

Hingham Harbor and Downtown Sustainable Vision Plan

Final Report

June 2021



Acknowledgments

Prepared for
Town of Hingham

With support from
Hingham Planning Department
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Prepared by
Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)

With funding from
District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA)
Planning for MetroFuture Technical Assistance (PMTA)
Town of Hingham

Study Description

The Town of Hingham developed the Hingham Harbor and Downtown Sustainable Vision Plan with the intent of creating an overall conceptual plan and strategic action plan to guide public realm improvements, district land use and sustainability, and other complementary district improvements. To advance this plan the Town applied for and received a technical planning assistance grant from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). The funding for the project included \$25,000 of MAPC Technical Assistance and \$3,000 from the Town of Hingham.

The overall goal of the project was to create a shared vision for the district and to define short and long-term recommendations that will help the district to evolve toward that vision and to achieve the goals articulated through this process. The district plan was developed through a public process that involved residents, business owners, property owners, and community leaders. The recommendations are supported by discussion through this process and research and analysis of the district.



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Hingham Harbor and Downtown Sustainable Vision Plan



Introduction

Study Goals

The Hingham Harbor and Hingham Downtown are two distinct areas that are close enough to function as one contiguous district that has several subareas. This study views these subareas as parts of one whole and the whole is stronger with each of the strengths that can be integrated from each subarea. For this combined district, the study generated recommendations that are focused on:

- Land use and zoning,
- Resiliency and sustainability, and
- Public realm and open space improvements.

A district plan is a powerful tool to set the direction for investment and improvement with the many stakeholders involved in this area. In order to advance the economic vitality, sustainability, resilience of the district, the following project outcomes were the focus of the planning effort and are the subject of many of the recommendations:

- **Update resilience assessment** - a data-driven analysis of the challenges of the district and specific locations of risk is foundational to the recommendations for the district.
- **Identify solutions with synergy** - recommendations that can address several district needs simultaneously have been prioritized.
- **Support shared interests** - solutions that will benefit multiple stakeholders in the district have been prioritized. The shared interest and specific actions are articulated in the district vision statement and integrated with goals and strategies that can be supported by shared responsibilities.
- **Enable project champions** - the process has included stakeholders well positioned to advance recommendations that have been identified for the benefit of the district.

Previous Studies

The Town of Hingham has several studies that form the planning context for this work. The town's Comprehensive Master Plan update is being finalized. Preliminary materials from this process were reviewed, with particular attention paid to visioning for the Hingham Harbor and Downtown area. From this initial review it would appear the details of this planning work are consistent with the overall vision and guidance being established by the town-wide planning effort.

A key document was a portion of the study area's previous master plan, *Master Plan for Hingham Harbor*, 2007. The plan will be revisited and updated in the near future. Since that plan, the new bathhouse and concession stand was part of the previous recommendations. The town also used Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds to construct the Whitney Wharf Bridge to provide pedestrian connection along the waterfront set back from Route 3A, improving pedestrian access as previously recommended. Benches and historic signage have enhanced the use of the harbor area as previously recommended. In addition, Community Rowing prepared a study for the Hingham Harbor area titled *Hingham Harbor Waterfront Improvements*, 2013 that provides additional insights into the waterfront subarea.

The town also worked with Kleinfelder on a sea level rise analysis to identify the vulnerability of town assets along the Harbor. This study is the *Climate Change Vulnerability, Risk Assessment, and Adaptation Study*, 2015. The town, Harbor Development Committee, and Trustees of the Bathing Beach have also implemented recommendations consistent with this study to increase the resiliency of the harbor including installing

a buried wall and planted dunes that protect the parking lot at the Bathing Beach, and is seeking to secure funds to raise three of the town-owned wharves.

The town has been working closely with MassDOT to redesign a portion of Route 3A in the study area. A MassDOT Road Safety Audit was performed as part of this process, as was a roadway design study by Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS). The roadway improvements are nearing design completion and capital improvements are on the 2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the five-year rolling capital plan for the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) planning area, including Hingham. Parking conditions downtown were recently updated and parking capacity studies were completed for the town-owned Station Street lot and the privately owned Merchant's Lot.

The previous relevant studies that have been reviewed to create a firm foundation for this study include:

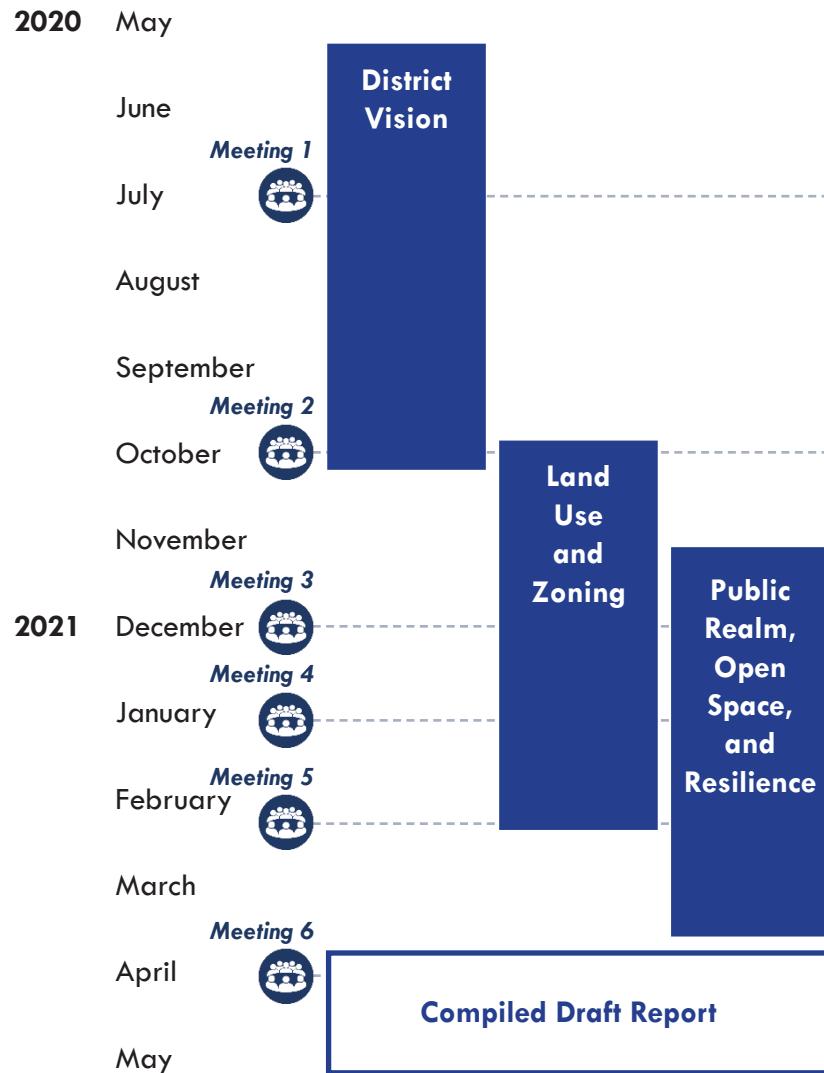
- Zoning By-law Hingham Massachusetts, 2020
- Municipal Vulnerability Plan Summary of Findings, 2019
- Merchant's Parking Lot Parking Demand Observations, 2018
- Station Street Parking Lot Parking Lot Demand Observations, 2017
- Shared Parking Model Update, 2017
- Summer Street/George Washington Boulevard Subregional Priority Roadway Study in Hingham and Hull, 2016
- Hingham Climate Change Vulnerability, Risk Assessment, and Adaptation Study, 2015
- Hingham Harbor Waterfront Improvements, 2013
- Hingham Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2009
- Master Plan for Hingham Harbor, 2007

Stakeholder Engagement

MAPC led and managed the study process with the support of the Town of Hingham's Director of Community Planning. The study involved six public meetings that were posted on the town website with meeting notices sent to nearby property owners. The meetings involved the convening of stakeholders of the study area including business owners, Conservation Commission, Friends of Hingham Harbor, Hingham Development and Industrial Commission, Hingham Downtown Association, Hingham Farmer's Market, Hingham Harbor Development Committee, Hingham Land Conservation Trust, Hingham Harbor Marina, Hingham Maritime Center, Hingham Municipal Lighting Plant, Hingham Net Zero, Hingham Unity Council, Historical and Historic District Commissions, homeowners in the district, Master Plan Committee, Planning Board, property owners, recreational boaters, Recreation Commission, residents, Route 3A Task Force, town staff, Trustees of the Hingham Bathing Beach, and the Weir River Estuary Park Committee.

At each meeting, MAPC presented data and information to guide the conversation and to invite feedback. At each meeting participants were invited to provide feedback through meeting polls, and discussion. The content of this feedback and discussion has directly informed the content of this plan and articulated the vision statement, confirmed the goals, and defined the strategies. The timeline to the right shows the sequence of meetings and topics discussed. The process occurred over the course of one year.

Plan Process and Tasks



Study Boundary

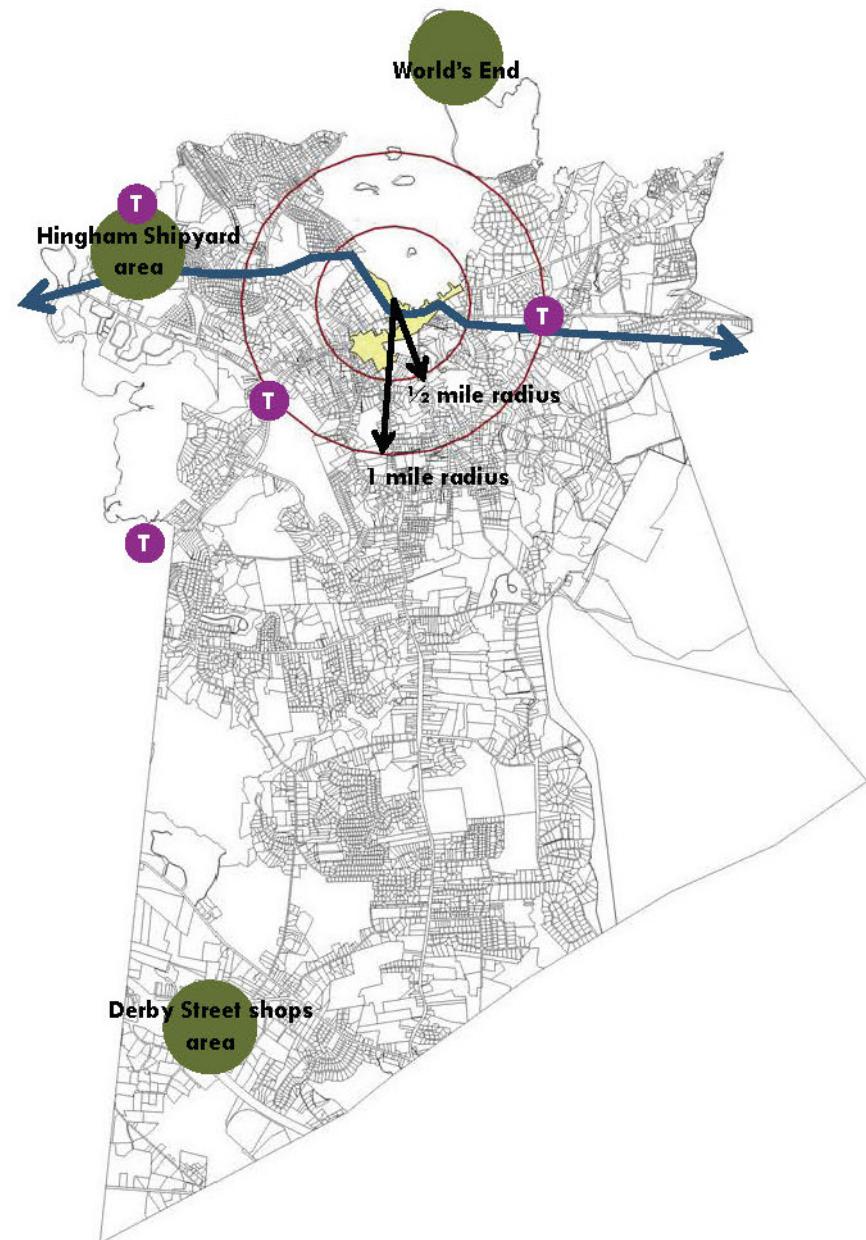
The Hingham Harbor/Downtown area for this study is shown in the illustration on the following page. The western extent of the area is at the intersection of Otis Street and Broad Cove Road. The area then runs east along Route 3A (Otis Street) and the waterfront harbor edge to its eastern extent at Steamboat Wharf near Steamboat Lane. From this edge the area extends south from the Summer Street rotary on Route 3A and follows Green Street crossing Eldridge Court and Water Street. The study area boundary continues rail corridor along the edge of the Hingham Cemetery and follows the rear property line of properties along North Street and Main Street.

The southern edge of the study area follows rear property lines along Elm Street and turns to follow along Central Street. The line turns along property lines to LaFayette Avenue and follows property lines to cross South Street and the rail corridor to properties around North Street and Lincoln Street. The area includes the Old Ordinary campus owned by Hingham Historical Society and the Benjamin Lincoln House recently purchased by the town. The study area then continues back to the north along the rear property lines along the west side of North Street where it meets again with Route 3A (Otis Street).

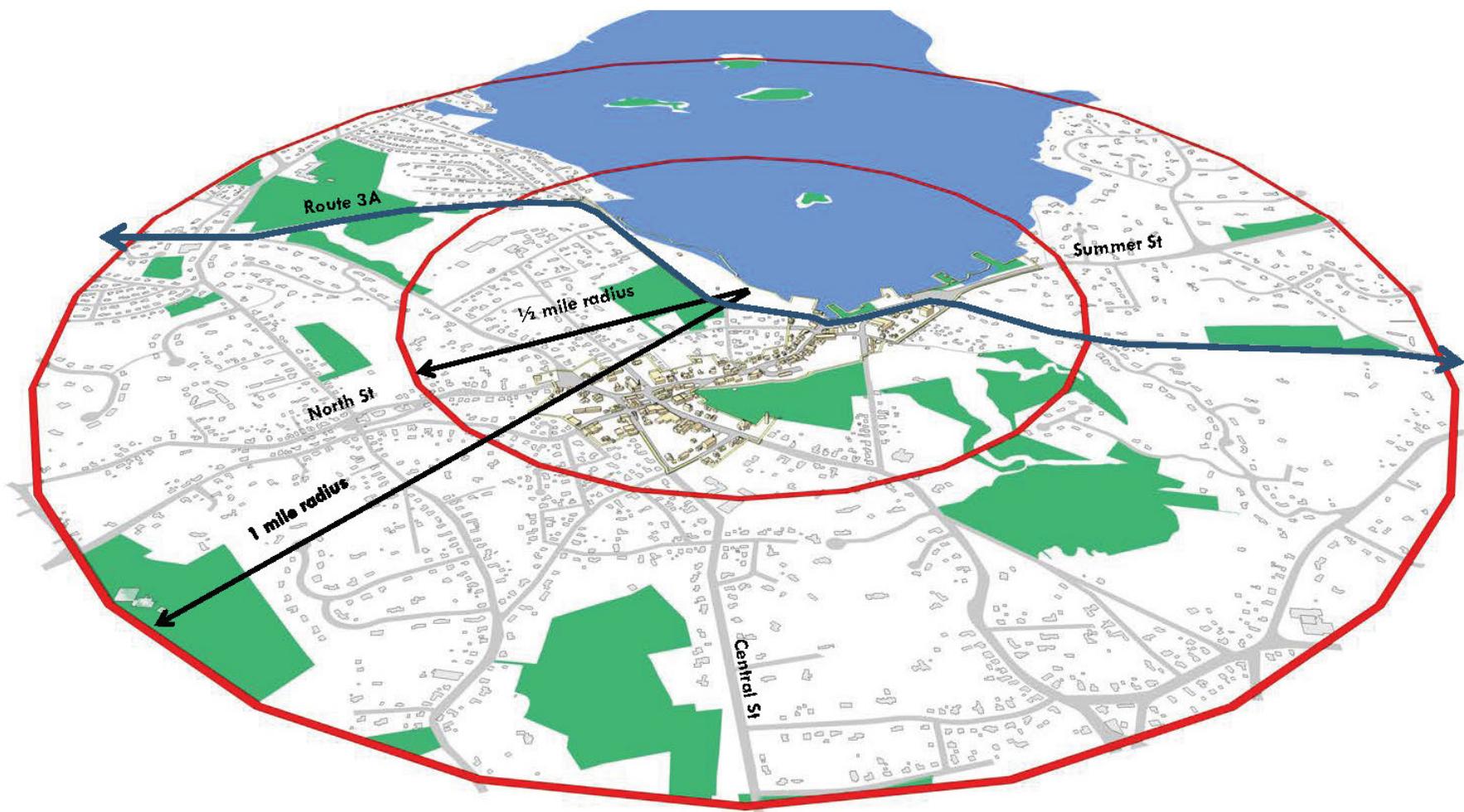


Study Area Context

The Hingham Harbor and Downtown is in the center of the town's coast. It is not too close to some of Hingham's major attractions for visitors, such as World's End, Hingham Shipyard or the Derby Street shops. It is also not too close to local commuter rail and commuter ferry connections. The closest are the commuter rail stops at West Hingham and Nantasket Junction with both about 1 mile away from the center of the district. The commuter ferry at Hingham Shipyard is further away from the district by about another half mile. The district stands somewhat on its own to attract visitors. The diagram of Hingham to the right highlights these features with the study area highlighted in yellow and shown with a 1/2 mile radius and a 1 mile radius that show the walking catchments for a 10-minute walk and 20-minute walk respectively.



The diagram on this page zooms into the 1 mile radius around the Study Area showing the surrounding street network and building patterns.





Hingham Harbor and Downtown Subareas

While the overall vision and purpose of this plan is to draw the study area together as a unified and complementary district, the subareas of the district are not uniform. Each subarea brings unique strengths and weaknesses to the whole. The three subareas are geographically defined on the previous page and described below.

Hingham Harbor

The Hingham Harbor subarea is the waterfront portion of the district. It includes all areas on the waterside of Route 3A including the Hingham Bathing Beach, the wharves, boat ramp, Hingham Maritime Center, marinas, and other waterfront uses. It is important to elevate the unique attractions and destinations that the waterfront provides for the district and strengthen safe pedestrian connections across Route 3A to reinforce the unity between this and other subareas. Better connections to complementary uses such as additional parking and restaurants are particularly important. The subarea includes 17 acres of land divided into 12 parcels with 5 buildings controlled by 10 owners with a total assessed value of \$10.7 million. The largest land owner is the Town of Hingham.

North Street Subarea

The North Street Subarea includes the area between Route 3A and south to the intersection of North Street and South Street. It is an area of transition from the more auto-oriented uses along Route 3A to the more historic development patterns with frontage along North Street. It is important for this subarea to reduce the negative impacts of Route 3A on the pedestrian environment and character of the built environment that are evident among large surface parking lots and discontinuous sidewalk infrastructure. This area is critically important to strengthen the connections and assets of Hingham Harbor and Hingham Square and to unify one contiguous and unified district. The subarea includes 17 acres of land divided into 53 parcels with 48 buildings controlled by 25 owners with a total assessed value of \$51.2 million. The largest land owner is the Town of Hingham.

Hingham Square

Hingham Square is the historic heart of the study area. The town has been a careful steward of this area and its well preserved buildings and streetscape character. The subarea includes many of the shops, services, and attractions of the downtown and is home to historic assets of the town including the Hingham Historical Society, Heritage Museum, Old Ordinary Campus, Samuel Lincoln House, and the Benjamin Lincoln House. Other institutions anchor the district and include the Old Ship Church, New North Church, St. Paul's Parish, First Baptist Church, and the Hingham Community Center. An attractive public realm is characterized by tree-lined brick sidewalks punctuated by small plazas and open spaces. This subarea includes 22 acres of land divided into 55 parcels with 49 buildings controlled by 28 owners with a total assessed value of \$71.9 million. The largest land owner is the Roman Catholic Archbishop.

