run, and Rattlesnake Run, are located within the Boston Harbor watershed.

**SURFACE WATERS**

Cohasset contains both salt and freshwater resources. In addition to the Atlantic Ocean, saltwater bodies include Cohasset Harbor, Little Harbor, the Gulf River estuary, and Straits Pond. Straits Pond lies within the northernmost portion of Cohasset, within the Weir River Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and is located in both the Towns of Cohasset and Hull. Straits Pond is an Outstanding Resource Water due to its location within an ACEC.

The Gulf River estuary is located in both the Towns of Cohasset and Scituate. This unique water feature lies in the southeastern portion of Cohasset and includes salt marshes, tidal flats and other lands subject to tidal action.

The major freshwater bodies within Cohasset are the Aaron River Reservoir, Lily Pond, Sanctuary Pond, Treat’s Pond, Aaron River, Bound Brook, Peppermint Brook, Herring Brook, Brass Kettle Brook,

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5 Outstanding Resource Waters include Class A Public Water Supplies and their tributaries, certain wetlands and other waters as determined by the Department based on their outstanding socio-economic, recreational, ecological and/or aesthetic values. [310 CMR 4.04(3)].
6 Massachusetts Surface Water Quality Standards [314 CMR 4.00].
James Brook, Turkey Hill Run, Richardson’s Brook, and Rattlesnake Run. Smaller ponds, streams, and seasonal wet places are also present throughout the Town. Note that Lily Pond and the Aaron River Reservoir are surface drinking water supplies. Therefore, Lily Pond and the Aaron River Reservoir, as well as the streams and wetlands tributary to these surface waters, are Outstanding Resource Waters. James Brook runs through Cohasset center, the most densely developed portion of Town, where it passes through a culvert under the village center and emerges south of Elm Street and drains into Cohasset Harbor.

Cohasset maintains significant surface water supplies in the Aaron River Reservoir and Lily Pond, as well as groundwater supplies through its wells. The Town of Cohasset Water Department has achieved significant protection for these resources by protecting associated watershed lands, and the Town maintains an awareness of developments in adjacent towns that may impact Cohasset’s water supply. Cohasset also recently completed installing multiple rain gardens throughout town to address stormwater runoff. The Town has recently also completed a sewer expansion project around Little Harbor. Smaller steps that could be investigated to further protect Cohasset’s water supplies include addressing failing septic systems as quickly as possible and continuing education of the public with regard to sources of nonpoint pollution. Additionally, although the majority of Cohasset’s surface water supplies are surrounded by protected lands, King Street lies adjacent to Lily Pond to the northeast, and the potential for spills from accidents exists.

WETLANDS

Cohasset contains many wetland types from coastal (including beaches, dunes, salt marshes, tidal flats and rocky intertidal shores) to inland (deciduous, coniferous and mixed forested swamps, scrub-shrub swamps, freshwater marshes, and wet meadows) as well as mixed saltwater/fresh water resources such as estuaries and brackish areas.

These crucial wetland landscapes provide a variety of functions, including the protection of public and private water supply; the protection of groundwater supply; flood control and storm damage prevention; the prevention of pollution; the protection of fisheries and shellfish; and wildlife habitat.

Saltwater wetlands are located in the northern and eastern portions of Cohasset bordering on the Gulf River estuary, parts of Cohasset Harbor, Straits Pond, and portions of Little Harbor. Major freshwater wetland areas include:

- The Great Swamp,
- The area between Lily Pond and the Aaron River Reservoir,
- Brass Kettle Brook and Bound Brook,
- Breadencheese Swamp (near the town transfer station and former landfill, north of Cedar Street), Jacob’s Meadow (adjacent to James Brook between South Main Street and Elm Street),
- Eighteen certified vernal pools, and
- Ellms Meadow (adjacent to James Brook between Cushing Road, James Lane and the MBTA Railroad).

FLOOD HAZARD AREAS

7 Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2018-2024
8 Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2018-2024
9 Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2018-2024
10 Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2018-2024
The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has identified areas in Cohasset that are predicted to be most prone to flooding, these are detailed in Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM). Because of Cohasset’s extensive river and tributary system, many flood hazard areas are spread throughout the town. The areas subject to flooding depicted on the FEMA maps generally include the basins of James Brook, Brass Kettle Brook, Bound Brook, Turkey Hill Run, Rattlesnake Run, Aaron River, the Gulf River, Lily Pond, Straits Pond, Aaron River Reservoir, and portions of tributaries thereto. 12

The following is excerpted from the Town’s Flood Insurance Study dated September 29, 1986:

“Due to its coastal New England location, Cohasset is highly susceptible to northeasters... northeasters often last long enough to be accompanied by at least one high tide, which results in the most severe flooding conditions...

In addition to flooding, damaging waves may result in areas with sufficient fetch length, water depth, and exposure to winds. The outer coastline from the Cohasset-Hull town boundary to the White Head section of Cohasset Harbor is susceptible to damaging waves. Seaward of the western side of Pleasant Beach is an ancient river channel which extends from the beach to approximately 1,500 feet offshore. The depth of water at this channel is significantly deeper than at other parts of the beach. These greater depths are a pathway for higher wave energy to reach the shore. The result is more overtopping and seepage at this part of the dune than at other sites in the system.

Inland riverine flooding is also a major concern in Cohasset. During peak runoff seasons and high intensity storms, inland flooding occurs along Turkey Hill Run and in the downtown Pleasant Street area where James Brook passes through a long culvert…” 13

In addition, Cohasset Harbor and the lowland shores of Little Harbor are subject to flooding and velocity hazards (wave action). In 2018, the Town of Cohasset was awarded a Municipal Vulnerability Program (MVP) Grant through the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to become a proactive planning community. Cohasset has partnered with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and the Cohasset Center for Student Coastal Research (CSCR) to bring together community members and citizens to comprehensively identify and prioritize steps to reduce risk and improve resilience throughout Cohasset. The plans will analyze future climate projections, including heat, drought, inland flooding, and sea level rise. Potential impacts will be considered to public and private infrastructure, vulnerable populations, natural resources, public health, and the local economy. This work will tie into the revised Harbor Plan currently being worked on by the Harbor Committee.

**Vegetation**

Cohasset is vegetated with a variety of plant species commonly found on well-drained upland soils throughout southeastern Massachusetts. White oak and pine forests dominate the upland forest other common species include American holly and Eastern hemlock.

Cohasset has over three thousand acres of forested land. Remaining sizable tracts of forested land within Cohasset include:

- Wompatuck State Park
- Whitney and Thayer Woods
- Turkey Hill

12 Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2018-2024
• Wheelwright Park
• Great Brewster Woods
• Barnes Wildlife Sanctuary
• Cornelia and Richardson White Woods
• Wooded portions of Cohasset Country Club
• Turtle Island and vicinity
• Reeds Corner and vicinity
• Walnut Hill and vicinity
• Adjacent to Deer Hill
• Water Department parcels around Lily Pond
• Brass Kettle Brook area off King Street

RARE SPECIES

Below are the four rare plant species found in Cohasset that are listed as threatened under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA):

• Swamp dock (Rumex verticillatus)
• Seabeach Dock (Rumex pallidus)
• Green Adder’s Mouth (Maloxis unifolia)
• Adder’s-tongue Fern (Ophioglossum pusillum)

Wildlife

VERNAL POOLS

Vernal pools serve as an important breeding ground and are home to a number of amphibians and invertebrate animals. Also known as ephemeral pools, autumnal pools, and temporary woodland ponds, these natural sites fill with water in the fall or winter due to rain and rising groundwater. They stay ponded through the spring and into summer, but tend to dry completely by the middle or end of the summer. This occasional drying prevents fish from permanently populating the pools, allowing amphibians and invertebrate species to reproduce without being targeted by fish predators.¹⁴

The Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) has certified 18 vernal pools in Cohasset as of 2017. This is twice the number of certified vernal pools reported in the 2002 Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan. Certified vernal pools can usually be protected from development and are afforded protection under a number of state regulations. There are another 86 potential vernal pools in Cohasset that have been identified, but not certified by NHESP.

RARE SPECIES

Four wildlife species of special concern listed by Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) have been found in Cohasset. These animal species include the least tern (Sternula antillarum), umber shadowdragon (Neurocordulia obsolete), mocha emerald (Somatochlora linearis), and attenuated bluet (Enallagma daeckii). Another rare animal species of special concern is the Eastern Box Turtle (Terrapene carolina).¹⁵ Threats to the species include habitat destruction, road mortality, and collection for pets. Protecting their habitat, including ensuring that it does not become fragmented, is important for continuation of the species.

¹⁵ Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 4
WILDLIFE MIGRATION CORRIDORS

Wildlife corridors become increasingly important as natural areas are inevitably divided by development. In the resulting isolated open spaces, the long-term survival of various wildlife populations depends upon patch size, the number of patches, and how isolated each patch is from the next. In order to conserve biodiversity, it is imperative to maximize both the number and size of protected individual natural areas, while maintaining bands of undisturbed lands to connect them.16

“Broad forested areas parallel to streams and rivers form natural wildlife corridors. The Aaron River/Brass Kettle Brook/Bound Brook system forms the core of Cohasset’s most important wildlife corridor” that links the Aaron Reservoir and Wompatuck State Park with Lily Pond, Bailey Conservation Land in Scituate, and the Gulf River estuary system. Additional significant riparian wildlife corridors include the Gulf River estuary and adjacent woodlands, a tributary stream to the Gulf River, Rattlesnake Run and associated wetlands, and the stream corridor flowing to Little Harbor within the Cabot & White Conservation Land. The opening of Weir River Farm, which lies adjacent to Turkey Hill, to the public by the Trustees of Reservations in 2000 created contiguous open space connecting Turkey Hill, Whitney and Thayer Woods, and Wompatuck State Park.17

In general, the significant areas of contiguous “natural” areas within Cohasset and adjacent communities are also likely to contain wildlife corridors. Conversely, the recent reestablishment of the MBTA rail line through Cohasset may have bisected and thus eliminated former wildlife corridors. Development also has the potential to fragment corridors.18

Although the above-discussion focuses on local wildlife corridors, parts of Cohasset also play important roles in broader migratory corridors. Specifically, coastal areas on the South Shore are renowned for their importance to migrating birds. Essentially, any open space with cover and food is important to migrating birds, while the waters of Massachusetts Bay proximate to Cohasset provide important feeding habitat for terns during the summer. The air space above Cohasset is full of migrating birds,

16 Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2018-2024
18 Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2018-2024
although they may not touch down in Cohasset, since many of the birds passing through Massachusetts during migration do not follow narrow routes.\textsuperscript{19}

**Environmental Challenges**

**HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES**

Wompatuck State Park originated as the Hingham Naval Ammunition Depot that served the North Atlantic fleet during World War II. Some of the oldest farms in Cohasset were taken by the federal government to create the depot. When the land was declared surplus by the federal government, it was given to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The current site contains contamination associated with the historic federal defense facility. Although the contamination lies within the portion of Wompatuck in Hingham, it is within the watershed of Brass Kettle Brook and Lily Pond. Water quality testing led the Army Corps of Engineers to conclude that the remaining contamination is unlikely to migrate toward Lily Pond.\textsuperscript{20}

**WATER POLLUTION**

Cohasset maintains spill control equipment to address potential oil releases with potential to affect the water supply, and activities proximate to wetlands and water bodies are subject to the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission. Several water bodies in Cohasset are presently polluted, including Straits Pond, where fishing is not allowed due to coliform bacteria, and Little Harbor, which no longer contains productive shellfish beds. Stormwater runoff pollutes all water bodies in Cohasset to some degree. The major contributing factor to the Harbor’s pollution problem that causes an inability to sustain shellfish beds is the outflow from the Gulf River. The properties bordering the Gulf River on all sides in North Scituate and South Cohasset do not have sewer access and have older septic systems that drain into the river. Until the two communities can execute a sewer plan to reduce septic pollution into the Gulf River this condition will continue.

One particular area of pollution is the outfall from Jacob’s Meadow into the harbor. Although proposed, the boat pump-out station noted in the prior OSRP as being installed at the town pier at Government Island was never constructed. Cohasset does maintain a pump-out boat. However, Cohasset’s coastal waters have been designated as a “No Discharge Area” for boat sewage. The recent expansion of sewer services will also decrease water pollution, as failing septic systems can result in significant impacts, including bacterial and nutrient contamination, to ground and surface water bodies. Additionally, the Stormwater Management Bylaw will also enhance ground and surface water protection. The Town of Cohasset has installed over 50 rain gardens to address stormwater runoff and to educate the public regarding Low Impact Stormwater Management techniques.\textsuperscript{21}

**Scenic Resources and Unique Features**

The Town of Cohasset has a wealth of scenic resources and views. In an effort to protect the Town’s scenic drives and vistas, a Scenic Roads bylaw was adopted through Town Meeting in 2017. This confers protection to the trees and historic stonewalls lining the streets that receive the designation, which is assigned via a straightforward petition process. The following places have been identified by residents as treasured scenic resources:

**LITTLE HARBOR**

\textsuperscript{19} Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2018-2024
\textsuperscript{20} Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2010-2017.
\textsuperscript{21} Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2018-2024
The Atlantic shore contrasts with the intimacy of Little Harbor, with its granite islands, and the twists and turns of the Gulf River, fringed by salt marshes.

**THE TOWN COMMON**

"The Town Common, set off by dignified historic buildings, communicates a classic image of New England calm and simplicity. The Cohasset Town Common is often considered to be among the finest surviving examples of an original New England town common."  

**TURKEY HILL**

Turkey Hill, which is nearly entirely surrounded by open space, lies on the Cohasset-Hingham town boundary and offers broad views of Boston Harbor and the Atlantic Ocean. Cohasset’s highest point occurs within the 20 acres of the Turkey Hill parcel that lie within the town. Turkey Hill was acquired by The Trustees of Reservations with cooperation between the Towns of Cohasset and Hingham, the Cohasset Conservation Trust, and the Hingham Land Conservation Trust.

Being on the coast, Cohasset has unique marine and estuarine systems including salt marshes, tidal flats, and barrier beaches. Cohasset has approximately 160 acres of salt marsh, 287 acres of tidal flats, and numerous segments of barrier beach for a total of 20 acres. These dynamic systems are valuable for recreation, shellfish, storm damage prevention, pollution prevention, flood control and wildlife.

**REVERSE RAPIDS**

Perhaps Cohasset’s most unusual features are the reversing rapids under the Border Street Bridge and Cunningham Bridge on Atlantic Avenue. These rapids change direction with the tide between the harbor and the Gulf River estuary at Border Street and Atlantic Ocean and Little Harbor at Atlantic Avenue.

**Open Space and Recreation Land**

**Open Space**

Cohasset has approximately 2,935 acres of public and private open space and recreational lands in the community. This represents approximately 46% of Cohasset’s total land area (excluding coastal waters such as Cohasset Harbor). Roughly 2/3 of these sites (1,965 acres) are permanently protected from future development and are under the care and control of the Town’s Conservation Commission, the Department of Conservation and Recreation or private land trusts. Having been deeded to the Conservation Commission, the Town owned and managed sites are mainly protected via Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution. These include, but are not limited to: Wheelwright Park, Brass Kettle Brook, and part of Whitney/Thayer Woods. The largest contiguous area of open space occurs in the southwestern to south-central portion of Town, which includes Wompatuck State Park. According to the inventory in the OSRP, the three largest open space parcels in Cohasset are Wompatuck State Park (1,051 acres), Whitney/Thayer Woods owned by The Trustees of Reservations (527 acres, and town-owned Wheelwright Park (80 acres).

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23 Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2018-2024
24 January 1985 Inventory by Lloyd Center for Environmental Studies & the Mass. Coastal Zone Management Program – Cohasset consists of 6,438.4 acres.
25 Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2018-2024
Other protected open spaces, particularly those that are owned by private groups or nonprofit organizations, are exempt from future development due to the presence of conservation restrictions. A conservation restriction is an agreement that is bound legally between a landowner and a grantee where the landowner agrees to limit the amount and/or use of a specific property in order to protect its unique or specific conservation values. A specified amount of time for the conservation restriction can be noted, or the conservation restriction can be in perpetuity. There are 12 Conservation Restrictions in Cohasset, which have been signed by the state and recorded at the Registry of Deeds covering over 200 acres. Any site financed with Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds is required to have a conservation restriction.

The Town Common was Cohasset’s first public open space area, designated as open land when the first settlers from Hingham distributed lots in 1670. Privately owned open space remained abundant throughout the 19th century, but in the early decades of the 20th century, several important public and semi-public parks and reserves were created. The Trustees of Reservations acquired Whitney and Thayer Woods in 1933 and 1943 respectively and the Bancroft Bird Sanctuary in 1935. Wheelwright Park was bequest to the Town in 1916, and the Sandy Beach Association acquired the beach for use by residents in 1917.

Holly Hill Farm is approximately 140 acres in area and contains an organic farm, woods, fields, brooks, ponds and salt marshes, as well as an extensive trail system, which was recently improved by physically improving the paths and trails, adding informational signage, adding trail markers, and making available a published trail map and trail guide. Although privately owned, the property is available to the community for recreational purposes.

The Cohasset Conservation Trust (CCT), a nonprofit land conservation trust, has protected over 212 acres in Cohasset, Scituate, and Hull. The Trust has acquired 23 properties (approximately 164 acres) and three (3) conservation restrictions (48 acres). The conservation restrictions held by CCT are on Supper Island, Barnes Wildlife Sanctuary, and a portion of Ingram Park. The properties are Adams Property, Andrus Island, Bassing Beach, Blake Holmes Property, Breadnecheese Conservation Area, Campbell Meadow, Churchill Conservation Area, Great Brewster and Dean’s Meadow, Dormitzer Salt Marsh, Francis Shore, Giuggio Overlook, Golden Reservation, Ingram Park, James Island, Pegram Preserve, Pelletier Conservation Area, Remick Salt Marsh, Scott’s Shore, Sumner Smith Overlook, Wheelwright Highlands, Williams Salt Marsh, and Winsor Shores. These sites provide wildlife habitat and passive recreation.

Bassing Beach, owned by CCT, is a ¾ mile long barrier beach that includes salt marsh and upland forest. Although located in Scituate, Bassing Beach defines the northwest side of Cohasset Harbor. The property is sited from the westernmost point to a north-south line about 1,000 feet east of the breakwater and bounded on the south by Bailey’s Creek and a tidal creek called Four Score Ditch. Bassing Beach including surrounding tidal flats provides habitat for a diversity of shellfish such as oysters and clams, birds such as osprey and plovers, and wildlife such as deer and rabbits. Bassing Beach provides nesting and resting sites for many species of shore and migratory birds. In an effort
to promote native wildlife by restoring native vegetation, CCT has held work parties for two years to remove invasive pepperweed and planted dozens of edible natives such as beach plums and fireweed. Bassing Beach is a significant recreation resource popular with beach goers and only accessible by water. There are two cottages on Bassing Beach owned by the CCT.

Straits Pond (located on the Cohasset/Hull town boundary) forms part of the Weir River Estuary Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The Weir River ACEC was designated as such not only for its ecosystem, but also due to development pressure facing the area.26

The approximately 950 acres of the Weir River ACEC (which include areas in Cohasset, Hingham, and Hull) support over 100 migratory and resident bird species, numerous small mammals, and shellfish, which were historically harvested and which continue to provide a food source for avian populations. A diverse finfish population, including alewives, smelt, flounder, bluefish, and striped bass, utilize the marshes and flats within this ACEC as nursery and feeding areas. The Weir River estuary floodplain also protects adjacent areas from flood damage.27 28 29

“Straits Pond is the innermost element of the estuary and the salinity of the water is increasingly precarious. The pond suffers contamination from runoff and leaching septic systems, resulting in sedimentation and eutrophication. It is also subject to increasing residential development pressures in both Hull and Cohasset. A municipal sewer system was installed in North Cohasset and will improve the environmental health of Straits Pond, but may further contribute to increasing development pressure.”30 Straits Pond is currently closed to fishing due to coliform bacteria. The Straits Pond Watershed Association mission is “to provide community input to governmental committees and agencies, and to facilitate efforts to maintain and improve the environmental quality and the beauty of Straits Pond.”31

Straits Pond tide gates were rebuilt in the last five years. The intention was to increase tidal flushing and control of water flow to from Straits Pond. The structure resides on the West Corner Bridge that is 25% owned by Cohasset, 25% owned by Hingham, and 50% owned by Hull. Due to the Hull majority and the proximity of Hull DPW just across the street, Hull DPW controls 100% of the operation and maintenance of the gates and structure.

The restoration project through Coastal Zone Management’s Wetland Restoration Program (in cooperation with others) for Straits Pond began in 2009 and has used a tidal gate and flushing protocol since 2010 which successfully eliminated the midge larvae in the sediment by raising the salinity levels. Thus the seasonal midge infestations have been eliminated. The SPWA is working with the Hull Conservation Agent to understand the algae phenomenon and has learned that widgeon grass is now well established in the shallow pond. The grasses grow up to the pond surface and then continue to grow along the surface. The algae attaches to these grasses to create the noisome mats that decay and smell.32

32 Dick Avery, email correspondence with Katie Holden, 15, May 2018.
Recreation

Cohasset is fortunate to have a variety of high-quality, Town-owned recreation facilities. The Town has a rich history of recreational opportunities for residents due to its location on the Atlantic Ocean and proximity to other inland recreational amenities. Boating, kayaking, canoeing, fishing, rowing, and sailing are some of the major water-based recreational activities within the Town. Baseball, softball, lacrosse, tennis, golf, horseback riding, walking and organized running have been some of the major inland recreational activities. Additionally, Cohasset offers an abundance of outdoor recreational opportunities using its natural resources such as bird-watching, hiking, geocaching, scouting, and questing.

To meet the needs of its population, Cohasset’s recreation and open space resources must serve both an older adult population of comfortable means and a growing number of families with children. The number of children and elders in Cohasset grew from 2000 to 2010. Households with children under the age of 18 and households with individuals over the age of 65 increased by one percent each.

In 2015, the Town completed its Senior Center and it is used extensively for Elder Affairs programming, social activities, and town meetings. A private indoor swim center has been opened in Scituate on the border with Cohasset as part of the Scituate Racquet and Fitness Club. The Club offers a swimming pool with lap lanes, tennis, squash, and outdoor platform tennis. The Town also has many successful private for-profit fitness and wellbeing facilities.

In 2010, the Cohasset Sports Complex opened and offers multi-purpose space that caters to sporting events, corporate events, non-profit events, birthday parties, functions, and more. This is a private
facility that charges rental fees. The complex features 22,500 square feet of indoor playing surfaces that can accommodate two (2) full soccer fields, as well as lighted outdoor fields.

Youth Sports in Cohasset has remained strong with children participating in the youth basketball, soccer, field hockey, lacrosse, baseball, softball, football, and cheerleading programs. In 2009, the Recreation Department along with the public health nurse started a Health and Recreation Fair that brings all of these organizations under one roof along with countless free medical health screenings. The Massachusetts Recreation and Park Association in 2009 honored the Cohasset Recreation Department with a Community Outreach Award for a “program over and above regular programming that demonstrates a benefit to the community.” This fair has become more and more popular each year with close to 1,000 attendees. In 2015, the Recreation Department moved from the Town Hall to the former Our World Museum Space at the Paul Pratt Library and has expanded numerous programs with the additional space. The Department still manages the Rec Center that was formerly the DPW Office, for additional programs. Currently, demand still exists for more walking trails, bicycle paths and sidewalks, as well as playing fields. There has also been requests for a dog park, a skate park, and outdoor fitness amenities.

Management and Resource Priorities

**TOWN OF COHASSET DEPARTMENTS AND BOARDS**

The Town of Cohasset has several active departments and boards that are working towards improving open space and recreation opportunities in the community. However, due to a lack of resources and unclear lines of responsibility there has historically and presently been a lack of coordination and communication among the actors involved. In order to set the stage for good communication moving forward, a specific entity in the Town of Cohasset should be assigned to oversee the implementation of open space and recreation goals. The best-suited committees would be the Open Space & Recreation Committee (OSRC), and the Recreation Commission which would work together on a regular basis.

**OPEN SPACE & RECREATION COMMITTEE**

The mission of the Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Committee is to preserve, maintain and enhance the quality of life for residents by developing and updating the Town's open space plan. The committee is made up of seven (7) members appointed by the Board of Selectmen.

**RECREATION COMMISSION**

The Cohasset Recreation Commission consists of seven (7) members who are elected and serve for a five-year term. The Commission promotes, encourages, and coordinates recreational activities for all citizens of the Town. The Commission is responsible for making recommendations to the Board of Selectmen regarding the maintenance and improvement of recreational areas owned by the Town.

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS (DPW)**

Cohasset’s Department of Public Works (DPW) maintains and preserves the Town’s property, parks, and open space, along with the public infrastructure which includes streets, sidewalks, signs, and catch basins. The DPW works together with various departments of the Town Government to accomplish these maintenance goals.

**COHASSET CONSERVATION TRUST (CCT)**

The Cohasset Conservation Trust (CCT), a nonprofit land conservation trust, was established in 1967.
CCT’s first property protected was Bassing Beach in 1968. Bassing Beach is the Trust’s best-known property, and has been a popular place for swimming, picnicking, fishing, and beach walking for generations. Since that time, the Trust has acquired 23 properties (approximately 164 acres) and three (3) conservation restrictions (48 acres) on three (3) additional properties for a total of 212 acres in permanent conservation. Properties include beaches, freshwater and saltwater wetlands, upland areas, and watershed land.

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

The Cohasset Conservation Commission is responsible for administration of the Cohasset Wetlands Regulations and Bylaws, Stormwater Regulations and Bylaws, and the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act. Through the administration and enforcement of these regulations and bylaws, the Mission of the Conservation Commission is to promote proactive administration of environmental laws and policies, open space protection, wetland and water management and protection, promote environmental education, and to preservation of Cohasset’s natural resources. The Commission works together with various departments in Town to ensure the regulations and bylaws are upheld. The Commission looks to improve the environmental integrity of the community while maintaining and improving the Town’s current conservation areas.

**OPEN SPACE RESOURCE NEEDS**

Cohasset needs to develop a list of conservation parcels of interest and develop a list of criteria or a ranking system to assist in identifying priority parcels. These criteria or factors should be vetted by the Open Space Committee and the community. The criteria will serve as a guide for reviewing a property’s suitability for protection. Boards, organizations, and individuals should retain discretion over the acquisition process and may choose to deviate from these guidelines on careful review of a specific proposal.

Cohasset could develop a general guide, which includes the following criteria or factors to consider:

- Enhances existing or proposed public and private holdings
- Links significant public or private open space/natural areas
- Preserves or buffers natural areas containing:
  - species of unusual merit or special concern
  - representative local plant and animal communities
  - wildlife habitat, wetlands, streams, or water supply migration corridors
  - screening to adjacent development
- Contains historical, geological, or archeological features
- Protects scenic vistas or view corridors
- Permits existing agricultural practices to continue on land that would otherwise succumb to development pressures
- Provides access to, or is a contiguous area for recreation
- Offers educational opportunities to the public
- Provides access or opportunities to people with disabilities
- Does not adversely affect the organization’s financial and land management capabilities

For Town-owned parcels without a conservation or other deed restrictions, including those under
the custody of the Conservation Commission, the Town could change the designation and use of the property. Therefore, working to change the temporary level of protection on Town-owned open space to permanently protect it represents an opportunity to ensure that these open space areas remain in the future. However, the Town is also reserving its options on land for future needs, such as police and fire stations or schools.

Conservation of remaining unprotected land should focus on areas that are adjacent to or connect larger areas of contiguous open space in order to maximize the benefit to wildlife. Connections to neighborhoods and the ability to walk to open space areas would also be beneficial for residents. Existing connections and paths should be researched and established so that they are not lost in the future. In addition to acquiring additional lands, Cohasset should focus on preventing fragmentation of significant habitats by proposed development.

The land that is permanently protected will continue to provide a wide range of functions, including preservation of environmentally and culturally sensitive resources, buffering developed areas, and providing recreational opportunities, indefinitely. However, other lands are at risk and these functions may be lost. Overuse at the Town's most popular areas may occur and may lead to their degradation without implementation of management strategies and regular maintenance.