Hingham Harbor and Downtown Sustainable Vision Plan



Furniture • Home • Baby

District Vision

Community and Stakeholder General Perspectives

Prior to the development of a district vision statement, participants in this process were invited to answer a series of important questions about Hingham Harbor and Downtown. The most frequent responses are included here and set the foundation for the district vision, goals, and strategies.

What works in Hingham Harbor?

New harbor walk; kayaks and rentals; benches; coffee shop; natural beauty; Bathing Beach; Farmer's Market; community events at bandstand; new bathhouse; pedestrian access; public cares about it; open space; public access were all given as priorities.

What works in Downtown?

Unique variety of local shops and restaurants; walkability; historic charm and resources; Heritage Museum; trees; quintessential downtown; arts walk; Fruit Center; movie theater, cemetery, walks, downtown events; and it's beautiful were all given as priorities.

Shared themes between Hingham Harbor and Downtown for what works:

Desirable activities (complementary); walkable; attractive; active; natural, cultural, historic value and beauty; variety of attractions

What doesn't work in Hingham Harbor?

Not safe for pedestrian and biking access - crossing Route 3A; not connected to other areas in Town; no harbor dining; lacking of parking on the waterside of Route 3A; limited social and passive recreation; access for water uses; needs facility for rowing, kayaking, and paddle boarding to complement Hingham Maritime Center's sailing facility; and consistent events were all given as priorities.

What doesn't work in Downtown?

Encourage walking and biking; more variety in retail and dining; landlord monopoly; place to gather or larger pedestrian only area; options to access downtown; outdoor dining; crossing Route 3A; need a retail anchor; concern about the economic vitality were all given as priorities.

Shared themes between Hingham Harbor and Downtown for what doesn't work:

Improve walking and biking safety; improve Route 3A safety and crossings; expand retail and dining options; improve access to the area; and coordination for improved events and parking.

What are the main draws for local visitors and tourists in the district?

The Historic sites - buildings, streetscape, cemetery; Heritage Museum; restaurants; waterfront/beach; Farmer's Market; and recreational boating were all given as priorities.

What would make the district more experiential or a bigger draw for local visitors and tourists?

An inn or bed and breakfast; better transportation access from outside the district - shuttles, water taxi, bike trail; waterfront dining; boating events and other consistent district events; enhance the retail experience and diverse mix of businesses; and expand a "Hingham Heritage Trail" that connects historic sites were all given as priorities.

What weather/coastal related issues have you experienced in Hingham Harbor/Downtown?

Flooding on wharf and wharf inundation; heat and value of tree canopy; 2018 snowstorms and coastal storms; snow removal; beach erosion and sea wall failure; degradation of sidewalks due to tides; Route 3A closed down in big storms were all given as priorities.

What other resilience issues have you noticed?

Rents are prohibitively high for some retailers; road safety and Route 3A; littering along the walkways and boat launch area; carbon reduction through walking and biking.

What should resilience look like for Hingham Harbor and Downtown?

Car free zones in downtown to encourage outdoor eating and other public spaces; Wi-Fi and better cell phone reception; bike paths and lanes; attract a variety of business owners that are financially feasible/viable; native and drought resistant plants; no litter, no pesticides, more pocket prairies, less mowing or leaf blowing, more walking, less idling cars; an inn or small hotel; bike share; improved cooperation between property owners, merchants, Town Hall, and DPW; solar canopies and trees to protect against extreme heat; meet the challenges of sea level rise; address the parking issues - maybe through parking meters were all given as priorities.

What do you want this study to accomplish?

Find balance between maintaining historic charms while making progress on efforts to increase diversity and move towards a low carbon lifestyle; action plan for connecting the harbor and downtown; generate attractive opportunities on the Harbor front; increase awareness that Hingham is a precious and vulnerable resource; bring harbor stakeholders and downtown stakeholders together with shared goals, attract corporate sponsorship for a significant project, build a coalition that works together for the future; fill the storefronts with a variety of shops, restaurants, and experiences – do not leave them empty for months; defined linkage of the downtown to the waterfront; a vision with clear steps for completion; a roadmap for how to tie downtown to the harbor with ideas how to make it more attractive for people were all given as priorities.

Community and Stakeholder Visioning

Prior to the development of a district vision statement, participants in this process were invited to answer a series of important questions about Hingham Harbor and Downtown that were specific to crafting a vision for the district. The most frequent responses are included here and were a part of the process of drafting the district vision statement.

What is the district about?

- *The ability of the residents to congregate and socialize*
- *The district epitomizes two of the three main reasons people settle in Hingham - historic character and the proximity to water*
- *The district should be welcoming and accessible to all*
- *Creating a more livable space that is not car-centric*
- *Make sure downtown/harbor is a place people are comfortable and safe walking around*

What should be accomplished?

- *Action plan for connecting the harbor and downtown*
- *Bring stakeholders together with shared goals and build a coalition that works together for the future*
- *A vision with clear steps for completion*
- *Action - result in practical recommendations*
- *Know what goals are doable*
- *Help us determine the best way to move forward*
- *We need direction and to see steps implemented to take us to the future*

A draft vision statement was created based on the feedback and presented at the third public stakeholder meeting. After presenting the draft statement, participants were asked the following questions to help further refine the vision statement.

Do you feel this draft vision statement reflects our discussion?

On review of the initial draft of the vision statement, 37% of the participants responded “Yes, it looks good” and 63% responded “It is okay, but could be refined.”

Comments on how it could be improved included:

- *Historic character of the square isn’t mentioned in the first paragraph*
- *The second paragraph is too wordy*
- *I think it touches on our goals and vision for linking the downtown and the harbor*
- *Can you break the statement into sections similar to the example that was shared?*
- *How about adding it to be more of a destination?*
- *Reference issues with Route 3A more directly*

In addition to checking in during the development of the district vision statement, the draft strategies were compiled based on feedback and an expression of initial support from participants in this planning process. All strategies included in this document received support from at least 70% of the participants as gathered through in-meeting polls. The following strategies were explored, but are not included:

- Increase amenity for recreational boating, for example through public access/storage for non-motorized boating
- Define a parking management plan
- Consider adding “Your Speed” signs along the Otis Street portion of Route 3A
- Consider reduction of the speed limit along the Otis Street portion of Route 3A
- Consider a pedestrian overpass crossing at Route 3A
- Explore road diets for every district street to expand sidewalk widths and bike lanes
- Identify street segments that can become pedestrian only to create outdoor plazas and amenities
- Use special events to test pedestrian only use
- Elevate 1,800 feet of Route 3A for flood protection
- Expand district branding to reinforce identity

Background

The Vision Statement has been framed by stakeholder and community conversations and has integrated feedback on several drafts to arrive at the statement below. The Vision Statement articulates a long term and high level view of where the district is headed and builds upon previous studies and plans for Hingham Harbor and Downtown. The Vision Statement

sets the context for the more specific district goals and strategies. All goals and strategies are intended to advance this overall vision for the district. Actions consistent with the vision statement should be supported and carry the weight of a well-informed community conversations that has expressed support for these concepts.

Vision Statement

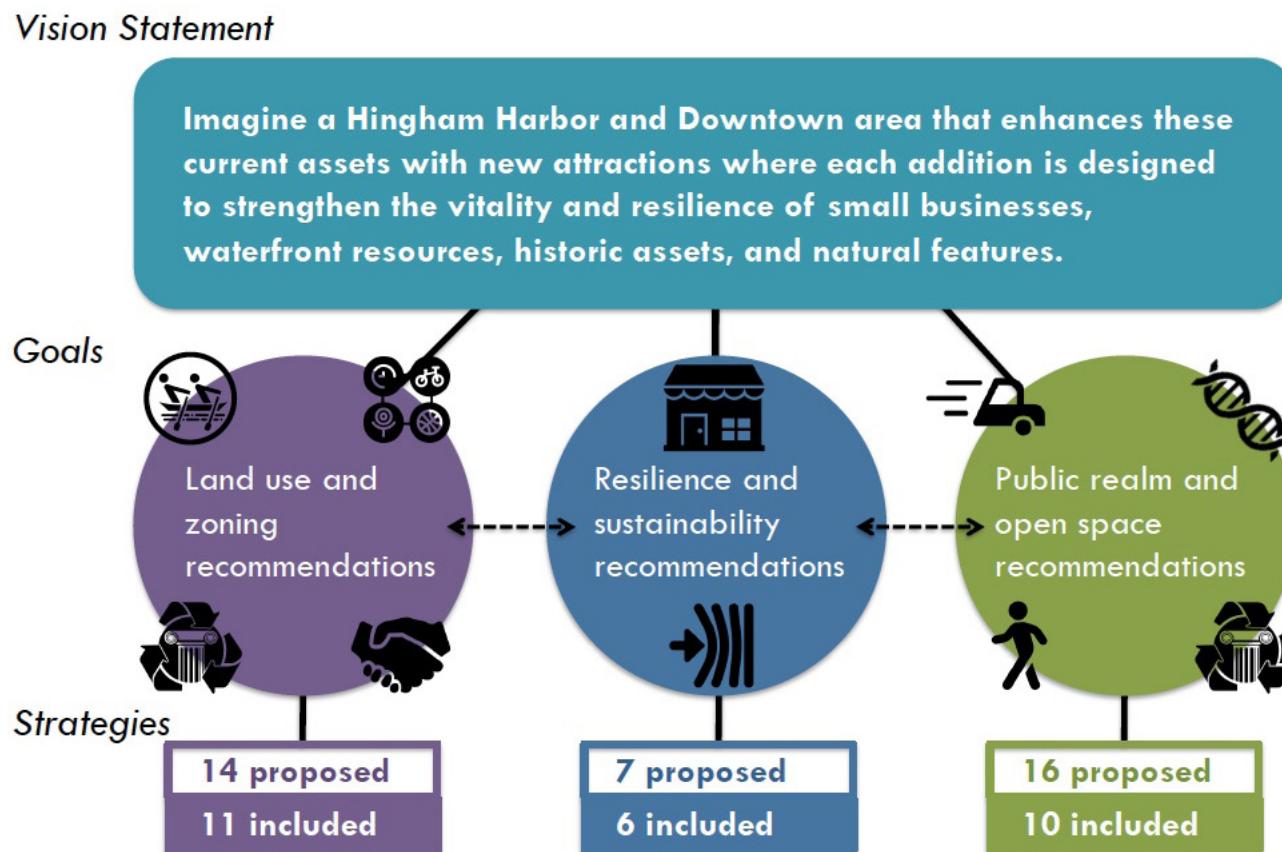
Hingham Harbor and Downtown is a distinct destination with local shops and restaurants, punctuated by an active and scenic waterfront, and set among a charming and historic network of streets and open spaces. All of which combine in a place that brings the community together for living, working, shopping, sightseeing, boating, worship, recreation, and special events.

Imagine a Hingham Harbor and Downtown area that enhances these current assets with new attractions designed to strengthen the vitality and resilience of small businesses, waterfront resources, historic assets, and natural features. Public and private investments add to the walkability and multimodal access, expand the number of activities, and beautify the distinct outdoor social spaces of the historic district.

Access to the district is made safer and more welcoming for all visitors. Route 3A is improved and its risks are mitigated with a focus on safety and resilience. All improvements add to the centuries of preservation and adaptation that have kept the district authentic and relevant for generations. This dynamic balance between legacy and long-term vision continues to shape the district to remain at the heart of the community.

Organization of Recommendations

The diagram below shows the general organization of this district plan and the relationship between the overarching Vision Statement the interrelated Goals and the Strategies that help to define each goal and add detail to the vision. Through the process a number of strategies were proposed, but did not receive enough support from process participants to include in the district plan.



Key Priorities for Hingham Harbor and Downtown

At the heart of the district plan strategies and actions are these **Key Priorities for Hingham Harbor and Downtown**.

Each priority responds directly to major themes often repeated by community members and stakeholders. Among the most frequently heard themes from the community was to take action on these priorities, and to not delay implementation. The following priorities are consistent with feedback received and taken from the recommended goals and strategies. Each priority is provided with more detail in the following chapters.



1

Increase space devoted to people

Many aspects of this district plan are intended to improve the walkability and bikability of the district and more generally devote more space to people and outdoor activities. This compact area with a concentrated collection of diverse activities should be a destination, in part, because it is a safe and attractive place to walk around. This is a competitive advantage when compared to other types of retail centers.

2

Strengthen vitality and sustainability

Many aspects of this district plan are intended to add to the activities, energy, and life of the district. A combination of attractions in the form of shops, restaurants, services events, water activities, and others helps to support the economy of the district and sustains the interest of visitors and patrons.



3

Form a coalition of partners

The district is home to many stakeholders and contributors. It is critically important to bring all of these partners together to join resources and stewardship of the district to move together in one complementary direction. This plan provides strategies to grow this coalition.



4

Increase walking and biking connectivity

In order to be most attractive, the entire district must provide the same high level of pedestrian environment. The district is compact enough to achieve uniformity and connectivity throughout. Additionally, strategic connections to the district should be inviting for anyone traveling to the district on foot or by bike.



5

Add sustainability and resilience guidance

The long term sustainability and resilience of the district is important to the community. New investments should better align to mitigate the risks of climate change and strengthen the longevity of the district.



Hingham Harbor and Downtown Sustainable Vision Plan



Land Use and Zoning Recommendations

Land Use and Zoning Recommendations

Introduction

The land use and zoning recommendations are focused on the proactive management and stewardship of activity in the Hingham Harbor/Downtown district. The goals and strategies focus on the strengths of the district encouraging active downtown and waterfront activity, strengthening the local character and historic qualities of the district, and supporting the partners who bring stewardship and care to the area. The goals and strategies intend to create a contiguous and complementary district that knits together the assets and activities of the Hingham Harbor waterfront and the amenities and uses of the Hingham Downtown.

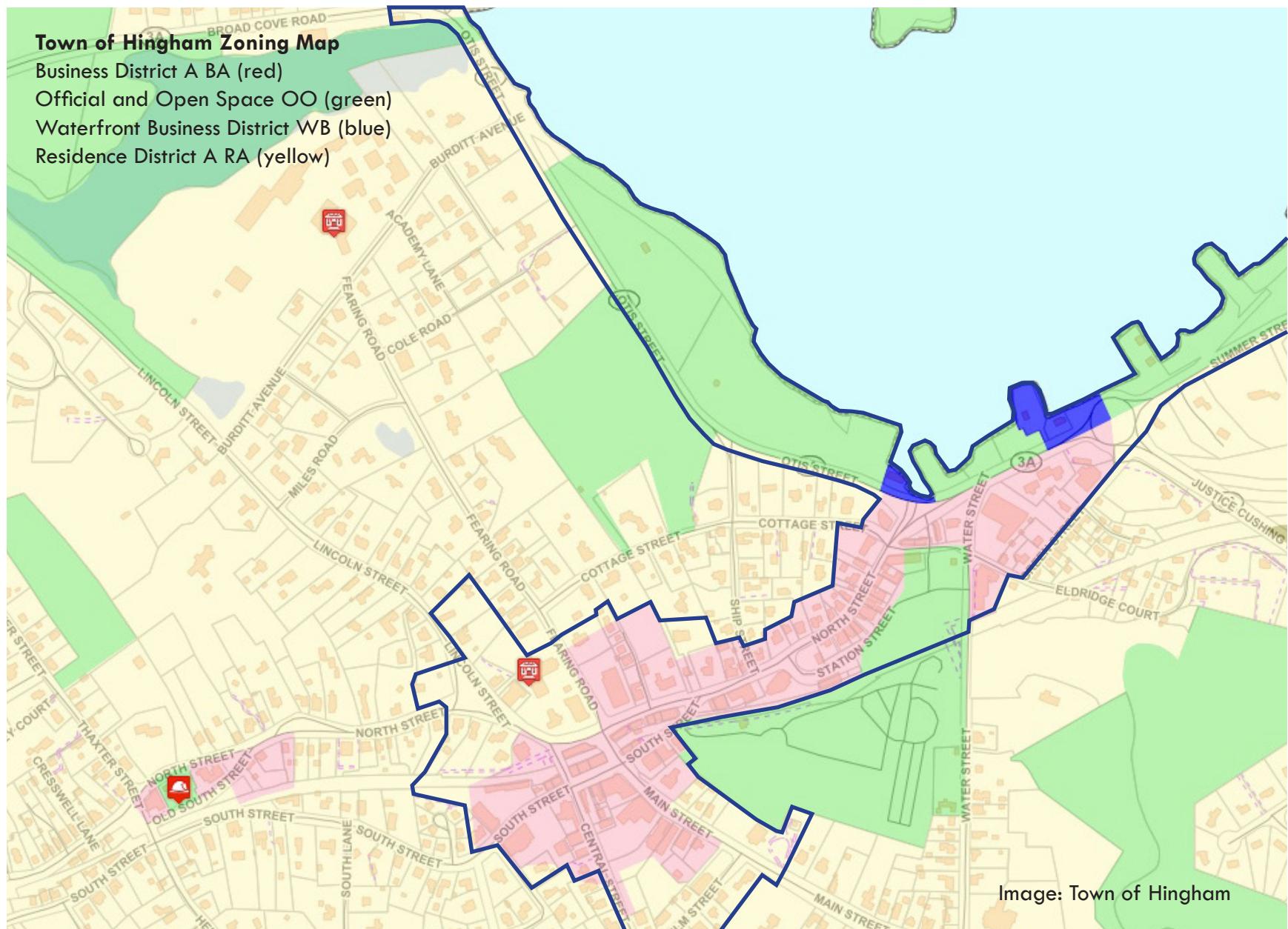
As part of the exploration of recommendations, a review of the zoning bylaw for the district was performed. The study area is comprised of four underlying zoning districts and two overlay districts. The Hingham Zoning Map is shown on the following page. The underlying zoning districts include Residence District A (RA), Business District A (BA), Official and Open Space District (OO), and Waterfront Business District (WB). The two overlay districts include the Downtown Hingham Overlay District and the Hingham Harbor Overlay District. The zoning was specifically reviewed to identify impediments to investment through redevelopment and for impediments to desired uses in the district. Several modest zoning modifications that would be consistent with the land use and zoning recommendations are noted among the goals and strategies. They include primarily updates to the uses of the district, and district guidelines. No major changes are to dimensional regulations or other zoning issues were identified as part of this review.

The following goals for land use and zoning are defined to advance the district toward the vision that has been articulated through this process. Each goal is made actionable with more specific strategies. Each strategy was presented and reviewed as a preliminary idea during community/stakeholder meetings. Only those strategies that received strong initial support have been included in the final report in the hope that they are the strategies most likely to be implemented. The Land Use and Zoning Recommendations are outlined as goals below and strategies for each goal are described in the following chapter.

The land use and zoning recommendations respond to stakeholder and community feedback received through this process. The feedback highlighted the need to balance the history of the district, while increasing the diversity of the district and its activities. In particular, to increase the district's range of businesses and to fill the storefronts with a variety of shops, restaurants, and experiences and to generate attractive opportunities on the waterfront. Finally, more needs to be done to help people know where public access parking is located.

Goals

-  **Goal 1:** Diversify activities and attractions
-  **Goal 2:** Expand waterfront activity
-  **Goal 3:** Elevate and emulate historic patterns
-  **Goal 4:** Continue and coordinate stewardship



Land Use and Zoning Recommendations

Goal 1: Diversify activities and attractions

1.1 Develop a vacant storefront program

The vibrancy and activity of a downtown district is a critical aspect of the success of the district. Small businesses are depending on a critical mass of activity to attract regular visitors and to create a sense of place and community. A vacant storefront not only reduces the number of attractive activities, but also creates a negative perception of the health of the district. Even during successful times, a proactive vacant storefront program should be in place and ready to be used to help property owners bridge the gap between tenants and to ensure that the overall health of the district is not negatively impacted.

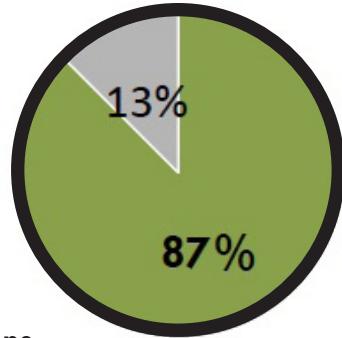
A few strategies to addressing vacant storefronts are available and could be used in a complementary manner. The first strategy is a temporary fix that is intended to reduce the negative impact of the vacant storefront. This is to find a temporary use that can retain activity or a sense of activity in the space. At one end of the spectrum for this approach is simply using the storefront to display local art, district photographs, or an exhibit of some kind. This would be a relatively passive use of the space, but would be help to retain activity and reinforce the sense of place. The next level up on the spectrum would be to move this type of temporary gallery or exhibit from a storefront window experience only, to include the leasable space in a curated and supervised art or exhibit space. The other end of the spectrum is a temporary “pop-up” business, shop or experience that would allow a new entry into the district for a small business or activity that could try something new on a temporary basis.

The second strategy is to release the vacant space as quickly as possible and to provide assistance to the landlord to help that happen in a manner that is complementary to the mix of uses and businesses that the downtown district is seeking. A state program, the Massachusetts Vacant Storefronts Program, may help in this regard. The program is through the Economic Assistance Coordinating Council (EACC) and offers small business owners up to a \$10,000 tax credit if they move into a storefront in a certified district that has been unoccupied for at least 12 months. The program requires that the district become certified and that matching funds are required from the municipality.

The state currently has eight municipalities that have been qualified for the state's vacant storefront program. The City of Marlborough is participating in the program and hopes the new incentive will help new businesses to get past the first hurdles in the initial years of opening a business. Going another step further, in 2016, the Town of Arlington adopted a “Registration and Maintenance of Vacant Commercial and Industrial Buildings Bylaw” requiring the registration of vacant storefronts by property owners. Registration requires an annual registration fee determined by the Town’s Select Board. These strategies can be used together to help mitigate the impacts of storefront vacancies and to get them back as contributors that will strengthen the range of activities and attractions for the district as quickly as possible.

Support for the Strategy

The development of a vacant storefront program was suggested as an idea during this planning process. Stakeholders and participants in the process showed initial support for the strategy. 87% of the participants agreed it was worth including in this district plan. 13% of the participants were neutral to it.



Potential Next Steps

For both temporary and permanent vacant storefront strategies, a proactive set of policies need to be put in place. For temporary solutions the procedures for contacting the property owner, opening a conversation about a temporary use of the storefront, arranging with a content-provider for installations, and arranging legal or insurance requirements are needed.

Municipalities may apply to the Economic Assistance Coordinating Council (EACC) for certification to designate a defined downtown area as a Certified Vacant Storefront District. Certification is competitive. A municipality must apply to create a district and have matching funds identified and available to qualify. The number of storefronts that have been vacant for 12 months is a determining factor in designation. An outreach plan that includes strategies for finding, identifying, and attracting businesses into vacant storefronts is also required.

Potential Funding Sources

Funds from the Town's general budget or funds from a potential Business Improvement District would need to be dedicated to support both the temporary activation of storefronts and matching funds for participation in the Certified Vacant Storefront District.





1.2 Expand arts and cultural activity and events

Expanding the arts and cultural activity and events in the district can support local economic activity, strengthen Hingham Harbor/Downtown as an attractive destination, and contribute to a positive sense of community. In order to better understand the economic potential for arts and culture, it is important to highlight the broader aspects of the creative economy that should be encouraged to fully leverage and embrace this activity.

The term creative economy was defined by the New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA) in a 2007 study called *The Creative Economy: A New Definition*. The creative economy was described as having three interrelated areas: the creative cluster, referring to creative industries; the creative workforce, referring to people in creative occupations; and creative communities, referring to geographies. In order for a creative economy to thrive, it must have assets within each of these areas.

Hingham Harbor/Downtown should identify opportunities to expand activity in each of these areas - attracting creative businesses and organizations, including web designers, architects, and others, expand support for the creative community, and highlight arts and cultural activity with a concentration of arts installations and events. The active promotion of the creative economy yields many benefits. For example, in a long-range, nationwide study of the economic impact of the arts conducted by Americans for the Arts, research showed that places with a thriving creative economy have a competitive economic advantage because they improve the area's quality of life and create vibrant

areas that attract additional economic activity that supports local businesses and spending. According to Americans for the Arts, studies on consumer behavior show that tourists that seek out arts and authentic cultural experiences such as festivals and performances, are more likely to stay longer at their destinations and spend more at local businesses. Moreover, attendees of arts events spend an average of \$24.60 per person beyond the cost of admission for their event on items such as meals, retail, childcare, transportation, and parking.

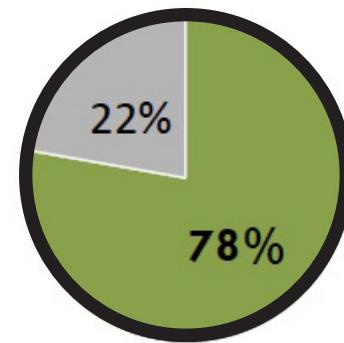
One way to encourage arts and culture uses in the district is to add artist uses under uses permitted in the Downtown Hingham Overlay. This may include uses such as an artist studio, recording studio, art gallery, artist live/work space, rehearsal studio, dance studio, or others. Allowing these uses would be more inviting to the types of arts and culture enterprises and patrons that are desired as part of the activity of the district. Expanding these permitted uses would also provide more options for viable uses to occupy ground floor commercial storefronts and spaces with active uses that contribute to the character and culture of the district.

Another way to expand arts and cultural activity is through the deliberate planning and coalition building involved in creating a Cultural District. The Mass Cultural Council launched the Cultural Districts program in 2011 by an act of the state legislature. Mass Cultural Council states that “Cultural Districts drive economic growth, strengthen our distinctive local character, and improve the quality of life of families across Massachusetts. By supporting arts, humanities, and science organizations, Cultural Districts attract tourists and entrepreneurs, which in turn help communities foster their cultural sector and expand their tax base.” A cultural district must be a specific area in a city

or town, such as the Hingham Harbor/Downtown area. It must have a number of cultural facilities, activities, and assets and must be a walkable and compact area that is easy for visitors and residents to recognize, and is a hub of cultural, artistic and economic activity. About 50 cultural districts have been designated across the Commonwealth to date. The Scituate Harbor Cultural District is one of the nearest examples of a designated district located on Front Street in Scituate.

Support for the Strategy

The expansion of arts and cultural activity was suggested as an idea during this planning process. Stakeholders and participants in the process showed initial support for the strategy. 78% of the participants agreed that this was a strategy worth including in this district plan. 22% were neutral toward the idea.



Potential Next Steps

The zoning modifications are relatively straight forward, the suggested uses could be part of a zoning modification warrant article at an upcoming town meeting. This type of change would most likely be initiated and led by the Planning Board. The designation of a Cultural District involves a process with the Mass Cultural Council. The applicant must be the town with

an application by the town's chief elected official. Prior to application, a cultural district partnership must be formed. The partnerships must include a diverse mix of organizations and businesses and represent shared interests of the district. The type of partners involved in management of the district include the town, Hingham Cultural Council, cultural organizations, at least 2 artists that live or work in the district, organizations that represent artists, for profit creative business (art gallery, dance school), local business or chamber of commerce. The partners can also include tourism, historic preservation, hospitality, or education institutions.

The partnership determines roles, duties, a meeting schedule, and expectations. The partnership is responsible for developing goals and objectives, a management plan, a marketing plan, and assessment measures for the district. During this process, a community input meeting must be held and the town must pass a resolution as a commitment to the designated cultural district.

Potential Funding Sources

No funding sources are needed for the suggested zoning changes. The Mass Cultural Council offers a variety of funding programs, some of which may benefit the planning and execution of a cultural district. Mass Cultural Council program staff is available for consultation. Local arts initiatives can be supported through the Mass Cultural Council's Local Cultural Council (LCC) grants. The grants are administered by the Hingham Cultural Council. Mass Cultural Council distributes funds to local and regional cultural councils, who then regrant funds to arts, humanities, and interpretive science projects in their own communities. Average grants tend to be modest in the range of \$500-\$750.

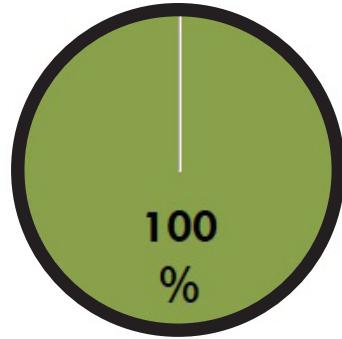
1.3 Identify all historic assets and destinations with information

Along the waterfront several interpretive information signs have been researched, designed and installed to give visitors a feel for the history and evolution of the district. These include historic photographs and narrative about the history of the area. This type of installation could be expanded to other sites, buildings, or locations of significance in the district. The same design of the black metal sign and similar graphic layout could be used for each location to receive a sign.

Additionally, these points of interest, could be linked with a district map that guides visitors to these locations. The locations could also be marked with a QR code that could be linked to a website providing additional information. This could include information for nearby amenities, shops, and restaurants, or could include audio stories about the points of interest. This activity could add to the activities and attractions for visitors to the district and would be consistent with activities to designate the district as a Cultural District.

Support for the Strategy

The identification of historic assets and destinations with information was suggested as an idea by the stakeholders during this planning process. Stakeholders and participants in the process showed unanimous support for the strategy. 100% of the participants agreed that this was a strategy worth including in this district plan.



Potential Next Steps

An inventory of the assets and attractions that should be highlighted with an interpretive information sign should be created. These assets should then be prioritized for creation and installation of signs in a sequence that expands the walking route. Create a district map for all inventoried locations and place the map on the website and have physical copies available at strategic locations in the district. Create a webpage companion to the inventory that could be expanded with additional content or interactive features. This webpage could link to the downtown business directory or other resources that connect to district amenities. The full inventory and locations with information signs should be posted on a website that is linked to the physical signs through the use of a QR code.

Potential Funding Sources

Funding for this type of activity could be supported through the implementation of two other strategies including funding through a potential Business Improvement District or Mass Cultural Council's Cultural Facilities Fund if a potential cultural district is designated. Otherwise, it would depend on incremental funding through the town budget or stakeholder contributions.



Land Use and Zoning Recommendations



Goal 2: Expand waterfront activity

2.1 Allow sit-down restaurants on waterfront by special permit

The views along the waterfront were mentioned frequently among the assets of the district. Several participants saw an opportunity to better use this asset and create additional attractions for the district by creating the opportunity for new waterfront restaurant uses in the district. A view of the water while dining would expand the attractions offered in the district. The land along the waterfront is zoned Official and Open Space and restaurant uses are not currently permitted. This recommendation would change a sit-down restaurant to be allowed by Special Permit.

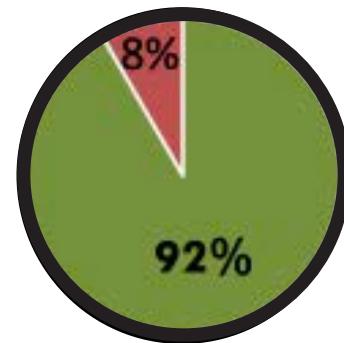
It is not clear whether development of a restaurant on one of the waterfront properties is feasible, but a simple change in the zoning use by special permit would at least allow property owners to evaluate the opportunity and propose a development if thought to be feasible for the town to review and decide whether or not to approve based on the location and characteristics of the proposal.

There are not too many waterfront locations where such a restaurant opportunity could occur. To encourage such an opportunity the town could also identify town-owned waterfront property that could potentially host a restaurant. The town could invite private entities to respond to a request for proposals to construct and operate a sit-down restaurant on a portion of town-owned land that is not restricted for open space or other use. The town could structure this use of the land through a long term land lease.

In addition to zoning requirements, such a waterfront use may also be subject to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 91, the waterways licensing program. Through Chapter 91, the Commonwealth seeks to preserve and protect the rights of the public, and to guarantee that private uses of tidelands and waterways serve a proper public purpose.

Support for the Strategy

Allowing sit-down restaurants in the Official and Open Space Zoning District by special permit was suggested as an idea during this planning process. Stakeholders and 92% of participants in the process showed support for the strategy. 8% of the participants did not think it was the right idea to pursue.



Potential Next Steps

The zoning modification should be relatively straight forward, the suggested use by special permit could be part of a zoning modification warrant article at an upcoming town meeting. This type of change would most likely be initiated and led by the Planning Board.

Potential Funding Sources

Funding for this strategy is not required.



Photo: Hinghamanchor.com,
Joshua Ross Photography

2.2 Partner with water dependent users to maximize activity

The waterfront activity is a unique asset of the district that offers an attractive destination. From observations through this planning process it seems the waterfront activity operates relatively independently and apart from other activity in the district. The waterfront assets include the Bathing Beach, Beach House, Town Boat Ramp, Hingham Harbor Marina, and Hingham Maritime Center. Partnerships with these organizations should be strengthened to both support water dependent activity and connect waterfront patrons to complementary and convenient amenities and services that occur in the district.

The Hingham Harbor Marina offers 44-slips with water and electrical hook ups for seasonal and transient recreational boaters. The Marina's website states that they cater to the recreational boater and provide a convenient refuge for long distance cruisers and an exciting destination for day boaters. The ease of access and convenience of downtown shopping and dining should be promoted with the patrons of the marina.

The Bare Cove Marina offers 40-slips with water and electrical hook ups for recreational boaters. The Marina's website states that they offer a 12 hour launch service with access to over 100 moorings in Hingham's Inner Harbor offering easy access to great fishing, sailing, and cruising just steps from historic Hingham Center.

The Hingham Maritime Center offers sailing, rowing, maritime education, and community access to Hingham Harbor. A lack of parking at the Maritime Center was mentioned as an issue during stakeholder meetings for this process. Patrons should be guided to the Station Street Lot and shown the most safe and convenient route to access the Maritime Center from that public

parking lot. Additionally, the ease of access and convenience of downtown shopping and dining should be promoted with the patrons of the Maritime Center.

Similarly, the opportunities for access to the harbor and the programs of the Marina and Maritime Center should be promoted with patrons of the downtown shops and restaurants. The Town should continue to work with the Commonwealth to reconstruct the boat ramp. The state has scheduled funding for the project in Fiscal Year 2021 which starts on July 1st, 2021, subject to approval of the State's Capital Budget in May. If approved, reconstruction is anticipated to be completed by Spring of 2022.

Potential Next Steps

Discuss complementary programs and activities that could occur to connect water-based patrons with downtown services and amenities with a particular focus on the needs of users of the Hingham Harbor Marina and Hingham Maritime Center.

Potential Funding Sources

Strengthened partnerships will not require funding. Additional moorings or other waterside improvements could seek funding through state programs such as the Massachusetts Boating Infrastructure Grant (MA-BIG) funding or funding from the Department of Fish and Game for improvements to the boat ramp. Local Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds could also be directed toward water access improvements.



Photo: hinghammaritime.org

2.3 Additional design, programming and event opportunities

Waterfront stakeholders should continue efforts to activate the waterside of Route 3A with design enhancements, programming, and event opportunities. Recent successes include the construction of the Beach House concession center at the Bathing Beach, improvements to Bathing Beach brick walkways, and beach restoration, plantings, and stabilization efforts. These efforts complement the completion of the Whitney Wharf Bridge and planned wharf improvements. Regular events, such as hosting the Hingham Farmer's Market, should continue to occur to provide an attraction for additional visitors to the district.

An update to the Master Plan for Hingham Harbor from 2007 is being pursued to update the planning for the waterfront improvements. Improvements should be considered to further connect and complement the overall district. Planned improvements should provide better amenities and activities for all seasons and even for enjoyment during inclement weather. A new Hingham Maritime Center boathouse and other Barnes Wharf improvements will be among the future investments. The improvements should include appropriate lighting for the safe use for the intended activities.

Specifically, these improvements might include further site and landscape design enhancements to town pier and Iron Horse Park, the area around the POW/MIA Memorial, and resilience, landscape and programming improvements for Hastings Wharf, Barnes Wharf currently leased by Hingham Maritime Center, and Steamboat Wharf. Programming could be supported by temporary and flexible amenities, such as seasonal furnishings or outdoor activities. Improvements would include areas for convenient and secure storage of these and other items to



Photo: jackconway.com

support waterfront activity.

This could also include exploring the feasibility of a public water access recreation facility at or near the Iron Horse Park location. The facility could be similar to the Duxbury Bay Maritime School in Snug Harbor. The location has parking, sewer and water utilities, and adjacent boat ramp access. The Iron Horse Park could be relocated to a more visible location of the same size, such as the Old Mobil Station property.

Potential Next Steps

Support and advance an update to the Hingham Harbor Master Plan to update and advance the conceptual site planning for these areas of the waterfront. The Trustees of the Bathing Beach and Harbor Development Committee have been proactively preparing for an update to this plan under the name “Harbor Vision Study.”

Potential Funding Sources

This type of planning could be supported either through funds raised through the participating waterfront stakeholders and potentially support from the town’s Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds. The Board of Selectmen and Advisory Committee recently voted for approval of the project through the Community Preservation Committee (CPC).





Goal 3: Elevate and emulate historic patterns

3.1 Explore district design guidelines attached to overlay

The historic character and development patterns of Hingham Harbor and Downtown are important to reinforce to strengthen the attractiveness of the district and to differentiate it from other destinations. Historic structures are distributed throughout the district as seen on the following page. All new investments, both private and public, should be used to strengthen the historic patterns of the district. District design guidelines can be used to ensure new investments are being optimized for the district.

A set of design guidelines for the district could be attached to the Downtown Hingham Overlay District and, if desired, could be expanded to the Hingham Harbor Overlay District. The purpose of the Downtown Hingham Overlay District is “to protect and promote the viability and value of business and residential properties located in the Downtown Hingham Overlay District (“Downtown”) in a manner consistent with Hingham’s historic character.

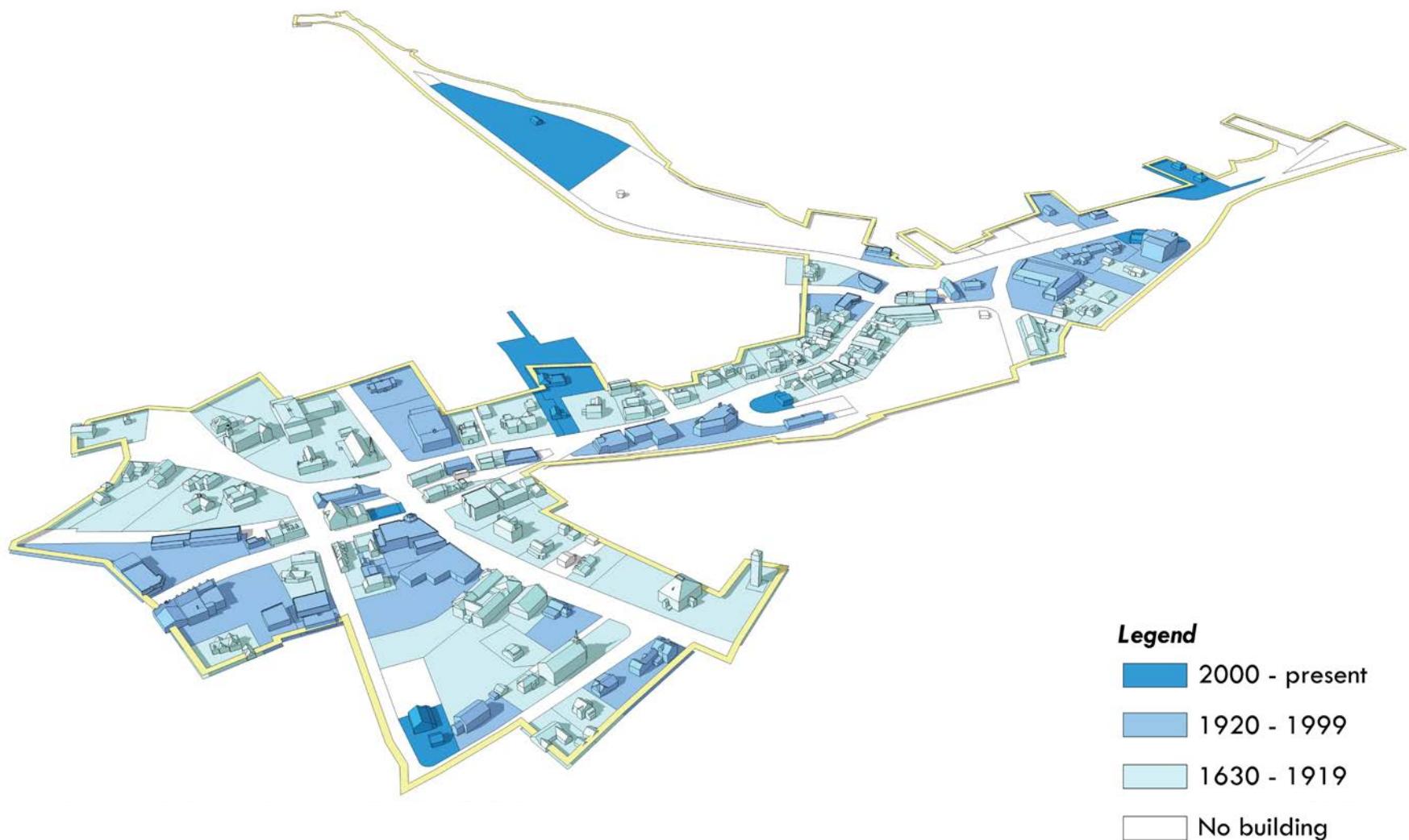
In addition to this Purpose, the current overlay district outlines, Objectives, Applicability, Permitted and Prohibited Uses, Design Review Criteria, Commercial/Residential Building Special Permit and Off-Street Parking Requirements. Under Design Review Criteria, projects subject to Design Review are reviewed by the Planning Board, Hingham Historic Districts Commission, and potentially other professional consultants to assist the town. The criteria for such reviews are currently described as the architectural and aesthetic consistency of the proposed project with the historic character of the Overlay District, taking into

account appropriate scale, massing, location of buildings on lot, roof slopes, street facade, fenestration, exterior building materials, and similar factors. Additional design guidelines could be added and would be applicable to projects within the district and could be administered during this Design Review process.