Public Input

To facilitate development of the OSRP, a public forum was conducted along with a community-wide survey to solicit public opinion regarding the status of open space and recreation resources for the Town. The public forum was held in July of 2017. The residents of Cohasset expressed concern about encroachment of new development on the scenic vistas and character of the Town and its quality of life during the public outreach for this plan and identified the same issues in previous plans.

The following is a list of goals that emerged from the forum to help guide strategic action for Open Space and Recreation over the next seven years. These goals are also summarized in Section 6 of the OSRP.

1. Make protection of open space and the character of the Town a priority in all town-wide land use decisions, in keeping with citizens' wishes, to preserve access and scenic beauty.

2. Protect and maintain the natural environment:
   Residents of the Town over the last two OSRPs and during this opinion survey have consistently voiced their support for all aspects of environmental protection.

3. Improve Recreational opportunity and access:
   The survey results and interactive sessions with the public continue to emphasize continuing to work to provide access, develop walking trails and biking paths and communicate how all of the recreational resources can best be enjoyed and maintained.

4. Organizational changes and collaboration:
   Due to a lack of resources and unclear lines of responsibility, it has proven to be very difficult to monitor past plan goals and implement specific objectives. Residents want town officials to collaborate with town departments to share planning resources, coordinate information used and to ensure that the desired citizens' goals are monitored and attained.

In addition to the public outreach meetings conducted by the committee specific to the OSRP update, a survey of public opinion was conducted between May 24 and July 25, 2017. Approximately 189 residents completed the survey and offered their thoughts about open space and recreation in Cohasset.

Almost everybody (97.2%) who completed the survey support the idea of the Town purchasing
additional recreation lands. Additionally, a large number of respondents (96.6%) also support the idea of the Town purchasing additional conservation lands. Approximately 84.4% of respondents would support strengthening current zoning laws in order to better protect open space in Cohasset. The greatest concern expressed by survey participants was the perceived overdevelopment and the loss of the small-town feel. According to the survey results, the harbor (100%), water-based recreational activities (98.9%) and scenic views (98.4%) were considered of the highest importance to respondents.

In terms of programming and recreational activities, only 40.1% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with current activities available for teenagers. Respondents also expressed the need for more bike paths, with 76.9% indicating that current paths are not adequate. Participants also wanted to see more boat moorings (57.9%) and conservation lands (50.3%)

The majority of respondents felt that the following resources were adequate, although a minority felt that the town needed more: Picnic areas (38.1%), Canoe/kayak launches (36.0%), Tennis courts (29.1%), Athletic fields (26.7%), Places for birdwatching (24.0%), Neighborhood playgrounds (23.1%), and Beach recreation (20.1%)

Open Space & Recreation Goals and Recommendations

The following is a list of strategies from the Action Plan (Section 9) of the 2018 OSRP, along with some new recommendations added as part of the master planning process. This list highlights some of the key strategies from that plan. Please refer to the OSRP for the full range of recommended actions.

Goal 1: Make protection of open space and the character of the town a priority in all town-wide land use decisions, in keeping with citizens’ wishes, to preserve access and scenic beauty

Strategy 1.1: Develop and maintain a list and priorities of properties suitable for potential acquisition on conservation by the Town and make recommendations

Goal 2: Protect and maintain the natural environment

Strategy 2.1: Create a town database of significant natural resources, wildlife habitats and corridors, rare species habitat, vernal pools, endangered plant habitat

Strategy 2.2: Revive or expand implementation of Water Dept.’s Rain Garden Program

Strategy 2.3: Support the restoration of shellfish beds, including developing an Inter-Municipal Agreement with the Town of Scituate to reduce phosphate pollution into the Gulf River

Strategy 2.4: Consider bylaw and regulatory changes to prohibit phosphate and nitrate-generating uses along Gulf River and other tributaries to the Harbor, Straits Pond, and along other sensitive bodies of water or wetlands
areas and their tributaries

**Strategy 2.5: Consider reviving plan for ocean outfall for sewer system to reduce fresh water incursion into the Harbor**

**Strategy 2.6: Organize selective non-toxic eradication programs of invasive species where appropriate**

**Strategy 2.7: Work to protect Town water supplies**

This can be done through a combination of efforts including resource identification; review the geographic extent and the provisions of the Water Resource Protection District to determine whether it adequately protects sensitive water supply areas; and determine where the Town could strategically purchase additional open space as a buffer between land uses incompatible with water supply protection.

**Goal 3: Improve recreational opportunity and access**

**Strategy 3.1: Study the feasibility of “shared road” bikeways, walkways and sidewalks with proper signage for vehicular traffic**

**Strategy 3.2: Study creation of additional walking trails on public and publicly-accessible private conservation properties**

**Strategy 3.3: Continue to monitor the need for development of new ball fields and play areas throughout town, and act upon opportunities as they present themselves**

**Strategy 3.4: Improve access to our waterways, including our harbors, ponds, ocean front, launching ramps and mooring areas**

**Strategy 3.5: Increase town recreational operated programs for all ages.**

**Strategy 3.6: Work cooperatively with the Department of Conservation and Recreation, The Trustees of Reservations, Cohasset Conservation Trust and any other non-town owner of publicly-accessible open space.**
Transportation & Circulation
Introduction

Cohasset’s transportation network is multifaceted, and includes roadways, commuter rail service, off-road paths and trails, sidewalks, and parking. In addition, ferry service to Boston, located in Hingham, is a popular commuting option for many Cohasset residents.

As part of the master planning process, the Town has hosted several forums, primarily designed to solicit public feedback on a variety of topics. A kick-off forum held on February 28, 2018 and a second forum was on May 9, 2018 provided opportunities specifically on transportation-related issues. Major themes included: the need for multimodal connectivity (pedestrian and bicycle) to the train station, as well as sidewalks in other areas throughout Town; increased education about private ways; and improving safety throughout the Town for all modes of transportation.

Key Findings

- Route 3A is the Town’s most important roadway. State and municipal efforts to reconstruct the roadway will result in it being safer and more comfortable for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists.
- Although driving is the most common means of commuting to work, a higher percentage of Cohasset residents use public transportation (commuter rail and ferry) than in the South Shore Coalition subregion and the MAPC metropolitan Boston region.
- The top transportation needs, as cited by participants in the Master Plan public input process, relate to pedestrian and cycling improvements, including new sidewalks, crosswalks, and other facilities that improve pedestrian safety.
- The high number of private roadways throughout the Town has created unique challenges. Cohasset has developed a policy related to private roadways and should continue to improve the mechanisms for maintenance and operations.

Existing Conditions

Roads

Cohasset has 53 miles of roadways throughout town, a fifth of which are privately owned. (See section below for a detailed discussion of issues related to privately owned roadways). Vehicle access to, from and within Cohasset is critical to the community’s economic future and its continued appeal as a highly desirable residential community.

Cohasset’s geographic location, abutting the ocean to the east and Wampatuck State Park to the west, in many ways isolates the community from the larger regional highway network. Cohasset village is approximately eight miles from Route 3 and then a further six miles to I-93. As a result, Route 3A, a state-maintained roadway, is an important arterial road, traversing Cohasset from the Hingham line south to Scituate. This heavily traveled corridor contains most of the commercial activities in Town including two shopping centers with supermarkets, gas stations, car sales, and other retail and business facilities.

Roadway maintenance is a challenge for any community. Harsh New England winters, combined with an increasing scope for roadway improvements, such as additional sidewalks and bicycle facilities, can put a strain on a small town’s ability to adequately maintain its roadways. Assuming maintenance is performed at a 15-year interval for public ways, Cohasset should be resurfacing (at a minimum) 2.5 miles per year. Over the past five years the Town has allocated approximately $200,000 in operating
budget to repair roads, supplementing the approximately $215,000 (2019 amount) of additional funds available from its annual State Aid Appropriate (Chapter 90). The Town has inventoried all of its roads and has developed a plan to prioritize roadway maintenance; however, even the approximately $415,000 in funding has not been adequate to properly maintain the Town’s roadways.

ROADWAY FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

Figure 35 depicts Cohasset’s roadways by functional classification of roadways. Functional classification defines the character of services that a particular roadway is intended to provide, e.g., how many vehicles it is designed to carry and what type of connections the road is intended to make. Arterials provide the highest level of mobility and the greatest vehicular speeds for the longest uninterrupted distances. These are broken down into sub-categories (principal and minor), based upon their access level, speed, etc. In essence, arterials are the community’s most important roadways. On the other end of the spectrum are local roadways. Local roadways provide access to residential areas and connect to higher order roadways.\(^1\) Between arterials and local roadways are collectors. Collectors are roadways that “collect” traffic from the local roadway network and distribute them to the arterial system. Examples of a principal arterial and collector are shown in the photos below.

Route 3A (Chief Justice Cushing Highway) is the major roadway (classified as a principal arterial) that traverses Cohasset northwest to southeast. North Main Street and South Main Street are two other important roadways (minor arterials), which are partially parallel to Route 3A and pass through the village. There are several east-west roads (minor arterials) Beechwood, Forest/King, Pond and Sohier which bring traffic from Route 3A to various parts of Town. Connecting and bisecting these roadways are lower volume, local roadways dead-end streets and cul-de-sacs.

PRIVATELY-OWNED ROADWAYS

Over 20% or approximately 12 miles of Cohasset’s roadways are privately owned. Because private ways are owned by residents and not the Town, the Town has only been able offer snow plowing (for private ways with three or more houses) due to safety considerations. Residents living along a private roadway are responsible for funding the repaving or reconstruction of these roads. Residents often do not realize that they are living on a private road, as there may be no visual difference between a private and public local road.

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\(^1\) Note that that “local roadways” in this functional classification context does not refer to ownership.
Figure 43: Cohasset Functional Roadway Network
In February 2018, the Board of Selectmen adopted a policy to clarify procedures for repairing private roads. The new policy offers a definition of “private way” and a classification system to help the Town assess how much assistance (if any) it can offer to residents. It also suggests a “pathway to public way” for qualifying roads, which must meet minimum standards for width, grade, and drainage. As it is a policy and not a by-law, the Town has more flexibility in how it is implemented and making adjustments, as necessary. For example, the policy states that 80% of abutters must be in favor of a project; however, that number could potentially be altered as the system matures. The new policy allows the Town to decide how much to contribute to each proposed project. Within six months of completion of the repairs, the Project Manager shall calculate the actual cost of the repair and send a list of the final apportioned shares for each abutter and/or beneficiary to the Cohasset Board of Assessors. Shares will be apportioned equally among all beneficiaries/abutters. Figure 36 depicts the roadway jurisdiction in Cohasset.

![Figure 44: Cohasset Roadway Jurisdiction](image)

While Route 3A should be the highest focus for addressing traffic safety concerns, other roadways in Town also require attention, primarily King Street, which had the second highest number of crashes with 17. The remaining 61 crashes were spread among a number of streets, including Atlantic Avenue (4), Beechwood Street (7), Jerusalem Road (6), North Main Street (5), Sohier Street (4), and South Main Street (6).

MassDOT also maintains a database of top crash location clusters that are within the top 5% in the region, based on factors such as crash incidence and severity (Highway Safety Improvement Program...
or HSIP). These HSIP locations are broken down by mode: vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle. While Cohasset does not have any HSIP locations for vehicles or pedestrians, Route 3A at Beechwood Street is an HSIP cluster for bicycles. This high crash location had 46 crashes between bicycles and vehicles between 2006 and 2015, six of which resulted in injury. Thus, this location should be part of the Town’s focus when making improvements for cyclists.

**Transit**

Public transportation plays a vital role in providing Cohasset residents with access to Boston. The commuter rail and ferry (located in Hingham) allow hundreds of Cohasset commuters to avoid roadways, such as Route 3A (a key north-south corridor in the south shore), Route 3, and I-93, which are gridlocked during rush hour. In addition, the MBTA’s 714 bus connects Hingham and Hull, passing through north Cohasset.

**COMMUTER RAIL**

The MBTA Greenbush line provides access within Cohasset with 12 inbound and 12 outbound trains each weekday, and 8 in each direction on weekends. The line provides access to downtown Boston (South Station) in approximately 45 minutes with stops along the way at UMass Boston, Quincy Center, and in Weymouth and Hingham. The popular rail service has more than 300 daily boardings at Cohasset station.\(^2\) Cohasset Station has 410 parking spaces, suggesting ample parking availability for commuters.

**FERRY**

Even more popular with Cohasset residents is the MBTA ferry from Hingham Shipyard, which had 368 daily boardings by its residents.\(^3\) The trip takes between 35 minutes and an hour (depending on stops). Although generally longer and more expensive than the commuter rail, many ferry users find the experience far preferable to driving or taking the train, which can become extremely crowded. In addition, the ferry has stops at both Long Wharf and Rowes Wharf, which may be closer to commuter’s place of employment than South Station.

\(^2\) ACS 2012-2016  
\(^3\) ACS 2012-2016
Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

For decades roadways were considered primarily the domain of vehicles, especially in suburban communities. Recently, however, many communities have shifted priorities to considering and incorporating the needs not only of motorists, but also those of pedestrians and even more recently bicyclists. Providing adequate facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists is critical to ensuring the safety of these users. It is also contributes to a community’s economic vitality as more and more people expect the places they live, work, and recreate to be “walkable.”

SIDEWALKS

As with many New England towns, as roads adapted to accommodating motor vehicles, they often came at the expense of other forms of mobility. Consequently, a number of roadways in Town lack sidewalks, most conspicuously for routes connecting schools and other minor roadways. Residents also noted the need for connections to the train station. Where sidewalks do exist, they vary greatly by location. In general the village area has well-maintained sidewalks at least five feet wide with granite curbing on both sides of the street. Other locations often have narrower sidewalks only on one side of the street. See Figure 37 for a map of sidewalk locations throughout Town.

BICYCLE FACILITIES

Bicycle use is permitted on all streets within Cohasset, and many roadway corridors are popular for on-road cycling. However, there are currently no on-road bicycle lanes or facilities within the Town. Providing safe on-street facilities for cyclists is extremely important, above all for improving safety. As noted above, Route 3A at Beechwood Street is a high frequency crash location for bicycles, meaning it is in the top five percent of crash locations for vehicles and bicyclists in the MAPC region. Encouraging biking can also reduce vehicular congestion in Cohasset’s streets, by providing a safe alternative to accessing the Town’s schools, Cohasset Village, harbor area, beaches, parks, and other points of interest.

MULTI-USE PATHS

The Whitney Spur Rail Trail runs from East Street by the Cohasset commuter rail station south 1.6 miles into Wompatuck State Park. Near and within the state park are numerous walking trails. Wheelwright Park also contains a number of walking paths. See the Open Space and Recreation chapter for additional information.
Figure 46: Town of Cohasset sidewalk availability
THE LANDLINE NETWORK: MAPC’S REGIONAL GREENWAY NETWORK

The LandLine Network was developed by MAPC to establish a connected regional greenway and foot trail system. These greenway corridors are for active transportation use (walking, cycling, running, dog walking, baby strollers, skating, etc.) and are separated from vehicular traffic to the greatest extent possible.

Figure 47: Existing and potential LandLine network in Cohasset and adjacent communities
extent possible. Corridors identified as part of the LandLine network are typically shared use paths, or protected bike and sidewalk lanes. In Cohasset, as in other communities along the shore, the LandLine route follows the most direct, continuous route along the shore as possible along relatively comfortable roadways for pedestrians and bicyclists. See Figure 38 for a map depicting the existing and potential LandLine network in Cohasset.

PRIORITIZING BIKE-PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS

At the public forum and based on social media polling, the Town provided input for where pedestrian and bicycle improvements are needed. Figure 48 notes the highest prioritizes based upon this input with North Main Street from the commuter rail station to Forest Avenue as the highest priority.

The Town has also sought community input via a “wikimaps” tool, whereby residents can highlight specific areas of need related to pedestrian, bicyclist, accessibility, transit, and vehicular issues. This data will help inform the Town's Complete Streets Prioritization Plan (see Recommendations for additional details). Figure 6 provides a snapshot of where residents have placed notes for needed improvements. As can be seen, many comments again reflect the need for pedestrian improvements along King Street, north Main Street near the commuter rail station, and in the downtown area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohasset Sidewalk Priorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 T Station to Forest Ave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 West Corner to Rocky Beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Beechwood St from Route 3A to Beechwood Ballpark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Sohier Street/ Route 3A to Pond Street / Route 3A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 T Station to Fair Oaks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 48 (Source: Town survey administed via Facebook)

Figure 49: Cohasset Complete Streets Prioritization Plan Wikimap
Commuting Characteristics

Understanding where and how residents get to work can help the Town tailor and prioritize the types of its transportation recommendations.

VEHICLE OWNERSHIP

Cohasset residents average 2.03 vehicles per household, with the average registered driver driving 28 miles per day. Ownership is higher than the South Shore Coalition Subregion average (1.82), which is unsurprising given the strong correlation between household income and vehicle ownership. While this data suggests that accommodating vehicles will continue to be a critical component to maintaining an efficient transportation system, it also may suggest that there is an opportunity to shift some commuters to other forms of transportation.

JOURNEY TO WORK DATA

The vast majority of Cohasset residents (70%) drive to work; unsurprising given its relative geographic isolation from many employment centers. That being said, a smaller percentage of Cohasset residents drive to work than the subregion (77%). Furthermore, a far greater percentage of Cohasset residents take public transportation than the subregion as a whole (19% to 9%, respectively). As noted above, more than half of residents using public transportation for their daily commute take the ferry from Hingham (55% of transit users). A small percentage of residents work from home (7%), although this is slightly higher than the subregion and MAPC region (5% each). As telecommuting becomes more viable for additional employees, this share of workers could potentially increase, reducing the amount of vehicular commuters.

Parking

Parking is often cited as a problem in many communities, especially in downtowns and other areas of interest. In some cases the amount of parking is insufficient to meet the area’s needs. In other cases, “parking management” strategies, such as limiting the amount of time a vehicle can park at high-demand locations, can be a cost-effective way to manage parking. In 2014, the Town completed a parking study was conducted for Cohasset Village. The study area includes the following public on- and off-street parking areas:

- Village parking lot (along railroad tracks)
- Overflow parking lot (off Pleasant Street)
- Town Hall lot (behind Town Hall)

Figure 50: Journey to work mode choice (source: ACS data)

4 Summary statistics from Massachusetts Vehicle Census (2014). Dataset created from vehicle registration and inspection records.
5 Subregion refers to the communities of Braintree, Cohasset, Duxbury, Hanover, Hingham, Holbrook, Hull, Marshfield, Norwell, Pembroke, Rockland, Scituate and Weymouth.
• North Main Street (between Highland Avenue and Depot Court)
• Highland Avenue (between North Main Street and Jason Road)
• Long Road (between North Main Street and Highland Ave)
• Jason Road (between North Main Street and Jason Road)
• South Main Street (between Depot Court and Brook Street)
• Ripley Road (between Pratt Court and Depot Court)
• Depot Court (between Ripley Road and North/ South Main Street)
• Elm Street (between South Main Street and Brook Street)
• Brook Street (between Elm Street and South Main Street)

In addition to these public parking areas, the Post Office Parking lot was observed during data collection to determine general occupancy levels. See Figure 42 for the study area used in the analysis.

The purpose of this parking study was to determine how the parking supply in Cohasset Village is currently being utilized, in order to develop data-driven strategies to address the following goals:

• Improve parking availability for customers of Village businesses
• Improve inconsistent and at times confusing signage and regulations
• Address safety and traffic flow concerns associated with preschool drop-off and pickup
• Address commercial loading needs

In general, all public parking should be as easy as possible for local business patrons to locate, access, and utilize. To that end, there are several parking management best practices that apply to Cohasset Village:

• Parking regulations should be clear and consistent
• Parking signage and regulations should be visible
• Parking should encourage people to park once and visit multiple destinations in one trip
• Short-term parking should be prioritized in front of businesses, with long-term parking at the periphery of the business district
• Parking policies should aim for 85% parking occupancy for on-street parking\(^6\), meaning parking is generally close to being fully utilized but there are always a few spaces available. Occupancy above 85% may be appropriate for off-street parking, where remaining open spaces are more concentrated.

Results from the study suggested that there is no overall parking shortage in the Village; however, certain areas experience very high demand, and many respondents in the survey noted that it can be difficult to find parking. See Recommendations section for how the Town can best meet its parking management needs.

Another location that residents identified related to parking issues is the harbor area. As described in the draft Cohasset Municipal Harbor Plan, the “Town offers public parking in several places throughout the Harbor, but general agreement is that not enough parking is available for current uses. Future private development will need to provide off-street parking for planned uses. For future public parking, Government Island, particularly the unpaved overflow parking behind the Lighthouse Keepers’ Cottage, could be reconfigured to provide additional parking. On-street parking is available along Border Street. The Town does not charge for on-street parking.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Parking Spaces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government Island: Fisherman’s Wharf</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harbor Master</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailing Club</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back Lot (behind Lighthouse Keepers’ Cottage)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Landing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Pier/ Margin Street</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>79</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 52: Parking in Cohasset Harbor (Source: Draft Cohasset Municipal Harbor Plan, April 2019)

**Planning Projects: Route 3A**

Route 3A, a principal arterial, is the most important roadway in the Town. Unlike the Town’s other roadways, it is owned and controlled by MassDOT; thus, the process for reconstructing is different from that of other roads. In 2014, staff to the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) conducted a study of Route 3A in Cohasset to address safety, mobility, and access on designated Subregional Priority Roadways.

The corridor was divided into three sections:

• North Section: MBTA Cohasset Station to Cohasset Plaza Shopping Center (business, office, and

\(^6\) Target parking occupancy level identified in The High Cost of Free Parking, by Professor Donald Shoup. An 85% parking occupancy is generally considered the sign of a “healthy” parking district - one with strong demand but 1 or 2 parking spaces available on every block.
The corridor has four major, signalized intersections, as well as three unsignalized intersections. The business district also has many driveways directly connected to the corridor, which are potential traffic conflict points.

In the scope meeting on March 14, 2013, representatives from the Towns, MassDOT, and MAPC shared their views of the study corridor. Below is a summary of issues and concerns:

- High travel speeds on Route 3A perceived by the area’s residents and businesses
- Perceived unsafe travel conditions along the corridor
- Perceived unsafe conditions at intersections in the corridor, especially at Beechwood Street in Cohasset and at Henry Turner Bailey Road in Scituate
- Lack of pedestrian accommodations in the corridor, including access to the MBTA Cohasset Station
- Lack of safe bicycle accommodations in the corridor
- Frequent curb cuts in business districts with high crash occurrences, especially those south of
Beechwood Street

- Inconvenient and unsafe access from Route 3A to adjacent developments in the business districts
- Delays at stop-controlled locations, especially at Sohier Street and at King Street

Based upon a variety of data and input from the Town, the project identified a number of interventions along the corridor. The South Section is currently being evaluated for funding through the FY 2019-23 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Proposed improvements include installation of sidewalk on east side, five-foot wide shoulders (which can accommodate bicycle use), and reconstructing the section into a three-lane roadway with the center lane acting as a traffic median, left-turn lane, a center turning lane depending on adjacent business settings. It also seeks to reconstruct the intersection at Beechwood Street and install a traffic signal at Henry Turn Bailey Road.

Similarly, the north and middle sections, are recommended to have sidewalks, wide shoulders, and center-turning lanes where feasible, as well as various intersection improvements. The process for completing these sections would be a multi-year effort. The Town should work with the Metropolitan Planning Organization, which allocates TIP funding, to include the sections of Route 3A into its Universe of Unprogrammed Projects list. The Town has indicated that the north section is the higher priority. In order to be evaluated by MPO staff, the project must have a functional design report or be at a 25% stage; therefore, the Town should work to identify funding to complete this level of design. MPO staff then can include the projects as part of its evaluation, which prepares a recommendation on a series of programming scenarios.

Public Input

The May 2018 forum asked participants to rank their top transportation needs in Cohasset. The top choice was to enroll in MassDOT’s Complete Streets funding program, which provides funding to implement pedestrian and bicycle improvements. Relatedly, the second highest number of votes was for additional sidewalks. In particular, participants commented that

Figure 54: Input captured from the public forum
residents should be able to safely walk to destinations such as the commuter rail station and Wompatuck State Park.

Educating the public and refining policies to deal with private ways was the third top choice, followed constructing shared-use paths, constructing bicycle facilities, implementing parking management strategies, and implementing traffic calming along certain street segments.

Transportation Tomorrow – Autonomous Vehicles and Electric Vehicles

Autonomous vehicles – also sometimes referred to as driverless vehicles or self-driving vehicles – are vehicles that rely on onboard technologies such as radar, Lidar (light detection and ranging), and GPS (global positioning systems) to sense and interpret its environment and navigate itself without human intervention. Autonomous vehicles are intended to safely operate on public roadways and interact with existing infrastructure and other roadway users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles operated by humans.

The deployment of autonomous vehicles holds the potential to positively transform the transportation network. Autonomous vehicles will affect not only transportation systems, but also the economy, safety, workforce, environment, land use, and energy use. The positive transformational impacts include strengthening public transportation, reducing crashes and fatalities for drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as reducing traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions. Autonomous vehicles also have the capability to lessen the need for parking facilities and increase mobility for those who cannot drive. However, without appropriate legislation and policies in place, the eventual widespread deployment of autonomous vehicles could possibly increase safety risks for drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists in addition to worsening traffic congestion, vehicle miles traveled (VMT), and greenhouse gas emissions.

Since the technology is still emerging and it is unclear how and when it will affect the region’s roadways, there are no concrete planning or implementation steps for preparing for a future with autonomous vehicles; instead, the Town should continue to remain apprised of latest developments in technology, monitoring federal and state developments, and participating in any relevant forums to ensure its interests are voiced.

More pressing than planning for autonomous vehicles is to continue planning for and accommodating electric vehicles. See the Energy & Sustainability chapter for additional information.

Transportation & Circulation Goals and Recommendations

This master plan presents an opportunity to think creatively and holistically about the Town’s transportation network, creating a multi-pronged strategy both to address major concerns and to improve Cohasset’s quality of life. As noted, improving connectivity for pedestrians was the major concern of residents participating in the master plan.

Goal 1: Improve pedestrian connectivity throughout the Town

Improving pedestrian connectivity enhances safety, positively impacts economic development in commercial areas, and reduces congestion.
Strategy 1.1: Enroll in MassDOT Complete Streets Program

This program provides construction funding to implement various pedestrian and bicycle improvements. Communities must pass through three tiers after which communities can apply for up to $400,000 per year per community for construction funding.

- The first step is to register on MassDOT’s complete streets portal and to develop a local policy, adopted by its Board of Selectmen, which the Town has completed.
- Create a complete streets advisory body. Although not required, many communities have established a body comprised of stakeholders, advocates, and/or interested citizens to help guide implementation of the complete streets policy.
- Create a Prioritization Plan. Cohasset developed a prioritization plan, providing costs and conceptual plans for various complete streets projects. Once the prioritization plan is adopted, Cohasset can apply for up to $400,000 to implement projects.

Strategy 1.2. Improve safety, mobility, and access on Route 3A for all types of transportation

A 2014 study by the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) analyzed the roadway and made numerous recommendations. The south section will soon be reconstructed and the Town should continue advancing plans to reconstruct the northern section of Route 3A.

- The south section, from Beechwood Street to the Scituate border, is currently being evaluated for funding on the FFY 2019-23 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). It will include sidewalks and bicycle lanes, as well as improvements for vehicles.
- Advocate for funding on TIP for completing the north section of Route 3A. The Town should continue to advance plans and complete engineering designs to the level required to request TIP funding (25%) in order to complete reconstruction of Route 3A.
- Explore short-term means for improving pedestrian safety along portions of Route 3A. The Town should work with the MassDOT District office to explore whether near-term, temporary improvements can be made to Route 3A, especially near the commuter rail. For example, cones, jersey barriers, and other materials could create a separate pedestrian that would allow for residents to safely walk and/or bike to the station.

Strategy 1.3: Construct pedestrian facilities in other high traffic locations throughout Town

- Constructing sidewalks and adding crosswalks are two of the most important ways to improve the comfort and safety of pedestrians.
- Prioritize street segments for sidewalk construction. For example, the section on North Main Street to the train station was cited as the top priority from residents. In addition, the Local Access map notes segments of Pleasant Street as having high pedestrian utility but which lack sidewalks. Comments from participants also highlighted Jerusalem Road for its lack of sidewalks.
- Identify funding sources and timeline for implementation. Although the MassDOT Complete Streets funding may be among the funding sources, the available funding is not sufficient to construct significant segments of sidewalks. MassWorks grants, TIP funding, local funding, and mitigation payments from new development are other potential opportunities.
- Identify locations for needed crosswalks. The Town should assess areas where crosswalks, curb
cuts, etc. are needed. For example, Forest Avenue has a sidewalk on the southbound side of the street but entrance to Wheelright Park is on the northbound side. A crosswalk would allow for safer crossing.