Additional design guidance could include the following:

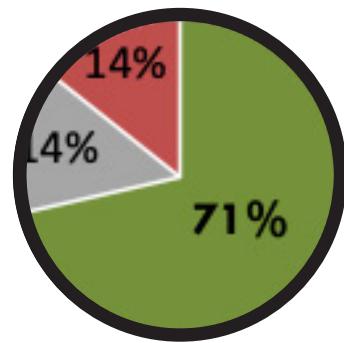
- The building should be oriented to the street frontage with the primary building facade aligned with the sidewalk. Where a front setback is proposed it should complement frontage conditions of abutting properties with an extended sidewalk and outdoor seating area and generous landscaping.
- The roof should be sloped with a roof pitch that complements the abutting roof forms with a similar range of slope. The roof form should be subdivided with gable ends, dormers, or other roof features to break up the roof.
- The ground floor oriented to the street frontage should be distinct from upper floors and responsive to the ground floor use by either distinguishing the building entry and ground floor windows or by reinforcing an active and engaging orientation to the sidewalk through the use of storefront windows.
- Parking supply should be provided as unobtrusively as possible with preference given to reduced and concealed parking that is either placed to the rear of the building, or constructed to be below grade as part of the buildings foundation.
- The building and site improvements should be integrated with the surrounding public realm and should be coordinated to improve the surrounding public realm consistent with historic materials with the potential for additional trees, landscaping, lighting, signage, outdoor seating, or other amenities.

Diagram showing “Year Built” in Hingham Harbor and Downtown



Support for the Strategy

Exploring district design guidelines attached to the Downtown Hingham Overlay District was suggested as an idea during this planning process. Stakeholders and 71% of participants in the process showed support for the strategy. 14% of the participants were neutral toward the idea. 14% of the participants did not think it was the right idea to pursue.



Potential Next Steps

The suggestions for additional design guidelines should be reviewed and amended by the Planning Board and Historic Districts Commission to ensure they address the needs anticipated through the review of future projects. Once a set of additional design guidelines are refined, they should be proposed as an zoning amendment to the Downtown Hingham Overlay District.

Potential Funding Sources

Additional funding is not required. If more extensive district design guidelines are desired, such a process could be supported by a Massachusetts Downtown Initiative grant. The process to define and produce a set of district design guidelines typically requires a grant of between \$15,000 and \$20,000.

3.2 Adjust zoning for several uses inconsistent with vision

The majority of the non-waterfront portion of the study area is located in the Business District A zoning district. During the review of the current zoning for the study area, several uses listed in the Schedule of Uses should be modified to be more consistent with the vision that is articulated for Hingham Harbor/Downtown. For reference, on the following page, a diagram of the district is shown with the current land uses

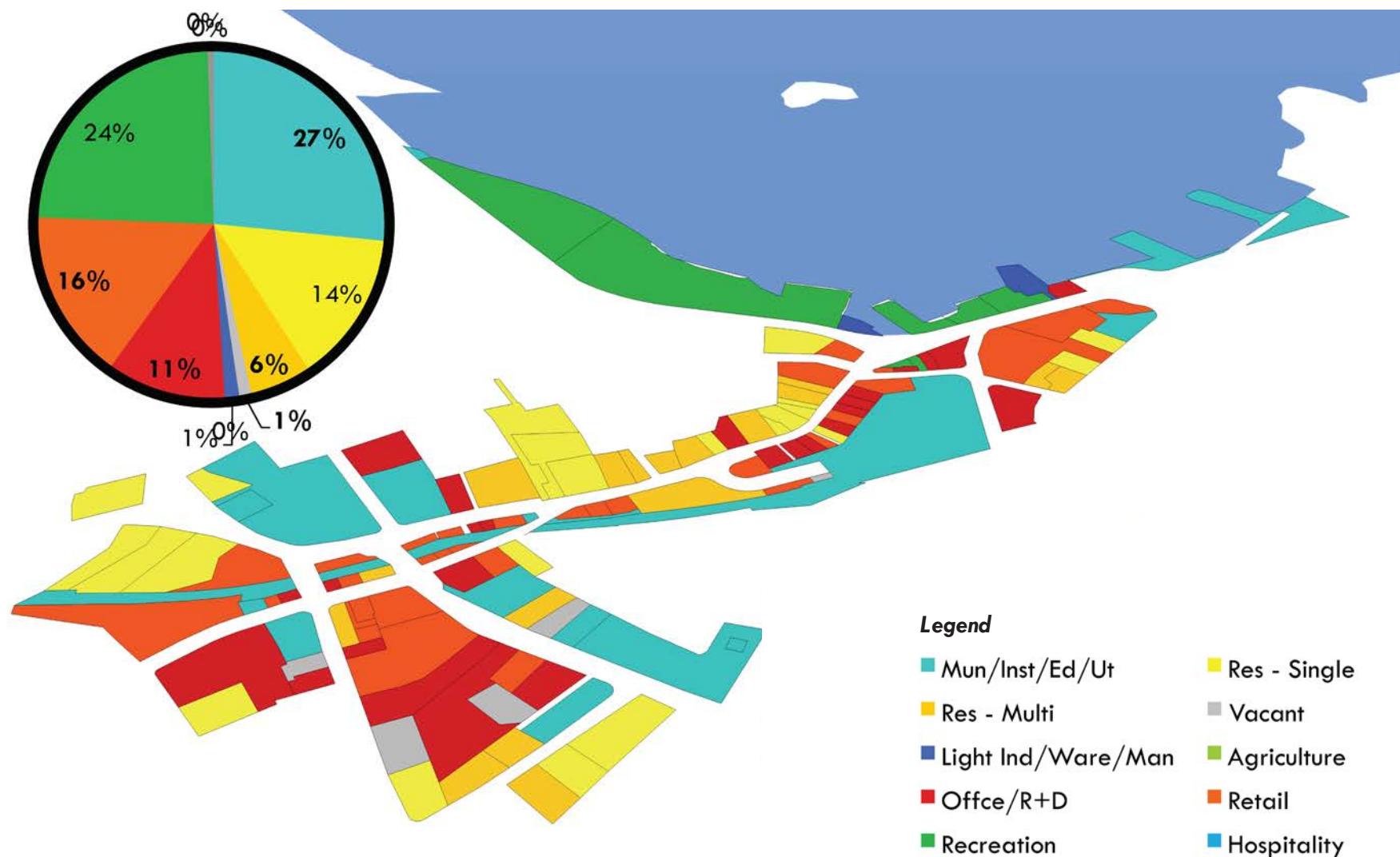
Currently, “Leased Parking for Commercial/Residential Buildings” is listed as “P” use permitted. Based on the review recent parking supply and demand analyses at the Station Street Lot and Merchants Lot additional properties should not be converted to parking as the primary use.

“Automotive “filling” or service station” is listed as “A1” use allowed under a Special Permit by the Board of Appeals. The vision intends to reduce the auto-orientation of the district and strengthen the pedestrian orientation and safe pedestrian environment along Route 3A. Adding to the two gas stations and car wash located in the study area along Route 3A would not be consistent with this vision.

“Repair or storage garage for motor vehicles or trailers, which may include body, repair, welding, or soldering shop for motor vehicles or trailers” is listed as “A2” use allowed under a Special Permit by the Board of Appeals. This use would also not be consistent with the vision for the district.

“Salesroom for franchised dealer or recognized agent of motor vehicle manufacturer whose principal business is the sale of new motor vehicles, together with indoor storage and service

Diagram showing “Land Use” in Hingham Harbor and Downtown

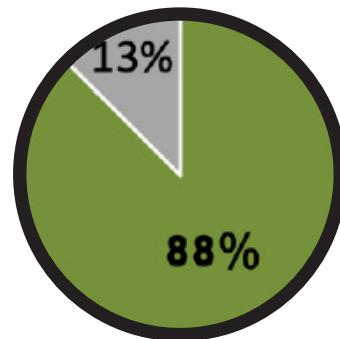


facilities reasonably incidental to such salesroom" is listed as "P" use permitted. This use would also not be consistent with the vision for the district.

Each of these uses should be revised for the Downtown Business A District to be listed as "O" use prohibited. If modifications to the Business A uses would impact other parts of the town, these changes could be defined and accomplished by modifying the Downtown Hingham Overlay District. Any existing uses in the district that fall under these use categories would become existing nonconforming uses and would be grandfathered to operate as previously approved.

Support for the Strategy

Adjusting zoning for several uses inconsistent with the district vision was suggested as an idea during this planning process. Stakeholders and 88% of participants in the process showed support for the strategy. 13% of the participants were neutral toward the idea.



Potential Next Steps

The proposed zoning changes should be reviewed by the Planning Board and if the board agrees could be packaged as a recommended zoning amendment for the next Town Meeting. The changes could potentially be packaged with other zoning modifications within the recommendations of this study.

Potential Funding Sources

Additional funding is not required. Proactively updating uses to reflect the vision for the district may save time and effort for town staff and land owners to avoid preparation and review for a proposed use that is not desired in the district.

Land Use and Zoning Recommendations

Goal 4: Continue and coordinate stewardship

4.1 Form a coalition of partners that meet to advance district

As part of the planning process to create this district plan, a series of public meetings were held where a consistent group of stakeholders participated to discuss the future vision for the district and strategies to help achieve the vision. Continued coordination and communication between these stakeholders would be very valuable for the success of the district. The following stakeholders would be the core stewards to begin this coalition of partners. Others may need to be included, but this would be a good starting point.

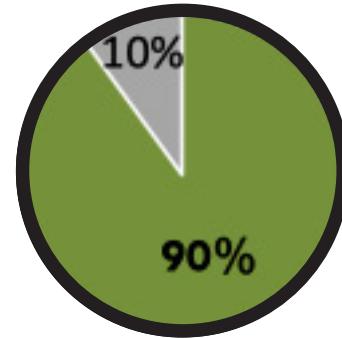
This strategy is to formalize a partnership of contributors to the district and to allow them to more closely coordinate and align their complementary activities. The initial stakeholders should include:

- Harbor Development Committee
- Hingham Downtown Association
- Hingham Historical Society
- Hingham Maritime Center
- Master Plan Implementation Committee (to be formed)
- Route 3A Task Force (as long it is active)
- Town staff
- Trustees of The Bathing Beach

Support for the Strategy

The formation of a coalition of partners that meet to advance the district was suggested as an idea during this planning process. Stakeholders and participants in the process showed initial

support for the strategy. 90% of the participants agreed that this was a strategy worth including in this district plan.



Potential Next Steps

Immediately following the finalization of this plan, this group should begin to meet as a continuation of this process. Of the goals and strategies outlined in this document, the coalition of partners should decide on initial priorities on which to focus implementation efforts. The group should determine a regular meeting schedule that works for the group and to support the implementation activities. The meetings should be open to the public and invite engagement and participation from the community to ensure transparency and accountability.

Potential Funding Sources

Funding for the strategy is not required, it is more dependent on the availability of the stakeholders. All of the stakeholders are busy and have many demands for their time. The meeting time to build the relationships for this coalition of partners should be worthwhile and help to leverage efforts of all stakeholders in a coordinated manner.



4.2 Further empower management through a BID

Many of the strategies outlined would benefit from dedicated stewardship and funding. The partners that manage the Hingham Harbor and Downtown district would be better positioned as stewards through the creation of a Business Improvement District (BID). A BID would also create an independent funding source that is dedicated to improvement of the district. Hingham Harbor and Downtown is competing against other closely managed centers, such as the Derby Street Shops that closely manage tenants, maintenance and upkeep. A Business Improvement District would provide similar oversight, management, and additional funding to support those same activities.

A Business Improvement District (BID) can provide additional services to supplement town services within the district. These may include district management and administrative services, marketing and promotional efforts, economic development initiatives, event support, and maintenance, capital, and physical improvement activities. A BID is a special assessment district with financial support built into the establishment of the district. A BID is established under Massachusetts General Law (MGL) Chapter 40O by petition signed by owners of at least 60% of the real property and at least 51% of the assessed valuation of the real property in the proposed district.

The amount of the assessment is decided by participants in the district and is a common area fee levied on property in the district. As part of district establishment, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) would be defined with the Town to outline the relationship, involvement and support of the Town as a member and partner in the district. The process to explore,

create, and authorize a BID takes anywhere from 18 to 24 months.

Currently, there are eight Business Improvement Districts in Massachusetts, including similarly scaled districts in Hyannis, Hudson and Amherst. The Amherst BID may be the most similar in scale of downtown and it is also one of the newest BIDs in the Commonwealth. It was formed for property owners to pool resources in order to fund and coordinate improvements and supplemental services. A board of directors represents the property owners, retailers, residents and other institutions, and they work closely with the Amherst BID team to implement their goals and plans. Additional information about the Amherst BID can be found at <https://www.amherstdowntown.com/>

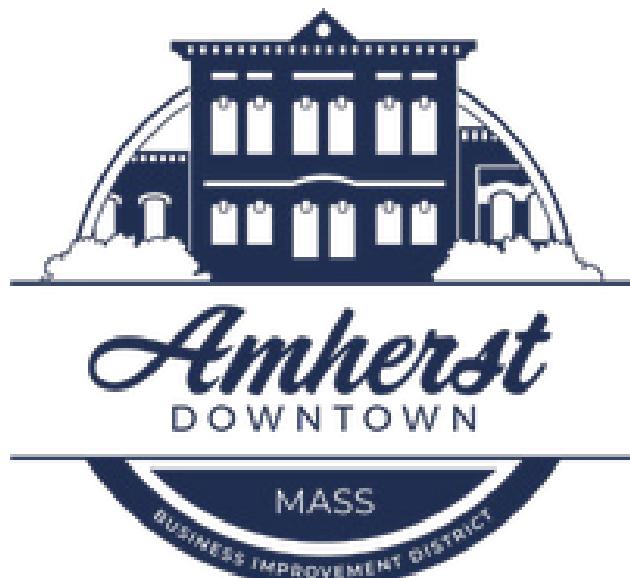
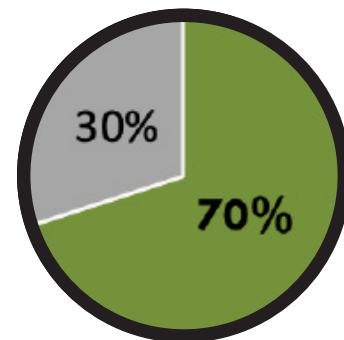


Photo: business.amherstarea.com

Support for the Strategy

The creation of a Business Improvement District was suggested as an idea during this planning process. Stakeholders and participants in the process showed initial support for the strategy. 70% of the participants agreed that this was a strategy worth including in this district plan. 30% of the participants were neutral toward the idea.



Potential Next Steps

Further exploration of a Business Improvement District would be the next step, this process would include communicating the role of a BID and its benefits and establishing a steering committee to guide the BID creation process. “A Guide for Establishing BIDs” was created by the Department of Housing and Community Development’s Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) to help cities and towns navigate the process of establishing a BID. The guide details the steps involved in the BID creation process and provides sample templates for forms and policies needed in their development.

In order to support the BID creation process, the Town of Hingham applied for a grant from the Department of Housing and

Community Development's MDI Rapid Recovery Plan Program. The program is intended to assist in the revitalization of downtowns and respond to the effects of COVID-19 on local businesses. The town was not awarded this grant to support the exploration of a BID. Similar funding opportunities may be available in the future and should be pursued.

Potential Funding Sources

The required funding is for the initial exploration, development, and creation of the Business Improvement District. Once established the BID should be self-sustaining based on its self-taxing mechanism scaled to the needs and structure of the district. The funds are then reinvested in the district to support direct improvements and programs.



Photo: hingham.wickedlocal.com

4.3 Define additional events and programming to attract

In order to leverage all events, programs and activities to the fullest potential, all such activity across the district should be coordinated and promoted by district stewards and potentially combined and promoted through one resource. For example, special events at the Bathing Beach Band Stand or Beach House could be cross-promoted with shops and restaurants along North Street. Special events, such as parades that impact the parking and street network in the downtown subarea could leverage additional parking that is available on the waterfront. These logistical and promotion considerations will help patrons to view the area as one related district and may help to optimize the use of all resources and amenities available.

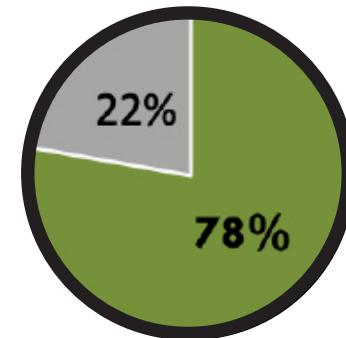
The coordination of events has the potential to expand the number of reasons to visit and avoid conflicts or logistical issues with competing events. The coordination should occur over a full calendar year of events and involve all district stakeholders that typically host or promote events. This full calendar year approach would allow large events to be spaced relatively evenly between quarters, find the right days and times for more regular weekly, or monthly offerings, and determine seasons that are in need of additional programming. This coordination would combine the full calendar of events for holidays, special events, parades, arts and culture events, small business events, waterfront events and others. Regular seasonal activities such as the Hingham Farmers Market would be a part of this event coordination.

While in-person events have been disrupted due to COVID-19. Outdoor events practicing safe social distancing protocols remain an option to bring the community together. This ongoing

disruption to the “normal” calendar of events may be a great time to plan this coordination and return with a new annual calendar coordinated amongst all stakeholders when it is safe to return to such activities.

Support for the Strategy

The creation of a Business Improvement District was suggested as an idea during this planning process. Stakeholders and participants in the process showed initial support for the strategy. 78% of the participants agreed that this was a strategy worth including in this district plan. 22% of the participants were neutral toward the idea.



Potential Next Steps

All stakeholders responsible for scheduling and promoting special events and activities should meet to create an inventory of the types of events that occur, the processes used to determine when the events should occur, and the tools and platforms used to promote events. The stakeholders should then share ideas as to how these processes could be brought together in a more collaborative and coordinated manner and what types of cross-promotions may be desirable. Over a calendar

year, a few ideas should be tested and evaluated. Once a model of successful event coordination and collaboration is established additional events and collaboration ideas should be tested in the following years of events. Eventually, it is hoped that these new routines will be an efficient and effective way for event organizers to plan, communicate and promote and for patrons of the events to receive information about upcoming activities. All of these efforts would be intended to maintain a regular pattern of special attractions that are associated with the district and to provide unique offerings to a diverse audience that will draw new patrons to the district.

Potential Funding Sources

In the approved application to the Community Preservation Committee, the Harbor Development Committee included identifying a consultant as part of the Hingham Harbor Master Plan update that could capture and communicate this type of comprehensive calendar of events.

If advanced and adopted, the Business Improvement District (BID) would be well positioned to both coordinate and fund additional event planning for the district and may be able offer modest financial support to events. Otherwise, once a procedure for coordination and promotion is in place, it may not require too much more additional funding or effort than what was previously devoted to events to implement this recommendation.





Hingham Harbor and Downtown Sustainable Vision Plan

Resilience and Sustainability Recommendations

Resilience and Sustainability Recommendations

Introduction

The resilience and sustainability recommendations are focused on the long term viability of the Hingham Harbor/Downtown district. The goals and strategies focus on leveraging each investment in the district as an opportunity to strengthen sustainability and the long term resilience of the district incrementally. If these incremental improvements are undertaken in a strategic and coordinated manner they can combine to mitigate the impacts of climate change and simultaneously strengthen the district as a place to live, work, play, and gather as a community.

The strengths of the district that are defined by its waterfront present a primary risk to the district relative to climate change and the impacts of sea level rise. The following page shows the current Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Zones for the district. An approach to mitigation that is sensitive to cost, environmental, and livability impacts is critical. The recommendations try to find that balance and build on the approach already underway in the district. The strengths of the district that are defined by its historic and downtown core also present resilience risks. The density of the development pattern results in a concentrated area of buildings, pavement, and asphalt. All of these surfaces attract and retain heat and contribute to the heat island effect. The heat island effect is an area where the physical characteristics contribute to an increase in the temperature of that area relative to other surrounding less developed areas. The heat island effect will be made worse by climate change and can have health and quality of life impacts. The goals and strategies intend to reduce these

impacts and to help the district adapt to changing conditions in the climate and environment.

The following goals for resilience and sustainability are defined to advance the district toward the vision that has been articulated through this process. Each goal is made actionable with more specific strategies. Each strategy was presented and reviewed as a preliminary idea during community/stakeholder meetings. Only those strategies that received strong initial support have been included in the final report in the hope that they are the strategies most likely to be implemented. The Resilience and Sustainability Recommendations are outlined as goals below and strategies for each goal are described in the following chapter.

The resilience and sustainability recommendations respond to stakeholder and community feedback received through this process. The feedback highlighted road safety concerns for pedestrians along and crossing Route 3A and flood risks for the roadway. The desire to make the district more resilient to climate change with more green infrastructure, natural landscape, and renewable energy amenities. Beyond Route 3A, pedestrian and bike safety throughout the district is important for a district where people feel comfortable and safe.

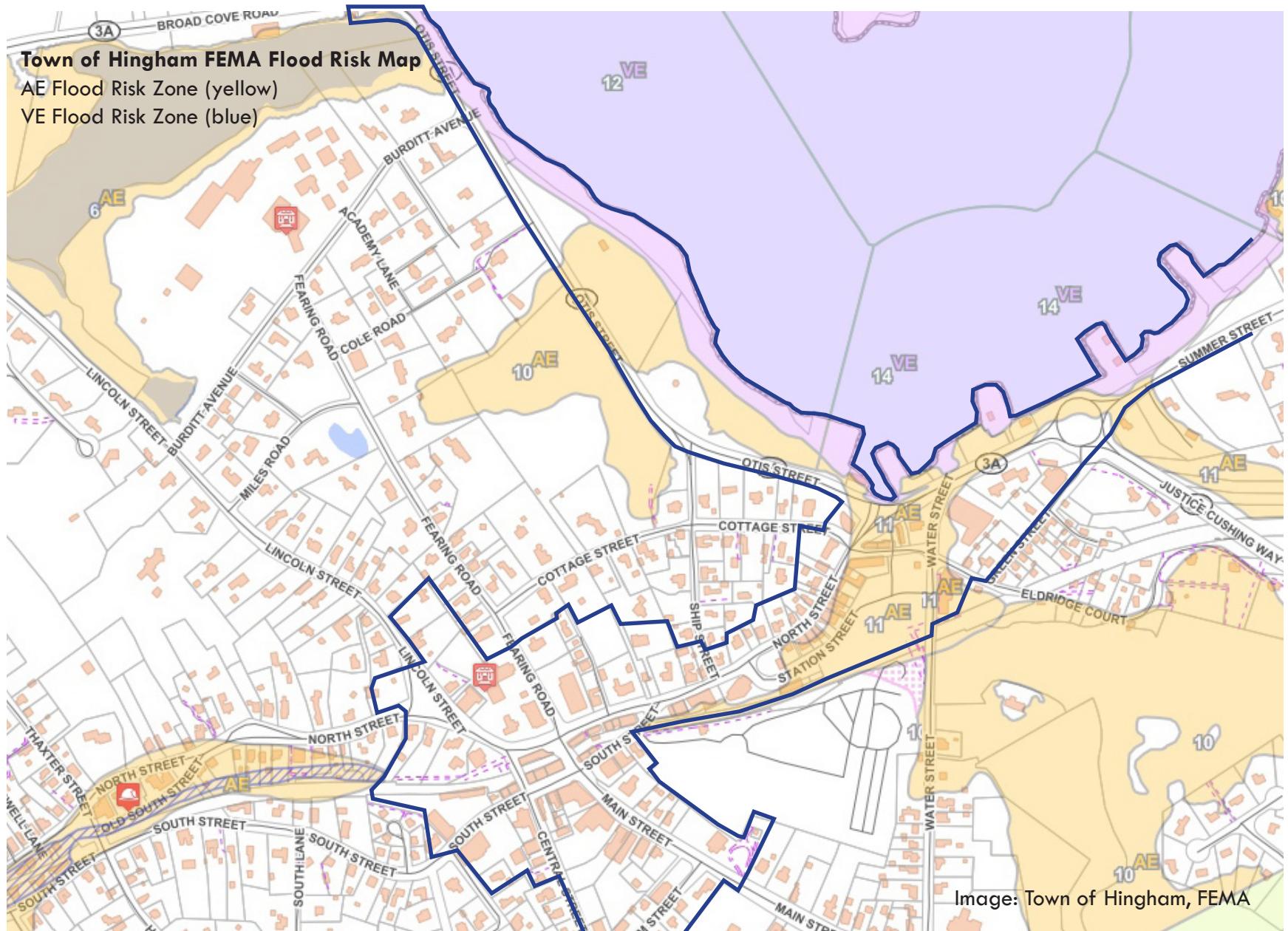
Goals



Goal 5: Strengthen vitality and sustainability



Goal 6: Strengthen resilience with improvements



Background and Context

Additional background and context for potential climate risk in the Hingham Harbor and Downtown district is outlined in the following tables and illustrations. The table on this page shows a comparison between the climate change that have occurred from 1900 to present today and the projected impacts of climate change for 2030 and 2070.

For example, for sea level rise the change that has been measured from 1900 to present day sea level rise has occurred at a rate of about 2.8 millimeters per year resulting in an 11" of sea level rise in the last century. The projected increase in

the year 2030 is 1.2 to 1.4 feet and in 2070 is 4.2 to 5.4 feet. Sea level rise in Massachusetts results from the confluence of several factors, the most significant being global warming resulting from accelerated rates of greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere. Scientist anticipate that the rate of sea level rise will increase and accelerate in the coming decades.

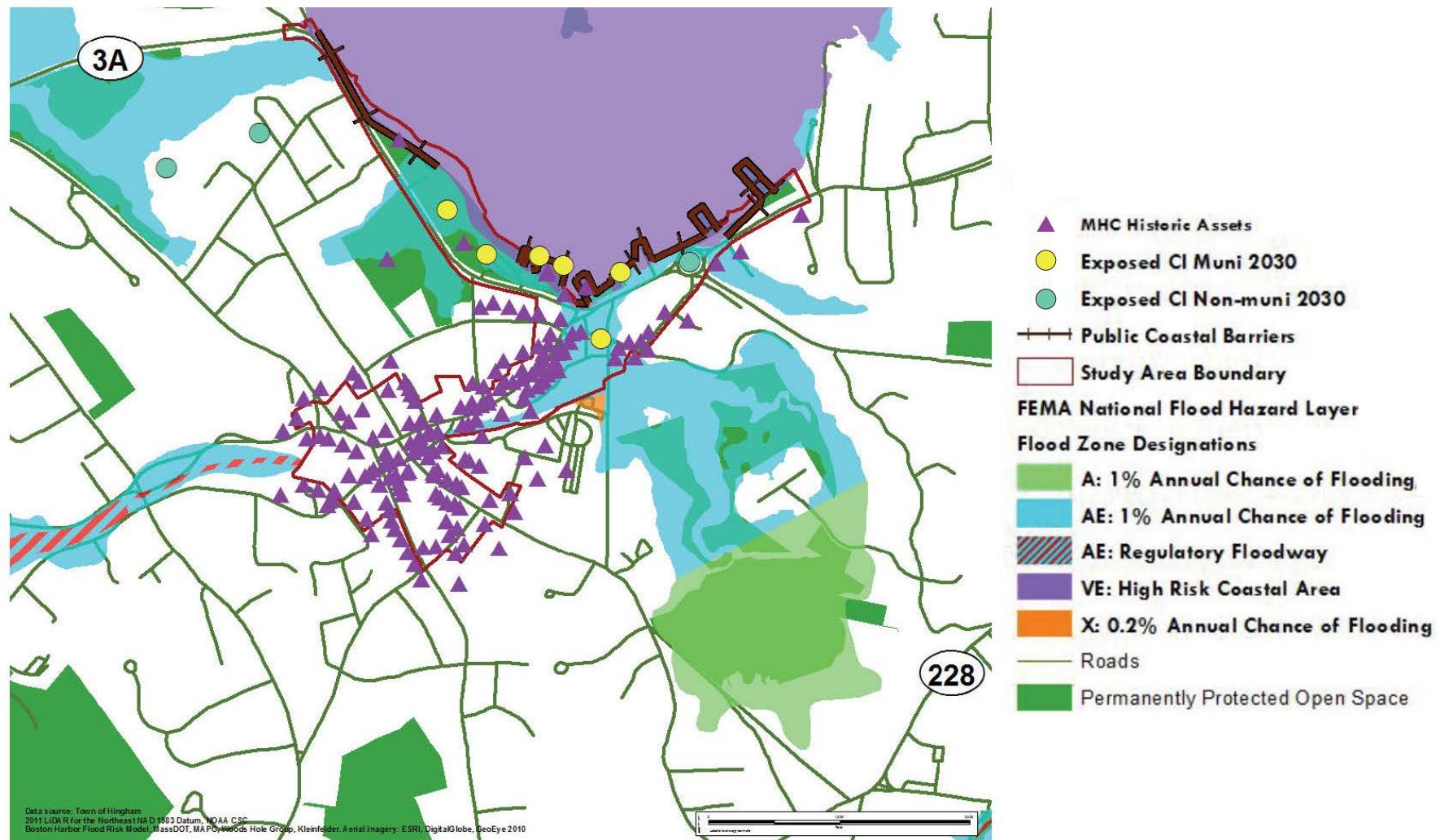
These projections have been well documented in previous climate planning efforts in the Town of Hingham. On the following page recent climate planning efforts are summarized with a focus on the recommendations for Hingham Harbor.

Climate Risk	1900-Present	2030	2070
Sea Level Rise	11" in Boston Harbor	1.2-1.4 feet	4.2-5.4 feet
Temperature	➤ 2° locally & globally, ➤ ~8 days over 90°	~20 days over 90°	~48 days over 90°
Precipitation	>10% increase in Boston; 8 days >1 inch rain	9.5 days with >1" Precipitation Events	1% Chance Storm becomes a 25% Chance Storm

A summary table of climate planning and recommendations focused on Hingham Harbor from Hingham's recent climate planning efforts.

Climate Planning Effort	Hingham Harbor Recommendations
<i>Kleinfelder (2015) Climate Change Vulnerability, Risk Assessment and Adaptation Study Town of Hingham, MA</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mill St. Pump Station Elevation • Bathing Beach dune and beach restoration • Iron Horse Park Coastal Stabilization
<i>MAPC (2016) Town of Hingham Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan Update</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harbor Seawall Study • Bank Stabilization along Route 3A-Otis Street to Bathing Beach • Sand Management Plan for Bathing Beach • Climate Vulnerability and Adaptation Study for SLR impact on coastal infrastructure • Vegetated Buffer Rt. 3A by Bathing Beach
<i>Town of Hingham, Beals and Thomas, Inc (2019). "Summary of Findings, Hingham Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Workshop." Hingham, Massachusetts.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase height of seawalls and adjacent upland • Implement resiliency to sewer lines and pump stations • Stormwater controls to treat runoff • Decrease bacteria levels at beaches bounding the Harbor • Beach nourishment • Temporary Flood barriers to protect historic assets

Current flood zones in Hingham Harbor and Downtown with the locations of critical infrastructure and historic assets.



Resilience and Sustainability Recommendations

Goal 5: Strengthen vitality and sustainability

5.1 Develop district parking guidelines for visitors, businesses

Developing policies and regulations to optimize the use of parking in the district can result in many benefits. Although convenient parking is a necessary component supporting the success of the district, it also represents a trade-off by occupying space that could be used for other amenities or attractions in the district. Parking is also one of the primary contributors to the heat island effect. The district has elevated temperatures compared to the surrounding neighborhoods in Hingham, which by comparison have less asphalt, more landscape and more tree cover. By developing district parking guidelines for visitors and businesses the use of the parking supply can be optimized. This optimization may result in clear areas of excess parking supply that can then be re-purposed as part of the resilience and sustainability strategies.

The issue with unmanaged parking demand, particularly in a downtown district, is that everyone wants to park in the most convenient locations. The most convenient locations are typically those closest to the entry of the destination, whether that be an on-street parking space in front of a coffee shop, or a off-street parking spot close to the rear entry of a shop. In order to manage these demands the most convenient spaces are typically restricted through time limitations, parking meters, or both. Typically, the intention behind these interventions is to encourage turn-over of the most convenient spaces, so that they frequently become unused and can be used again by another patron in a steady cycle throughout the hours of operation. These types of regulations are not right for every district, particularly if these measures would reduce the likelihood of a patron to visit the district.

Another approach focuses not on the parking demand of the patrons of the district, but of the business owners and employees of the district. This approach can also be effective and places less inconvenience on the patrons of the district that are being encouraged to visit. Often business owners and employees also need a place to park and will occupy a parking space for the duration of the hours of operation. If employees arrive before a business opens and stay until after it closes, they would have an open choice of parking spaces at the beginning of the day and the space may not turnover all day. For parking optimization this can be particularly difficult, especially if employees and owners choose to park in the most convenient and high demand locations.

A district-wide program of parking policies and incentives can help communicate the parking needs to district business owners and employees. All business owners and employees would be introduced to this program and encouraged to park in designated areas of the Station Street parking lot or the Merchants parking lot. These designated areas would be coordinated with the managers of these lots. An incentive that could be used to encourage participation would be to enter participants into a raffle drawing for a modest reward. Depending on the participation rates and need for the incentive this could be set up where for each full week of participation your name is entered into the drawing with a random reward drawing at the end of each month. If needed and depending on the budget for the program, the drawings could occur more frequently. Prizes could be offered from local shops and businesses.

Another approach that would be consistent with this encouraged management of parking demand would be to encourage visitors and patrons who intend to park all day to use the Station Street

parking lot. This encouragement could be accomplished through wayfinding and signage that directs patrons to “all day” and “visitor” parking at the Station Street lot from the major gateways into the district.

These parking management solutions will help to optimize the parking supply to demand and could make the most convenient locations more available while also creating the ability to remove a few parking spaces strategically to allow space for several of the other resilience and sustainability strategies outlined in this chapter.

Support for the Strategy

The development of district parking guidelines for visitors and businesses was suggested as an idea during this planning process to stakeholders and participants as part of developing a broader parking management plan. The parking management plan was not well supported, a few stakeholders thought this had already been tried, but there was interest in this specific idea.

Potential Next Steps

Discuss the suggested parking locations for business owners employees with the managers of the Station Street and Merchants parking lots. Define the parameters of the parking guidance and incentive program. Share the program with business owners in the district and launch the program. Gather feedback from owners, employees and patrons as the program is initiated and underway.

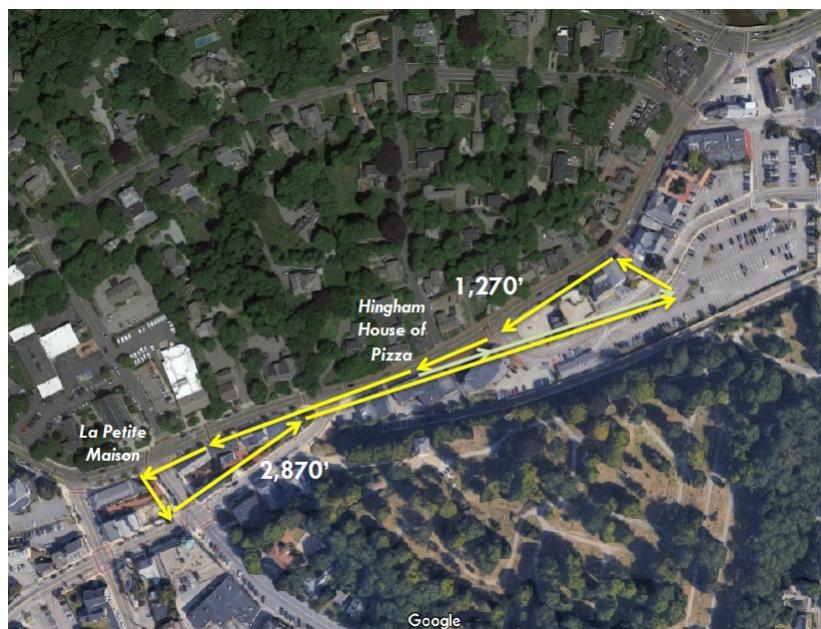
Potential Funding Sources

This effort would require staff time to get underway, but would not require substantial funding. A Business Improvement District (BID) could provide a funding source for any signage or incentives needed as part of the program.



One of the difficulties with parking management efforts is the perceived inconvenience of the amount of time and energy required to walk between more remote parking and the destination. It seems downtown districts are often held to a higher standard in terms of the desire to park close to the destination. At an enclosed mall, strip mall, or grocery store, the actual distance to the destination from the farthest reaches of the parking lot can be quite large.

A comparison of the distances to walk around Derby Street shops relative to the distances to walk around the Hingham Harbor and Downtown district shows comparable distances for more remote parking in the Station Street lot. If a visitor were to park at the Derby Street parking lot and then walk from store to store around the perimeter of the parking lot, the total distance would be about 2,870 feet. If that same 2,870 feet were applied to a walking trip from the Station Street parking lot, a visitor could park there and walk to the block at Main Street and South Street and back. The diagrams to the right show this comparison. The aerial images of the two centers are shown at the same scale.



5.2 Add sustainability and resilience guidance and checklist

The long term impacts of climate change will be a part of resilience challenges for this district. New building investments are generally anticipated to be around as long as the time horizons projecting climate impacts. For example, climate impacts relative to sea level rise are often associated with the years 2030, 2050, and 2070. These future years are well within the reach of current building investments. Depending on the construction type the expected life span of a building is between 60 and 120 years on average. Accordingly, new buildings located in districts that may be impacted by sea level rise and other climate impacts should be following a sustainability and resilience checklist to anticipate and mitigate future risks and reduce the need to adapt later.