**Strategy 1.4: Consider other initiatives to improve pedestrian safety and convenience**

- Consider reducing town-wide speed limits on local roadways. Lowering speed limits, combined with other traffic-calming measures, can improve pedestrian safety.
- Pilot pedestrian-friendly streets. The Town should consider whether to reinstitute programs such as One Way Sunday on Jerusalem Street, whereby the roadway was converted to one-way traffic to allow a lane for pedestrians and cyclists. Several forum participants spoke in favor of this program.
- Enforce Massachusetts vehicle noise regulations.

**Goal 2: Improve bicycle access and safety**

Where sufficient right-of-way exists, many bicycle facilities (e.g., bike lanes), can be far less costly to implement than sidewalk construction.

**Strategy 2.1: Implement on-road bicycle infrastructure**

The Town should incrementally create a network of bicycle facilities to allow separated (where possible) access for bicyclists.

- Create a bicycle master plan. Completing the MassDOT Complete Streets Prioritization Plan can highlight the most important and near term bicycle corridors. Following this up with a full plan will create a town-wide network.
- Work with DPW to implement bicycle facilities. Sometimes, roadways already have sufficient width to allow for the striping of a bicycle lane by reallocating the space (e.g., reducing travel lane width). The most cost-effective way to implement facilities in these situations is to coordinate with the Town's repaving/restriping schedule.
- Identify funding sources for advanced bicycle infrastructure. Many communities are now investing resources in higher quality bicycle facilities, such as separated bicycle lanes (cycle tracks). These provide superior safety and comfort versus traditional bicycle lanes but require a higher degree of design and cost to implement.

**Strategy 2.2 Improve and connect off-road multi-modal facilities**

Shared use paths provide transportation and exercise opportunities, including walking and bicycling, on paved surfaces physically separated from vehicular traffic. In Cohasset, the Whitney Spur Trail is an example of a shared-use path. The Town could explore options to create a larger network of shared-use paths to further connect to Hingham and other communities.

- Identify additional shared-use paths. Numerous residents participating in the master plan process expressed a desire for additional shared-use paths. The Town should work with interested stakeholders within Town and adjacent communities to identify if any opportunities exist and, if so, create an action plan to lead to its construction.
- Improve LandLine. MAPC has identified the coastal route (Atlantic Avenue, Jerusalem Road) as a LandLine route. Coastal routes are often chosen because of their beauty and popularity. These
roads is Cohasset generally lack sidewalks and do not contain bicycle facilities and limited right-of-way makes implementation of these elements challenging. The Town should create a plan to improve these roadways for pedestrians and cyclists. Examples could include: signage, traffic calming features, takings for sidewalks, etc.

- Create additional connections to Wompatuck Trail. The Wompatuck Trail provides a connection between the train station and Wompatuck State Park. The Town should work on creating multi-modal connections (on-road or off-road) to this trail, especially from the LandLine.

**Goal 3: Improve how roadways in Town operate**

While Cohasset deals with typical issues related to maintaining and operating its roadways and parking lots as other communities, it also has a high number of private roadways.

**Strategy 3.1 Improve mechanisms for addressing private ways**

As noted above, the Town has recognized the challenges that come with almost a quarter of its roadways being privately owned.

- Periodically review and assess policy. Because the policy was recently enacted, the Town should assess how it is working.
- Implement changes, as needed. If warranted the Town should amend its policy. It may also consider whether a by-law would be more appropriate in the future.
- Assess existing privately-owned roadways and begin process of conversion to public ways. Some private ways may already be meeting the standards for roadways set forth in the Subdivision Regulations. These “low-hanging fruit” could be the first private ways to be converted to public roads.
- Educate community on issue. Several residents participating in the master plan felt that the community should be better educated about the issue of private roadways.

**Strategy 3.2 Address local parking challenges and opportunities**

The Cohasset Village parking study provided a number of short-, medium-, and long-term recommendations to improve parking management in Cohasset Village and Harbor and make the most of existing parking supply. The following actions are the key recommendations in this report.

- Alter time limits. Implement a consistent one hour time limit between 6 am and 6 pm for the vast majority of Cohasset Village on-street parking spaces, with additional 30 minute spaces for day care use.
- Improve pedestrian access and safety in various locations around Cohasset Village. Many people would be willing to walk a short distance from their vehicle to their destination if it feels safe to do so. Improving pedestrian access, including by reconfiguring the intersection of Pleasant Street, Depot Court, and Ripley Road, can help achieve that aim.
- Improve and clarify signage, including adding new signage to clearly identify parking locations in the Village and the Harbor. As with improving pedestrian access, wayfinding and clear signage of parking options can help change the perception that there is a lack of parking when in reality there may be parking close by.
- Encourage use of the overflow lot, especially by employees of Village businesses. Where possible, employees and others parking for long periods of time should park in the overflow lot, allowing parking along the street to remain open for more high-turnover uses.
Strategy 3.3 Improve roadway safety and operations

Cohasset does not suffer from the high number of crashes as in many other communities in the region; furthermore, most traffic conflicts occur along Route 3A, addressed in Strategy 1.2. There are, however, other improvements that could be made.

- Implement improvements to top crash locations in Town. The Master Plan lists additional streets that have the highest number of crashes in Town, such as King Street. The Town should prioritize safety improvements in this area.
- Consider development of a comprehensive assessment of pavement management and roadway needs. A pavement management program provides a more systematic and ultimately cost-effective way to protect and preserve roadways.
Introduction

The public facilities and services element of a master plan takes stock of a community’s facility resources and helps to guide decisions and develop a maintenance, management, replacement and expansion plan relevant to public buildings, utilities, and infrastructure in order to meet future needs of the community. Public facilities make it possible for municipal employees and volunteers to provide services for the public good. These facilities are also required by various mandates of state and federal government. Citizens, as taxpayers, assume the provision of basic services such as fire, public safety, education, town government and water supply. Beyond that, residents frequently convey the importance of a desire for a sense of place, membership in a community and to be cared for across the cycles of life.

Cohasset’s ability to provide adequate facilities depends on effective capital planning, collaboration, a commitment to implementation, asset management policies, and the amount of revenue available for local government operations. Cohasset, like many other municipalities, receives very little funding from non-local sources and relies largely on local property taxes for financial support. Residential property taxes account for more than 90% of Cohasset’s total property tax levy. Proposition 2 ½, a ballot initiative approved by Massachusetts voters in 1980, places an upper limit on the amount of the property tax levy raised by a city or town and constrains annual increases.

This chapter details the structure of Town government; provides an overview of the Town's largest service departments, including the Cohasset Public Schools, Public Works & Facilities, Public Safety, and Community Services; and describes the existing conditions of facilities owned by the Town of Cohasset, including those operated by the public schools. Recommended goals and strategies to guide the Town of Cohasset’s maintenance and development of its public facilities and services follow at the end of the chapter.

Key Findings

- The Town benefits from professional and capable staff and volunteers, but the condition of several departments’ facilities inhibit their operational efficiency.
- Aging infrastructure and the need for modernization of key municipal facilities in the next 10-30 years present challenges that will need to be balanced against the Town’s fiscal management policies.
- Town residents and organizations have generously provided material philanthropic support for capital improvements to Town facilities.
- Communication between Town officials and residents is a critical component of building support for major projects. Opportunities to expand and improve upon existing outreach and education strategies should be pursued.

Existing Conditions

Town Government

Pursuant to the Town’s General Bylaws, Cohasset is governed by the open town meeting form of government and an elected five-member Board of Selectmen. Cohasset adopted a Town Manager form of government in 1997 by Special Act Charter (Chapter 34 of the Acts of 1997), which was last amended in 2014 (Chapter 3 of the Acts of 2014). Under the Town Manager form of government, the Board of Selectmen “serve as the chief goal-setting and policy-making body of the town. “The Town Manager, and other Town officers and employees, implement the guidelines and policy directives formulated by the Board of Selectmen. As the chief administrative officer of the Town, the Town Manager assumes general responsibility for coordinating day-to-day operations of the community, including supervision of all town departments under the jurisdiction of the Board of Selectmen.
The Cohasset School district is an independent school district. The School Superintendent and central administrative office, run the daily operations of the school under the supervision of an elected School Committee. The School Committee, governed by Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 37, works closely with the Superintendent and district leadership and the Town of Cohasset to ensure that the over 1,550 students and over 240 staff members work together to achieve student performance goals supported by prudent management of financial resources that support quality education.

In FY19, the Town supported about 108 Full-time Equivalent (FTE) positions in general government departments. The School Department employed approximately 244 FTE.

Cohasset Town Hall is located at 41 Highland Avenue. Many of the Town’s departments operate out of this central location. However, other departments with particularized facility or locational needs are headquartered in separate public facilities spread throughout town. An inventory of Cohasset’s municipal facilities and the departments they house is included in the image below:

![Cohasset Public Facilities and Departments](image)

**Figure 55: Cohasset Public Facilities and Departments**

**Town Boards and Committees**

In addition to the professional staff supporting the Town of Cohasset’s government departments, volunteer boards and committees are a crucial component of properly functioning town governance. State statutes outline the powers and duties of statutory boards, such as the School Committee, Board of Health and Planning Board. Town bylaws specify the operations of their work. The Cohasset Board of Selectmen also establishes advisory boards and committees to support the performance of their responsibilities.

Cohasset’s various boards and committees differ in their appointing authority. While some are elected by residents of the town, others are appointed by the Board of Selectmen, and still others by the

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1 Full-time Equivalent (FTE) positions are calculated by adding the total hours worked by all department employees and dividing by the total hours in a full-time schedule. For example, if a department had two employees – each of who worked 30 hours per week – with a full time schedule of 40 hours/week, the department would have 1.5 FTE (60/40 Hours).
“Troika,” a body composed of the Town Moderator, Chair of the Advisory Board, and Chair of the Board of Selectmen.

**ELECTED BOARDS, COMMITTEES, AND POSITIONS**

- Board of Assessors
- Board of Health
- Board of Selectmen
- School Committee
- Trustees of Paul Pratt Memorial Library
- Town Moderator
- Cohasset Housing Authority
- Planning Board
- Recreation Commission
- Sewer Commissioners
- Water Commissioners
- Town Clerk

**BOARDS AND COMMITTEES APPOINTED BY TROIKA**

- Advisory Committee
- By-law Committee
- Design Review Board
- Alternative Energy Sources Committee
- Capital Budget

**BOARDS AND COMMITTEES APPOINTED BY BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

- Affordable Housing Steering Committee
- Cohasset Affordable Housing Trust
- Cohasset Common Historic District Commission
- Cohasset Harbor Committee
- Elder Affairs Board
- Historical Commission
- Open Space and Recreation
- Registrar of Voters
- Town Hall Building Committee
- Cable Advisory Committee
- Cohasset Cultural Council
- Cohasset Community Television Corporation, Board of Directors
- Conservation Commission
- Government Island Advisory Committee
- Master Plan Committee
- PEB Committee
- Stormwater Advisory Committee
- Zoning Board of Appeals
Town of Cohasset Organizational Chart

The following organizational chart was drawn from the Cohasset FY19 Budget Document. The image was modified slightly to reflect the Town Clerk’s position as an elected official, the Town Manager’s joint financial oversight responsibilities for the Water and Sewer departments, and the Superintendent’s day to day operational control of the School Department.

![Town of Cohasset Organizational Chart](image)

Figure 56: Town of Cohasset Organizational Chart
Source: FY 19 Proposed Budget

Capital Expenditure Planning and Funding

The Town of Cohasset’s General Bylaws (§ 30-55) define capital expenditures as purchases which cost more than $10,000 and have greater useful life than 18 months. This includes capital projects – such as the construction or improvement of buildings, land, and other public infrastructure – and capital purchases, such as the purchase of major equipment, e.g. motor vehicles. The development and maintenance of Cohasset’s capital assets are central to the performance of Town departments and the delivery of high quality public services.

The majority of capital requests originate with the heads of Town departments and the schools, who have ongoing capital needs. The Board of Selectmen may also submit capital project requests, most often for large scale projects such as building construction or infrastructure development. Capital funding requests are submitted to the Capital Budget Committee (CBC) for review. After reviewing the proposals, the Capital Budget Committee develops recommendations on the capital budget for the Town Manager. The CBC also presents its recommendations for Town Meeting to the Board of Selectmen and the Advisory Committee. The capital budget is finalized by the Town Manager and memorialized in a Warrant Article which is submitted to Town Meeting for a vote. The funding of capital...
expenditures are subject to approval at Town Meeting.

Funding for capital projects comes from a variety of sources. The Town’s Financial Management Policies encourage the use of “free cash” – the balance of remaining, unrestricted funds from the operations of the previous fiscal year – for smaller capital items to minimize the issuance of debt and its related tax impacts. The primary source of funding for capital spending is the Capital Stabilization Fund. Money appropriated to the fund generally comes from “free cash”, sale of assets, and re-appropriation of unused funds from previously approved capital expenditures. The Town maintains separate Water Capital Stabilization and Sewer Capital Stabilization funds for improvements to the Town’s water and sewer systems. Deposits to and spending from the stabilization funds require a two-thirds vote at Town Meeting.

The Town’s Debt Policy generally confines borrowing for capital projects to those with a cost greater than $25,000 and with a useful life of five or more years. Some projects are financed through “non-excluded debt,” which uses appropriations from the Capital Stabilization Fund to pay for debt service. Other projects rely on “excluded debt,” where debt service obligations are met through temporary increases to the property tax levy. In order to raise the funds necessary to pay debt service costs for a particular project from the property tax levy, the Town may pursue a “debt exclusion.” Debt exclusions raise property taxes for the term of a bond used to finance a capital project or major capital purchase. Exclusions are placed on the Town Meeting Warrant by the Board of Selectmen and require a two-thirds vote at Town Meeting as well as a majority vote at Town Election in order to take effect. The last successful debt exclusion in Cohasset was passed in 2000 to fund the reconstruction and renovation of Deer Hill School and the Middle High School. In 2018, Town Meeting approved a debt exclusion to fund the renovation of Town Hall, but the measure failed to gain majority support through Town Election.

The Town also continuously pursues alternative financing strategies to acquire funding for capital needs by means other than conventional borrowing, such as grants, federally subsidized loan programs, or zero-interest loans from state agencies. Capital needs for the Town’s business-type activities – the Water Department and Sewer Department – may be covered through user fees to avoid imposing a burden on the tax levy.

**Largest Town Department Overviews**

**PUBLIC WORKS ADMINISTRATION**

The Town of Cohasset’s Department of Public Works provides expert and efficient planning, design and quality construction management of all town-initiated or financed public works improvement projects while maintaining budgets and timelines. Based on directives and oversight of elected and appointed Town leadership, the Department manages and maintains the Town’s public works infrastructure. The Department of Public Works is administratively organized into four divisions, each supervised by a division head, with overall direction from the Director of the Department of Public Works. Divisions include Engineering & Project Management, Procurements & Contracts, DPW Field Operations, and Facilities. In FY19, the budget for the Department was $2.9 million and employed 29 FTE inclusive of all divisions.

The **Engineering & Project Management** division oversees town-wide issues that require engineering solutions for improvement to the Town’s public buildings, roadways, and water systems. The Engineering team manages the application and administration of public grant money that funds various engineering and capital improvements. The team regularly applies for and receives funds from the state

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2 Cities and towns may also pursue debt overrides, which result in permanent increases to the tax levy and are intended to correct structural shortfalls in town revenues to support operational expenses of local government and the school system. Cohasset last approved a debt override in 2005.
to improve the town’s infrastructure, through initiatives such as the Green Communities program. The division generates and collects data which allow the Town to maintain updated and accurate spatial GIS data that documents changes in the town infrastructure, including water and sewer pipes, lighting, and environmentally sensitive areas. The Director of Public Works oversees the division.

The Procurements and Contracts Manager heads the division of Procurements & Contracts. This division manages the purchase of goods and services required to support the Town’s operation. Cohasset implements fair, open, and competitive bidding procedures. The division supports all Town department procurements. In FY19 several major accomplishments of this office related to DPW operations, including contracts for plumbing, electrical, HVAC, and boiler services for the town.

The Town of Cohasset’s property, parks, and open space, as well as its public way infrastructure, including streets, sidewalks, and storm drainage systems, are managed and preserved by the Field Operations division. This division also operates the town’s Recycling Transfer Facility (RTF), which is located on the same site as the division’s offices at 91 Cedar Street. The division is led by the Department of Public Works Superintendent. Resource constraints force the Field Operations team to scale their assignments to prioritize particular tasks over others. Purchasing higher capacity, but more expensive, capital equipment would increase overall productivity by reducing the staff time required to complete tasks such as snow removal. A thorough review of the costs and benefits of new equipment is needed. In 2017, the Capital Improvements Budget included over $200,000 in funding for DPW equipment, including a heavy haul tractor lease, partial funding of sidewalk snow removal equipment, and a dump truck body.

The Facilities Department, under the direction of the Facilities Manager, ensures that all town buildings are maintained to the highest possible standard. The division is staffed by four full-time and three part-time employees. In addition to regular custodial duties, response to work order requests, and planned maintenance activities, the Facilities division logistically supports core Town functions by setting up rooms for various board and committee meetings, Town Meeting, and elections. The recent addition of an Assistant Director to oversee work order requests submitted through the SchoolDude platform will add crucial capacity to the department’s operations. Facilities Department staff do not have a singular dedicated workspace, although they do have access to a workshop in the Town’s Middle-High School. Operating as a shared facilities department – serving both general town government and school district buildings – the Facilities Department is a model example of the Town of Cohasset’s “One Community” initiative, which fosters resource sharing across organizational lines to leverage economies of scale and economical use tax revenue.

While the Public Works Director, Procurement and Contracts Manager, and Facilities Director each maintain offices in Town Hall, the main Public Works Facility is located on the western edge of Cohasset, on a triangular lot next to the Cohasset Golf Course at 91 Cedar Street. The public works site includes the main public works building, a salt shed, and the Town’s Recycling Transfer Facility. The main building consists of one-story central office building flanked by two large garages which provide storage and work space for the Field Operations division’s 15.5 full time staff – five highway, five tree and park, three and a half transfer station, and the Superintendent and his assistant. Constructed in 1997, the main building is in generally good repair. The other buildings on site have recently benefited from capital improvement funding approved by Town Meeting. The 2018 Town Meeting approved $15,000 for repairs to the salt shed, which was built in 1985. However, the shed remains undersized, requiring re-stocking during the busy winter months, and the DPW hopes to obtain capital funding and bid for construction of a new shed in the short term. In 2017, Town Meeting approved a capital budget request to provide $30,000 for a roof replacement on one of the RTF’s five buildings.

Although investments in the public works facility buildings are certainly important to maintaining a high level of service, the facility’s site design presents perhaps more pressing challenges. The parking lot surrounding the main public works building, which connects to the primary access point via Cedar
Street, currently serves as a parking space for the Town’s school buses. The DPW lot is not large enough to conveniently house Town and school vehicles. The neighboring Cohasset Golf Club owns an undeveloped parcel which could potentially be repurposed as a parking area for the school buses, and the Town has explored the option of leasing the property for that purpose.

**Recent Accomplishments for Public Works and Facilities:**

- Completed the Jerusalem Road Paving project (7,700 feet of resurfacing).
- Rebuilt, repaired, and cleaned catch basins town wide.
- Received grants through the Green Communities program to retrofit public lighting with LED lamps.
- Completed over 700 work order requests at various town facilities.
- Made security and accessibility improvements to school facilities.

**Facility and Staffing Needs and Challenges for Public Works and Facilities:**

- The DPW relies on capital equipment to fulfill many of its regular duties, such as tree work and snow removal. In some instances, requests for more expensive but better suited equipment have been declined in favor of lower cost alternatives. The gains to staff productivity and work efficiency should be balanced against the higher initial capital outlay.
- For items that fall outside the scope of line items and capital improvements, the Facilities Department relies on Town funding to complete operational maintenance projects raised by the Town Manager and department heads. In 2015 and 2016, Town Meeting articles provided $50,000 to cover the cost of these projects. The predictable availability of these funds would support strategic facilities planning.
- The Facilities staff do not have a dedicated workspace.

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**POLICE DEPARTMENT**

The Cohasset Police Department’s mission is “to ensure a safe environment within the town, reduce crime, and to enhance the overall quality of life for visitors and citizens alike.” The department achieves these ends through community policing and adherence to a set a core values including: Excellence, Honor, Respect, Accountability, and Teamwork.” The Police Chief oversees multiple divisions in the police department; the main units are Patrol and CID/Criminal Investigation. In FY19, the department was budgeted $2.5 million and employed 19 FTE. The FY19 budget included the addition of one full-time position to the Cohasset Police Department, in order to reduce overtime expenses and to provide support during vacation and sick leave.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CPP Operating Indicators</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accidents covered by an officer</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>171</td>
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<td>Citations issued</td>
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<td>1,133</td>
<td>1,428</td>
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<td>Arrests</td>
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<td>163</td>
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<td>Larcenies</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>68</td>
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</tbody>
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*Figure 48: Cohasset Police Department Operating Indicators*

*Source: FY19 Proposed Budget*
The Patrol Division is the largest and most public facing division of the Cohasset Police Department. Operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, officers assigned to the division conduct high-visibility patrols and respond to emergency and other calls for service. In 2018, there were 12 patrol officers, including the Town’s School Resource Officer.

The Criminal Investigation Division (CID) supports the Cohasset Police Department by conducting “timely and thorough criminal investigations using advanced investigative techniques and forensic equipment.” In addition to investigating serious crimes, CID collects and maintains custody of evidence for use at trial and completes background an internal affairs investigations. CID is also the primary point of contact for partner law enforcement agencies. A detective lieutenant leads the division, which also includes a detective sergeant and a detective patrolman.

The police fleet includes unmarked and marked vehicles, an off-road utility vehicle, an animal control vehicle, one motorcycle, and five bicycles. New vehicles are acquired on a schedule detailed in the Department’s fleet maintenance plan. In 2018, the capital improvements budget included funding for two new police vehicles. The department also received a $15,000 anonymous donation which funded the purchase of a 4x4 utility vehicle, which allows easier access to the town’s beaches and forested trails.

The Police Department operates out of the Public Safety Building at 62 Elm Street, which also houses the Fire Department. The one story building was originally built in 1962 as two separate buildings that were renovated and connected to each other in the late 1980s to provide additional office and housing space for the Police and Fire Departments. Although generally considered to be in a useable state of repair, the Public Safety Building’s design and condition are outdated and in need of replacement. Located in a dense residential area on Elm Street, the majority of dispatched vehicles must travel directly through Town Center via Main Street, which can pose public safety risks and slow response times. Although designed to accommodate three vehicles, part of the police garage was converted to a limited access evidence room and is also used to store large equipment, reducing its useable storage capacity to a single vehicle. The lack of additional storage space has resulted in the Police Department requiring the use of the library basement for statutorily mandated record keeping. Existing holding cells do not meet the state standard, lack privacy, and do not provide for suicide prevention solutions. The building also lacks dedicated spaces for other important activities, such as attorney/client meetings, training, and general work space. In 2018, the Facilities Department completed a request from the Police Chief to upgrade the station’s roof gutter system, which had been dumping water and creating an ice buildup in an area used by officers for heavy foot traffic.

Recent Accomplishments for Police:

- Assisted the South Shore Regional Emergency Communications Center (SSRECC) in securing more than $350K in grant funding to streamline computer aided dispatch software and records management. This will allow public safety departments in Cohasset, Hingham, Hull, and Norwell, to share information and records, as well as dispatch emergency units on a single regional CAD platform.
- Systemized department record keeping in the Criminal Investigation Division (CID).
- Ran full evacuation and safety drills with staff of each school in the district.

Needs and Challenges for Police:

- Although still useable, the condition of the Public Safety Building hinders efficient operation and provides less than ideal working conditions.
- Continue to work with all Town Departments and committees to investigate feasibility of new
The department currently lacks a Deputy Chief, a position which has been vacant since 2012. Filling command position vacancies would strengthen the organizational functioning of the department.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT**

The Cohasset Fire Department’s mission is to provide “for the safety and welfare of the public through the preservation of life, property, and environment.” The Fire Department meets its mission by offering a wide range of emergency services, including fire prevention and suppression, as well as emergency medical services. The Fire Chief heads the department, supported by the Assistant Fire Chief, overseeing four captains, three lieutenants, and 15 firefighters. All firefighters are certified at the Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) – Basic or EMT – Paramedic levels. In FY19, the Fire Department was budgeted $2.46 million and employed 24 FTE. A three-year, $313,000 grant awarded in FY19 through the Staffing and Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) program will enable the hiring of two additional firefighters and allow the Department to staff each shift with five personnel most of the time.

<table>
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<th>Cohasset Fire Department Calls for Service</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fire Related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency medical related</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 49: Cohasset Fire Department, Calls for Service**

Source: FY19 Proposed Budget

The Cohasset Fire Department responds to fire related and emergency medical related calls for service. While the “Fire related” calls for service enumerated in Table 2 are restricted to calls where fire was present, the Fire Department regularly responds to calls for hazardous conditions other than fire, good intent calls, and false alarms. Through the Fire Prevention Division, the Fire Department Fire Prevention Inspections and issues permits; in 2017, the Division completed 582 inspections and issued 358 permits.

The Cohasset Fire Department responds to emergencies and other calls for service using the following apparatus, as appropriate:

- “Engine 1” 1994 Pierce Pumping Engine/Rescue – 1,750 Gallons per Minute (G.P.M.)
- “Engine 2” 2010 Pierce Pumping Engine/Rescue/Class V (non-transport) Advanced Life Support Ambulance – 1,500 G.P.M.
- “Ladder 1” 2004 Pierce – 105 foot Aerial Ladder Truck
- “Ambulance 1” 2008 E-450 Class I (Transport) Advanced Life Support Ambulance
- “Ambulance 2” 2014 F-450 4x4 Class 1 (Transport) Advanced Life Support Ambulance
- “Car 1” 2012 Chevrolet 4x4 Incident Command Vehicle
- “Car 2” 2009 Ford 4x4 Incident Command Vehicle
- 1993 Avon Inflatable Boat with Trailer, 14 ft.

In 2015, Town Meeting approved a capital improvements budget which included $180,000 to refurbish Engine 1. In 2017, the capital improvements budget included a request for $600,000 to purchase a front line pumper. Department vehicles are replaced in line with the Fire Department’s fleet maintenance plan. The Fire Department shares the Public Safety Building, located at 62 Elm Street, with the Police Department. Fire staff have indicated that the firehouse garage, which includes six bays, cannot
accommodate all of the department’s apparatuses. As a result, the department parks Ambulance 2 across Elm Street on Sewer Department property. Due to the decentralized storage, the Fire Department is more likely to rely on mutual aid to respond to a second emergency rather than risk delays collecting and deploying the second ambulance.

**Recent Accomplishments for Fire:**

- Replaced all Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) used by the Cohasset Fire Department using funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program.
- Received a three year, $313,000 grant through the Staffing and Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) program, which will allow the Fire Department to hire two additional firefighters and staff each shift with five personnel most of the time.
- Secured funding, through a generous donation by the Social Service League of Cohasset, for the expansion of the Cohasset Cares Program. Cohasset Cares is a program that has been funded through the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services Senior Awareness of Fire Education Program (Senior S.A.F.E.).
- In 2017, the Cohasset Fire Department Fire Prevention Division completed 540 fire prevention code related inspections and issued 352 fire prevention related permits.

**Needs and Challenges for Fire:**

- The geographic location of the Public Safety Building places some areas of town outside of the recommended travel time range during emergency response.
- The Public Safety Building’s size cannot accommodate the various apparatuses the department relies on for emergency response, nor does it have sufficient space for the department’s engineer to make vehicle repairs. The Fire Department should continue to work with all relevant Town departments and Committees to investigate the feasibility of a new public safety building.

**COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**LIBRARY**

The Paul Pratt Memorial Library is “a vibrant community hub that serves as an incubator of discovery and a catalyst for creative imagination and lifelong learning.” The Library staff, trustees, and Friends “are committed to offering high quality information, resources, and programming to the Cohasset community and beyond.” The Library maintains an impressive collection of circulation materials – both physical and digital. Library staff also design and run wide ranging programming for youth, such as a weekly story hour and homework center. Adult book discussion groups and author talks are also offered. In addition to Town funding, the Library is supported by the Friends of the Cohasset Library, a nonprofit organization which fundraises and advocates on behalf of the Library. The Library is led by a Director and overseen by an elected, nine-member board, the Trustees of the Paul Pratt Memorial Library. In FY19, the library was budgeted $643,200 and employed 8.46 FTE.

Remaining true to its mission, the Library has evolved to meet the dynamic demands of Cohasset residents and other library users. Changes in reading habits have altered how library space is used and organized; rather than a simple repository for reference materials, the library serves as a vital “third place,” a forum for public gatherings outside of the home and workplace. As documented by the Library’s 2017-2022 Strategic Plan, room reservations grew by 22% between FY15 and FY16, from 1,558 to 1,911. Over the past 15 years, new uses of library space include persons working remotely seeking
quiet accommodations outside of the home. However, as technology adoption patterns have changed, the library has witnessed less demand for library supplied technology, as users now generally tend to prefer using their own devices. Despite these shifts, annual circulation has demonstrated an upward trend. In FY16, circulation of print books went up four percent from the previous fiscal year to 110,636. Demand for streaming audio witnessed the greatest growth, jumping from 1,962 to 3,325 – a 70% increase.

The Library makes a conscious and effective effort to make its resources available to users of all ages. However, the most numerous and consistent users of the library tend to be seniors and families with young children. Programming for children is an especially attractive service, drawing an attendance of over 10,600 in FY16, compared to 876 for young adult programs and 1,391 for adult programs.

The Paul Pratt Memorial Library occupies the former Joseph Osgood Elementary School. Originally constructed in 1926, the Town renovated the building in 2003 to house the Library. The Library space is 15,500 square feet and occupies the entirety of the main floor of the original building. The Library has non-meeting room seating for 133 people, has three meeting rooms with 60, 25, and 14 seats, two quiet studies, 21 computer workstations, five public access computers, and space dedicated for the display of historical documents and artifacts. The Library facility is ADA compliant. There is ground level access when entering from Ripley Road and elevator access when entering from the rear parking lot. Space in a rear addition was originally leased to a non-profit children’s museum, but was transferred to the Recreation Department in 2015. The third floor of the main building – which does not meet accessibility requirements – is used as office space by Safe Harbors, a local organization established in 2014 that provides education aimed at encouraging safe choices around drugs and alcohol.

Overall, the facility is in a good state of repair. However, the roof is worn and will need to be replaced in the near term. Replacing the slate roof has the potential to be very expensive; materials are more expensive than lower cost alternatives, the installer needs technical expertise, and worn slates must be disposed of appropriately. The Library Trustees, Town management, and the Facilities Department have discussed and will further weigh their options - including simulated slate with a solar energy option - before submitting a request to the Capital Budget Committee. The high usage rates of its services and programming, combined with an increasing demand for dedicated study, work, and meeting space, have bumped up against the physical limitations of the buildings space. Although the Library would benefit from a larger facility, other pressing demands for capital improvements make any imminent replacement unlikely.

Recent accomplishments for Library:
- Implemented two grant programs with Library Services & Technology (LSTA) federal grant funds awarded by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC). Funds totaling $9,889 were awarded for our “Equal Access for All” grant for expanding library services for people with physical and intellectual challenges.
- Implemented “All Aboard Greenbush!: One Train, One Book” an outreach initiative to connect the daily riders of the Greenbush commuter Line to their local libraries.

Needs and challenges for Library:
- The high demand for meeting, study, and programming space strains the availability of space within the Library building.
- The Library’s parking lot, which is shared with the Recreation Department, lacks adequate parking and needs to be repaved.
- Continue to maintain and repair facility including the replacement of slate roof which is reaching end of life.
SCHOOLS

COHASSET PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

Cohasset operates its own school system, with 1,554 students enrolled across its three schools in the 2018-2019 school year. The district is governed by the Cohasset School Committee, a board of five elected members and managed by Superintendent. In FY19, the Cohasset Public Schools had an appropriated budget of just below $19.55 million and employed 244.1 FTE.

The district’s elementary school population is spread across two school buildings on a shared campus. Students in prekindergarten through second grade attend the Joseph Osgood School, while third through fifth graders attend the Deer Hill School. Cohasset Middle/High School enrolls students from grades 6 through 12.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Building</th>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Enrollment (2018-2019)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Osgood School</td>
<td>PreK to 2nd</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deer Hill School</td>
<td>3rd to 5th</td>
<td>373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle/High School</td>
<td>Middle: 6th to 8th</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High: 9th to 12th</td>
<td>482</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 57: Cohasset Public School Profiles

The Joseph Osgood School building is the most recently constructed school facility, opened in 1998 to replace the old Osgood School building which now houses the town library. The Deer Hill School and Cohasset High School both date to 1950, although each underwent substantial renovations in the early 2000s. The improvements to the High School building included a major addition and renovation creating autonomous areas for the middle school students and high school population with shared central core facilities. In 2017, the Cohasset Education Foundation,3 a community based non-profit organization, organized a capital campaign which raised $250,000 to transform the Cohasset Middle/High School library into a modern “Learning Commons.”

Enrollment data reported by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) indicates that the school district’s student population is slightly more diverse than the town as whole. While the 2017 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates indicate that 98% of the town population is white, the proportion of white students within Cohasset Public Schools is 92%. Most notably, although the ACS Estimates place the Town’s Black or African American population at 0.3%, the Cohasset Public Schools enrollment data shows that 3% of the student population is African American. The complete demographic data for the remaining student population is as follows: 2.4% Asian, 1.2% Hispanic, 0.2% Native American, and 1.2% Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic.

Cohasset students perform at a very high level academically, with the 2017 class achieving a four-year cohort graduation rate of 100%, compared to statewide average of 88.3%. Among this graduating class, 98% planned to attend a 4-year college.

3 “The Cohasset Education Foundation is an independent, non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization, financed completely through private funds, that works in close coordination with teachers and school administrators. Since November of 2007, the CEF has raised over $1.7 million in donations to support and improve our public schools.” – Cohasset Education Foundation, “Frequently Asked Questions” https://cohasseteducation.org/about-us/faqs/
In June 2016, the School Committee approved a five-year strategic plan (FY 17 to FY 21) for the Cohasset public schools. This strategic plan was based on a year-long project including input from all community stakeholders. The strategic plan has five pillars: Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment, Social & Emotional Learning (SEL), Human Capital, Safety & Security, and Community & Collaboration. As the diagram below (Table 4) shows, each of the plan’s pillars include strategic goals supported by key initiatives. In addition, the strategic plan pillars are supported by the Digital Learning Plan, a strong Professional Development Plan focused on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and solid Financial Practices aligned to the education goals of the district and town financial policies.

Recent accomplishments for Schools:

- The 2017 U.S. News and World Report ranked Cohasset Middle High School as the 9th best public high school in the state of Massachusetts. Over the last five years, Cohasset has also consistently ranked in the top 40 schools in the Boston Magazine annual ranking of Massachusetts high schools.
- The schools invested in upgrading physical security at all three buildings with the support of the Capital Budget Committee.
- Cohasset Public Schools maintain a safe and supportive environment for learning, including professional development regarding social and emotional learning, beginning the implementation of a Responsive Classroom for grade PreK-5, Positive Behavior Intervention and Support in grades 3-8, and the acquisition of alternative seating and noise-reducing equipment for students in grades 1-5.
- The district has invested significant professional development and capital in a digital learning program from kindergarten to 12th grade including the Middle-High School’s Bring-Your-Own-Device (BYOD) program, which has contributed to the continued implementation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).
• Over the past several years, the administration has completed a number of independent external reviews in areas it was looking to benchmark and strengthen including literacy, special education, security, and the middle school. These reviews have resulted in changes to curriculum, staffing and professional development.

Needs and challenges for Schools:

• Stakeholder input collected as part of the Cohasset Public Schools Strategic Plan 2016-2021 cited finances as the number one challenge facing the school district.

• Although school facilities are in overall good condition, all of the school buildings are approaching 20 years since construction or last major renovation. Major intermediate repairs, such as roof replacements, and more general operational maintenance projects will need to be planned for and financed over the coming years.

Cohasset students also have the opportunity to pursue their primary or secondary education outside of the Cohasset Public School District through additional public school offerings. Although located outside of Cohasset, the educational institutions described below represent regional assets to which Cohasset students have access.

**SOUTH SHORE VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL SCHOOL**

The South Shore Vocational Technical High School (SSVT) provides high quality technical education through “rigorous and relevant hands-on instructional experiences,” which prepares its students for post-secondary entrance into direct workforce employment, college education, or a combination of the two. SSVT students can choose from 13 vocational technical majors offered by the school, including: Allied Health, Automotive Technology, Automotive Collision Technology, Carpentry, Computer Information Technology, Cosmetology, Culinary, Electrical, Design & Visual Communications/Graphic Communications, Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration, Horticulture & Landscape Construction, Manufacturing Engineering Technologies, and Welding & Metal Fabrication. SSVT students have provided assistance in a number of facility projects in Cohasset, including installing new air conditioning in the recreation center in 2010.

The school is located in Hanover, MA and serves students from eight district towns: Abington, Cohasset, Hanover, Hanson, Norwell, Rockland, Scituate, and Whitman. Each district town is represented by a member on the South Shore Regional District’s School Committee, which oversees SSVT. In the 2017-2018 school year, three of the school’s 650 students were from Cohasset.

**SOUTH SHORE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL**

The South Shore Charter Public School (SSCPS) serves students in kindergarten through twelfth grades who are drawn from over 24 sending districts, including Cohasset. In accordance with the school’s mission, SSCPS provides students with a strong academic foundation, requires participating in service learning and community service, and empowers students to actively participate in the governance of the school. The school operates across three proximate buildings located in the Town of Norwell, with one building housing K-8 classrooms, a separate high school building, and a space dedicated to physical education and art programming. In the 2017-2018 school year, three of the school’s over 925 students were from Cohasset.

As a Commonwealth Charter School, SSCPS is publically funded and operates under a charter granted
by the Commonwealth’s Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. The school is governed by an independent board of trustees - comprised of parents, community members, and a student - which reports to the state Department of Education. Admission to the school is awarded through a randomized enrollment lottery, to which prospective students must apply. The lottery for the 2018-2019 academic year received 1,161 applications for 125 available seats.

NORFOLK COUNTY AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL

The Norfolk County Agricultural High School is a public high school located in Walpole, MA, which prepares students for occupations or additional education related to agriculture, agriscience, agribusiness, the care and management of animals, horticulture, forestry, and environmental science. The school is open to student residents of Norfolk County, which includes Cohasset, as well as non-resident students who do not have access to a specialized agriculture program in their home district. Prospective students must submit an application and attend an Admissions Program where they participate in a personal interview. In the 2017-2018 academic year, 550 students were enrolled at the school.

Town and School District Facilities

TOWN BUILDINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Year Built, Renovated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town Hall</td>
<td>41 Highland Avenue</td>
<td>1857, 1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Safety Building</td>
<td>44-62 Elm Street</td>
<td>1962, 1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Pratt Memorial Library</td>
<td>39 Ripley Road</td>
<td>1926, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Center</td>
<td>91 Sohier Street</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Public Works Facility</td>
<td>91 Cedar Street</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation Center</td>
<td>25 Parkingway</td>
<td>Early 1900s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harbormaster’s Building</td>
<td>Lightkeeper’s Lane</td>
<td>1950s (approx.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 59: Town Buildings

TOWN HALL

Cohasset Town Hall, located at 41 Highland Avenue, serves as the administrative center for Cohasset Town Government, housing the Town’s leadership, including the Town Manager and many of the Town’s department heads. Departments housed in Town Hall include Planning, Building, Engineering & Project Management, the Board of Health, Conservation Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Finance, Treasurer-Collector, Town Clerk (an elected role) and Assessor’s offices. Two separately constructed but connected buildings compose the existing Town Hall structure. The Historic Town Hall, originally constructed in 1857, contains a large and historic auditorium which accounts for much of its space. The more recently constructed addition to the facility, built in 1987, includes the majority of offices for Town Staff.

Over the past 10 years, three studies have evaluated the condition of the facility and recommended the
replacement or substantial renovation of Town Hall due to significant structural and functional deficits. Many of the building systems – including plumbing, electric, HVAC, and fire suppression – have reached the end of their operational lives; the exterior of the building has suffered water damage leading to rotting wood and peeling paint; and the facility lacks adequate office, meeting, and bathroom space.

In November 2016, the Town Manager established the Town Hall Renovation Advisory Committee (THRAC) to advance the goal of addressing these deficiencies. The THRAC met regularly through 2017, and submitted a warrant article to a December 2017 Special Town Meeting requesting funding for schematic design documents. Subsequent to a successful Town Meeting vote, the Board of Selectmen adopted the THRAC, renaming it to the Town Hall Building Committee (THBC), in order to provide a series of objectives to guide the project's development and direction. At Annual Town Meeting in April 2018, voters approved a warrant article authorizing $12.5 million in funding to renovate the historic Town Hall, including the building of a new addition, by a margin of 253 to 90 – earning the two-thirds majority required to pass. However, needed support to obtain an $8.5 million bond was voted down at Town Election 633-572.

The Board of Selectmen are continuing to work with the Town Manager to evaluate the causes underlying the unsuccessful vote and to consider multiple scenarios for the project moving forward. In December 2018, the Board of Selectmen reaffirmed their commitment to the overarching project objectives, including: 1) Town Hall remain on the Town Common, 2) Town Hall should be a safe, functional, flexible, and accessible space, 3) the historic portion of the Town Hall structure should be restored and preserved for future generations, and 4) the Town seeks community partners in the restoration of the 1857 historic structure, including financial assistance. A fifth objective – that the budget for town hall be reasonable, prudent, and consistent with the 10-year capital plan – was amended and approved to include a provision that the project budget be “governed by Town’s ability to fund such construction with a net neutral tax impact on the residents of the town.”

As part of the ongoing commitment to complete the full restoration, voters at Special Town Meeting in December 2018 approved up to $20,000 for the design of a roof replacement for Historic Town Hall.

PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING

The Cohasset Public Safety Building, located at 64 Elm Street, serves as the headquarters for both the Cohasset Police Department and Cohasset Fire Department. The one story building was originally built in 1962 as two separate buildings that were renovated and connected to each other in late 1980s to provide additional office and housing space for the two departments. In recent years, the Facilities Department has undertaken a variety of projects to improve the building’s infrastructure and layout. Significant improvements completed since 2013 include the installation of new doors and windows, the replacement of outdated electrical panels, as well as the creation of a new police evidence room and new office space for Fire Department leadership. Through the town's capital planning process, the Facilities Department has highlighted repairs to the Public Safety Building’s roof and the replacement of its standby generator as potential capital improvements in the next five years.

Although Cohasset has invested in the maintenance and adaptation of the Public Safety Building, public safety staff have indicated that the site and size of the facility present challenges to their work. Both Police and Fire Department leadership have expressed their interest in working with the relevant Town committees and departments to explore the feasibility of a developing new public safety building. However, any plans for future facility replacement must be balanced against competing demands for capital funds and decided in line with the Town’s higher level goals and objectives.

LIBRARY

The Paul Pratt Memorial Library building, located at 39 Ripley Road, contains the Library and the
Recreation Department. The building was originally built in 1926 as the Joseph Osgood School. When the school was decommissioned following the construction of the new Joseph Osgood School in 1998, the Town formed an Osgood School Re-use Committee, which considered transforming the property into senior housing or turning it over to the Library, with Town Meeting voting for the Library option. The Library Trustees were able to raise over $1.1 million from private gifts for the Library Building Fund, which combined with a state grant for $1.5 million, and the proceeds of the sale from the former library. In 2015, the Recreation Department moved into the ground floor and second floor of the rear addition, which provides office and programming space. The Recreation Department has also identified the development of a second basketball court on site and the addition of the grass field behind the building to the DPW maintenance plan as opportunities to better suit the site to their needs. The Town playground behind the building is targeted for upgrades designed to bring the space into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Currently the playground’s ground cover material is composed of woodchips, which poses access challenges to individuals with mobility limitations; remediation will involve replacing the ground cover with a poured rubber surface, which will provide an ADA compliant route to and through the playground. Although both departments would benefit from additional space, the building is in good repair. In 2016, the Facilities Department painted the outside trim and upgraded the lighting to LED. The Facilities Department also completed roof repairs in 2016, but the slate roof has reached the end of its life and will need to be replaced in the near term.

SENIOR CENTER

The Cohasset Senior Center, named Wilcutt Commons, (91 Sohier St) is the newest Town facility, housing the Elder Affairs Department, the Veteran's Officer, an office for the Public Health Nurse, and the Social Service League of Cohasset (SSL) offices. Constructed with private funds collected by the SSL in 2015, the Town purchased the building for use as a Senior Center in 2016. The 10,000 sq. ft. building includes a large community room, smaller conference and activity rooms, offices, and a common room with comfortable seating and a pool table. Although the building’s usage is dedicated to seniors, since its opening Wilcutt Commons has served as a vital community resource for many civic purposes.

PUBLIC WORKS FACILITY

The Public Works Facility (91 Cedar Street) serves as the base of operations for the DPW's Field Operations division. The main building includes office space and workstations for the Superintendent and Highway, Tree, Park, and Cemetery staff. The Town's Recycling Transfer Facility and salt shed are also located on the site. Although in generally good structural condition, working conditions within the building would be improved through investment in air conditioning, the installation of a second bathroom, and the supply of materials – such as cots – which would allow staff to stay at the facility during emergencies. The 2017 Capital Improvements Budget provided $30,000 for work on one of the Recycling Transfer Facility building’s roof. The salt shed is also in poor condition and undersized; the DPW lists obtaining capital funding in anticipation for a construction bid as a goal in the proposed FY19 budget.

RECREATION

The Recreation Center (55 R South Main) is located in Town Center and provides additional programming space for the Recreation Department. Originally constructed in the early 1900s to house the Town's Highway Department, the Recreation Department moved into the space in 1998. The main room of the facility also contains five booths, fifteen cycling bikes, and a small storage room. Current
facility programming centers on playtime and short-term childcare services for children ages two to six, which is offered Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. Additional programming includes use of the facility for the Recreation Department’s dance and cycling programs, birthday parties, youth league registration events, and other Recreation Department classes. The Safe Harbor Coalition also uses the facility for its weekend Ground Level Music Cafes. Despite the building’s age, the facility is in a state of good repair and the HVAC system was rebuilt as part of a South Shore Vocational Technical High School project in 2010. The relatively small size of the building does restrict maximum class size to 15 participants and does not have any dedicated parking. The Open Space and Recreation chapter of this Master Plan provides more detail about the Recreation Department’s property and programming.

HARBORMASTER’S BUILDING

Government Island, located off of Border Street on the northeastern edge of Cohasset, includes facilities used to manage and access activities in Cohasset Harbor. Cohasset’s Harbormaster operates out of the Habormaster’s Building. The Harbormaster supervises the operations of Cohasset Harbor, including mooring management and permitting, and enforces the Cohasset Harbor rules, regulations, and bylaws. Cohasset Harbor is a highly desirable destination for permanent mooring (there is a sizeable wait list) and docking for transient boaters. The building must accommodate up to six staff during the busy summer months. However, the building’s size presents cramped working conditions, with little space for paperwork or the storage of documents related to the Harbormaster’s administrative functions. A relatively new air conditioning system has been installed, but the building lacks sufficient insulation and can become quite cold during the winter months, negatively impacting the Harbormaster’s thermal comfort in that season. Additionally, the facility does not include infrastructure, such as showers and restroom facilities, for transient boaters, which are common in most harbormaster facilities. Town officials are aware of the need to upgrade the building.

The Town of Cohasset’s 2019 Municipal Harbor Plan provides a comprehensive overview of other town owned infrastructure which support commercial and recreational activity on the waterfront, including the Parker Avenue Boat Ramp, the town piers at Margin Street and Border Street, publicly owned seawalls, and boat moorings. Improvements recommended in the Harbor Plan include the redesign of the Parker Avenue Boat Ramp to allow use throughout the tidal range; an in-depth investigation of seawall condition and design analysis for improvements; and a feasibility study and concept design for a town-owned pile supported pier balancing commercial and recreational uses. For detailed descriptions of existing conditions and recommendations, please refer to the Cohasset Municipal Harbor Plan 2019.

SCHOOL DISTRICT BUILDINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Year Build, Renovated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Osgood School</td>
<td>210 Sohier Street</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deer Hill School</td>
<td>208 Sohier Street</td>
<td>1950, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohasset Middle/High School</td>
<td>143 Pond Street</td>
<td>1950, 2004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 60: School District Buildings

JOSEPH OSGOOD SCHOOL

The Joseph Osgood School (210 Sohier Street) was built in 1998 to replace the original Joseph Osgood School on Ripley Road. In 2018-2019, 347 students in PreK to 2nd grade attended the school. The newest of the Town’s school facilities, the building is structurally in good condition and a 2015
Cohasset Master Plan – Public Facilities & Services

Parent survey found that 88% of respondents believe the “building facilities are adequate to support the instructional program.” In 2014, Town Meeting approved a $100,000 capital project to purchase a new fire system and Building Automated Controls (BAC) system to manage the HVAC for the school. Since its installation, the Facilities Department has worked through their staff and with contractors to evaluate and improve the system. In 2017, the Osgood School received significant security upgrades, including the installation of security bollards, an entrance security camera, FOB readers, and Lobby Guard machines. Other recent capital improvements include the installation of exterior LED lights and a new handicap rent. The Community Preservation Committee and Cohasset Parent School Organization (PSO) recently jointly committed funds to construct a new age appropriate and handicap accessible playground for the school which is due to be completed during the Fiscal 2020 school year.

DEER HILL SCHOOL

The Deer Hill School (208 Sohier Street) is located on the same Sohier Street campus as the Osgood School. The building dates to 1950, but underwent a substantial renovation and reconstruction in 2002. The school building houses students in Grades 3 to 5, with a total 2018-2019 enrollment of 373. Recent major facility improvements include the installation of a new hot water heater, improvements to the BAC and HVAC systems, and entrance security improvements. The building is also undergoing a continuing flooring upgrade project. The Community Preservation Committee has provided funding for ADA accessibility improvements to the school's relatively new playground.

COHASSET MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL

The Cohasset Middle/High School (143 Pond Street) was constructed in 1950 and also underwent substantial renovations and reconstruction as part a larger school facilities reorganization process in the early 2000s. The renovation reconfigured the school’s design to create autonomous areas for the middle and high school student populations connected by shared central core facilities. In 2018-2019, 834 students in grades 6 to 12 grade attended school at this building. The most recent facilities upgrade to the building was the reconstruction of the school library as a modern “Learning Commons,” which was funded through private donations to the Cohasset Education Foundation. Masonry contractors were also able to repoint and seal an outside brick wall which had long suffered rain water penetration at the library. The building has also benefited from other security and accessibility improvements, including the replacement of the gym lower lobby entrance doors, internal/external security cameras, repairs to front ramp, concrete repairs to drop-off loop, additional handicap parking, and the installation of entrance security bollards. At the direction of the Cohasset Fire Department, the school implemented a new traffic pattern to enhance student safety during the 2018-2019 school year. As part of the new plan, buses at the school will no longer enter the “loop” behind the building, and will instead circle around the former parent drop-off area. The Town is also considering funding of a comprehensive municipal and school traffic study as part Annual Town Meeting in April 2019 to further study problem transportation and circulation areas in Cohasset.

FUTURE PROJECTS

In addition to regular operational maintenance projects, over the next ten years several major intermediate construction projects on the school buildings and facilities are anticipated. Due to the similar ages of the buildings since their last major renovation or construction, each of the school building’s roofs will reach the end of their lifespans in close succession. The Town’s capital planning
estimates the cost for the three roof replacements to total $3.5 million ($1 million each for Osgood and Deer Hill, and $1.5 million for CMHS). Grant funds from the Massachusetts School Building Authority may be available to offset the total cost of the project. The Cohasset Middle/High School track and turf field will also need to be replaced in the next ten years, with cost estimates of $495,000 for the turf field and $500,000 for the track. Public-private partnerships with the Cohasset Parent School Organization, Cohasset Educational Fund, and sports boosters offer avenues to partially support these projects. Given the age of all three school buildings, sidewalks, walkways, curbs and sections of the brick masonry will also need to be redone or repaired over the next decade.

**TOWN BUILDINGS USED FOR PUBLIC UTILITIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Year Built, Renovated</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lily Pond Treatment Plant</td>
<td>339 King Street</td>
<td>1978, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellms Meadow Pumping Station</td>
<td>Off James Lane adjacent to James Brook</td>
<td>2006, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bear Hill Water Tank</td>
<td>Off Pleasant Street and Bancroft Way</td>
<td>1965, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scituate Hill Water Tank</td>
<td>Off Route 3A</td>
<td>2001, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wastewater Treatment Plant</td>
<td>43 Elm Street</td>
<td>1979, 2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 61: Town Buildings Used for Public Utilities

**WATER DEPARTMENT**

The Cohasset Water Department provides drinking water and water for fire protection to approximately 90% of Cohasset. A three member, elected Board of Water Commissioners oversees the Water Department and water system, with the Town Manager sharing joint financial oversight and the Director of Public Works providing supplemental professional oversight. The water system has been operated under contract by Woodard & Curran since 2012. The most recent contract extension with Woodard & Curran was approved in February 2018 and extends to June 2021.

The Water Department has developed a long-range capital improvements program for its water supply infrastructure and water distribution system. In 2015, Annual Town Meeting approved a water rate restructuring based on a professional rate study which projected rates out five years and included future borrowing for needed capital improvements. The anticipated capital improvements are primarily regulatory driven with an end goal of improving water quality, fire suppression abilities and the integrity of the water system assets. Capital projects are expected to be funded by the Water Capital Stabilization Fund, retained earnings, and possibly loan procurement.

The town’s water supply system consists of both surface water and groundwater sources. Lily Pond serves as the town’s primary water source. Water from the Aaron River Reservoir can be diverted to Lily Pond in times of high water demand using an adjustable gate on Beechwood Street, referred to as the Bound Brook Control Structure. Water drawn from Lily Pond is treated for distribution at the **Lily Pond Treatment Plant** (339 King Street), which was constructed in 1978. In addition to the treatment equipment, the plant’s facilities include a full size laboratory and the Cohasset Water Department’s administrative offices, consisting of a secretarial office, superintendent’s office, construction manager’s office, conference room, personnel room and engineering office. In 2017, the Water Department replaced the building’s failing lower roof and the capital improvement plan lists the replacement of the...
upper roof as a proposed project for 2020. The Water Department anticipates requesting funding for a more complete needs assessment of the water treatment plant in 2022.

A wellfield at Ellms Meadow offers a critical groundwater supplement to the supply system. Water from the Ellms Meadow wellfield is drawn by the Ellms Meadow Pumping Station, which was constructed in 2006 to reactivate the then out of service wellfield. Ellms Meadow produces the highest quality, lowest costing water in the system, due to the intensive treatment required of surface water. While the wellfield’s total contribution to the supply has historically been limited by the pumping station’s seasonal operation, in 2016 the pumping station’s wellheads were insulated to allow for year round use, water levels permitting.

The Cohasset water distribution system consists of approximately 40 miles of water mains, two water storage tanks, 524 hydrants, and 2,637 service connections. In addition to regular maintenance and emergency repairs, the Water Department has undertaken a number of water distribution capital improvements in recent years. In 2017, the Water Department awarded a contract to be paid for with retained earnings for the looping of the water main from Lincoln Lane to Ledgewood Farm Drive, a project which had been on the Water Department’s capital improvement plan for more than 10 years. Future water main replacements – most significantly along Rt. 3A from Beechwood to the town line – represent a large share of the Water Department’s planned capital improvements. The Town has also invested in maintaining other critical components of their water distribution infrastructure, specifically the 2 million gallon Bear Hill Water Tank and the 1.8 million gallon Scituate Hill Water Tank. Both water tanks have been targeted for rehabilitation in recent years, with work covering interior cleaning, repairs to the coating system, and exterior painting. The Bear Hill project was completed in 2016, and work on the Scituate Hill Tank commenced in late 2018.