Local examples of such checklists have been recently created and adopted. The most comprehensive example is the Boston Climate Resiliency Checklist. This example applies to Article 80 projects in the City of Boston. Article 80 refers to the large project review and approval process and applies to projects over 20,000 square feet in gross area. Accordingly, this checklist example may need to be streamlined to be appropriate to the scale of projects in Hingham Harbor/Downtown, but it is a good example nonetheless. The Boston Climate Resiliency Checklist is six pages and includes the following sections: A - Project Information, B - Greenhouse Gas Reduction and Net Zero/Net Positive Carbon Building Performance, C - Extreme Heat Events, D - Extreme Precipitation Events, and E - Sea Level Rise and Storms.

The checklist is designed to encourage a project development team to pause and think about the resilience risks for the

project and to integrate necessary adaptation strategies. It also provides the review team for the City or Town to receive information about the project's climate risks and considerations in a consistent format. Below is an outline of a checklist based on the Boston Climate Resiliency Checklist that may be more appropriate for Hingham Harbor/Downtown.

Resilience Checklist Outline

A. Project Information

A.1 General Information - Project name, address, type of approval, filing contact information.

A.2 Project Team - Owner/developer, architect, engineer, other consultants

A.3 Project Description - Principal uses, first floor uses, critical site infrastructure or building uses, site area, building area, building height, site elevation (low, high), first floor elevation, below grade levels, green building certifications

B. Greenhouse Gas Reduction and Net Zero

B.1 GHG Emissions - Design Conditions - For this filing estimate annual building GHG Emissions in tons. Describe how building energy performance has been integrated into the project design. Describe passive energy efficiency measures including orientation, massing envelop and systems. Describe active energy efficiency measures including equipment, controls, fixtures, and systems. Describe load reduction strategies including on-site renewable, clean, and energy storage systems.

B.2 GHG Reduction - Adaptation Strategies - Describe how

the building and its systems will evolve to further reduce GHG emissions and the timeline for meeting that goal.

C. Extreme Heat Events

C.1 Extreme Heat - Design Conditions - Describe all building and site measures to reduce heat-island effect at the site and in the surrounding area.

C.2 Extreme Heat - Adaptation Strategies - Describe how the building and its systems will be adapted to efficiently manage future higher average temperatures, higher extreme temperatures, additional heatwaves, and longer heatwaves. Describe all mechanical and non-mechanical strategies that will support building functionality and use during extended interruptions of utility services and infrastructure.

D. Extreme Precipitation Events

D.1 Extreme Precipitation - Design Conditions - Describe all building and site measure for reducing storm water run-off.

D.2 Extreme Precipitation - Adaptation Strategies - Describe how site and building systems will be adapted to efficiently accommodate future more significant rain events (e.g. rainwater harvesting, on-site storm water retention, bio swales, green roofs).

E. Sea Level Rise and Storms

E.1 Sea Level Rise Applicability - Is any portion of the site in a FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) SFHA (Special Flood Hazard Area)? If so, what zone: A, AE, AH, AO, AR, A99, V, VE? What is the current FEMA SFHA Zone

Base Flood Elevation? If you answered yes, please complete the following questions.

E.2 Sea Level Rise and Storms - Design Conditions -

Proposed projects should identify immediate and future adaptation strategies for managing the flooding risk. What is the sea level rise base flood elevation? What is the sea level rise design flood elevation? What are the site elevations at the building? What is the first floor elevation? What is the accessible route elevation? Describe site design strategies for adapting to sea level rise including building access during flood events (e.g. elevated site areas, hard and soft barriers, wave/velocity breaks, storm water systems, utility systems). Describe how the proposed building design flood elevation will be achieved (e.g. dry/wet flood proofing, critical systems protection, utility service protection, temporary flood barriers, waste and drain water back flow prevention) Define any strategies that would support rapid recovery after a weather event.

E.3 Sea Level Rise and Storms - Adaptation Strategies -

Describe future site design and or infrastructure adaptation strategies for responding to sea level rise (e.g. elevating of site areas and access routes, barriers, wave/velocity breaks, storm water systems, utility services). Describe future building adaptation strategies for raising the Sea Level Rise Design Flood Elevation and further protecting critical systems, including permanent and temporary measures.

Support for the Strategy

This strategy has been discussed previously and supported through previous resilience and sustainability planning efforts of

the town. Support for the strategy poll data was not gathered from the stakeholders during a meeting.

Potential Next Steps

The Hingham Planning Department and permit granting authorities can review this outline and the checklist example and translate the materials into a draft resilience checklist for the town. The draft checklist would then be reviewed and approved by permit granting authorities to be a part of the review and approval processes of the town for development projects with the Hingham Downtown or Hingham Harbor Overlays. The zoning language could be modified to include reference to the checklist where appropriate.

Potential Funding Sources

This strategy does not require additional funding, but would be dependent on staff time to advance the checklist to the point that it is supported and adopted as an instrument of review and approval.



Photo: ggwash.org

5.3 Consider development incentives linked to sustainability

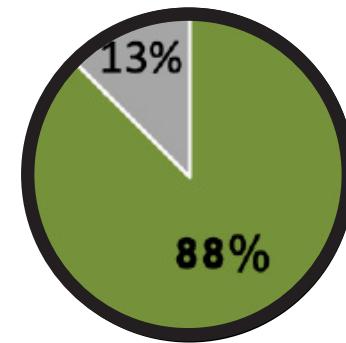
For this strategy, it seems important to distinguish between resilience and sustainability for proposed development. While the terms are closely related, building features related to an identified resilience need for a project should be addressed by the proposed project in an interest to protect the investment that is being made. For example, if a property will be subject to a risk of flooding, it is in the interest of the development to address this risk. While related to reducing the impacts of climate change, other sustainability investments may not have as direct a justification from a perspective of the development. For example, improving the energy efficiency of the building envelope or adding on-site renewable energy sources. However, these investments are also important. In order to encourage new investment to achieve more of the sustainability features that are outlined in the Resilience Checklist a development incentive could be made available through zoning.

One approach would be to provide an incentive for sustainable development through an increase in the allowable intensity regulations. Currently in the Business A District the maximum height in stories is 3. A half story incentive could be provided to increase the maximum building height to 3 1/2 stories if the building is LEED certifiable, as one example. Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) is a building sustainability certification program. Another incentive may be to reduce the parking requirements in exchange for sustainable building features. The current residential parking requirement is 2 spaces per unit, it could be reduced to 1.5 spaces per unit. The current retail/service store requirement is 5 spaces per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area, it could be reduced to 4 spaces per 1,000 or 3.5 spaces per 1,000.

Sustainability features that qualify for the incentives may include providing some agreed upon minimum threshold of investments that are scaled to the project. The features could include parking spaces for car sharing, charging stations for electric vehicles, permeable paving, parking lot landscaping with rain garden islands set below the grade of the surrounding parking surface, bike parking, rooftop photo-voltaic systems, improvements to the pedestrian and bicycle environment adjacent to the property, reduced building energy use, reduced building water use, inclusion of additional affordable housing units, or contribution to resilient infrastructure investment near and impacting the property.

Support for the Strategy

The consideration of development incentives linked to sustainability was suggested as an idea during this planning process. Stakeholders and participants in the process showed initial support for the strategy. 88% of the participants agreed that this was a strategy worth including in this district plan. 13% of the participants were neutral toward the idea. The total is greater than 100% due to rounding of the figures.



Potential Next Steps

The Hingham Planning Department and permit granting authorities can review this strategy and the examples and translate the materials into a draft zoning recommendation for sustainability incentives. The specifics of the types of incentives and the sustainability thresholds to achieve the incentives would need to be determined based on the perspective of the Planning Board and other permit granting authorities. The specific zoning language recommendations would then need to be brought to Town Meeting for approval.

Potential Funding Sources

This strategy does not require additional funding, but would be dependent on staff time to advance discussion of the exact incentives offered and the sustainability investments that would qualify for the incentives. This determination would require discussion with the Planning Board and potentially other Town boards and committees. The recommendation would eventually require a zoning change and Town Meeting approval.



Resilience and Sustainability Recommendations

Goal 6: Strengthen resilience with improvements

6.1 New amenities should be integrated with flood protection

Hingham's Harbor Development Committee completed a district master plan for Hingham Harbor in 2007 and has been proceeding with improvements based on that planning effort. Among those improvements have been new amenities that are integrated with flood protection. The improvements have been incremental investments that create an elevated coastal flood protection measure. The incremental resilience investments have included a new pedestrian harborwalk with low resilient stone wall, an elevated and engineered dune planted with sea grass that covers a buried sea wall, and armor stone barriers at the coastal edge.

This approach to incremental flood protection investments that is already underway should continue with new investments extending the flood protection along additional length of the waterfront edge. These investments could extend the same character of pathway and low wall that have been already been installed. The low height walls, berms, or other elevated flood protection measures should be integrated with waterfront amenities to increase seating areas, landscape features, and waterfront activities. Where achieving continuous flood protection through these incremental improvements may not be possible, a plan for deployable temporary flood barriers should be designed to fill the gaps in protection with the permanent infrastructure designed to receive these temporary barriers.

The entire length of the waterfront is not likely to need this type of flood protection measure. There are small areas where water will encroach along the coast line and then those locations result in larger areas of lower elevation flooding. This approach

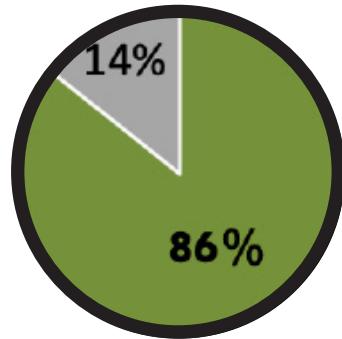
would benefit from a closer examination of the updated Sea Level Rise modeling that will soon be available from the state completed by Woods Hole Group. Using this data a flood pathways study was completed to determine exactly where additional flood protection features are needed and to what elevation they should be built. A report from this work is forthcoming. The Harbor Development Committee continues to work with Woods Hold Group to respond to a number of issues raised by the Conservation Commission relative to raising the Harbor wharves.

Another key piece of infrastructure to investigate further relative to sea level rise is the culvert and flood gates under Route 3A, Mill Street, Station Street and the rail line that connects the harbor, west of Whitney Wharf, to the Home Meadow tidal area. This infrastructure should be reviewed relative to projected water elevation and volumes to ensure that it will be properly sized and functional for future needs.

All of these coastal flooding protection approaches require coordination with and approval from the Hingham Conservation Commission, and Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management. Other stakeholders and approvals will be necessary to define the appropriate approach and investments.

Support for the Strategy

The consideration that new amenities should be integrated with flood protection was suggested as an idea during this planning process. Stakeholders and participants in the process showed initial support for the strategy. 86% of the participants agreed that this was a strategy worth including in this district plan. 14% of the participants were neutral toward the idea.



Potential Next Steps

As new investments are made for an extended waterfront pathway through the Route 3A improvements or other investments, a low height wall should be integrated to extend flood protection along the waterfront. Both the pathway and the low height wall should be designed and constructed to match the existing investments. A flood pathways study along the waterfront would be useful to identify locations where coastal flood waters enter the district and to prioritize the type of interventions and investments are most appropriate to increase resilience.

Potential Funding Sources

This type of flood pathways study and coastal adaptation investment could be funded through the Seaport Economic Council headed by Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito or Coastal Resilience Grants from Coastal Zone Management (CZM). The Town of Hingham has been successful pursuing these types of grants in the past.

6.2 Improvements should integrate stormwater enhancements

As climate change continues to impact weather and precipitation patterns, the amount and severity of large coastal storms and rainfall events is expected to increase. Additionally, larger storm events are likely to occur as isolated events within more frequent periods of drought. This type of pattern can also reduce the ability for the ground to infiltrate water and result in more frequent stormwater flooding. Stormwater flooding occurs when drainage infrastructure becomes overwhelmed with water volume. All of these patterns can increase the amount of pollutants that are carried into water bodies.

Low impact development (LID) techniques and green infrastructure can be used to reduce stormwater runoff and can be integrated with additional green space in the district. Stormwater infiltration should be maximized on-site by preserving and planting vegetation and reducing impervious surfaces. One measure to require the most effective types of stormwater enhancements for a specific property is to limit impervious area by requiring infiltration on-site that is greater than or equal to the predevelopment conditions on the property. All of the properties in the district have some level of development that has occurred on the property so this type of requirement would improve district stormwater conditions as each property invests and renews through redevelopment. In general designs should maximize stormwater absorption areas and implement compensatory measures to accommodate floodwaters.

Runoff from a building roof is typically cleaner than runoff from a parking area or street. This cleaner roof runoff could be required to be directed to landscaped or naturally vegetated

areas that are capable of absorbing and infiltrating the roof runoff. This would minimize stormwater runoff and provide groundwater recharge with the cleaner runoff source. In the public realm adjacent to a property and in property parking areas bioretention areas, swales, rain gardens, and vegetated channels should be encouraged and functional green features of the district. Plantings in these features should be native, drought resistant, and salt tolerant and provide filtration functions as well as contribute to the landscape character of the district.

The parking efficiencies that may be gained with an employee and visitor parking optimization program may result in the ability to convert some strategically placed on-street and off-street parking spaces to stormwater enhancements integrated with the addition of new landscape in the district.

Support for the Strategy

The consideration that improvements should integrate stormwater enhancements was suggested as an idea during this planning process. Stakeholders and participants in the process showed strong initial support for the strategy. 100% of the participants agreed that this was a strategy worth including in this district plan.

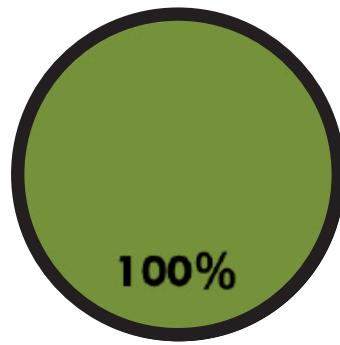


Photo: phillywatershed.org

The table below shows the assessed value within the Hingham Harbor and Downtown district that is vulnerable to sea level rise and storm surge according to the current flood risk maps and sea level rise projections. The preceding two strategies could mitigate this risk through flood protection and stormwater enhancements.

	FEMA AE: 1% Annual Chance Storm		FEMA VE: High Energy 1% Chance Storm		Sea Level Rise 2030		Sea Level Rise 2070	
	Count	Building Value	Count	Total Value	Count	Total Value	Count	Total Value
Historic Assets	13	\$4,510,900	6	\$317,800	2	\$1,986,500	2	\$1,986,500
Critical Facilities	2	\$0	2	\$0	3	\$2,540,400	3	\$2,540,400
Parcels	5	\$5,026,813	1	\$2,062,300	3	\$2,540,400	2	\$2,540,400

Potential Next Steps

Use the Resilience Checklist to encourage private development to integrate stormwater enhancements on site. Identify public on-street or off-street parking spaces that could be used as stormwater and landscape enhancement pilots. Locations should be identified based on localized stormwater management trouble areas where the current infrastructure is frequently overwhelmed by storm flows. Such a location could be improved through the installation of a rain garden conversion of an existing on-street parking space. Similarly, if there are locations within the Station Street parking lot that are frequent locations for stormwater ponding, then those locations could be the location to convert a few parking spaces into rain garden landscape islands. Once the locations are identified, the green infrastructure features should be designed and priced for construction.

Potential Funding Sources

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection provides §319 Non-point Source Competitive Grants and the Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loans to support stormwater best management practice design, and best management practice construction. The Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) provides the Coastal Pollutant Remediation Grants for best management practice design and construction for municipalities within the coastal watershed. The Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs provides the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Action Grant Program for green infrastructure. The Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development provides MassWorks Infrastructure Grants that could be used for these types of improvements as well.

6.3 Improvements should integrate locations for new landscape

Closely related to district stormwater improvement is integrating locations for new landscape into district improvements. The environmental factor driving this strategy is the heat island effect. The heat island effect occurs in locations with a concentration of development that includes buildings and paved surfaces that cause the area to experience higher temperatures than surrounding areas. The effect occurs when the buildings and paved surfaces absorb and re-emit the sun's heat more than natural landscapes or water bodies. The addition of new landscape areas and shade trees specifically help to directly address the impacts of the heat island effect.

As noted for stormwater improvements, the parking efficiencies that may be gained with an employee and visitor parking optimization program may result in the ability to convert some strategically placed on-street and off-street parking spaces to stormwater enhancements integrated with the addition of new landscape in the district. These areas should integrate new shade trees into the district to interrupt the pattern of heat absorption and re-emission in the district. Additionally, large off-street parking lots should identify locations that would be well-located to convert parking spaces into landscape islands that can also add new shade trees.

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, trees and other plants help cool the environment. They lower surface and air temperatures by providing shade and through evapotranspiration. Trees and vegetation are most effective when planted in strategic locations around buildings, parking lots, and streets. Deciduous trees planted to the west of a building's windows and roof are most effective for cooling a

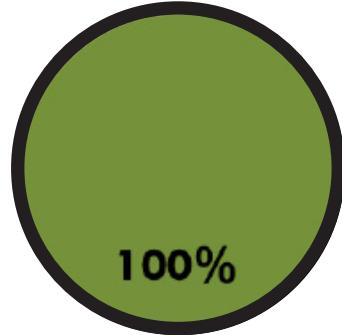
The table below shows the potential benefits associated with tree cover and tree canopy resilience. The Hingham Harbor and Downtown district with its existing approximately 50% tree canopy is compared to Wompatuck a location with an 80% tree canopy. The tree canopy captures and stores carbon and carbon dioxide, reduces air pollution, contributes to cooling, and reduces stormwater runoff. All of these benefits are not typically accounted for with dollar figures, but the table quantifies the equivalent value of achieving these benefits and the potential increase in benefits if the tree canopy is improved.

	Hingham Harbor Census Tract (50% Tree Canopy)	Wompatuck Block Group (80% Tree Canopy)		
	Volume	\$ Saved	Volume	\$ Saved
C and CO ₂ Equivalent Capture	4,446 ton/year	\$162,446	7,457 ton/yr	\$272,512
C and CO ₂ Equivalent Storage	184,268 short ton	\$6,734,359 / yr	130,496 short ton	\$22,447,472
Air Pollution Removal	76,190 lb/yr	\$189,599/yr	56,143 lb/yr	\$208,956/yr
Transpiration (Cooling)	96 MG year	-	247 MG/yr	-
Avoided Runoff	13.6 MG/yr	\$121,667/yr	6.5 MG/yr	\$58,190/yr

building. The trees also remove air pollutants and store and sequester carbon dioxide. The vegetation reduces stormwater runoff and improves water quality by absorbing and filtering rainwater.

Support for the Strategy

The consideration that improvements should integrate locations for new landscape was suggested as an idea during this planning process. Stakeholders and participants in the process showed strong initial support for the strategy. 100% of the participants agreed that this was a strategy worth including in this district plan.



Potential Next Steps

Identify public on-street or off-street parking spaces that could be used as stormwater and landscape enhancement pilots.
Use new landscape and shade tree investments to enhance the district.