About 10% of Cohasset’s water service is provided by Aquarion Water Company, a private company which operates a regional system including Hingham, Hull, and a portion of North Cohasset. As of 2017, Aquarion supplied water to 334 connections in Cohasset. Hingham’s water company has been privately owned since its incorporation in 1879, but a local statute reserves the Town’s right to purchase the water company at any time. In 2012, the Town of Hingham initiated a study to examine the feasibility of the Town purchasing the water company, due to concerns over comparatively high water rates, underinvestment in capital, service disruptions, and a desire for greater Town control of the water supply and distribution infrastructure. The Town of Hingham’s Town Meeting voted to approve the purchase of the water company at 2019 Annual Town Meeting, by a vote of 1,482 to 382. Although Hull and Cohasset residents were not able to participate in the Town Meeting vote, officials from both towns had expressed support for the acquisition. The Town of Hingham will contract with a third-party water system operator to manage the systems operations. The Town will also hire a water superintendent to oversee the water system operation company, with the Town of Hingham’s Board of Selectmen serving as water commissioners. A citizens advisory board – comprised of three Hingham residents, one Hull resident, and one Cohasset resident – will advise the Board of Selectmen.

**SEWER DEPARTMENT**

The Town of Cohasset’s Sewer Department is overseen by a three member, elected Sewer Commission which is responsible for establishing and implementing the policies which manage the Town’s sewage collection system and wastewater treatment plant. The Town Manager shares joint financial oversight of the Sewer Enterprise Fund, and the Director of Public Works provides supplemental professional oversight. Woodard & Curran, which also manages Water Department operations, was awarded the contract to operate the wastewater treatment plant and collection system in 2018. The term of the contract is five (5) years with the possibility of three separate extensions of two years each, for a possible maximum total of eleven (11) years.
Cohasset’s **Wastewater Treatment Plant** (43 Elm Street) was constructed in 1978 with a capacity for treating 72,000 gallons per day (gpd) serving approximately 200 connections in the town center. In order to keep pace with the increased number of connections and service volume, the facility was upgraded and expanded in 2000. Although the WWTP’s location in Jacob’s Meadow, an extensive wetland resource area, limited the expansion of the facility’s physical footprint, the treatment plant’s design capacity was expanded to 300,000 gpd through the retrofitting of the facility’s aeration tanks with an innovative membrane technology. Using newly upgraded membranes, the WWTP was again expanded in 2009 to its current design capacity of 450,000 gpd. As a result of the upgrade, the Town has an existing excess treatment capacity of 150,000 gpd. The Sewer Department plans to replace the membranes in 2021, at a cost of $1.3 million. Retained earnings and debt stabilization funds are projected to cover approximately two-thirds of the project expense. Annual Town Meeting in 2017 approved a 10% sewer rate increase to cover the remaining cost without needing to bond the project.

The expansion of the Wastewater Water Treatment Plant has been tied to the growth of Cohasset’s sewer collection system. In response to legal action brought against the Town by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts under the Clean Water Act, the Town agreed to expand the collection system to address failing septic systems and their adverse environmental impact. In addition to increasing connections in the Central Cohasset Sewer District, in 2000 the Town created the North Cohasset Sewer District whose flow was directed first to Hingham and then to Hull under the terms of an intermunicipal agreement. More recently, the Sewer Commissioners determined Cohasset’s WWTP could treat the wastewater more cost effectively and the North Cohasset District now sends their flow through the Cohasset system. Following the completion the Little Harbor expansion project in 2009, the Town fully satisfied the Commonwealth’s Second Amended Final Judgment. The sewer of the Little Harbor Judgement District, with connections completed in 2013, resulted in 465 additional residential connections. In 2016, there were a total of 1,594 sewer service accounts, primarily residences, but also including municipal users and some commercial. The North Cohasset Sewer District accounts for 108 properties, while 1,473 were in the Central Cohasset Sewer District.

**Regional Sewer**

The Towns of Cohasset, Hull, and Scituate are currently studying the feasibility of creating a regional wastewater system between the three towns. North Scituate, one of Scituate’s commercial centers bordering Cohasset, does not currently receive any sewer service, which has severely constrained development opportunities. The wastewater treatment plants in Cohasset and Hull both have excess treatment capacity which could potentially accommodate flow from North Scituate, if a collection system were developed and tied into existing networks. The North Cohasset collection system and the Little Harbor-Atlantic Avenue collection systems were constructed with a number of valves that would allow flow to either or both of the Hull or Cohasset treatment plants. Planned improvements to the Town of Hull’s wastewater treatment plant would greatly increase its treatment capacity – from 1.3 million gallons per day (mgdp) to 3.0 mgpd - and accepting increased flow from surrounding communities would support operational and capital expenses. While the Town of Cohasset’s WWTP has an existing excess capacity of 150,000 gpd, diverting wastewater to Hull could allow for the extension of sewer service within Cohasset without overburdening its treatment system.

The extension of sewer service to North Scituate offers potential environmental and economic benefit to the Town of Cohasset. Currently, some properties in North Scituate have older septic systems which drain into the Gulf River and outflow of polluted water from the Gulf River significantly contributes to pollution in Cohasset Harbor. Early discussions have proposed running a sewer line along the portion of Rt. 3A in Cohasset, which is targeted for roadwork in the coming years and would simplify installation.
Connecting commercial properties along 3A to the sewer system would support existing business which have struggled with septic issues and allow the potential for more intensive development that grows the tax base. Participation would also allow for Cohasset to benefit from regional cost sharing. Of course, engagement in the regional system would also incur costs. Preliminary studies of the feasibility of extending a sewer line along Rt. 3A from Ledgewood estimate a project cost of approximately $30 million, although cost estimates are subject to change as the project evolves. Multiple parties within Town Government will work together and with Town residents to define and communicate the costs and benefits of the project, as well as how they will be distributed.

**TOWN BUILDINGS LEASED TO NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Year Built, Renovated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lightkeeper’s Cottage</td>
<td>15 Lightkeepers Lane</td>
<td>1858, 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hagerty House at Mariner’s Park/</td>
<td>40 Parker Avenue</td>
<td>1860, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for Student Coastal Research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George H. Mealy</td>
<td>143 Pond Street</td>
<td>1950, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Legion Post 118</td>
<td>98 Summer Street</td>
<td>1820</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 62: Town Buildings Leased to Nonprofit Organizations

The Town of Cohasset owns several properties which are leased to nonprofit organizations for private, civic, and educational uses. The managing organizations assume responsibility for general upkeep and maintenance, but the Town is actively exploring processes to conduct more regular audits assessing the condition of the facilities and to support the protection of these important community assets.

Located on Government Island, Cohasset’s **Lightkeeper’s Cottage** (15 Lightkeepers Lane) was constructed in 1858 to house the keeper of Minot’s Ledge Light. The building underwent restoration and remodeling in 1993 using funding raised by the nonprofit Cohasset Lightkeepers Corporation. The renovation allowed for reoccupation of the home through the construction of two apartments upstairs. The downstairs of the facility contains a hall for use by the community as a site for civic meetings and private events such as weddings.

The Town of Cohasset purchased the former Hagerty Company property, which included a historic home on site, along Parker Avenue in 1993 to provide citizens with greater waterfront access. The **Cohasset Center for Student Coastal Research (CSCR)** took over the historic home in 2002. The CSCR engages students in scientific research projects that serve environmental research needs of municipalities in the greater Cohasset Harbor Watershed. CSCR invested in the restoration of the building upon moving into the space and later paid for its repainting. In 2010, Town Meeting approved using Community Preservation Funds to perform restorative work to correct storm water damage and preserve the structure’s integrity.

Founded in the wake of World War I, the American Legion is a wartime veterans organization with nearly 15,000 local posts throughout the United States. Cohasset’s Post 118, chartered in 1935 and named to honor the first Cohasset soldier killed in World War I, provides services to local veterans and their families through fundraisers, food drives, and scholarship programs. The Post, each year,
organizes and hosts Cohasset’s annual Memorial Day Parade and related activities including an annual Field of Honor display of the Stars and Stripes. The **George H. Mealy American Legion Post 118** (98 Summer Street) operates as the local post headquarters. In the early 20th century, other local organizations such as the Guild Band – a brass band made up of young people – and the Volunteer Veteran Firemen’s Association used the building as a gathering space. The Town of Cohasset originally received the property as a gift and it is deed restricted from subsequent sale. The American Legion now operates the post under a nominal lease with the Town. Although the American Legion is a membership based organization for veterans who served on active duty during periods of conflict, the building is open to the public and has an upstairs function room available to rent for private events.

### Community Engagement

Town of Cohasset residents were invited to review and comment upon the existing conditions and future goals for the Town of Cohasset’s public facilities and services at a public forum on May 9, 2018.

Participants at the Public Forum were asked to prioritize higher level planning objectives guiding the Town’s stewardship of its public facilities and services; each participant was provided with three votes, which could be spread across different priorities or concentrated in one. “Collaborating with external partners to meet facility needs” and “increasing regional collaboration” tied as the highest priorities with six votes each.

For general town facilities, participants were invited to make general comments about what they appreciate about Cohasset’s public facilities and how they could be improved. Commenters indicated they appreciated the efforts of the Town’s Garden Club to develop and maintain the landscaping of the Senior Center and Lightkeeper’s Cottage, and were pleased with the how the new Senior Center was being utilized. Commenters suggested that the Town should explore replacing the Harbormaster’s Building and the Public Safety Facility. Other suggestions encouraged the Town to work more closely with nonprofit partners, such as the Cohasset Center for Student Coastal Research, to find efficiencies related to building maintenance and procurement of maintenance services.

Participants were invited to rank their preferred planning prioritizes for school facilities. Enhancing the energy efficiency of school facilities emerged as the top priority, closely followed by the continued performance of routine operational maintenance made in line with the school district’s capital plan, specifically the repair of concrete sidewalks at all three buildings. Other comments received related to logistical and potential safety issues for student’s transportation to school.

Information summarizing the anticipated Town Hall renovation was also presented. In addition to displaying schematic designs and surveying the facility’s existing deficiencies and planned...
improvements, the public process supporting the project was also highlighted. A month prior to the public forum, residents at Town Meeting had voted to authorize funding to complete design and engineering work for the renovation of the historic Town Hall and the construction of a new addition. Consequently, feedback regarding the project was not collected due to advanced state of the renovation planning. Ultimately voters at Town Election declined to approve a debt exclusion financing the project, and Town leadership are currently evaluating possible paths forward for the project.

Public Facilities & Services Goals and Recommendations

Goal 1: Ensure Cohasset’s public infrastructure and facilities meet community and departmental needs

Regular assessment of and investment in the Town of Cohasset’s physical facilities are required to support the efficient operation of the staff who rely on them and their use as community resources. Efforts to maintain and improve Cohasset’s public facilities should continue to be guided by well-developed capital planning and budgeting processes which identify future needs, as well as wants, while offering a framework to evaluate individual priorities in the context of Town wide planning activities. Building community buy-in and support for both discrete projects and the Town’s overarching capital objectives should be a core component of capital planning.

Strategy 1.1: Maintain and refine the Town’s capital planning and implementation processes

Recently, the Capital Budget Committee has begun to develop an updated prioritization model, which would allow for the scoring and weighting of received requests based on common language and parameters. The Committee has agreed the overall concept is positive, and will work further to clarify the evaluation criteria, scoring descriptions, and weighting method.

Strategy 1.2: Plan for the renovation or replacement of facilities whose size, condition, and/or location inhibit the efficient operation of the Town staff and citizens who rely on them

The Town should continue efforts to develop a plan for a renewed Town Hall, due to its significant state of disrepair and its centrality to the Town’s governmental functioning and civic life. Other facilities which merit further assessment and possible action in the near term include the Public Safety Building and the Harbormaster’s Building.

Strategy 1.3: Continue to identify and proactively address maintenance concerns which do not yet rise to the level requiring capital improvement funding

The Facilities Department relies on Town funding to complete projects raised by the Town Manager and department heads that fall outside the scope of line items or capital projects. The predictable availability of sufficient funding for these projects supports preventive maintenance and strategic facilities planning, and can save the Town money in the long term.
Strategy 1.4: Consider department’s capital assets portfolio holistically and evaluate opportunities to share or transfer resources between departments

- The Town of Cohasset’s Police and Fire departments replace their vehicles according to a regular fleet management schedule. As vehicles roll-off, the Town should consider whether they are suitable for use by other departments and whether their re-use is permitted under the Green Communities Act.
- The Facilities Department staff would benefit from having access to a dedicated workspace outside of their workshop in the Town’s elementary school. The Town should explore whether underutilized space at the Lily Pond Water Treatment Plant could be adapted for their use.

Strategy 1.5: Upgrade the technology infrastructure of public buildings to improve their operations

The installation of a municipal wide area network in 2016 has provided the town with a modern and high-speed communication infrastructure foundation. As the Information Technology Service’s (ITS) department pursues the development of a strategic technology plan for departments town wide, opportunities to maximize departmental use of the municipal network should be explored. Potential examples include the upgrading of camera surveillance and security systems.

Strategy 1.6: In addition to attaining or maintaining compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), consider designing public facilities in line with the principles of universal design (UD), also called inclusive design, which seeks to create spaces that can be used by all people, regardless of their age, size, disability or ability

The Town should implement its plans to bring the Library/Rec Center Playground into compliance with the ADA, including the installation of a compliant route to and through the playground. During the design phase, the Town should consider how modifications to the playground can be made to meet the needs of the widest spectrum of users.

Goal 2: Secure and supply adequate resources to provide high quality facilities, services, and programs that serve the needs of Cohasset’s residents

The Town of Cohasset’s government and community partners provide a broad array of services and programs to promote the health, safety, and welfare of the town and its residents. Effective service delivery relies on the availability and provision of operational resources, such as sufficient funding, personnel, and access to appropriate work space. Town leadership, staff, volunteers, and citizens should work together to identify existing resource deficiencies and pursue opportunities to enhance their supply.

Strategy 2.1: Continue to foster relationships between the Town government and community partner organizations and share resources to aid each in the fulfillment of their missions

- As the Town and school district develop plans to replace the turf field and track at the Middle/
High School, organizations including the Cohasset Education Foundation and the Cohasset Parent School Organization should be engaged as partners to attract private financial and other support for the project.

- The Town should continue to support the work of public service organizations, such as the Safe Harbor Cohasset Coalition, by working together to identify Town facilities available for work and programming space.

**Strategy 2.2: Encourage and support the continued pursuit of grant funding and other alternative financing strategies**

Cohasset was successfully designated as a Green Community under the Department of Energy Resources’ (DOER) Green Communities program in 2015. In the first two years, the Town received $318,000 of state-funded grants to implement energy efficiency projects in schools and municipal buildings in the Town. The Town plans to continue applying for additional grants in future years, to complete other identified priority projects and continue to save energy and money in Town-owned facilities.

**Strategy 2.3: When evaluating capital purchase requests for specialized equipment, gains to staff productivity and work efficiency should be considered in addition to the base cost**

The Department of Public Works relies on capital equipment to fulfill many of its regular duties, such as tree work and snow removal. Investing in more expensive, but better suited, equipment can reduce the labor hours required to complete specific tasks and allow for higher productivity.

**Strategy 2.4: Continue to support the “One Community” initiative to foster resource sharing with all departments in Town to economically use tax revenue**

In FY20, the Town and schools are exploring a combined custodial services model in order to realize efficiencies and achieve savings.

**Goal 3: Enhance communication and improve transparency of town processes**

The Town of Cohasset has made significant progress in recent years in developing the processes and infrastructure necessary to coordinate and streamline work across departments. The Town has also made a concerted effort to more fully and effectively communicating the process and intentions behind governmental action, which is required to develop trust within an engaged and informed citizenry. In order to create operational efficiencies, strengthen the economical use of time and financial resources, and develop popular and legislative support for Town priorities, the Town should continue seeking ways to strengthen working relationships within and between Town departments, boards, committees, and the broader public.

**Strategy 3.1: Continue to disseminate information on town processes through all channels of communication**
As one part of a broader engagement strategy, the Cohasset Master Plan Committee strategically used social media to regularly engage stakeholders through the provision of project updates and the solicitation of public input. They also used their social media presence to promote related planning efforts, such as the Harbor Plan and Housing Production Plan. Using social media allowed for the monitoring of engagement levels and analysis of received input.

**Strategy 3.2: Increase coordination between Town committees and boards**

When appointing members to advisory committees, the appointing authority should attempt to develop a membership which includes liaisons from related boards and committees.

**Strategy 3.3: Utilize established and emerging technologies to improve inter-department and intra-department communication**

The Town has adopted electronic permitting modules for the Building & Inspections Department and Town Clerk. Efforts are currently underway to expand electronic permitting to the Planning Department. The Town should evaluate the use of these programs, and if successful, continue expanding to additional departments including Conservation and Public Safety.

**Goal 4: Explore collaborative solutions to address regional issues facing the Town of Cohasset and neighboring communities**

Working with neighboring communities and regional partners allow municipalities to increase the efficient utilization of their resources and tackle problems whose origins and effects spread across administrative boundaries. Cohasset has a strong track record of regional partnership, including the creation of the South Shore Regional Emergency Dispatch Center (SSRECC) and the institution of intermunicipal agreements for regional water and sewer service. The Town should continue to identify opportunities to develop and access shared resources and evaluate their benefit to the Town and the region.

**Strategy 4.1: Work with surrounding communities to increase Cohasset’s resilience against the effects of climate change**

While the breakwater protecting Cohasset Cove is technically located in Scituate, its maintenance and continued performance are critical to protecting assets within Cohasset from flooding. Cohasset should continue working with the Town of Scituate to ensure that the breakwater is properly maintained and evaluated for the projected increase in regular tides and storm surges based on projected sea level rise resulting from climate change.

**Strategy 4.2: Identify opportunities to coordinate with neighboring towns in addressing the environmental and other impacts of development in adjacent areas**

The Town should continue working with Hull and Scituate to determine the costs and benefits of creating a regional sewer system. Such a system has the potential to significantly reduce pollution in the Gulf River attributable to faulty septic systems in North Scituate, which currently does not receive sewer service.
Strategy 4.3: Continue, and consider expanding, participation in collective purchasing programs for capital equipment to benefit from economies of scale and save staff time

The Cohasset Police Department has purchased vehicles through the Greater Boston Police Council’s police vehicle cooperative purchasing contract administered by MAPC, and were satisfied with the pricing and service.
Energy & Sustainability

TOWN OF COHASSET 2019 MASTER PLAN
**Introduction**

Sustainability, climate change, and energy use has been a topic of interest to the Town for many years. This commitment was solidified by the formation of the Alternative Energy Committee (AEC) in 2005. The AEC is the Town’s driving force towards reducing energy use and implementing other projects such as renewable energy and electric vehicles. AEC leaders coordinate with the Town Manager, Board of Selectmen, and School Committee, among others, to build support for these initiatives and bring projects to fruition.

Notably, Cohasset was successfully designated as a Green Community under the Department of Energy Resources’ (DOER) Green Communities program in 2015. In the first two years, the Town received $318,000 of state-funded grants to implement energy efficiency projects in schools and municipal buildings in the Town. The Town plans to continue applying for additional grants in future years, to complete other identified priority projects and continue to save energy and money in Town-owned facilities.

Energy use has dramatic effects on both budgets and the environment, at local and global scales. Total energy costs represent a significant portion of annual Town spending, and offer a corresponding prospect for savings. This chapter explores the current use of energy by the municipality, as well as its residents and commercial establishments; and opportunities for improvement across many sectors.

As a coastal community, Cohasset is particularly cognizant of the need to plan for and adapt to changing climate conditions and rising sea levels. Environmental impacts relate closely to both public health and climate impacts, which Cohasset is particularly sensitive to as a coastal community. Impacts of the changing climate in Cohasset will include increased risks of flooding, severe storms, drought, and extreme heat. Associated challenges will include power outages, infrastructure damage, and impacts to transportation and communication throughout Cohasset and the region. This chapter and the soon-to-be published Cohasset Municipal Harbor Plan also touches on climate change and related resiliency efforts taking place in the town.

**Key Findings**

- Participation in the DOER Green Communities program has helped Cohasset better track its energy use and provide significant grants to fund energy-saving projects. Cohasset will need to pay careful attention to and monitor energy use to ensure that recently implemented measures perform as expected and deliver substantial savings. Energy efficiency should be a top consideration in any building construction or renovation project going forward.

- Cohasset’s municipal landfill solar project represents a great success for the Town’s budget and the environment. Serious consideration should be given to constructing additional solar projects, particularly rooftop arrays, whenever a municipal roof is replaced or updated. Opportunities to further promote residential and commercial solar installations should also be pursued.

- Cohasset’s coastal location leaves it particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and sea level rise. Cohasset should continue its planning processes to prepare for the specific severe weather possibilities, and include consideration of climate change and rising sea level in all local planning and permitting processes.

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1 https://www.cohassetma.org/288/Alternative-Energy-Committee
Municipal Energy Profile

Energy Use

The Town uses Mass Energy Insight (MEI), an online tool provided by DOER, to track municipal energy use. MEI tracks total municipal energy consumption across all facilities, buildings, and vehicles; which includes tracking the Town’s use of electricity, natural gas, oil, gasoline, and diesel, along with renewable energy.

The Town’s energy use has seen a net decrease of 0.4 percent since its baseline year, as based on FY 2018 data (although usage spiked higher in 2015 - 2017). The bulk of the previous increase came from an increase in gas use at the Cohasset High School/Middle School in FY16. The Town is monitoring and investigating this building to determine the cause of this increase.

### Municipal Energy Use by Facility Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Baseline MMBtu</th>
<th>Year 1 MMBtu</th>
<th>Year 2 MMBtu</th>
<th>Year 3 MMBtu</th>
<th>Year 4 MMBtu</th>
<th>Category Use by %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buildings</td>
<td>36,582</td>
<td>38,416</td>
<td>42,209</td>
<td>38,960</td>
<td>35,094</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Space</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>&lt; 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street &amp; Traffic Lights</td>
<td>901</td>
<td>902</td>
<td>886</td>
<td>876</td>
<td>876</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicles</td>
<td>7,257</td>
<td>7,984</td>
<td>6,877</td>
<td>5,316</td>
<td>7,286</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water/Sewer (treatment)</td>
<td>6,503</td>
<td>6,499</td>
<td>6,674</td>
<td>7,752</td>
<td>7,786</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL ENERGY CONSUMPTION</td>
<td>51,262</td>
<td>53,821</td>
<td>56,669</td>
<td>52,923</td>
<td>51,055</td>
<td>--</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent change from Baseline</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>4.99%</td>
<td>10.55%</td>
<td>3.24%</td>
<td>-0.40%</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 64: Municipal Energy Use by Facility Type

Source: FY 2018 Annual Report to DOER’s Green Communities Program

### Highest Energy Consuming Buildings, FY 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building</th>
<th>Use (MMBTU)</th>
<th>Size (Sq ft)</th>
<th>MMBTU per Sq ft</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cohasset MS/HS</td>
<td>22,229</td>
<td>220,000</td>
<td>0.101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osgood School</td>
<td>5,735</td>
<td>66,231</td>
<td>0.086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deer Hill School</td>
<td>5,724</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>0.081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>2,361</td>
<td>30,007</td>
<td>0.078</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 65: Highest Energy Consuming Buildings, FY 2017

Source: Mass Energy Insight

2 To compare use across fuels, British Thermal Units (BTUs), and millions of BTUs (MMBTUs) are used as the units of measurement
As shown by Figures 64 and 65, buildings make up by far the largest share of energy consumption on the municipal side, and among all buildings, the combined middle school/high school is the single largest user. Cohasset MS/HS consumes over three times as much energy as the next largest building, and makes up approximately half of the total energy use among municipal buildings. Additionally, this facility uses the most energy per square foot of all municipal buildings (see Figure 59 below). This makes the MS/HS the highest priority target for energy conservation measures and potential renewable energy integration.

**Energy Costs**

In order to keep municipal energy costs stable and predictable, Cohasset has entered into long term contracts for both electricity and natural gas supplied to municipal and school facilities. These contracts guarantee set costs for three year periods, allowing the Town to budget more accurately and keep energy costs relatively low.

For the last several years, the total budget for electricity and natural gas service has hovered slightly above $1 million. As the town continues to implement additional efficiency measures while holding its pricing stable, Cohasset should see fairly significant savings start to accrue. If Cohasset is successful in achieving the 20% energy reduction goal set by the Green Communities program, annual savings would be in the range of $200,000. Cohasset could potentially choose to re-invest those savings in additional efficiency measures or renewable energy projects.

**Energy Efficiency/ Green Communities**

To become a designated Green Community in 2015, Cohasset demonstrated compliance with all five criteria required by DOER’s program:

1. Provided as-of-right siting for renewable energy
2. Adopted expedited application and permitting processes for renewable energy installations
3. Established an energy use baseline of FY 2014 and developed an energy reduction action plan to achieve a 20% reduction in energy consumption within five years
4. Committed to purchase fuel-efficient vehicles for the Town’s fleet
5. Adopted the Massachusetts Stretch Energy Code for new buildings

This designation came with a $141,000 initial grant for the Town, which was used to retrofit exterior lighting in four buildings. In 2017, the Town successfully applied for its first competitive grant, receiving an additional grant to complete upgrades in two schools and the police-fire station (see Figure 68 for

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3 [https://www.mass.gov/green-communities-designation-grant-program](https://www.mass.gov/green-communities-designation-grant-program)
Cohasset Master Plan – Energy & Sustainability

10-year storm (100-year storm): The biggest storm expected in a 10 (100) year period, or the storm that has a 10% (1%) chance of happening in any given year

AEC: Cohasset’s Alternative Energy Committee

British Thermal Unit (BTU): Unit measuring power. MMBTU = 1 Million BTU

DC: Direct Current

DOER: Massachusetts Department Of Energy Resources

EIA: U.S. Energy Information Administration

EV: Electric vehicle

Kilowatt (kW): Unit measuring power, i.e. the rate at which energy is generated or used

Kilowatt hour (kWh): Unit measuring electricity use

MassCEC: Massachusetts Clean Energy Center

Mass Energy Insight (MEI): An online tool provided by DOER, to track municipal energy use

Solar Photovoltaic (Solar PV / PV): Solar powered electricity generation technology

Therms: Unit measuring natural gas use or power produced by burning 100 cubic feet of gas.

Figure 67: Energy Terminology & Acronym reference table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec-15</td>
<td>$141,460</td>
<td>Exterior lighting retrofits in three schools and one municipal facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul-17</td>
<td>$177,400</td>
<td>Upgrades in municipal facilities including Cohasset Middle-High School, Deer Hill Elementary School, and Police-Fire Station. The energy conservation measures include building optimization, demand control ventilation update, and efficient motors and variable frequency drives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$318,860</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 68: Green Communities Grant Awards to Cohasset
Source: DOER Green Communities Summary, December 2017

details on both grants). Cohasset has chosen to focus its initial grants on building energy, since this sector represents the greatest use in municipal energy.

The first set of energy conservation projects under the Green Communities program, completed in late 2016, has already contributed to significant savings in FY 2017 & 2018, from reduced outdoor lighting load at the schools and the DPW building. The second set of projects is still in progress as of fall 2018.

The Town should see some noticeable savings from the projects during the second half of FY 2019, and will benefit from the full expected savings during FY 2020, driving the overall town-wide usage down.

Each year, all Green Communities have the opportunity to apply for up to $250,000 in competitive grant funding under the program. To continue making progress towards the Town’s energy reduction commitment, Cohasset intends to continue applying for grants to fund additional energy conservation measures in future years.

The Town’s Energy Reduction Plan from October 2015 lays out the full details of all proposed energy conservation measures in Town-owned buildings and schools, as informed by audits done at the time. Both the plan and the audits should be used as references when planning for future projects.

As mentioned above, Cohasset MS/HS is both the largest and the most energy-intensive building in the Town, and it is therefore advised that Cohasset target this building with additional Green Communities funding/projects. The building was originally constructed in 1950, and was renovated in 2000. The energy and monetary savings from the upgrades completed in late 2018 should be fully realized in the 2019/2020 school year, but there are still more opportunities yet to be completed, as outlined in the energy reduction plan. Measures could also include programs to educate building staff, students, and teachers to encourage behavioral changes and drive further savings.