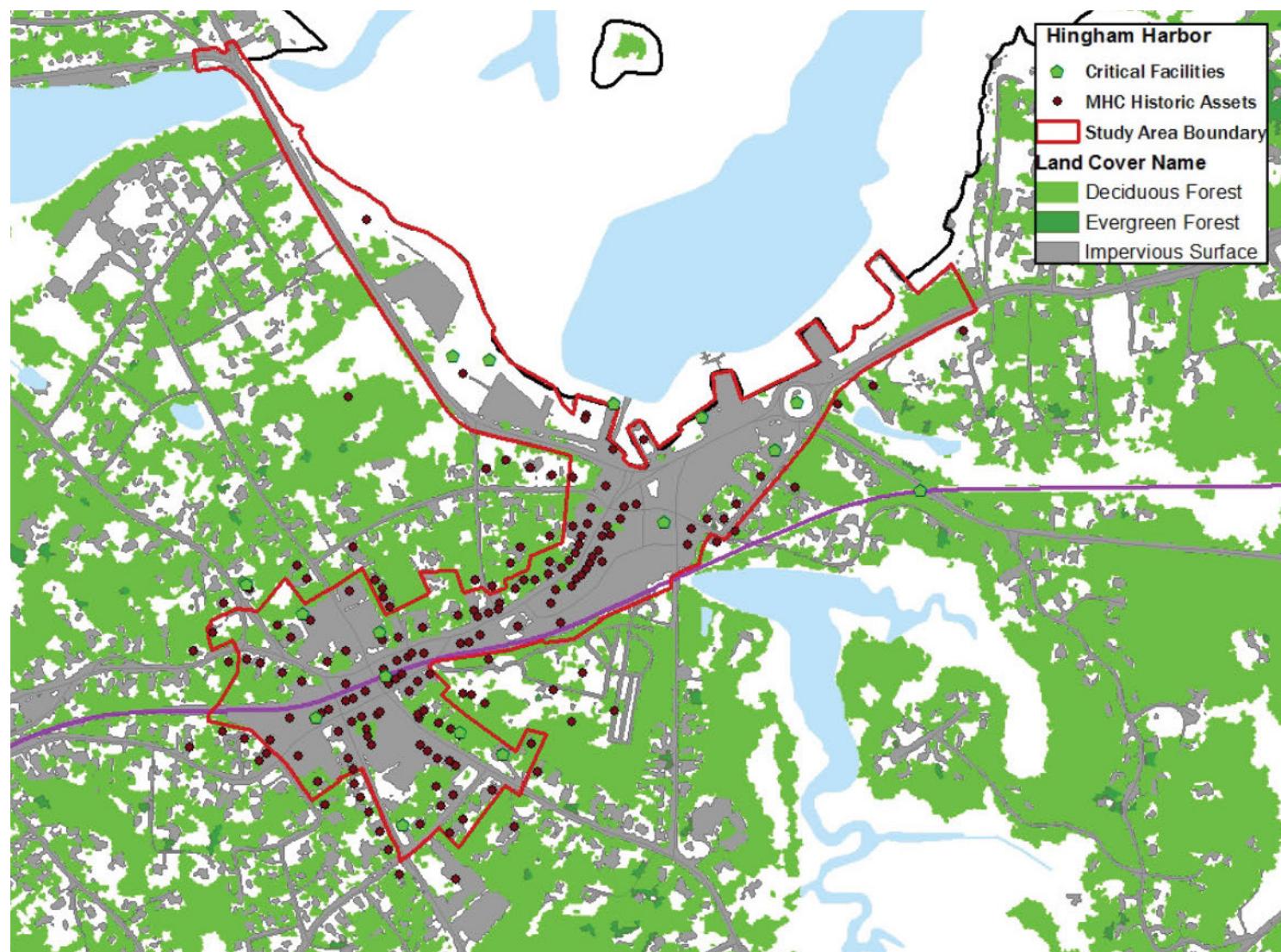
Potential Funding Sources

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation offers a 50/50 matching Urban and Community Forestry Challenge Grant to plant public trees.

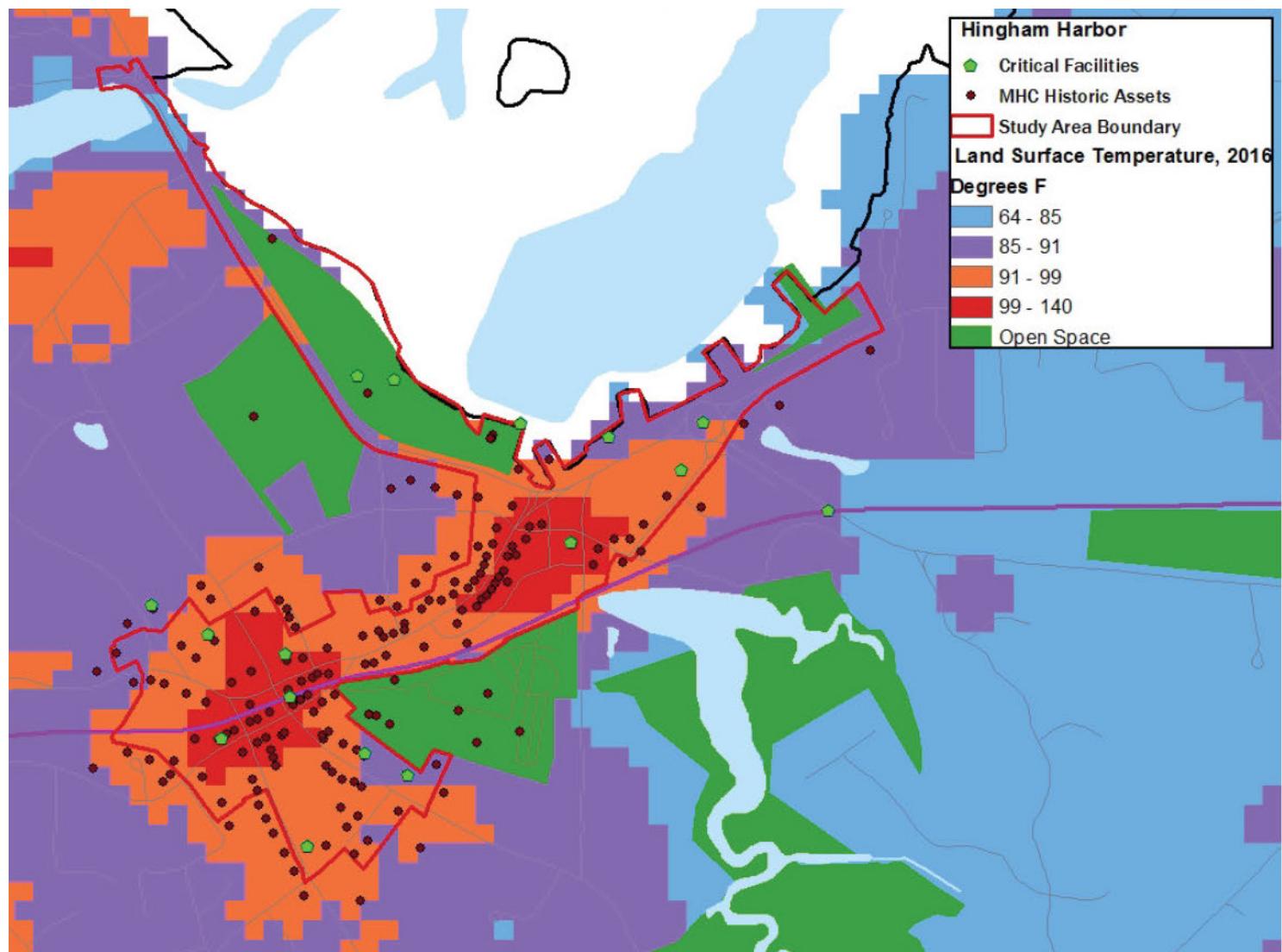


Photo: chesapeakebaymagazine.com

Diagram showing tree cover in the Hingham Harbor and Downtown District. Tree cover is reduced in the study area where exposed impervious surface is more common.



The lack of tree cover contributes directly to the increased land surface temperatures in the district. The diagram below shows higher temperature concentrations resulting from the heat island effect in the district.





Public Realm and Open Space Recommendations

Public Realm and Open Space Recommendations

Introduction

The public realm and open space recommendations are focused on safe and convenient connections in and around the Hingham Harbor/Downtown district. The goals and strategies focus on improving the district as safe and pedestrian-oriented and leveraging walkability to offer a unique place that showcases history, arts, and culture. While the historic settlement pattern of the district is intact and defines the walkable streets and block structure of the district, the intervening eras of development and roadway infrastructure have been decidedly less walkable. Route 3A runs along the waterfront and divides Hingham Harbor from Downtown. Overcoming this obstacle was consistently prioritized as the primary issue facing the district. The town through its Route 3A Task Force has been actively working to improve Route 3A for years in conjunction with MassDOT and the Towns of Hull and Cohasset. These investments will improve the pedestrian environment along portions of the Route 3A corridor, but there are additional strategies that can improve walkability in the district that are highlighted in this chapter.

In addition to the walkability within the district, it is important to improve safe and convenient connections to the district for bicyclists and pedestrians. Beyond walkability and bikability, it is also important to enhance the district through the quality and consistency of its public realm and open spaces. The public realm and open spaces connect the destinations and assets and should reinforce that the district is one connected place with distinct subareas. The recommendations try to define ways to draw the district together while making meaningful

improvements to safety and convenience.

The following goals for public realm and open space are defined to advance the district toward the vision that has been articulated through this process. Each goal is made actionable with more specific strategies. Each strategy was presented and reviewed as a preliminary idea during community/stakeholder meetings. Only those strategies that received strong initial support have been included in the final report in the hope that they are the strategies most likely to be implemented. The Public Realm and Open Space Recommendations are outlined as goals below and strategies for each goal are described in the following chapter.

Goals

 **Goal 7:** Improve safety and decrease vehicle speed

 **Goal 8:** Increase spaces devoted to people

 **Goal 9:** Integrate history, arts, and culture

 **Goal 10:** Elevate district identity and consistency



District Street and Open Space Network

Public Realm and Open Space Recommendations

Goal 7: Increase safety/decrease vehicle speed

7.1 Advance Route 3A improvements

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) has been working in cooperation with the towns of Hingham, Hull, and Cohasset to design roadway and sidewalk improvements on Route 3A through most of the Hingham Harbor and Downtown district and extending down Rockland Street further to the east to George Washington Boulevard. The improvements include reconfiguring the Summer Street rotary to reduce its scale to a smaller roundabout. The project also extends a buffered shared-use bike path and establishes turn lanes on Summer Street. The purpose of the improvements has been to improve multimodal access and to enhance the safety of pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicular traffic as well as to complement the ongoing work in the harbor.

Hingham Town Meeting has supported these efforts through previous votes to allocate funding to the development of the roadway design and construction documents. This process is about 75% complete. All of this effort has been guided locally by the Route 3A Task Force, town engineer, and public safety chiefs. The construction funding is currently on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) project list for 2025. The construction has about \$15M Regional Target Funds projected for 2025 from federal and state sources.

The improvements will be critical to addressing the pedestrian safety and ease of crossing Route 3A. This was a frequently mentioned concern of all stakeholders in this process and is important to address if the subareas of the district are to function in a more integrated manner. This will be accomplished

through a few significant improvements. First, the crosswalks will be restriped and made more visible and safe crossings will be improved through adjustments to the pedestrian signal timing at the North Street intersection. The multi-use trail on the waterside of Route 3A will provide a dramatically improved pedestrian experience with a buffer between the trail and the traffic and a wider trail that is not interrupted by utilities. As part of the design or perhaps added at a later date, the multi-use trail could be configured to match the new portion of the harborwalk along the Bathing Beach. This would include a brick paved walkway with a low height granite block wall on the waterside of the path. This feature would add to the continuity of the district and its resilience. The reduced footprint of the roundabout, improved pavement markings, and turn lane should all help to reduce vehicular speed and improve safety.

Support for the Strategy

The support for this critical effort has been well documented and has a much longer history than this district study. All district stakeholders will benefit through its implementation.

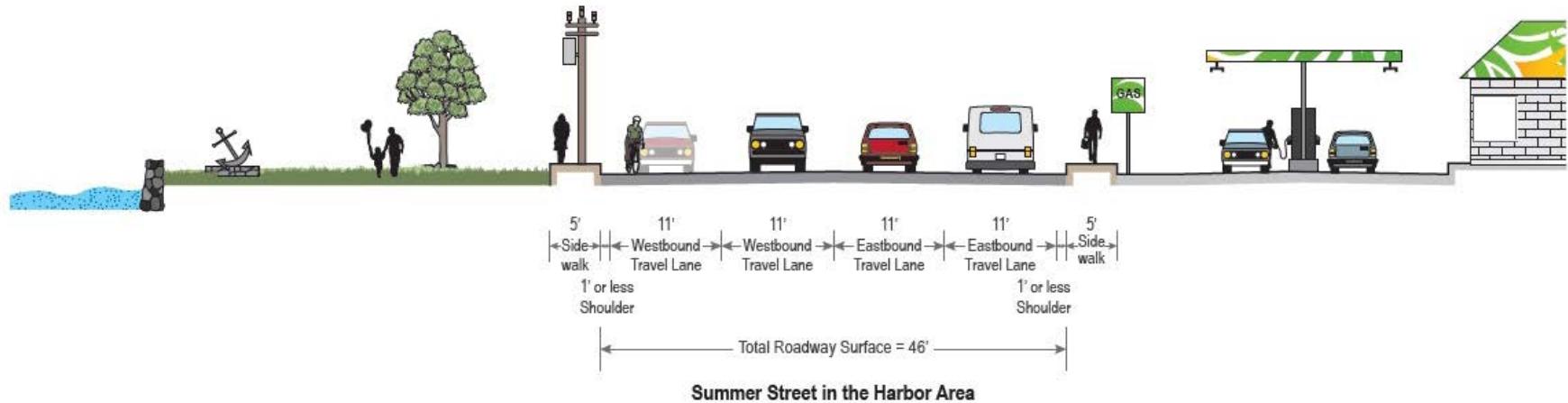
Potential Next Steps

Finalize the design and integrate the multi-use path features if possible, continue to work with all partners to prepare for construction in 2025.

Potential Funding Sources

The project will be funded in 2025.

Current Route 3A (Summer Street) Cross Section



Improved Route 3A (Summer Street) Cross Section

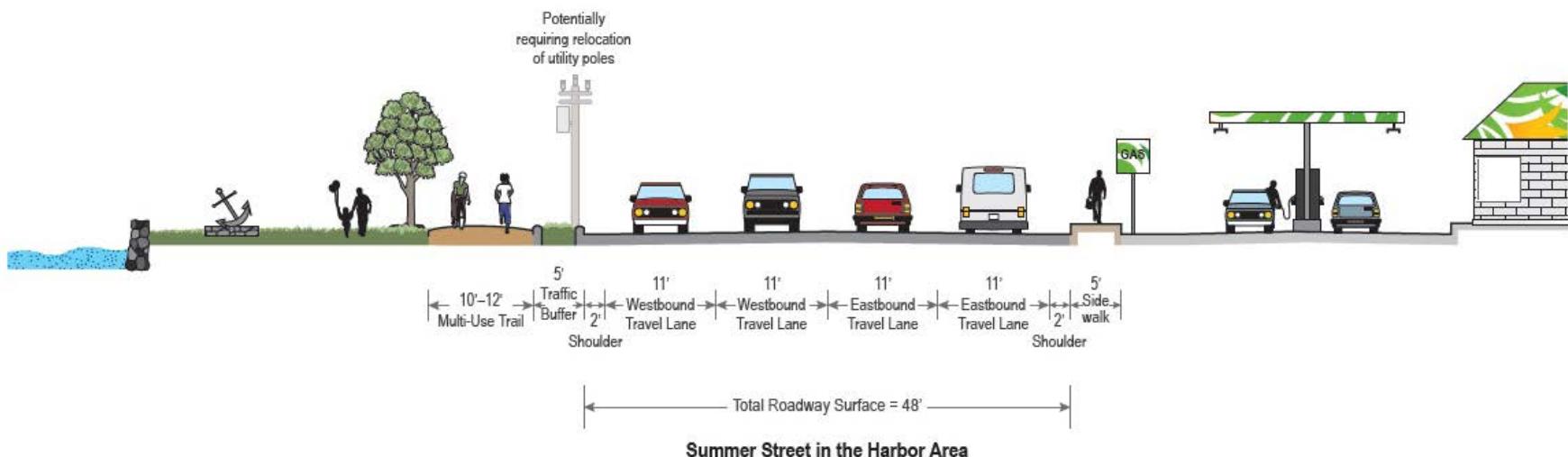


Image: Boston Region MPO, Proposed Roadway Cross Sections

7.2 Consider implementing short term Route 3A improvements

In 2016, the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization summarized proposed short and long term improvements for the Route 3A corridor in a Technical Memorandum. The objectives of the study were to identify safety, mobility, access, and other transportation-related problems in the corridor and to develop and evaluate potential multimodal transportation solutions to problems. The study was a precursor to the Route 3A roadway improvements outlined in the previous strategy. In addition, to the permanent long term investments pursued through that work with MassDOT, this study suggested several short term recommendations that could be undertaken to improve the conditions prior to the capital investments of the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) in 2025 and to complement those investments.

The study performed a series of safety and operations analyses, identified safety and operational problems and recommended key short-term improvements that included:

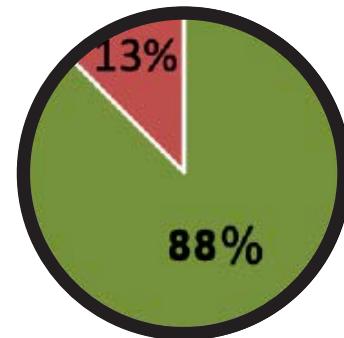
- Installing solar power Your Speed warning signs in conjunction with the existing speed regulation signs at suitable locations
- Restripe faded crosswalks at the North Street, Water Street, and Ship Street intersections. Use white longitudinal lines to emphasize the pedestrian crossing area
- Increase pedestrian signal timing at applicable intersections
- Install traffic signal backplates with reflective borders at applicable intersections
- Trim any overgrown vegetation at applicable locations
- Consider prohibiting left turns from Summer Street to

- Water Street and install traffic island to prohibit turns
- Patch/repave/seal rutting and cracking pavement

These improvements could enhance safety for all users and improve traffic operations moderately. The short term improvements also outlined short term pavement markings that could be installed at the existing Summer Street rotary, but these improvements may not be as complementary to the long-term investments that will completely redesign the rotary.

Support for the Strategy

The consideration to implement short term Route 3A improvements was suggested as an idea during this planning process. Stakeholders and participants in the process showed initial support for the strategy. 88% of the participants agreed that this was a strategy worth including in this district plan. 13% of the participants disagreed that this was a strategy worth including.



Potential Next Steps

Coordinate improvements with Hingham Public Works.

Potential Funding Sources

The short term improvements could be funded through Highway Maintenance funding or Hingham Chapter 90 funding.



Public Realm and Open Space Recommendations

Goal 8: Increase spaces devoted to people

8.1 Identify locations remove parking to expand amenities

In many locations in the district, the sidewalk widths may not be adequate to support outdoor seating for restaurants, outdoor merchandise areas for shops, additional shade trees and landscaping, and improved stormwater management features. In many of the same locations where sidewalk space is limited to support all of these people-pleasing functions there are on-street parking spaces immediately adjacent to the curb. Across the district the limited amount of space that is available should be evaluated to determine the most optimal use of the space to support an active and vibrant district. In some cases the on-street parking space is critically important to the adjacent businesses and is the best use of the space. In other cases, the parking optimization strategies in this report may help to create new opportunities to re-purpose some spaces currently devoted to vehicles to make them spaces devoted to people.

Many downtown districts have turned to outdoor dining and shared streets programs to mitigate the negative impacts of COVID-19 on small businesses and provide a safe way to encourage economic activity. Many of these measures have been temporary authorizations, but could provide a model for new curb-side uses in the future. Several dedicated uses have been converted from on-street parking including temporary pick-up zones in front of restaurants, on-street outdoor dining, and on-street retail display and sales. Each of these measures can be deployed on a temporary or seasonal basis and can adapt to the needs of the businesses in the district. The conversion can be as simple as placing traffic barriers to create a safe space or involve a more involved installation

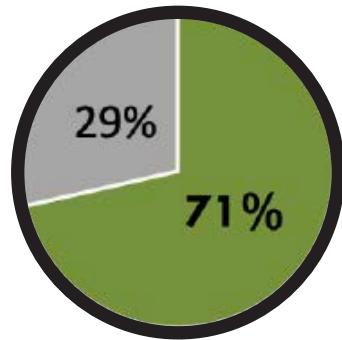
of an elevated deck and seating area with landscaping and protection from inclement weather. The locations where these types of conversion may be needed should be defined in consultation with the business owners of the district. A few potential locations are highlighted below:

- North Street – 2-way including 2 travel lanes (12.5' and 11.5') and one on-street parking lane (6'). The parking lane could be interrupted for an occasional sidewalk extension.
- South Street – 2-way including 2 travel lanes (11.5' and 11.5') and two on-street parking lanes (8'), also portion of 1-way with two on-street parking lanes. The parking lanes could be interrupted for an occasional sidewalk extension.
- Main Street – 2-way including 2 travel lanes and angled and parallel on-street parking lanes (15' and 7.5'), and 2-way about 42' curb to curb with parallel parking. The parking lanes could be interrupted for an occasional sidewalk extension.