Cohasset has also purchased the streetlights within the Town from National Grid, in order to retrofit the existing lights with LEDs to significantly reduce energy use and costs. The Town completed a full audit and inventory of existing lights, then installed pilot LED fixtures for residents to view and give feedback on. Full funding for the retrofit was approved at the December 2018 town meeting, and project completion is expected in the summer of 2019. Once complete, the retrofit will save the Town approximately 130,000 kWh of electricity or an estimated $30,000 per year.

Renewable Energy

On August 29, 2017, Cohasset’s “Old Landfill” solar photovoltaic (PV) array began producing power for the first time, a significant accomplishment for all parties involved. The project consists of a 515 kW DC array situated on the Town’s capped landfill, and is expected to generate an average of 667,000 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of clean energy per year. This is equivalent to about 16% of the current annual municipal electricity usage. Under a fixed price power purchase agreement, the Town will purchase the power generated at a rate of 8.8 cents/kWh, for a 20 year term, with anticipated yearly savings of

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5 https://www.cohassetma.org/288/Alternative-Energy-Committee
Town-Wide Electricity Use by Sector - 2016

- Residential: 55%
- Commercial/Industrial: 37%
- Municipal: 8%

Figure 69: Electricity Use by Sector, Mass Save Data

Town-Wide Natural Gas Use by Sector - 2016

- Residential: 43%
- Commercial/Industrial: 51%
- Municipal: 6%

Figure 70: Gas Use by Sector, Mass Save Data
$58,000, and total savings of approximately $1.5 million.

Additional opportunities for Cohasset to benefit from renewable energy include installation of a rooftop solar array at the Cohasset Middle and High School (combined building), which is currently being considered alongside the planned roof replacement project. Since the MS/HS building is the largest consumer of electricity amongst Town buildings, it makes a particularly attractive option for a rooftop solar installation. Alongside the installation of a more energy-efficient roof, this combined project would serve to significantly decrease the carbon footprint of the building, and could serve as an excellent learning opportunity for students and staff. All three school roofs are tentatively slated for replacement in the 2022-2024 time frame, and the Town hopes to receive a significant amount of outside grant funding to complete these projects. As the projects move into the planning phase, the Town should look further into the possibility of including rooftop solar arrays, if grant funding allows. If feasible, the solar array should be incorporated in each project at an early design stage to ensure compatibility, and maximize system size & benefits.

Proposals have also been floated for solar canopies over municipal parking lots, including schools, and the Town should continue exploring this option as a way to drive additional energy cost savings, and provide benefits such as shading and precipitation shielding to parking lots.

One such solar canopy project is in the works at the Cohasset MBTA station lot. Although not a Town project, this canopy will hopefully serve as a valuable educational tool, and serve to familiarize the Town and residents with the potential for such projects.

**Vehicle Fleet and Fuel Reduction**

In early 2017, the Town began addressing emissions from its municipal vehicle fleet by leasing three electric vehicles (EVs) for Town employee use, and installing a dual-head charging station in the Town Hall parking lot. Cohasset took advantage of a grant from the MA Electric Vehicle Incentive Program, which allowed the Town to lease three Nissan Leaf vehicles for a three-year term, and install the charging station, at almost no cost to the Town.

The three-year lease is serving as a pilot stage, during which time the vehicles are replacing miles which would otherwise be driven by Town employees’ personal cars, as well as substituting for an Elder Affairs van for transporting seniors to medical appointments.

Both the Town government and residents have expressed an interest in promoting electric vehicle adoption, and this was one of the main topics of conversation at the energy table during the public forum. Attendees were hopeful that the Town would both purchase additional electric vehicles, and plan to install more charging stations. Installing charging station infrastructure at all municipal and school parking lots would allow residents and visitors with EVs to have more flexibility, and encourage the adoption of additional electric vehicles amongst people who live and work in Cohasset. The Town could also consider coordinating with neighboring municipalities to install stations in strategic locations that would benefit more EV users in the region.

Cohasset is also looking into the possibility of replacing the fleet of police cruisers with hybrid vehicles, to reduce the emissions from periods of idling. Significant amounts of idling by police cruisers is often overlooked as necessary to their function, but contributes to localized emissions and lower air quality in town. Hybrid vehicles could drastically reduce the amount of time the motor runs while idling, thus reducing emissions.

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6  http://palmcap.com/portfolio/cohasset-ma/
7  http://cohasset.wickedlocal.com/news/20170302/cohasset-adopts-3-electric-cars-via-mass-incentive-program
Cohasset has expressed interest in exploring possible routes to achieve “net zero” energy use for its municipal facilities. Net zero energy use is typically achieved by minimizing use as much as possible through energy efficiency measures and use reduction strategies, and offsetting the remaining use with generation provided by renewable energy. Planning for net zero is a relatively new idea, and there are a variety of definitions currently being used to describe similar goals, and a variety of pathways to achieve these goals. For example, one of the big distinctions is whether the Town chooses to only consider electricity use, or to include heating fuels (natural gas, oil, propane), and vehicle fuels (gasoline, diesel) in its calculations and planning efforts.

For Cohasset, the recommended next steps would be to first decide which net zero definition and approach is most appropriate for the Town, and then begin research on how best to achieve the chosen goal. MAPC is working to guide municipalities in net zero efforts, and offers a variety of resources to help kick-start the process\(^8\).

\(^8\) https://www.mapc.org/net-zero/
Residential & Commercial Energy Profile

Zooming out, energy use by the Town’s facilities and vehicles is only a small fraction of the total usage in Cohasset, when considering residential and commercial energy use. The Town’s facilities use approximately 8% of the total electricity, and only 6% of the total natural gas across the entire Town. This section explores the energy use trends in the residential and commercial sectors, and opportunities for greater efficiency within each.

Residential and Commercial Energy Use

While municipalities cannot directly control the energy used by any of their residents or businesses, there are certainly ways to influence the trends in these sectors. Cohasset has already begun to play this role through participation in the Green Communities program, and can continue its leadership to reduce community-wide energy use and increase efficiency through education and outreach programs, connecting stakeholders to appropriate information and incentives.

At the 2015 Town Meeting, Cohasset adopted the Stretch Energy Code for new residential and commercial buildings, which are now required to be built to higher energy efficiency standards than under the previously general Building Code. Implementation of the Stretch Code is an important step, which serves to lower the energy use of new privately-owned buildings throughout Town.

The total electricity and natural gas usage by Cohasset residences and businesses is shown in Figures 64 and 65. While residential use has stayed relatively steady over this time period, commercial use of both electricity and natural gas spiked sharply in 2016.

Energy Efficiency

While it is natural for energy usage and costs to fluctuate slightly year to year, there should always be a goal to drive usage down when possible, to mitigate the emission of harmful pollutants. Cohasset’s residents have been proactive in taking action to address energy use in their own homes, as illustrated by their rate of participation in the MassSave program. MassSave, a statewide collaborative of Massachusetts’ natural gas and electric utilities and energy efficiency service providers, offers a variety of services and rebates to state residents to help them make energy efficiency upgrades.

According to data provided by National Grid, Cohasset residents have undertaken 1,030 home energy assessments since 2013. Following the assessments, many homes made one or more efficiency upgrades with the program’s help, including air sealing or weatherization measures, adding insulation, and upgrading water heaters, heating/cooling systems, and thermostats. MassSave also provides free LED light bulbs, advanced power strips, and water-saving sink and shower head replacements or aerators for every home assessed (Cohasset-specific statistics of these smaller measures were not available). Each of these measures offer significant energy saving opportunities for residents.

To encourage further home efficiency audits and improvements, Cohasset could consider ways to expand outreach and encourage participation - particularly among residents that may not know of the program, or may have other barriers to participation. Outreach could be targeted toward low-income residents, the elderly, Veterans, renters (who don’t have direct control over building-related decisions), and residents in multi-family buildings. Low-income residents could also benefit more from the monetary savings, as utility costs may consume a higher percentage of income, any savings are felt

9  http://www.masssavedata.com/Public/GeographicSavings?view=U
10  https://www.ecode360.com/31606873?highlight=stretch#31606873
11  https://www.masssave.com/en/about/
Energy Costs

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), Massachusetts had the second highest residential electricity rates out of any state as of April 2018; second only to Hawaii\(^{12}\). In Cohasset, residents pay an estimated total of $4.5 million for electricity on an annual basis, in addition to $3.9 million for natural gas and heating oil, for total residential energy costs of nearly $8.5 million\(^{13}\).

In addition to taking steps to increase energy efficiency and otherwise reduce energy use (discussed in the next section), cities and towns are increasingly turning to municipal aggregation (also called community choice aggregation) as a way to help residents and businesses within the community save money on electricity costs. In a municipal aggregation, a city or town contracts with an electricity supplier on behalf of residents and businesses who have not already selected a competitive supplier as an alternative to the basic service provided by the electric utility (National Grid for Cohasset). This is separate from the municipal-specific contracts referenced in the section above.

Typically, most aggregations in Massachusetts have pursued cost savings and price stability as primary goals, but MAPC has developed a strategy to help communities achieve these goals while also helping to build new renewable energy\(^{14}\). Communities participating in the Green Municipal Aggregation program typically add 5% or more additional renewable energy into their contracts (above and beyond current state requirements), helping to drive increased renewable generation capacity in New England. Cohasset should explore the option of participating in green municipal aggregation, to address both residential/commercial energy costs and associated harmful emissions from fossil fuel energy sources.

Renewable Energy

Residents of Cohasset have taken the initiative to install over 300 kW of solar photovoltaic capacity, a

\(^{12}\) https://www.eia.gov/state/rankings/?sid=MA#/series/31
\(^{13}\) https://lead.mapc.org/cities/cohasset
\(^{14}\) https://www.mapc.org/our-work/expertise/clean-energy/green-municipal-aggregation/
total of 44 separate installations, between 2010 and early 2018. The addition of a large Town-owned system (mentioned above) and a significant commercially-owned system in 2017 bring Cohasset’s total operating solar capacity to just over 900 kW.\(^\text{15}\)

With the adoption of a new solar incentive program by the State, which is significantly more complex than previous programs, there is likely to be some confusion for any residents seeking to install solar systems in future years. To help encourage the installation of new residential and commercial solar arrays, and to help educate potential buyers, the Town should consider participating in the statewide Solarize Mass program. This program educates interested residents on the costs and benefits, and helps them save money on solar installations through an incremental bulk purchasing model.\(^\text{16}\)

### Climate Preparedness and Resiliency

To begin addressing this issue, MAPC recently completed a Community Resilience Building Workshop for the Town of Cohasset, as part of the State’s Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program.\(^\text{17,18}\) Over two days, nearly 50 community members and Town staff gathered to identify key community concerns and hazards, identify present and future strengths and vulnerabilities, and incorporate these findings into proposed action steps to increase resilience in Cohasset.

The process was built on a set of assumptions about future climate conditions, including expected storm size, annual precipitation trends, and sea level rise. The amount of rainfall anticipated over a 24 hour period from a 10-year storm will increase from 4.5 inches in 1961 to 6.4 inches by the 2055-2084 timeframe. Sea levels are projected to rise between 8-22 inches by 2050, and between 23-82 inches by 2100. With such significant changes expected in the coming years, there are many considerations to plan for.

The summary report, published in June 2018, includes a wide variety of recommendations to improve

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15 [https://www.mass.gov/service-details/qualified-generation-units](https://www.mass.gov/service-details/qualified-generation-units)

16 [http://www.masscec.com/solarize-mass-1](http://www.masscec.com/solarize-mass-1)


18 [https://www.mass.gov/municipal-vulnerability-preparedness-mvp-program](https://www.mass.gov/municipal-vulnerability-preparedness-mvp-program)
resiliency, ranked by priority level. Recommendations range from improvements to the built and natural environments to more comprehensive communications and emergency response plans. Participants ranked the following eleven priorities as the most important for Cohasset:

- **Reliable Power:** Work with other towns to build resilience and redundancy. Have generators for critical facilities. Develop multi-modal power sources utilizing new technologies for resilience. Develop microgrids. Consider underground lines. Have an aggressive tree management plan. Gain answers from utilities regarding power failures.
- **Coastal Flooding Protection:** Ensure harbor structures provide improved protection. Enhance salt marshes for flood protection. Enhance marshes with dredged material. Map salt marsh migration potential.
- **Sea Level Rise planning:** Account for future sea level rise in town permits and planning.
- **Emergency Response:** Improve emergency response time with a new facility on Route 3A between Stop & Shop and Pond Street.
- **Protect Water Quality:** Manage sewage, septic, and fertilizer contamination of water resources.
- **Emergency Communication and Assistance:** Assure that communication, transportation, and shelter assistance is reaching vulnerable populations. Develop a more comprehensive contact list. Make sure the high school has an alternative energy source.
- **Manage tide gates, stormwater, and wastewater systems:** Identify points of vulnerability and develop plans.
- **Protect Lily Pond:** Protect water quality and water supply. Ensure protection from runoff and potential contaminants from Route 3A.
- **Elm Street sewage treatment plant:** Address infiltration through manhole covers. Consider the need for a wall or other protection for the plant.
- **Cell phone service:** Study solutions for areas of town with poor service. Add leaky cable or repeater to improve signal availability. Improve cell towers. Work with Comcast and Verizon.
- **Sea walls and drainage:** Seek grants for improved drainage and sea wall repairs.

Dozens of additional items were also listed as secondary and tertiary priorities as a result of this planning process. Completion of the workshop and report was an important first step for the Town, and will allow them to apply for state grant funding to begin addressing the identified risks and implementing solutions.

Additionally, the Town is undertaking a Municipal Harbor Plan, which is expected to be completed in mid-2019. Among the purposes of this planning process is the focus on building overall resiliency within the harbor and surrounding area, including responding to impacts from current and future flooding and sea level rise. The completed plan will provide a valuable resource to inform Town-wide resiliency planning and climate change adaptation measures.

In addition to the work completed during the MVP process, GEI Consultants working on the Municipal Harbor Plan undertook a more in-depth look at the impacts of sea level rise, and, in particular, in the shifting patterns of flooding days. The patterns of flooding days and how those are impacted by the range of sea level rise scenarios: sea level rise alone in varying scenarios, sea level rise plus high tide, sea level rise plus storm surge, and sea level rise plus high tide plus storm surge are critical to understanding the implications for uses, buildings, infrastructure, and the soft edges in the Harbor. Existing sea walls may be overwhelmed, salt marshes may not have sufficient absorption capability, buildings may be damaged on a more regular basis. Understanding the ranges for the frequency and height of floods provides information that is crucial when evaluating repairs to buildings and infrastructure, the
placement and construction of new buildings and infrastructure, or the health of the creeks, rivers, and salt marshes in absorbing the impact of flooding without creating additional risk to properties upstream from the Harbor.

Also, the Municipal Harbor Plan looks at the risk of flooding over five feet in any single-year and the risk of flooding over five feet in a group of multiple years at four scenarios of sea level rise: slow rise, medium rise, fast rise and extreme rise. The conclusion is that the risk of a five feet flood will continue to increase both in any given year (10% by 2080 under a slow rise scenario) and in any group of years (there is approximately 18% chance of a five feet storm between 2016 and 2030).

The report from GEI Consultants provides a series of analyses whereby the increase in the water level is estimated from 2020 to 2120 under the four sea level rise scenarios. Each of these is further modified by adding two further levels of analysis: the addition of a moderate flood to each of the scenarios and the addition of a major flood.

The map below, an excerpt from the Municipal Harbor Plan, shows anticipated water levels within Cohasset for scenarios of one, three, and six feet of sea level rise, which underscores the importance of acting quickly to increase resiliency in Cohasset.

As sea levels continue to rise, flood-prone areas will increase even farther inland as well. For all of these reasons, climate change and related sea level rise projections should be taken into account in every municipal planning and permitting process, especially for areas projected to be affected by sea level rise, or adjacent to these areas.

The Municipal Harbor Plan contains more detailed projections and recommendations for planning processes, which should be strongly considered, but will not be re-iterated here to avoid redundancy.

Energy & Sustainability Goals and Recommendations

There are many opportunities for residents, businesses, and the Town to reduce their use of energy, including electricity, heating oil, natural gas, and gasoline. This section outlines some of the recommended possible ways to reduce energy use, switch to cleaner sources, and increase resiliency in the face of a changing climate, while taking advantage of existing state programs and incentives.

Goal 1: Reduce municipal energy use

Strategy 1.1: Continue tracking and analyzing energy data in Mass Energy Insight (MEI)

This will help the Town gain a better understanding of where and how energy is being used. MEI can also help analyze the impacts of implemented energy conservation projects, such as which are showing good results, and which may need tweaking.

Strategy 1.2: Continue participation in the Green Communities program

Submit annual reports and apply for additional funding under the Green Communities competitive grants each year to ensure money is available for priority projects. Annual reports are generally due in late fall, and competitive grant applications are generally due in late winter. 19

19 https://www.mass.gov/orgs/green-communities-division
Strategy 1.3: Undertake an education/training campaign for municipal building staff and users

The goal is to drive behavior-based energy savings.
Strategy 1.4: Implement a strategy to track energy cost savings

Funnel savings into new energy projects, possibly on a “split-benefit” or percentage basis.

Strategy 1.5: Start research into Net Zero options and goals to inform an eventual municipal net zero plan

Goal 2: Reduce residential and commercial energy use

Strategy 2.1: Promote MassSave for residential EE audits and incentives

Target residential outreach where appropriate.

Strategy 2.2: Promote Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing mechanism for commercial energy efficiency and renewable energy work

PACE was signed into law in 2016, and financing is expected to be available starting in 2019.20

Strategy 2.3: Continue enforcement of the Stretch Energy Code for new buildings

The stretch code was passed in Cohasset in May 2015, to comply with the Green Communities program requirements. It is the responsibility of the Town’s building inspector to ensure all new construction meets the stretch code standards.

Goal 3: Prepare for climate change and increase Town resiliency

Strategy 3.1: Continue participation in the State’s Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program

Begin planning to address the list of highest priority action items from the June 2018 summary report.

Strategy 3.2: Use the results of the Harbor Plan to inform resiliency and climate adaptation planning and identify additional actionable priorities

- The Town should also undertake a Hazard Mitigation Plan to specifically identify vulnerabilities and how best to mitigate them. By integrating recommendations from the MVP process and the Municipal Harbor Plan, an implementation plan that addresses the entire Town can be prepared.
- Because of the interrelationship between the soft edges of the Harbor and the remainder of Cohasset, sea level rise and increased precipitation events will have an impact on more than just the Harbor.

Strategy 3.3: Incorporate relevant knowledge of sea level rise and expected rainfall into all planning and permitting processes within the Town

- Conduct breakwater studies. The Town, either jointly with the Town of Scituate and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or on its own, should undertake a detailed engineering study of

20  https://www.massdevelopment.com/what-we-offer/key-initiatives/pace/
the breakwater.

- Once the estimated costs are known, the Town and any relevant partners should apply for grants for design and construction of the improvements.

- Evaluate and repair seawalls. All seawalls, public and private, should be evaluated as part of an overall study on suitability of the existing Harbor infrastructure for protection against sea level rise and storm surge events. Several seawalls in the Harbor need repair to limit further deterioration of roadways behind them. An investigation of the cause of damage should be considered to stop or minimize the future deterioration.

- Evaluate the health of soft infrastructure. Eelgrass beds, the salt marshes, and Bassing Beach act as critical absorption and buffer systems and as low maintenance methods of improving water quality. Ensuring that these systems are maintained is as important as repairs to the infrastructure in terms of preventing additional flood damage upstream and filtering out pollutants. The role of soft infrastructure as habitat should also be considered in the evaluation.

- Adopt regulatory changes. The Town should consider Zoning Bylaw changes to address resiliency measures to either prevent or mitigate the impact of flooding on new development in the Harbor. Such changes could range from allowing the maximum height to be from Base Flood Elevation (BFE) to the addition on a Flood Fringe District which addresses development standards along the edges of the FEMA Flood Zones, understanding that those may change over time.

**Strategy 3.4: Engage and educate the community around energy and climate issues**

The Center for Student Coastal Research (CSCR) provides opportunities for students to explore and study the watershed and coastal environment. The Town should continue to support CSCR's efforts and utilize them as a valued resource in understanding the local coastal environment.

**Goal 4: Promote the use of additional renewable energy to reduce emissions and costs**

**Strategy 4.1: Participate in the Solarize Mass program run by the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC)**

This can work to encourage residents to install rooftop solar arrays on their homes.

**Strategy 4.2: Identify good places for municipal solar projects**

Roofs and parking lot canopies are likely the best options, since the landfill project has already been developed. Strongly consider the possibility of adding solar any time a municipal building's roof is replaced.

**Strategy 4.3: Consider participation in Green Municipal Aggregation program on behalf of Town’s residents**

**Strategy 4.4: Consider adding language into zoning code to explicitly allow for rooftop solar arrays**
Goal 5: Reduce vehicle fuel use, support transition to electric vehicles (EVs)

Strategy 5.1: Promote and expand the usage of EVs in residential and municipal fleets

- Install EV charging infrastructure in all municipal & school parking lots
- Consider purchasing additional EVs or hybrid vehicles for the Town, including the Police Department.

Strategy 5.2: Implement a community-wide anti-idling policy

An anti-idling initiative or campaign to reduce idling throughout Town, including for the town fleet/municipal vehicles, will reduce emissions and improve local air quality.

(See the state’s Model Solar Zoning Guidance21)

**Introduction**

Health starts long before illness – it begins in homes, schools, and jobs. Given this connection, the following section provides a brief assessment of the Town’s health status and conditions and identifies strategies to sustain healthy living and outcomes among residents, from childhood to later in life. The purpose of the Public Health element is to: understand current health conditions and behaviors, assess risks and opportunities presented by built, natural and social environments; and propose how to achieve healthier outcomes through community design strategies and services. The element also considers how certain populations in town may experience disproportionate impact due to factors such as geography, ethnicity, income, age, or other characteristics.

The Public Health element also links to other elements of the Master Plan. It presents new data or different perspectives on how current conditions in other elements, such as those addressing housing, mobility, and open space and recreation, can contribute to healthier outcomes for residents. Furthermore, the Public Health element provides evidence-based and informed strategies that should inform policies, projects, and decisions regarding implementation of the Master Plan. And lastly, the element integrates the perspective of local public health by including the Health Department in the planning process and future decisions around community change.

**Key Findings**

- Cohasset is served by strong Health Department and Board of Health that addresses environmental health and community health issues
- Residents of Cohasset generally enjoy healthier outcomes and engage in healthy behaviors more than residents of other towns in the Commonwealth.
- Health issues that could pose potential risks include premature mortality, substance use disorder, mental health challenges, an elevated cancer rate, and an aging population.
- The Town has the opportunity to explicitly integrate more health considerations into its planning and development processes in order to reduce the risk of injury, increase daily physical activity and health eating, and become a more age friendly community.

**Public Health Relationship to Planning and the Built Environment**

More and more evidence shows that how we plan and build communities affects the health and wellness of residents. Although these figures are not exact, collective research focused on the history of the causes of disease suggests that roughly 60% of our health is determined by social, environmental, and behavioral factors shaped by the context in which we live (Figure 69). ¹

The relationship is reinforced by data on the health issues and leading causes of death in the United States. The country is experiencing increasing levels of chronic diseases like obesity and diabetes. More and more people are dying from preventable diseases like heart disease, strokes, and lower respiratory diseases. Yet, it is known that these issues are preventable because they are the result of behaviors, choices, and influences dictated predominantly by a community’s surrounding environment.

² U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Deaths: Final Data for 2013, Figure 10
Understanding the connection is important: it provides impetus for developing communities that provide more opportunities for healthy living. Planning plays a key role in engaging community members in developing a vision for the future, setting the conditions for what and where changes will occur, and ultimately creating places which protect and promote health.

**Community Health System**

Sets of individuals and organizations play an important role in planning for and meeting the service needs of residents, particularly those who are suffering from symptoms of environments that do not promote health. At the municipal level, the work is performed by health agents and inspectors and boards of health as well by others including council on aging and recreation departments. In the private sector, health systems and community organizations play this role as they respond to acute health issues (e.g., heart attacks) and seek to intervene in behavioral health issues (e.g., opioid use).

**Local Health Department and Board of Health**

Cohasset is served by its Health Department, which includes the Town’s health agent, public health nurse, and administrative support. The department’s mission is to “provide the residents of the Town of Cohasset with comprehensive, high-quality Public Health Services through the evaluation (and developing new) town policies, procedures, regulations, statements, and programs in the areas of Public Health Nursing, Environmental Health, and other Public Health disciplines.”

The Health Department assists the Town in meeting health regulatory requirements and works with the Board of Health to support the ten essential functions of public health:

1. Monitor health status to identify community health problems.
2. Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community.
3. Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues.
4. Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems.
5. Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts.
6. Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety.
7. Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable.
8. Assure a competent public health and personal healthcare workforce.

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3 Cohasset Health Department: https://www.cohassetma.org/190/Health-Department
9. Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services.
10. Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.

The Health Department provides these functions through inspectional work (e.g., food inspections), programming and preventative actions (e.g., flu clinics, farmers market), policy development, and emergency preparedness planning and response (e.g., Health and Medical Coordinating Coalition 4AB).

The Cohasset Board of Health oversees the Town’s responsibilities related to state statutes and regulations for the protection of public health disease control, promotion of sanitary living conditions, and the protection of the environment from damage and pollution. The board is comprised of five members and is staffed by the Town’s Health Department.

**Healthcare Systems**

The Town of Cohasset is located within the service area of the South Shore Health System, which is located in the Town of Weymouth. The health system serves 34 municipalities in Plymouth and Norfolk counties, spanning from the City of Quincy in the north to the towns of Plymouth and Carver to the south and the towns of Sharon and Easton to the west. South Shore Health includes primary and specialty medical care, hospital and health center, home medical care, and preventive and wellness services. The health system also spans three Community Health Network Areas (CHNAs): Blue Hills Community Health Alliance (CHNA 20), South Shore Community Partners in Prevention (CHNA 23), and Greater Brockton Community Health Network Area (CHNA 22).

The South Shore Health system created its most recent Community Health Needs Assessments (CHA) in 2016. The purpose of the needs assessment is to identify health needs in communities where the health system is located (beyond a provider’s patient population) and implement strategies that address these needs. The top community health priorities identified in the 2016 South Shore CHA are:

- Access to Health Services (e.g., language, cost and transportation barriers, addition of service providers, and underutilization of services)
- Behavioral Health (e.g., psychiatric services, response to and prevention of substance use disorder, and addition of service providers)
- Cardiovascular Health (e.g., older adults at risk, chronic disease education, and coronary heart disease hospitalizations)

Other priorities included: Diabetes, Older Adults and Aging, Exercise, Nutrition and Weight; Respiratory Diseases; and Cancer.

**Public Health Organizations**

Cohasset is part of the Blue Hills Community Health Alliance (CHNA 20) along with 12 other municipalities (Braintree, Canton, Hingham, Hull, Milton, Norwell, Norwood, Quincy, Randolph, Scituate, Sharon and Weymouth). CHNAs were established by the MDPH in 1992 and 27 networks were created to cover all of the cities and towns of Commonwealth. The purpose of the CHNAs were to: eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities and their social determinants; promote wellness in the home, workplace, school, and community; and prevent and manage chronic disease.

CHNA 20 has a set of six operating principles:
- Provide program support and education
- Create opportunities for networking
- Build collaboration and partnerships
- Problem-solve and influence policy
• Find and develop resources
• Share best practices

The alliance provides support to its member municipalities and other community partners through grant making, provision of technical assistance and resources, and creating opportunities for those in the health care, community health, and public health fields to convene and connect.

Community Participation

Residents were engaged during the Master Plan process through data about the health risks (e.g., environmental exposures, chronic disease) and social determinants of health factors (e.g., built environment characteristics, socioeconomic conditions) in order to understand perspectives on current conditions and potential opportunities.

Feedback from residents including the following points:

• More people could engage in daily physical activity through infrastructure investments such as a walking path along Jerusalem Road
• Capitalize on parks as places for physical activity through provision of exercise equipment in parks (for youth and adults) and new programming.
• Sustain and build on current health services and programs such as the flu clinic and exercise classes that are offered at the Senior Center.
• Address traffic safety particular as it relates to distracted driving.
• Explore history of Wompatuck State Park to understand potential environmental hazards that may still be present from previous uses (e.g., military munitions storage).
• Improve access to Straits Pond and Little Harbor as a place for water-based recreation and physical activity.
• Understand the role of social connectedness in town both for those who may become isolated (e.g., single older adults) and as it relates to resident turnover (e.g., residents who leave town after children finish school).
• Focus more tick-borne diseases, particularly as exposure to ticks is increasing and in the context of climate change.
Understanding Health Data

Due to the way that health data are collected, all data for Cohasset are estimates generated based on larger collections of data, from sources including the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) and the Center for Health Information and Analysis (CHIA). Here is how the numbers for each type of data are generated:

- **Hospitalizations**
  These data are based on the place of residence listed on hospital discharge forms. Hospitalizations are age adjusted rates of hospital discharges per 10,000 people or per 100,000 people. The reason data are age adjusted is that older people are typically more susceptible to illnesses than those who are younger, and therefore populations with greater proportions of older residents may look artificially less healthy than others. These data are therefore “adjusted” for age to ensure that populations with differing age distributions can be meaningfully compared to each other.

- **Disease prevalence and Health Behavior**
  These data are statistical estimates calculated by MDPH based on the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey, which is a self-report. For the ranking, a number of “1” means the municipality has one of the lowest percentages of people reporting the identified health condition, risk factor, or protective factor while a “5” means the community has one of the highest percentage of people with that health condition, risk factor, or protective factor. For example, a “1” ranking for smoking would indicate a municipality is among cities and towns with the lowest percentages of residents who report smoking while a “1” ranking for exercise would indicate a municipality is among cities and towns with the lowest percentages of residents report engaging in physical activity.

  These data are also reported with confidence limits. The upper (UCL) and lower (LCL) provide a range that characterizes the level of uncertainty for the reported percentage.

- **Youth Data**
  All data on Cohasset youth are based on a survey administered to middle and high school students every other year by the Safe Harbors Coalition. The coalition includes representatives from the school department, local law enforcement, fire department, town government, members of the faith, the medical and recovery communities, mental health professionals, and parents.

- **Aging Population Data**
  All data for populations over 60 are derived from the Massachusetts Health Aging Collaborative Community Profiles. More information on the methodology can be found here.
Community Health Conditions

Active Living

The health benefits of physical activity have been well documented, yet less than half (49%) of all adults meet the Surgeon General’s recommended 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on most days of the week; only a fifth meet (20%) the guidelines for both aerobic physical and muscle-strengthening activity. A recent study estimates that physical inactivity causes 6% of the global burden of disease from coronary heart disease, 7% of type 2 diabetes, 10% of breast cancer, 10% of colon cancer, 9% of premature mortality. If inactivity were decreased by 10% to 25%, between 533,000 and 1.3 million deaths could be prevented every year.

Evidence suggests that good infrastructure (sidewalks, bike lanes etc.) and public transportation access leads to increases in walking and biking for transportation purposes, and therefore plays an important role in increasing population level physical activity. A very robust body of literature links physical activity to a panoply of health benefits. Furthermore recent evidence suggests that while active transit may expose users to air pollution on the road, the positive benefits of physical activity outweigh the negative impacts of increased air pollution exposure.

Compared to the National walking average of six minutes per day, public transit users spend a median of 19 daily minutes walking. Estimates show that an individual walks an additional 8.3 minutes per day when they switch from driving to transit.

The percentage of Cohasset residents who report engaging in some form of exercise is among the highest in the state and, with the exception of Hingham, higher than surrounding municipalities.

Conversely, town residents are estimated to have some the highest percentages of those with heart disease in the state. The high percentage of those estimated to have heart disease can also be found in several surrounding municipalities, including Hingham and Hull. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the nation. In addition, many who experience cardiovascular-related disease can experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town Name</th>
<th>Quintile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cohasset</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hingham</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hull</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwell</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockland</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scituate</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weymouth</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town Name</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>LCL</th>
<th>UCL</th>
<th>Quintile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cohasset</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hingham</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hull</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwell</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockland</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scituate</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weymouth</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 77: Any Physical Activity in the Past 30 Days among Adults

Source: MA BRFSSS 2012-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town Name</th>
<th>Quintile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cohasset</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hingham</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hull</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwell</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockland</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scituate</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weymouth</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 78: Heart Disease among Adults (Source: MA BRFSSS 2011, 2012, 2014)

Although the Town is estimated to have one of the higher percentages of heart disease, residents do not seem to experience hospitalizations or deaths higher than state averages.

Motor vehicle crashes are one of the leading causes of death among younger populations in the US (i.e., those between 16 – 25 years old), and annually account for more than 32,000 deaths and over two million nonfatal injuries to motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists\textsuperscript{viii}. In addition to actual safety and injury risk, the perception of how safe the transportation system has effects on people’s behaviors. Studies that consider traffic and perceptions of safety generally agree that pedestrians and bicyclists have negative perceptions of traffic and that real and/or perceived danger and discomfort in traffic discourages walking and bicycling\textsuperscript{ix}. Safety concerns appear to be strongest in children, the elderly and women\textsuperscript{x}.

The number of reported crashes in Cohasset has increased recently according to the most recent crash data. In 2014, there were 126 crashes in the town. There were 155 and 146 crashes in 2015 and 2016, respectively. Among the crashes, nearly three quarters were property damage only crashes, which means those involved were not injured and could potentially indicate the crashes occurred at lower speeds. Twenty percent of the crashes did involve some form of injury and one road user died as a result of a crash.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crash Severity</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fatal injury</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-fatal injury</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property damage only (none injured)</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Reported</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>427</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 80: Crash Severity, 2014-2016 (MassDOT)
Food and Nutrition

Research suggests that access to healthy and nutritious foods in neighborhoods may play a critical role in residents’ diets. The choices that residents have and make regarding their diet are associated with risks for chronic diseases, such as Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and overweight and obesity.

Most research related to food access has focused on supermarkets, which provide a greater variety of healthy foods that are generally higher quality and more affordable when compared to smaller food stores. Although some discrepancy exists in the literature, poor supermarket access has been linked to increased rates of poor health outcomes such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and obesity when compared to neighborhoods that have supermarkets.

One indicator of the consumption of healthy foods is the prevalence of diabetes. While some people are born with diabetes, increasingly more people have developed diabetes (Type 2) because of diet, lack of physical activity and unhealthy weight, which can be seen in the percentage of residents who are overweight or obese. Cohasset is estimated to have one of the lowest percentages of those who are overweight or obese in the state, as do many of the Town’s surrounding municipalities.

Figure 81: Obesity Among Adults (MA BRFSSS 2012-2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town Name</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>LCL</th>
<th>UCL</th>
<th>Quintile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cohasset</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hingham</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hull</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwell</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockland</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scituate</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weymouth</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 82: Overweight Among Adults (MA BRFSSS 2012-2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town Name</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>LCL</th>
<th>UCL</th>
<th>Quintile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cohasset</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>64.1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hingham</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hull</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norwell</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockland</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scituate</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>52.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weymouth</td>
<td>60.7</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6 In order to provide data for more Massachusetts communities, town level estimates are included that may be based on relatively few respondents or have standard errors that are larger than average. When a cell is has a blue accent, the confidence interval for this community is wider than the normal limits set by MDPH. Therefore, the estimate for this town should be interpreted with caution.
Cohasset is estimated to be among the municipalities with the highest percentage of adult residents who have diabetes or pre-diabetes, which is a condition where blood sugar levels are high but not yet at a level for a diabetes diagnosis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age-Adjusted Death Rate due to Diabetes</th>
<th>Cohasset</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Nation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 76: Diabetes Death Rate per 100,000, 2012 (Source: Source: South Shore Health System 2016 Community Health Needs Assessment)

Data from the South Shore Community Health Needs Assessment also indicates that Cohasset residents experience a higher rate of diabetes-related deaths than the state or the US.

**Environmental Exposures**

Exposure to environmental contamination can have numerous health effects depending on the specifics of the pollutants and levels of exposure experienced by people. A brownfield is defined by the CDC as “abandoned or underused portions of land occupied by vacant businesses or closed military structures, located in formerly industrial or urban areas”. While there is no formal definition of the term “brownfields” in Massachusetts, brownfields are typically abandoned or for sale or lease and have been used for commercial or industrial purposes. Brownfields may have been reported to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) because contamination has been found or they may not have been assessed due to fear of unknown contamination conditions.

Health impacts due to brownfields and contaminated sites include:

Figure 84: Map of Waste Sites and Reportable Releases in Cohasset (MassDEP)
• Safety due to abandoned structures, open foundations, other infrastructure or equipment that may be compromised due to lack of maintenance, vandalism or deterioration, controlled substance contaminated sites (i.e., methamphetamine labs) and abandoned mine sites;

• Social and economic concerns due to blight, crime, reduced social capital, reductions in the local government tax base and private property values that may reduce social services; and,

• Environmental issues due to biological, physical, and chemical site contamination, groundwater impacts, surface runoff or migration of contaminants as well as wastes dumped on site xvi.

Over the past 30 years, there have been approximately 100 reported waste sites and releases in the town. Only 16 reports have been issued in the past 10 years with nearly all having response actions that were sufficient to achieve a level of no significant risk or ensure that all substantial hazards were eliminated. One site has required more remediation and cleanup due to the detection of fuel oil in soils in the vicinity of previously removed underground storage tanks.

An additional site not included in the reporting, but that have been identified by town residents, is the former NIKE launch sites and weapons storage facilities which are located in Wompatuck State Park. Former munitions and other uses could have left potential pollutants on the property which, if so, could create conditions for exposure to unsafe materials and limit use of the property (if not properly remediated).

Exposure to air pollution can have effects on human as can land based environmental contamination. There is an extensive body of literature linking vehicular air pollution to mortality and hospitalizations due to asthma exacerbation, chronic lung disease, heart attacks, ischemic heart disease, and major cardiovascular diseasexviii. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) identifies 6 criteria air pollutants that have important human health impacts: Ozone (O₃), carbon monoxide (CO), particulate matter (PM), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), and lead (Pb). Four of these air pollutants are most closely linked to vehicular traffic pollution.

Concentrations of traffic-related air pollution can be particularly high in areas with heavy congestion or high volumes of vehicle traffic. In these locations, nearby uses like schools or homes and those who walk or bicycle along can be directly affected by short- and long-term the pollution. Although identifying the source of the emissions, the presence of the higher traffic volumes and congestion can serve as guide. Research suggests that exposure concerns are relevant to those traveling on or living within 500 feet of corridors that have traffic volumes exceeding 30,000 vehicles per day. Estimated traffic volumes do not cross this threshold on roadways in the Town of Cohasset.

In areas with more wooded and vegetated undeveloped lands, more vectors such as ticks and mosquitoes can be present, posing an increased risk to health. Vectors can transit infectious disease through contact with people and in Massachusetts, vectors have been responsible for increases in diseases such as Lyme and Babesiosis. In some cases, these diseases can be treated easily while in others they can cause long-term chronic health issues and in extreme cases, death.

Recent reporting data for the Massachusetts shows that there have not been positive tests for mosquito-borne illnesses (e.g., as West Nile) in Cohasset. xviii Data on tick-borne diseases is not readily available at the municipal level so county level data is used. Based on state data, the areas surrounding and including Cohasset have seen increasing number of cases of tick-borne diseases. In fact, although the Town is Norfolk County, its surrounding municipalities are in Plymouth County which ranked 57th nationally for its rate of Lyme cases (127 per 100,000 residents). xix
Public Health and Climate Change

OVERVIEW

The changing climate will affect health of individuals, families, and communities. The projected changes, such as higher temperatures and extreme weather, will exacerbate existing health conditions, such as asthma and cardiovascular disease. New health issues will also emerge as vectors and water borne diseases are facilitated by the warmer and wetter conditions. While our physical places will be vulnerable so will be the health of people that define, live, work and gather in these places. The following section describes in more detail these potential impacts and their relevance to the Town of Cohasset.

EXTREME WEATHER AND FLOODING

Cohasset, like the rest of Massachusetts, is expected to incur more turbulent weather, especially those weather events that bring precipitation. Extreme weather events cause disturbances in people’s lives and the systems that they rely on. This is particularly true when it comes to human health and welfare.

More frequent storm events are projected to mean precipitation events that occur more frequently and with greater volumes. Flooding will be a result of these storms. Flooding can be expected to disrupt transportation systems and potentially isolate people in their homes. The breakdown in these connections has consequences such as individuals not being able to get to medical care, meet basic daily needs like shopping for food and water, and being exposed to water-borne pollutants. Older adults, people with disabilities, and those with acute health needs like those requiring dialysis are at particularly high risk when these disruptions occur.

Often extreme storms are accompanied by disruptions in electrical systems. When this occurs, heating, air conditioning, and ventilation systems can be put at risk if there are not backup power systems. As result, residents may face difficulties in maintain indoor temperatures. Longer term impacts of reduced air circulation in combination with increased moisture can lead to more indoor mold and contaminants. Those who suffer from respiratory issues like asthma face challenges during these situations and others become susceptible to developing similar health issues.

EXTREME HEAT

Extreme heat is the leading weather-related cause of death in the United States. Prolonged exposure to high temperatures can cause heat-related illnesses, such as heat cramps, heat syncope, heat exhaustion, heat stroke, and death. Heat exhaustion is the most common heat-related illness and if untreated, it may progress to heat stroke. Additionally, heat is expected to contribute to the exacerbation of chronic health conditions. In particular, hyperthermia—elevated body temperature due to failed thermoregulation can be caused by heat stroke — is a contributing factor to cardiovascular, metabolic, and other causes of death.

Extreme heat has the potential to contribute to greater levels of ground level air pollution and allergens. Heat helps form by chemical reactions between NOx and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in the presence of sunlight. Breathing ozone can irritate the respiratory system, reduce lung function and heighten sensitivity to allergens. Likewise, increased temperatures in the presence of higher concentrations of CO2 has been linked to earlier blooming of flowers (shrubs and trees), which in turn

7 Extreme heat can be considered an aspect of extreme weather. For this purposes of this document, extreme heat is treated separately due some of its specific effects on health.
affects the timing, distribution, and composition of pollen and other allergens\textsuperscript{xxvi}.

Those at particularly high risk of adverse health effects from extreme heat exposure are older adults, children, those living alone, those with chronic illnesses, urban residents, minorities, people of low income, people with less education, and people without access to air conditioning\textsuperscript{xxvi, xxvii}. In addition, people with chronic mental disorders or pre-existing medical conditions (e.g., cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes, neurologic or psychiatric disease), and those participating in outdoor manual labor or sports in hot weather also are at increased risk for heat-related illness\textsuperscript{xxviii, xxx}.

**VECTOR BORNE DISEASES**

With climate change, the public will likely be subject to greater exposure to disease vectors, such as Eastern equine encephalitis (Triple E), West Nile virus, St. Louis encephalitis virus and Lyme disease. Massachusetts is predicted to have a general trend of warmer temperatures, which may lead to higher mosquito and tick numbers and greater activity. This may prolong transmission seasons for all vector-borne diseases, extending the risk of transmission outside of the traditional late spring through early fall timeframe.

**POPULATIONS MORE AT RISK**

Climate change will impact all populations in a variety of ways, but these impacts will not be felt equally by all and not only according to pre-existing health conditions. Because of this, the following section provides information on populations that might be more vulnerable due to their social, environmental, or economic conditions. In Cohasset, these vulnerable populations include low-income residents, younger and older populations, those living alone, and those who may speak languages other than English.

**Social Cohesion and Mental Health**

Social cohesion, which describes the extent of connectedness and solidarity of a community, and social support are associated with positive health outcomes. Communities with greater levels of social cohesion—often characterized by high levels of trust and respect, participation in community activities and public affairs, and increased participation in community groups—have better health outcomes than those with low levels\textsuperscript{xxvii}. This is true on an individual level as well. Those with rich social environments—who have more friends and social interactions, hold a greater level of trust in their neighbors, and are part of a more tightly knit community—have access to a greater network of social resources which in turn help them stay healthier\textsuperscript{xxviii}. These social resources can manifest as emotional support in difficult times, material support such as a ride to work when the family car breaks down, or simply through health-promoting information shared amongst neighbors. Access to social support such as this is associated with protective health effects including improved mental health outcomes, reduced stress, better cardiovascular health, better immune system functioning and more\textsuperscript{xxix}.

Voting has been used to characterize social cohesion since it can represent ties and engagement with the community. Using Elections and Voting data from the Secretary of the Commonwealth, it is estimated that nearly two thirds of voting-eligible residents (63%) were registered in 2016, which is similar to the state percentage of registered votes (64%) from the same period\textsuperscript{xxx}. Among those registered to vote, 83% participated in the 2016 elections. Participation in local elections, which occur in May, offer a perspective on civic participation that is typically outside of state and national elections. Over the past five years, participation has varied in the annual town elections from a high of 37% in 2014 to a low of 8% in 2017. Most recently, there was a turnout of 21% of registered voters in the May 2018 local election.
Measures of mental health, which involve social cohesion factors as well as others, are reporting on
days of poor mental health and substance use disorders. For Cohasset, it is estimated that percentage
of residents reporting 15 days or more of poor mental health falls within the average for the state, when
compared to other municipalities.

Cohasset is one of many communities served by the William James INTERFACE Referral Service, which
collects and categorizes a wide range of valuable resources related to mental health, substance abuse,
and wellness issues for the benefit of children, adults and families living in Cohasset. The referral
service works with the Youth Health Connection, a community benefits program of South Shore Health.
It is dedicated to developing the positive mental health and physical well-being of young people across
our region.

**Health over the Lifespan: Age Specific Health**

Data specific to youth and older adults are included here. The purpose is to provide a spotlight on
populations that are more susceptible to changes that can either promote or provide lifelong health and
wellness.

**YOUTH**

Childhood and youth are critical periods for physical and mental development and a time when external
factors such as significant personal or social events (e.g., housing instability, trauma) or exposure to
pollutants can adversely affect development. Similarly, engagement in prosocial and healthy behaviors
can serve as protective factors that improve health outcomes and prevent illnesses. Many municipalities
use youth surveys to gather information from you about their health and their experiences growing up
in healthy environments.

Cohasset Public Schools included social and emotional learning as one of the five pillars to the 2016-
2021 Strategic Plan. The strategic goal is to promote the social and emotional well-being of students.
The key initiatives included for social and emotional learning are:

- Identify areas of student need
- Build programs to provide social-emotional support to all students
- Develop tiered intervention strategies
- Build student resiliency to prepare students for college and careers beyond Cohasset High School.

Cohasset is home to the Safe Harbors Cohasset Coalition (SHCC), which began in 2014 with a focus on
substance use disorder and has now become an established coalition (including a full-time Program

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town Name</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>LCL</th>
<th>UCL</th>
<th>Quintile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cohasset</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hingham</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hull</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwell</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockland</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scituate</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weymouth</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 85: Adults Reporting 15 Days or More of Poor Mental Health (Source: MA BRFSSS 2012-2014)*

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8. [https://interface.williamjames.edu/](https://interface.williamjames.edu/)
9. [https://www.southshorehealth.org/wellness/youth-health-connection](https://www.southshorehealth.org/wellness/youth-health-connection)
Director and part-time Project Coordinator) after receiving the 5-year Federal Drug Free Communities Grant in 2017. The coalition has developed youth-focused programming (e.g., youth ambassadors) as well as new resources (e.g., Guiding Good Choices) and collaborations with local businesses (e.g., free participation in fitness classes) to support health promoting behavior among Cohasset’s younger residents. Cohasset Public Schools, with support from SHCC, administered several surveys of the Town’s youth and adolescents to gather and analyze data about their experiences, perspectives, and behaviors.

The most recent available survey results (a combination of Communities that Care Survey and the Youth Risk Behavior Survey) are from 2017.\(^\text{11}\) The survey, which included Middle and High School students, collected student self-report responses to questions about behaviors, substance use, weight and physical activity, and mental health, among other information. A summary of the key 2017 results are presented below and compared to previous survey results (2015), which represent responses provided by those in the grades surveyed two years prior.

Existing conditions data was not available on healthy eating behaviors (e.g., daily consumption of fruits and vegetables) or physical activity rates (e.g., physical activity over past week). Overweight and obesity estimates were available from a recent publication. Approximately 14% of students in Cohasset public schools are estimated to have an unhealthy weight (overweight or obese as defined by body mass index – BMI) as compared to the state average of 30%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Progress</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Lifetime alcohol and marijuana use is down</td>
<td>• A large number of students, particularly students of color, students who are LGTBO/Non-Binary, and younger students (grades 6-9), do not feel as supported in the school environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Marijuana use over the past 30 days is down (with exception of grade 10 respondents)</td>
<td>• Tobacco use is up significantly, particularly regarding vaping and cigarette use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Alcohol consumption down among 10th and 11th graders</td>
<td>• A general reduction in the perception that tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana is risky, particularly as it relates to parents’ perception of risk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Overall student perception of marijuana use as risky has increased</td>
<td>• Student stress and mental health concerns continue to rise, including grades (not learning) as the primary source of stress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Approximately 1 in 5 of HS students and 1 in 10 MS students indicated atypical sadness or suicidal thoughts. (Adults are only made aware of students considering suicide in about 20% of cases.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• New data indicates that sexual violence increases as students get older (noted a possible correlation to an increase in substance use).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^\text{11}\) Cohasset Public Schools conducted a more recent survey and results should be available in April/May 2019. The survey is typically conducted on a two-year cycle.
## Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative Municipal Profile for Cohasset

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Metric</th>
<th>Performance¹²</th>
<th>Cohasset</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WELLNESS and PREVENTION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% any physical activity within last month</td>
<td></td>
<td>71.7%</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% injured in a fall within last 3 months</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with self-reported fair or poor health status</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with 15+ physically unhealthy days last month</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with physical exam/check-up in past year</td>
<td></td>
<td>90.6%</td>
<td>90.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NUTRITION/DIET</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with 5 or more servings of fruit or vegetables per day</td>
<td></td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% obese</td>
<td></td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% high cholesterol</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
<td>73.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% current smokers</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% excessive drinking</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MENTAL HEALTH</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with 15+ days poor mental health last month</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% satisfied with life</td>
<td></td>
<td>95.6%</td>
<td>95.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% receiving adequate emotional support</td>
<td></td>
<td>80.7%</td>
<td>80.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHRONIC DISEASE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with Alzheimer’s disease or related dementias</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with diabetes</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with stroke</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with asthma</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with hypertension</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>70.5%</td>
<td>77.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% ever had a heart attack</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary chronic disease measures</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>52.9%</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with 4+ chronic conditions</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LIVING WITH DISABILITY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% disabled for a year or more</td>
<td></td>
<td>31.1%</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent living impairment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 65-74 with independent living difficulty</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 75+ with independent living difficulty</td>
<td></td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 87: Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative Municipal Profile for Cohasset
OLDER ADULTS

Massachusetts is set to experience growth in the number of residents who are 65 years old and older. The growth in the number of older residents will challenge how infrastructure is built, what services are offered, and how and where these residents interact with the rest of the community. The older population in Cohasset is projected to grow by 90% and could account for nearly a quarter of the Town’s overall population by 2030.

The Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative has developed municipal profiles for cities and towns that show the health of older residents. This dataset provides detail for a population that may or may not reflect general health trends for the Town. Select data for Cohasset is presented in Figure 80.

These data show that on nearly each measure the older population in Cohasset is line with or better off than the state’s performance. While Cohasset’s older residents appear better in a relative sense, the percentages themselves provide useful information to consider. For example, the data indicate that older residents are receiving emotional support, mostly satisfied with life, and have healthy behaviors that include physical activity and eat fruits and vegetables daily. In contrast, the data convey that more than a third of the older adult population is living with a disability, slightly more than one in ten are living with dementia, and that over half live with multiple chronic health conditions.

Public Health Goals and Recommendations

Current conditions suggest that the Town of Cohasset’s residents, overall, experience physical, social, and mental health outcomes that are equal to or better than the average of the Commonwealth. The Town’s economic, housing, and environmental conditions support these beneficial outcomes and represent conditions that are supportive of wellness. Although residents in the town generally enjoy better health, there are actions that Cohasset can undertake to prevent future threats to the health of residents and help all enjoy greater wellbeing.

Goal 1: Sustain and expand access to locally produced and healthy foods in town

Cohasset does better on most measures related to healthy food behavior and access when compared to the state. Residents have access to a full service grocery stores and on average they eat more fruits and vegetables than those in the state. However, residents seem to experience health issues that are diet-related, such as diabetes and heart disease. Going forward, Cohasset should continue to support conditions and behaviors related to consumption of healthy foods.

Strategy 1.1: Continue support and identify expansion opportunities for the farmers market to encourage use of local and healthy foods (e.g., Holly Hill)

Explore potential for winter farmers market to have local, fresh food available year round.

Strategy 1.2: Develop and implement a Community Food System Action to help preserve existing agricultural uses and soils, use of marine resources, and respond to climate driven issues that could affect local food production

Strategy 1.3: Monitor local needs for supplemental nutrition benefits, especially among vulnerable populations including low income households and seniors
Goal 2: Sustain support for actions to monitor and respond to issue related to the mental and emotional wellness of residents, particularly that of youth and older adults

Cohasset residents engage in prosocial behaviors and high levels of physical activity, two factors that help maintain good mental health. There are small signs that some in town, particularly youth and older adults, may experience depressive periods or times when they might feel isolated.

Strategy 2.1: Conduct an annual town-wide communications campaign to reduce the perception of stigma for receiving mental and emotional support

Work could be led by or build on by the Safe Harbors Cohasset Coalition.

Strategy 2.2: Continue to support programs that provide social and emotional support to younger and older residents

Provide additional attention to outreach work for those who are or are at risk of social isolation.

Strategy 2.3: Support the development of a teen or intergenerational center in town

The center could be located in a new or existing building and include collaboration with current community and faith organizations. The purpose would be to provide a welcoming space to youth in town to engage with their peers as well as potentially seniors in town in constructive and community-supportive activities (e.g., volunteering).

Strategy 2.4: Conduct regular (annual or bi-annual) town-wide surveys to gather information about parents’ behaviors in relation to their children and youth in town (e.g., social host law, conversation with children about substance use)

The data would complement youth survey and provide information to develop a community-wide action plan around behavioral health.

Goal 3: Prioritize active transportation (walking, biking, and transit use) and open space access to promote physical activity and exposure to outdoor natural environments

Cohasset residents benefit from higher level of access to open spaces and exposure to greenness. However, accessing many of these outdoor spaces requires use of vehicle or travel along thoroughfares that are not perceived as safe. In addition, increased use of green spaces is associated with higher levels of physical activity and social cohesion – both protective factors for certain chronic diseases.

Strategy 3.1: Sustain and expand local programming for activities that include physical activity

Programming can include age-specific activities (e.g., older adult walking groups) or mixed age activities (e.g., open hours at school through joint use agreement).
Goal 4: Addresses environment hazards to reduce resident exposure to substances that reduce the quality of life in town

Cohasset residents face few threats related to environmental quality. To maintain the protective features that reduce the risk of exposures, Cohasset should monitor factors that pose health risks from environmental contaminants under current conditions and as conditions shift due to climate change.

Strategy 4.1: Develop and disseminate information about prevention and reduction of tick and mosquito exposure

Consider modeling materials on information available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, including use of landscaping techniques (e.g., Middlesex Tick Taskforce Landscaping a Tick Safe Zone)

Strategy 4.2: Provide informational materials for new and existing residents who live in proximity to roadways with higher traffic volumes (e.g., Route 3A)

Strategy 4.3: Prioritize actions that reduce local single occupant vehicle trips in order to reduce locally-generated motor vehicle trips and related air pollutants

Strategy 4.4: Provide more mobility options for older residents and households with limited access to personal vehicles in order to enhance transportation safety, connect with local destinations and maintain community connections

Strategy 4.5: Explore current risks associated with Wampatuck Park’s former military uses and where necessary, update information (e.g., signage) for park users so that they are aware of potential exposures

Goal 5: Assess potential health impacts of proposed projects and policies by integrating a health and equity lens into local decision-making

The Town will face additional growth and development pressures. It can be helpful to anticipate public health impacts as part of these pressures similar to assessing other impacts (e.g., housing, public finances).

Strategy 5.1: Use a health assessment tool, such as the NACCHO Public Health in Land Use Planning & Community Design checklist, in planning and development decision making

Strategy 5.2: Bring health perspective the Community Preservation Committee through consultation with the Health Department or Board of Health

Strategy 5.3: Explore use of Racial Equity Impact Assessment in municipal planning and development decision making


Cohasset Master Plan – Public Health


xxii Ibid


xxvi USGCRP, 2016: The Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health in the United States: A Scientific


xxx Ibid


xxxiv MA Secretary of the Commonwealth, Elections Division - Research and Statistics, Registration and Enrollment Statistic, https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleidx.htm
Implementation
The Implementation Chapter is based on the goals and strategies of this Master Plan and the data that was collected and analyzed. This chapter summarizes the recommendations from each of the Master Plan elements. The Planning Board, Board of Selectmen and other Town Boards, Commissions and Committees, with the assistance of the Town staff, should use this Master Plan as a guide and policy document for the time period of 2019 to 2030.

It is important to note that planning is a dynamic process and priorities can shift over time. The intent of the Master Plan Committee is to update sections of the plan as new data becomes available. This update and review process allows for issues to be acknowledged while keeping each specific recommendation on the table unless a situation dictates that it be reconsidered. This regular follow-up will allow the Master Plan to remain current and address concerns or events as conditions change. Although the Master Plan Committee played an advisory and oversight role as the plan was being drafted, it will be important to consider the establishment of a separate entity to coordinate implementation of the Plan. The Planning Board will be responsible for a number of the Plan’s recommendations, so a separate Committee can help in moving forward on recommendations that are beyond the Planning Board’s authority. The appointment of a Master Plan Implementation Committee could assist in the oversight and coordination of the Master Plan’s implementation.

The implementation plan intends to deliver on the promise of the goals and strategies expressed throughout this process, with a program of tangible steps for the Town to take over the next ten years and beyond. There is a high level of activity required on these issues, based upon the input received during the planning process.

The table below summarizes the specific recommendations found at the end of each of the Master Plan chapters. The timing for implementation of the recommendations is estimated by a range of years (near-, mid-, long-term) to assist in determining the timeframe in which each item is to be considered. Some recommendations are noted as ongoing in nature. The responsible parties are also listed. If more than one entity could be charged with implementing a particular strategy or recommendation, the “lead agency” is listed first in bold.

The following list identifies the acronyms used for responsible parties in the table:

- 250 – 250th Anniversary Committee
- AEC – Alternative Energy Committee
- AHSC – Affordable Housing Steering Committee
- BoA – Board of Assessors
- B&I – Building & Inspections
- BOH – Board of Health
- BOS – Board of Selectmen
- Cap – Capital Budget Committee
- CCHDC – Cohasset Common Historic District Commission
- CoC – Chamber of Commerce
- ConCom – Conservation Commission / Conservation Agent
- CPC – Community Preservation Committee
- DBTA – Downtown Business Association
- DPW – Department of Public Works
- EA – Elder Affairs
- Eng – Engineering
- FD – Fire Department
- Har – Harbor Committee
- HM – Harbormaster
- HC – Historical Commission
- HP – Housing Partnership / Housing Coordinator
- Lib – Library
- OSRC – Open Space and Recreation Committee / Recreation Commission
- PB – Planning Board
- PD – Police Department
- SC – Sewer Commission
- SD – School Department / School Committee
- SHCC – Safe Harbor Cohasset Coalition
- SW – Shellfish Warden
- TM – Town Manager
- TP – Town Planner
- WD – Water Department
- ZBA – Zoning Board Appeal
The following list identifies the acronyms for technical assistance and funding opportunities described in the implementation program:

- AARP – American Association of Retired Persons
- CPA – Community Preservation Act
- DOER – Department of Energy Resources
- EEA – Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
- LAND – Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity
- MAPC – Metropolitan Area Planning Council
- MPPF – Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund
- MVP – Municipal Vulnerability Program
- PARC – Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities

### Cohasset Master Plan Implementation Matrix

**Timeline:** Near-term: 1-3 years; Mid-term: 4-6 years; Long-term: 7+ years; Ongoing

**Potential Resources:** Technical assistance and/or fund opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal/Strategy/Action</th>
<th>Parties Responsible</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Potential Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Land Use</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 1: Plan and invest strategically for smart growth in order to preserve Cohasset’s community character</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.1: Complete study of Cohasset residential land use patterns</td>
<td>TP, PB</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.2: Review existing zoning bylaw on accessory dwelling units (ADUs)</td>
<td>TP, PB, AHSC</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.3: Review zoning bylaw to allow greater housing options in certain areas along Rt. 3A and near the train station (see Housing chapter)</td>
<td>TP, PB, AHSC</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.4: Review and revise the zoning bylaw to ensure desired smart growth and enforcement of zoning bylaws</td>
<td>TP, PB, B&amp;I, ZBA</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.5: Improve planning and permitting process by educating community through zoning clinics</td>
<td>TP, PB, ZBA</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 2: Revitalize the Harbor area in accordance with the Harbor Plan vision and landside development and infrastructure recommendations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 2.1: Support public use of and access to the Harbor</td>
<td>Har, HM</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 2.2: Identify and plan for appropriate improvements to landside and waterside infrastructure</td>
<td>Har, HM</td>
<td>7+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 2.3: Improve the interconnectivity between the Village and the Harbor</td>
<td>TP, Har, DPW, CoC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Cohasset Master Plan Implementation Matrix

**Timeline:** Near-term: 1-3 years; Mid-term: 4-6 years; Long-term: 7+ years; Ongoing  
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal/Strategy/Action</th>
<th>Parties Responsible</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Potential Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 2.4:</strong> Explore zoning changes to the Harbor to reflect the goals of the Harbor Plan and the demand for alternative uses along the water’s edge</td>
<td>TP, PB</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 3:</strong> Protect open space in all town-wide land use decisions in order to preserve access and scenic beauty in accordance with the OSRP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 3.1:</strong> Develop a set of criteria for ranking and evaluation of future open space acquisitions by the Town</td>
<td>OSRC, CC, TP</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 3.2:</strong> Develop and maintain a list and priorities of properties suitable for potential acquisition on conservation by the Town and make recommendations</td>
<td>OSRC, BoA, BOS, TP</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>LAND, CPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 3.3:</strong> Request comment from the OSRC on permitting and land acquisition and disposition matters before the land use permitting boards, Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting</td>
<td>PB, OSRC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 3.4:</strong> Increase public awareness of tax incentives available to private landowners who preserve open space</td>
<td>BoA, OSRC, BOS</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 3.5:</strong> Increase public outreach on the value and importance of open space, including the benefits of public-private partnerships dedicated to preserving and enhancing open space.</td>
<td>OSRC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 4:</strong> Attract and retain diverse business in Cohasset while retaining small town character</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 4.1:</strong> Develop plans for joint economic development of the Harbor area and the Village</td>
<td>TP, Har, CoC</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>MA Downtown Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 4.2:</strong> Complete study of commercial build-out analysis including impact of potential regional sewer on economic development along Rt. 3A</td>
<td>TP, SC</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 4.3:</strong> Establish design guidelines that can be adopted for the Route 3A corridor</td>
<td>TP, PB</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 4.4:</strong> Consider ways in which to introduce more housing in Cohasset Village as a way to enhance market opportunities in that district (see Economic Development chapter)</td>
<td>TP, PB</td>
<td>7+</td>
<td>MA Downtown Initiative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Cohasset Master Plan Implementation Matrix

**Timeline:** Near-term: 1-3 years; Mid-term: 4-6 years; Long-term: 7+ years; Ongoing  
**Potential Resources:** Technical assistance and/or fund opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal/Strategy/Action</th>
<th>Parties Responsible</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Potential Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 1: Diversify Cohasset's housing stock and promote increased options for households of varying sizes, incomes, tenures, and ages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.1: Consider amending the Zoning Bylaw to allow context-appropriate increases in density in key areas of town, such as along Route 3A, near the train station, in the harbor area, or near the village center</td>
<td>TP, AHSC, PB</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>EEA Planning grants, MassHousing grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.2: Identify areas to use zoning or other incentives to encourage “missing middle” typologies – buildings that fall between single-family houses and small-scale multifamily buildings</td>
<td>TP, AHSC, PB</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>EEA Planning grants, MassHousing grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.3: Review the zoning regulations to more fully encourage the construction of accessory dwelling units (ADUs)</td>
<td>TP, AHSC, PB</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>EEA Planning grants, MassHousing grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.4: Develop a local program to support first-time moderate-income homeowners seeking to purchase a home in Cohasset.</td>
<td>AHSC</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>Mass Housing Partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.5: Develop a plan to outreach and engage with residents to promote a greater understanding of housing need and goals</td>
<td>AHSC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 2: Increase the supply of deed-restricted affordable housing qualified for the state Subsidized Housing Inventory</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 2.1: Utilize CPA funds to support new affordable housing projects</td>
<td>CPC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>CPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 2.2: Fund and empanel the Affordable Housing Trust Fund</td>
<td>BOS</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>CPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 2.3: Continue to seek partnerships with nonprofit developers and Community Development Corporations</td>
<td>TP</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 2.4: Provide municipal support to the prospective affordable housing developments</td>
<td>TP</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 2.5: Develop policies and programs that will aid Cohasset’s neediest residents</td>
<td>TP, AHSC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 2.6: Complete a Housing Production Plan, currently underway, by summer 2019</td>
<td>AHSC, TP</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>MAPC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 2.7: Maintain safe harbor under Chapter 40B</td>
<td>AHSC, TP</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Cohasset Master Plan Implementation Matrix

Timeline: Near-term: 1-3 years; Mid-term: 4-6 years; Long-term: 7+ years; Ongoing
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal 3: Support seniors as they age and provide housing options that will enable them to live and thrive in Cohasset</td>
<td>AHSC, EA</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>AARP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 3.1: Explore tools to help residents age in place</td>
<td>AHSC, EA</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>AARP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 3.2: Promote age-friendly development that is sized for smaller households</td>
<td>AHSC, EA</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 3.3: Adopt visitability or universal design guidelines that encourage architectural approaches to new homes and home improvement projects that would increase accessibility for older adults and people with disabilities</td>
<td>AHSC, EA</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Economic Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal 1: Create a variety of economic activities in town to satisfy citizen’s desires for more varied experiences in the Village, the Harbor and along the commercial corridor of Route 3A</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.1: Increase density in the Village by building more mixed-use developments</td>
<td>TP, PB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.2: Pursue development of a Cohasset Cultural District through the Massachusetts Cultural Council</td>
<td>TP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.3: Create a Village-Harbor Vision</td>
<td>TP, Har</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal 2: Reimagine the Town’s Engagement with Economic Development</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 2.1: Develop a comprehensive economic development plan that melds the Town’s sites of economic and social activity into a broader framework</td>
<td>TP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 2.2: Rejuvenate the Economic Development Committee (EDC) to implement this plan</td>
<td>BOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 2.3: The EDC should develop working relationships with local, state and regional entities to provide resources and technical assistance to enhance the Town’s economic base</td>
<td>CoC, DBTA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Cohasset Master Plan Implementation Matrix

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 3</strong>: Strengthen the traditional economic development organizations including the Cohasset Chamber of Commerce and the local Downtown Business Association (DTBA)</td>
<td>CoC, DBTA</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 3.1</strong>: Broaden public knowledge of Cohasset's environmental, historical, and community assets by connecting with regional organizations such as the Greater Boston Convention &amp; Visitors Bureau</td>
<td>CoC, DBTA</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 4</strong>: Increase the number of visitors traveling to Cohasset for enjoyment and to use the Town's resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 4.1</strong>: Identify ways of increasing access to town by improving connections between public transit and the Village</td>
<td>TP, MBTA</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 4.2</strong>: Connect the Village and the Harbor</td>
<td>TP, Har, DPW</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 4.3</strong>: Create partnerships with surrounding seaside towns to connect tourism-related activities</td>
<td>CoC, DBTA</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 5</strong>: Implement the economic development recommendations of the Master Plan and the Harbor Plan, focusing on the greatest strengths of businesses that operate formal and informal establishments, including in-home enterprises</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 5.1</strong>: Identify a location where an in-Village collaborative workspace can attract and serve business professionals</td>
<td>CoC, DBTA</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 5.2</strong>: Engage Village banking institutions to serve as financial intermediaries and sources of business planning advice</td>
<td>CoC, DBTA</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 5.3</strong>: Increase new business formation by identifying complementary activities that match the needs of existing businesses</td>
<td>CoC, DBTA</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 5.4</strong>: Harness local goodwill by developing strong brand recognition of locally produced goods and services</td>
<td>CoC, DBTA</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 5.5</strong>: Streamline the steps required to start and sustain a new business</td>
<td>BOS</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 5.6: Support and where appropriate create water-based economic activities including recreation, commercial, and civic functions. Develop resources to support the continued operation and development of the Cohasset fishing industry</td>
<td>Har, HM, OSRC</td>
<td>7+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Historical & Cultural Resources

Goal 1: Preserve the historic residential character of Cohasset

| Strategy 1.1: Celebrate the Town's comprehensive historical record | HC, TP | Ongoing |
| Strategy 1.2: Establish vision and priorities to guide historic preservation planning efforts | HC, TP | 1-3 | MA Historical Commission |
| Strategy 1.3: Strengthen the Local Historic District Commission with the adoption of additional bylaws such as an Affirmative Maintenance Bylaw | CCHDC, TP, PB | 4-6 | MA Historical Commission |
| Strategy 1.4: Establish a Demolition Delay Bylaw | TP, HC, PB | 1-3 | MA Historical Commission |
| Strategy 1.5: Explore the expansion of the Local Historic District | CCHDC | 4-6 | MA Historical Commission |

Goal 2: Develop additional local capacity to manage and enhance historic and cultural resources

| Strategy 2.1: Expand partnerships among historic and cultural organizations through development of a Historic Preservation Plan | HC, TP | 4-6 | CPA |
| Strategy 2.2: Implement new partnerships among organizations within historic and cultural asset clusters for programming, maintenance, fundraising and promotion | HC | Ongoing |
| Strategy 2.3: Establish programs such as land alteration management to prevent clear cutting and the alteration of natural rock ledges | TP, PB | 4-6 |
| Strategy 2.4: Expand Design Review Board purview to include residential properties | TP, PB | 1-3 |

Goal 3: Enhance Cohasset's historic and cultural resources

| Strategy 3.1: Revitalize and restore Town Common to historic standards | HC | 7+ | CPA, MPPF |
### Cohasset Master Plan Implementation Matrix

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 3.2: Continue Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding for maintenance and restoration of historic properties</td>
<td>CPC, HC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>CPA, MPPF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 3.3: Provide best practices information through the Town’s Historical Commission about how to research house histories</td>
<td>HC, HS</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>MA Historical Commission Survey and Planning Grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 3.4: Review zoning in Cohasset Common Historic District</td>
<td>TP, PB</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 3.5: Highlight historic and cultural resources during annual cultural events</td>
<td>HC, HS</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>MA Cultural Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Goal 4: Enhance creative and cultural economic development

| Strategy 4.1: Celebrate the upcoming 250th anniversary by highlighting local cultural and historic resources | 250, HC, HS, BOS | 1-3           |
| Strategy 4.2: Explore economic development strategies that highlight local artists and food producers | TP, BOH, CoC     | Ongoing       |
| Strategy 4.3: Develop a process to establish a cultural district                     | TP                 | 4-6           |
| Strategy 4.4: Commemorate notable historic achievements                              | HC                 | Ongoing       |

#### Open Space & Recreation

Goal 1: Make protection of open space and the character of the town a priority in all townwide land use decisions, in keeping with citizens’ wishes, to preserve access and scenic beauty

| Strategy 1.1: Develop and maintain a list and priorities of properties suitable for potential acquisition on conservation by the Town and make recommendations | OSRC, BoA, BOS, TP | Ongoing | LAND, CPA |

Goal 2: Protect and maintain the natural environment

| Strategy 2.1: Create a town database of significant natural resources, wildlife habitats and corridors, rare species habitat, vernal pools, endangered plant habitat | OSRC, CC, TP, Eng | Ongoing |
| Strategy 2.2: Revive or expand implementation of Water Dept.’s Rain Garden Program | WD, OSRC | Ongoing |
### Cohasset Master Plan Implementation Matrix

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 2.3:</strong> Support the restoration of shellfish beds, including developing an Inter-Municipal Agreement with the Town of Scituate to reduce phosphate pollution into the Gulf River“</td>
<td>SW, HC, CC, BOS, Town of Scituate</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 2.4:</strong> Consider bylaw and regulatory changes to prohibit phosphate and nitrategenerating uses along Gulf River and other tributaries to the Harbor, Straits Pond, and along other sensitive bodies of water or wetlands areas and their tributaries</td>
<td>HC, CC, OSRC, BOH</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 2.5:</strong> Consider reviving plan for ocean outfall for sewer system to reduce fresh water incursion into the Harbor</td>
<td>SC, BOS</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 2.6:</strong> Organize selective non-toxic eradication programs of invasive species where appropriate</td>
<td>OSRC, CC, DPW</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 2.7:</strong> Work to protect Town water supplies</td>
<td>WD</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Goal 3: Improve recreational opportunity and access**

| Strategy 3.1: Study the feasibility of “shared road” bikeways, walkways and sidewalks with proper signage for vehicular traffic | RC, DPW, TP                          | Ongoing  | Chpt. 90, Mass Trails Grant, MAPC Landline, MAPC Trail Implementation Toolkit |
| Strategy 3.2: Study creation of additional walking trails on public and publicly-accessible private conservation properties | RC, CC, OSRC, Eng                    | Ongoing  | CPA, PARC, Mass Trails Grant, MAPC Landline, MAPC Trail Implementation Toolkit |
| Strategy 3.3: Continue to monitor the need for development of new ball fields and play areas throughout town, and act upon opportunities as they present themselves | RC                                   | Ongoing  | CPA, PARC                           |
| Strategy 3.4: Improve access to our waterways, including our harbors, ponds, ocean front, launching ramps and mooring areas | RC, HM, Har                          | Ongoing  |                                      |
| Strategy 3.5: Increase town recreational operated programs for all ages | OSRC, RC                             | Ongoing  |                                      |
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 3.6: Work cooperatively with the Department of Conservation and Recreation, The Trustees of Reservations, Cohasset Conservation Trust and any other non-town owner of publicly-accessible open space.</td>
<td>OSRC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Transportation & Circulation

#### Goal 1: Improve pedestrian connectivity throughout the Town

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy 1.1: Enroll in MassDOT Complete Streets Program</th>
<th>TP</th>
<th>1-3</th>
<th>MassDOT Complete Streets program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.2: Improve safety, mobility, and access on Route 3A for all types of transportation</td>
<td>DPW</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>MassDOT, FHWA Road Safety Audit guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.3: Construct pedestrian facilities in other high traffic locations throughout Town</td>
<td>DPW</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>MassDOT Complete Streets program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.4: Consider other initiatives to improve pedestrian safety and convenience</td>
<td>TP</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>MassDOT Complete Streets program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Goal 2: Improve bicycle access and safety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy 2.1: Implement on-road bicycle infrastructure</th>
<th>DPW</th>
<th>7+</th>
<th>MAPC Landline, MAPC Trail Implementation Toolkit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 2.2 Improve and connect off-road multi-modal facilities</td>
<td>OSRC</td>
<td>7+</td>
<td>MAPC Landline, MAPC Trail Implementation Toolkit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Goal 3: Improve how roadways in Town operate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy 3.1 Improve mechanisms for addressing private ways</th>
<th>BOS, TP, PB</th>
<th>1-3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 3.2 Address local parking challenges and opportunities</td>
<td>TP, DPW</td>
<td>4-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 3.3 Improve roadway safety and operations</td>
<td>DPW</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Facilities &amp; Services</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 1: Ensure Cohasset’s public infrastructure and facilities meet community and departmental needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.1: Maintain and refine the Town’s capital planning and implementation processes</td>
<td>Cap, TM, BOS</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.2: Plan for the renovation or replacement of facilities whose size, condition, and/or location inhibit the efficient operation of the Town staff and citizens who rely on them</td>
<td>Cap, TP, TM, BOS</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>CPA, MPPF, MA School Building Authority, MA Board of Library Commissioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.3: Continue to identify and proactively address maintenance concerns which do not yet rise to the level requiring capital improvement funding</td>
<td>All departments</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.4: Consider department’s capital assets portfolio holistically and evaluate opportunities to share or transfer resources between departments</td>
<td>Cap, TM, BOS</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.5: Upgrade the technology infrastructure of public buildings to improve their operations</td>
<td>All departments</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.6: In addition to attaining or maintaining compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), consider designing public facilities in line with the principles of universal design (UD), also called inclusive design, which seeks to create spaces that can be used by all people, regardless of their age, size, disability or ability</td>
<td>TM, TP</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 2: Secure and supply adequate resources to provide high quality facilities, services, and programs that serve the needs of Cohasset’s residents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 2.1: Continue to foster relationships between the Town government and community partner organizations and share resources to aid each in the fulfillment of their missions</td>
<td>TM, BOS</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 2.2: Encourage and support the continued pursuit of grant funding and other alternative financing strategies</td>
<td>TM, BOS, TP</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 2.3: When evaluating capital purchase requests for specialized equipment, gains to staff productivity and work efficiency should be considered in addition to the base cost</td>
<td>Cap, TM</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 2.4: Continue to support the “One Community” initiative to foster resource sharing with all departments in Town to economically use tax revenue</td>
<td>TM, BOS</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 3.1: Continue to disseminate information on town processes through all channels of communication</td>
<td>TM</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 3.2: Increase coordination between Town committees and boards</td>
<td>TM</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 3.3: Utilize established and emerging technologies to improve inter-department and intra-department communication</td>
<td>TM</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 4.1: Work with surrounding communities to increase Cohasset’s resilience against the effects of climate change</td>
<td>TP</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 4.2: Identify opportunities to coordinate with neighboring towns in addressing the environmental and other impacts of development in adjacent areas</td>
<td>TP</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 4.3: Continue, and consider expanding, participation in collective purchasing programs for capital equipment to benefit from economies of scale and save staff time</td>
<td>Cap, TM</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Energy & Sustainability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal 1: Reduce municipal energy use</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.1: Continue tracking and analyzing energy data in Mass Energy Insight (MEI)</td>
<td>AEC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.2: Continue participation in the Green Communities program</td>
<td>AEC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.3: Undertake an education/training campaign for municipal building staff and users</td>
<td>AEC, TM</td>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.4: Implement a strategy to track energy cost savings</td>
<td>AEC, TM</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>MA Department of Energy Resources (DOER) Pathways to Zero Net Energy Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.5: Start research into Net Zero options and goals to inform an eventual municipal net zero plan</td>
<td>AEC</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Goal 2: Reduce residential and commercial energy use

| Strategy 2.1: Promote MassSave for residential EE audits and incentives (targeted residential outreach where appropriate) | AEC | Ongoing | MassSave |
| Strategy 2.2: Promote Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing mechanism for commercial energy efficiency and renewable energy work | AEC | Ongoing | |
| Strategy 2.3: Continue enforcement of the Stretch Energy Code for new buildings | B&I | Ongoing | Green Communities |

Goal 3: Prepare for climate change and increase Town resiliency

| Strategy 3.1: Continue participation in the State’s Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program | TP | Ongoing | MVP Action grants |
| Strategy 3.2: Use the results of the Harbor Plan to inform resiliency and climate adaptation planning and identify additional actionable priorities | TP, Har | Ongoing | MVP Action grants |
| Strategy 3.3: Incorporate relevant knowledge of sea level rise and expected rainfall into all planning and permitting processes within the Town | TP, PB | Ongoing | |
| Strategy 3.4: Engage and educate the community around energy and climate issues | AEC | Ongoing | |

Goal 4: Promote the use of additional renewable energy to reduce emissions and costs

| Strategy 4.1: Participate in the Solarize Mass program run by the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) | AEC | 1-3 | MA Clean Energy Center and MA Department of Energy Resources (DOER) Solarize Massachusetts programs |
## Cohasset Master Plan Implementation Matrix

Timeline: Near-term: 1-3 years; Mid-term: 4-6 years; Long-term: 7+ years; Ongoing

Potential Resources: Technical assistance and/or fund opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal/Strategy/Action</th>
<th>Parties Responsible</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Potential Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 4.2: Identify good places for municipal solar projects</td>
<td>AEC, TP</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 4.3: Consider participation in Green Municipal Aggregation program on behalf of Town’s residents</td>
<td>AEC</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>MAPC’s Municipal Aggregation Toolkit and municipal aggregation program, Community Electricity Aggregation PLUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 4.4: Consider adding language into zoning code to explicitly allow for rooftop solar arrays</td>
<td>AEC, TP</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5: Reduce vehicle fuel use, support transition to Evs</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 5.1: Install electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure in all municipal &amp; school parking lots and consider purchasing additional EVs or hybrid vehicles for the Town, including the Police Department.</td>
<td>Cap, BOS, DPW</td>
<td>7+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 5.2: Implement a community-wide anti-idling policy</td>
<td>BOS</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Public Health

| Goal 1: Sustain and expand access to locally produced and healthy foods in town       |                     |          |                                                                                     |
| Strategy 1.1: Continue support and identify expansion opportunities for the farmers market to encourage use of local and healthy foods (e.g., Holly Hill) | BOH                 | Ongoing  |                                                                                     |
| Strategy 1.2: Develop and implement a Community Food System Action to help preserve existing agricultural uses and soils, use of marine resources, and respond to climate driven issues that could affect local food production | BOH, BOS            | 4-6      |                                                                                     |
| Strategy 1.3: Monitor local needs for supplemental nutrition benefits, especially among vulnerable populations including low income households and seniors | BOH, EA             | Ongoing  |                                                                                     |
## Cohasset Master Plan Implementation Matrix

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<tr>
<td>Goal 2: Sustain support for actions to monitor and respond to issues that relate to mental and emotional wellness of residents, particularly that of youth and older adults</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 2.1: Conduct an annual town-wide communications campaign to reduce the perception of stigma for receiving mental and emotional support</td>
<td>SHCC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 2.2: Continue to support programs that provide social and emotional support to younger and older residents</td>
<td>SHCC, EA</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 2.3: Support the development of a teen or intergenerational center in town</td>
<td>SHCC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 2.4: Conduct regular (annual or bi-annual) town-wide surveys to gather information about parents' behaviors in relation to their children and youth in town (e.g., social host law, conversation with children about substance use)</td>
<td>SHCC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 3: Prioritize active transportation (walking, biking, and transit use) and open space access to promote physical activity and exposure to outdoor natural environments</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategy 3.1: Sustain and expand local programming for activities that include physical activity</td>
<td>RC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 4: Addresses environment hazards to reduce resident exposure to substances that reduce the quality of life in town</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategy 4.1: Develop and disseminate information about prevention and reduction of tick and mosquito exposure</td>
<td>BOH</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 4.2: Provide informational materials for new and existing residents who live in proximity to roadways with higher traffic volumes (e.g., Route 3A)</td>
<td>BOH</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 4.3: Prioritize actions that reduce local single occupant vehicle trips in order to reduce locally-generated motor vehicle trips and related air pollutants</td>
<td>TP, AEC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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**Cohasset Master Plan Implementation Matrix**

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<tr>
<td>Strategy 4.4: Provide more mobility options for older residents and households with limited access to personal vehicles in order to enhance transportation safety, connect with local destinations and maintain community connections</td>
<td>EA</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 4.5: Explore current risks associated with Wampatuck Park’s former military uses and where necessary, update information (e.g., signage) for park users so that they are aware of potential exposures</td>
<td>BOH, OSRC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 5: Assess potential health impacts of proposed projects and policies by integrating a health and equity lens into local decision-making</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategy 5.1: Use a health assessment tool, such as the NACCHO Public Health in Land Use Planning &amp; Community Design checklist, in planning and development decision making</td>
<td>TP, PB</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 5.2: Bring health perspective the Community Preservation Committee through consultation with the Health Department or Board of Health</td>
<td>BOH, CPC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 5.3: Explore use of Racial Equity Impact Assessment in municipal planning and development decision making</td>
<td>TP, PB</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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