If such temporary measures were a success, then the sidewalk in that area could be permanently expanded with new granite curbing, extended concrete sidewalk and modified brick accent band. Expanded areas for landscape and stormwater improvements may not require as large an area and could be more closely integrated with on-street parking spaces to better define the length of spaces.

Support for the Strategy

The increase of spaces devoted to people was suggested as an idea during this planning process. Stakeholders and participants in the process showed initial support for the strategy. 71% of the participants agreed that this was a strategy worth including in this district plan. 29% of the participants were neutral toward the idea.



Potential Next Steps

Prepare a survey to poll district business and property owners regarding the use of outdoor space to the front or rear of the property. Ask the owners to prioritize their needs for nearby and convenient on-street parking, additional space for outdoor seating, additional space for outdoor commerce, or additional space for landscape features. Follow up with owners about their needs and determine if they would be willing to make investments in temporary conversions of on-street parking.

Potential Funding Sources

The American Rescue Plan established the Restaurant Revitalization Fund to support restaurants during the pandemic. Funds from this program may be used for the construction of outdoor seating. A Business Improvement District (BID) could provide a funding source to support the types of conversions of on-street parking space described. The town could also vote to allocate funding to support small business recovery and conversions that may assist in reopening efforts.



8.2 Recalibrate parking requirements to promote new activity

Parking provided in a district is a critical component to support functionality and vitality. In past eras, providing more than enough parking was seen as a way to promote the economic health of a district and ensure the smooth flow of commerce. However, providing parking is not without costs. As a property is developed the construction of parking is a cost of the overall development program. If the parking is more efficient than a conventional surface parking lot (e.g. a parking structure, or below grade parking, or parking in the foundation of the building), the costs have an impact on financial feasibility for the development. The other costs of parking show up as an opportunity cost. Opportunity cost is simply the loss of the potential gain of another alternative.

Parking occupies a substantial amount of physical space. That space, occupied as parking, has the opportunity to support other complementary uses and activities in the district. For example, a redevelopment with less parking may be able to support and additional space for a small business or additional housing units and therefore make the project more likely to be financially feasible. On-street parking space, as described in the previous strategy, can be repurposed for other uses that will support economic development and communal activity in the district.

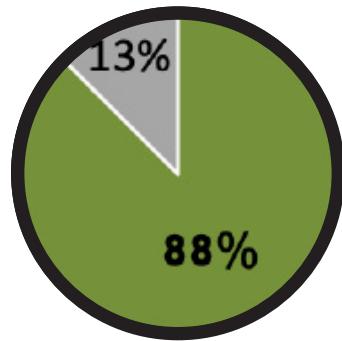
Parking supply and parking demand must be closely calibrated and optimized. Overestimating the parking demand and therefore oversupplying parking in the district is removing additional potential activity from the district and replacing it with unused parking spaces. One approach to better align parking supply and demand is to reduce minimum parking

requirements. This change could be connected to development incentives, such as outlined with the sustainability strategies, or could be adjusted as an optimized baseline for the district. The current residential parking requirement is 2 spaces per unit, it could be reduced to 1.5 spaces per unit. The current retail/service store requirement is 5 spaces per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area, it could be reduced to 4 spaces per 1,000 or 3.5 spaces per 1,000. These changes could be reduced further.

Other approaches to optimizing the parking can be employed as well. The shared parking reduction allowance that is currently in the Zoning Bylaw allows a property owner to calculate the amount of parking that can be shared by different types of uses that have different profiles in terms of the hours of peak parking demand and to reduce off-street parking if appropriate. The Planning Board is responsible for review of these reductions and should look favorably upon them. Another approach is to consider the district parking supply more holistically and to allow a property owner to account for nearby on-street or off-street parking in municipal parking lots to supplement and support the parking needs of the uses on their property.

Support for the Strategy

The recalibration of parking requirements to promote new activity in the district was suggested as an idea during this planning process. Stakeholders and participants in the process showed initial support for the strategy. 88% of the participants agreed that this was a strategy worth including in this district plan. 13% of the participants were neutral toward the idea. Due to rounding of the results these figures add to more than 100%.



Potential Next Steps

Continue to monitor and optimize parking across the district. The underutilization of the large municipally owned Station Street parking lot is a symptom of an oversupply of parking in the district. A number of strategies in this plan should help to optimize the use of the Station Street parking lot. Generally, an 85% utilization rate is the sign of well balanced parking supply and demand. Encourage property owners and the Planning Board to be open to reducing parking or converting parking in critical locations where other uses of the land may be better for the district. Explore zoning changes to reduce the minimum parking requirements in the downtown business district.

Potential Funding Sources

Additional funding may not be needed for much of the activities described in this strategy. Additional funding may be required for occasional parking utilization study updates. The studies are typically manageable through town funding or could potentially be supported by a Business Improvement District.



This diagram highlights the locations of major off-street parking lots in the Hingham Harbor and Downtown district. It does not show smaller driveways in the district. As highlighted in this strategy, a substantial amount of physical space in the district is currently occupied by parking.



Public Realm and Open Space Recommendations

Goal 9: Integrate history, arts, and culture

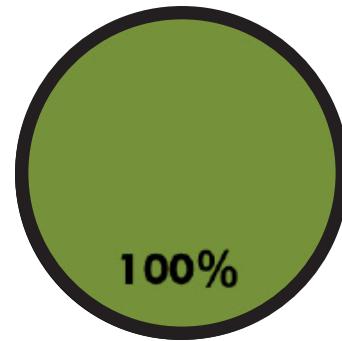
9.1 Link historic assets through a walking tour with wayfinding

As highlighted with the land use and zoning strategies, along the waterfront several interpretive information signs have been researched, designed and installed to give visitors a feel for the history and evolution of the district. These include historic photographs and narrative about the history of the area. This type of installation could be expanded to other sites, buildings, or locations of significance in the district. The same design of the black metal sign and similar graphic layout could be used for each location to receive a sign.

Additionally, these points of interest, could be linked with a district map that guides visitors to these locations. The locations could also be marked with a QR code that could be linked to a website providing additional information. This could include information for nearby amenities, shops, and restaurants, or could include audio stories about the points of interest. This activity could add to the activities and attractions for visitors to the district and would be consistent with activities to designate the district as a Cultural District.

Support for the Strategy

Linking historic assets through a walking tour with wayfinding was suggested as an idea by the stakeholders during this planning process. Stakeholders and participants in the process showed unanimous support for the strategy. 100% of the participants agreed that this was a strategy worth including in this district plan.



Potential Next Steps

An inventory of the assets and attractions that should be highlighted with an interpretive information sign should be created. These assets should then be prioritized for creation and installation of signs in a sequence that expands the walking route. Create a district map for all inventoried locations and place the map on the website and have physical copies available at strategic locations in the district. Create a webpage companion to the inventory that could be expanded with additional content or interactive features. This webpage could link to the downtown business directory or other resources that connect to district amenities. The full inventory and locations with information signs should be posted on a website that is linked to the physical signs through the use of a QR code.

Potential Funding Sources

Funding for this type of activity could be supported through the implementation of two other strategies including funding through a potential Business Improvement District or Mass Cultural Council's Cultural Facilities Fund if a potential cultural district is designated. Otherwise, it would depend on incremental funding through the town budget or stakeholder contributions.



9.2 Integrate public art into public realm improvements

Art is an important element contributing to a vibrant and engaging public realm. Art features big and small can be integrated into district public realm and open space in consistent ways that allow distinct art installations to reinforce district unity. In this way, art can be used to draw the district together and strengthen its consistency. The opportunities for art are many, but some of the more typical types of installations include a mural program for blank walls in the district, a mural program for utility boxes and traffic control boxes in the district, sculptures and statues in public spaces of the district, special inlays or ornamental features that are integrated among sidewalk pavers or accents, and special lighting for specific features or locations.

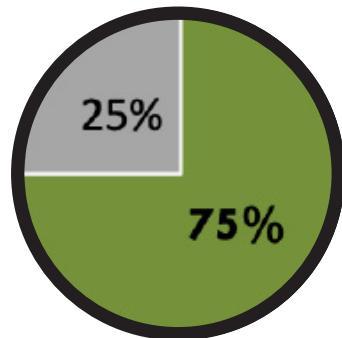
The strategy would require identifying the type or types of art installations that are desirable for the district and to define the locations for an initial installation of the art. The art installations could be part of an annual cycle of events where new art is added each year and unveiled as part of one of the district events. The locations to receive art could be defined in advance and then planned with an incremental implementation. Once the type of art installation and locations are determined, a call for artists can occur through a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process. The RFQ communicates the type of artistic opportunity and location and invites artists to send their qualifications to be reviewed by a selection panel of district and town stakeholders. Artists selection is based on their past art and achievements. Through this process a preference for local artists can be defined and communicated.

The Artist RFQ typically will include a brief project summary,

overview of the artist's scope of services, art goals or criteria, art location description, budget, artist eligibility, and application requirements. Organizations such as Americans for the Arts have guidelines for such calls for artists.

Support for the Strategy

The integration of public art into public realm improvements was suggested as an idea during this planning process. Stakeholders and participants in the process showed initial support for the strategy. 75% of the participants agreed that this was a strategy worth including in this district plan. 25% of the participants were neutral toward the idea.



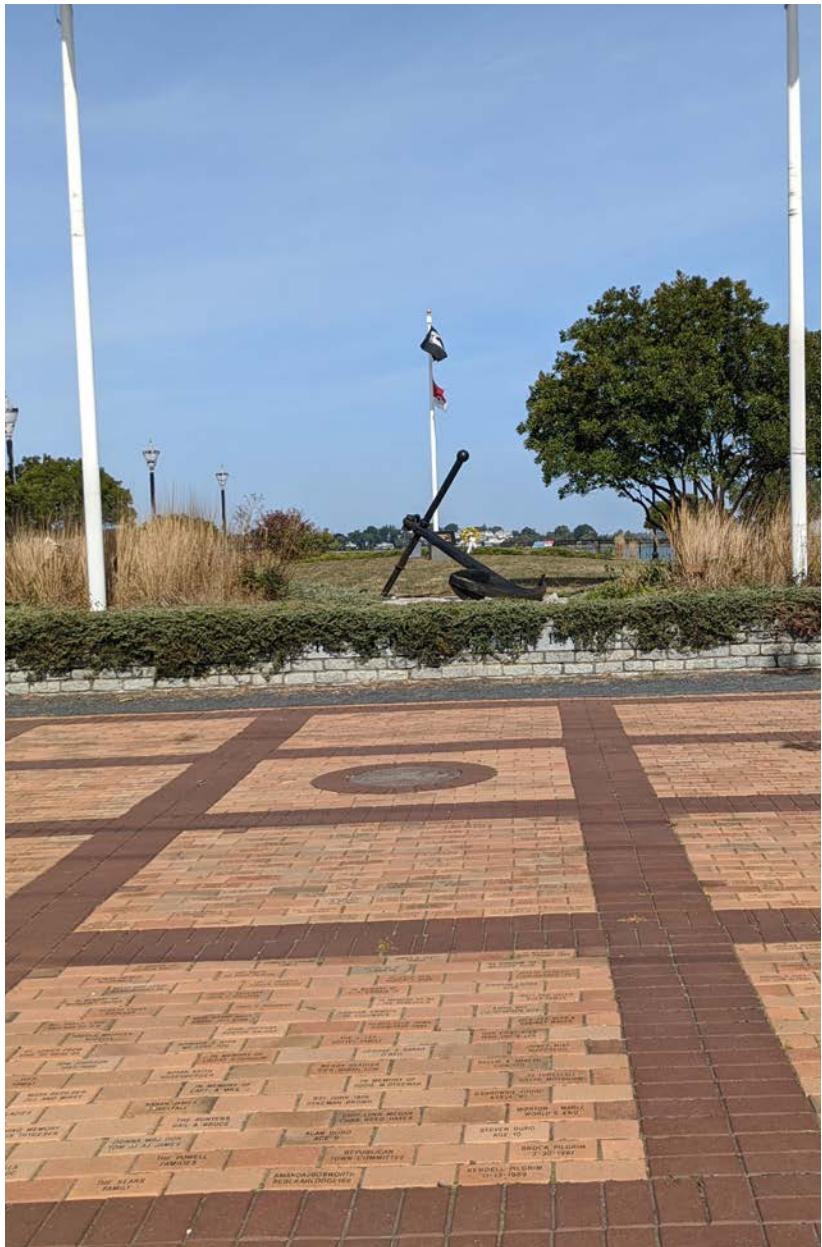
Potential Next Steps

Identify an initial type of art installation and location to pilot a public arts program in the district and define an RFQ.

Potential Funding Sources

Establish a funding source for integrating public art, such as a percent for art program that could require contributions to a local art fund from investments in the district. These may be other roadway improvements or development investments.





9.3 Design simple, consistent features as part of district identity

Many of the strategies of this district plan are directly addressing aspects of what makes a great place to enhance Hingham Harbor and Downtown as the heart of the community. This strategy is directly focused on that enhancement of a sense of place as well and is about helping to reveal the essence of the place and to communicate its story to patrons and visitors. A few elements and features could be designed and integrated into the physical environment of the district.

The first element is the potential for a district logo or brand of some kind. This could simply be the use of a district name and consistent font, typesetting, and color. The logo could also feature an iconic element of the district or an abstracted map of the district or several icons representing prominent activities in the district. The approach to and design of a district logo or brand should be undertaken with a committee of stakeholders and could be assisted by a graphic designer.

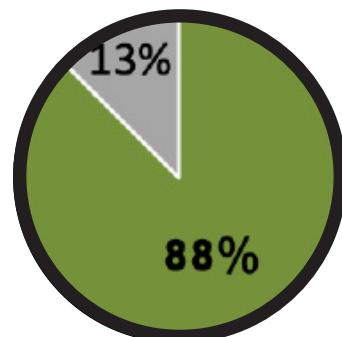
If a district logo or brand is designed, it could be integrated on wayfinding signage that is mentioned in another strategy of this plan. It could also be integrated on websites, events, and other materials that are distributed as part of district communications. Some districts go as far as to introduce the district logo into the physical environment through occasional etchings on brick pavers, or small decorative features such as inlaid bronze elements in concrete sidewalks, for example. One of the benefits of the district logo or brand is having an easily recognizable and consistent way to label any communications or programs that are associated with the district.

If a district logo or brand is not pursued, other consistent district features can help to communicate a cohesive and

uniform district. These features may include the treatment of the streetscape and uniform special features, such as granite posts that already exist in the district with a Hingham Sq. sign on top.

Support for the Strategy

The design of simple, consistent features as part of the district identity was suggested as an idea during this planning process. Stakeholders and participants in the process showed initial support for the strategy. 88% of the participants agreed that this was a strategy worth including in this district plan. 13% of the participants were neutral toward the idea. Due to rounding the figures add to more than 100%.



Potential Next Steps

Establish a committee of stakeholders to explore a district logo or brand and define a process to develop options for review and selection.

Potential Funding Sources

This type of effort would be best supported by stakeholders of the district and could be supported through the formation of a Business Improvement District.



Public Realm and Open Space Recommendations

Goal 10: Elevate district identity and consistency

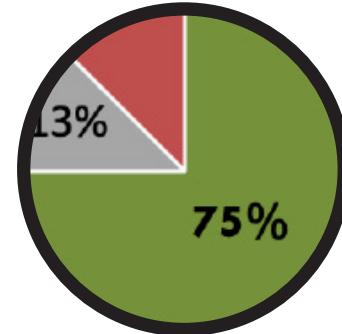
10.1 Continue streetscape character and features of district

The Hingham Square subarea provides the palette for streetscape character, features, and design elements that should be continued through the district. The sidewalks are typically concrete with evenly spaced score lines and expansion joints and a brick accent band adjacent to the granite curb. Street trees are planted in tree beds within the sidewalk adjacent to the granite curb with black ornamental metal grating over the tree bed. The crosswalks are painted red with white lined edges. Curb ramps with red detectable warnings transition from the sidewalk to the street.

Street furnishings include black antique street lights, black metal benches with a vertical strap design, seat back, and armrests, and black metal waste receptacles with a simple vertical strap design, and vertical granite posts holding a sign that describes the district subarea. Other consistent features that could be integrated with these more standard street furnishings are discussed in other strategies of this report.

Support for the Strategy

The continuation of streetscape character and features of the district was suggested as an idea during this planning process. Stakeholders and participants in the process showed initial support for the strategy. 75% of the participants agreed that this was a strategy worth including in this district plan. 13% of the participants were neutral toward the idea. 12% of the participants disagreed with the idea.



Potential Next Steps

For future public or private investments in the district streetscape, refer project advocates to the examples of streetscape finishes and furnishings in Hingham Square particularly at the intersecting blocks of South Street, Main Street, Central Street, and North Street. When such investments occur, ensure that these standards are maintained through project approvals processes.

Potential Funding Sources

The Town of Hingham could be a potential resource for supporting this effort, when future roadway improvements in the district are approved, they should be budgeted to include these streetscape improvements. If the Business Improvement District is established it could support the funding needs for incremental streetscape improvements. Private property owners redeveloping properties should be required to improve streetscape to match these standards at the edges of the property.



10.2 Increase uniformity and connectivity of sidewalk network

The entire Hingham Harbor and Downtown district must present a generous and inviting pedestrian environment with wide and continuous sidewalks connected by clearly marked and safe street crossings. Currently, the most uniform and attractive portion of the sidewalk network is located in the Hingham Square subarea of the district. Continuous sidewalks are located on both sides of the street, except for Elm Street, portions of Central Street, and North Street near Lincoln Street.

The North Street subarea has a less consistent sidewalk network and it would benefit the entire district to increase the uniformity and connectivity of sidewalks in this subarea. Continuous sidewalks should be added to both sides of Station Street, Water Street, Mill Street, Eldridge Court and Green Street. In this subarea in particular, the street right of way merges with off-street parking in one continuous paved area that provides very little safe space for pedestrians. New granite curbs should be added to elevate a clear concrete sidewalk with a brick accent band similar to the Hingham Square sidewalk treatment. As sidewalks are added, landscape islands could also be added to areas of parking that aren't used for parking along these edges. Formalizing the sidewalks in this manner may require a reduction in parking on some properties and that reduction could be agreed to and approved by the town to allow for these pedestrian improvements.

The Waterfront subarea would benefit from the continuation and expansion of planned investments to enhance the sidewalk network. The improvements to Route 3A add a new multimodal path to the waterside of Route 3A and that path could be extended beyond the boundaries of that project in the future.

Additional connections to the harborwalk path along the Bathing Beach would be a great addition to the network. For future improvements along Route 3A, such as the Otis Street portion, the sidewalk location immediately adjacent to the four lanes of traffic should be reconsidered. As planned at the Summer Street portion, a multimodal path that is setback from the vehicular traffic would be safer and more attractive.

All of these improvements would require sizable capital investments and streetscape improvements, and in some locations, frontage redesigns. In order to increase the safety of the pedestrian network more immediately, short term and temporary solutions could be installed and may include painting sidewalks on the asphalt and providing safe barriers with planters or other temporary objects. Where longer term improvements would require property owner coordination and investment, the intended improvements could be discussed with the property owner and integrated with a future site improvement or combined with another future investment or approval required for the property.

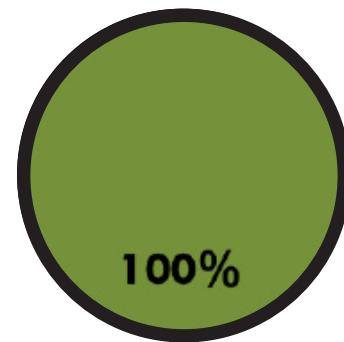
In addition to these subarea specific pedestrian network improvements, multimodal improvements are needed beyond the district to safely connect visitors arriving by train or ferry. Improving the conditions of a continuous off-street path or sidewalk connecting from Hingham Shipyard, and the West Hingham and Nantasket Junction commuter rail stations is an important aspect of attracting patrons to the district who will not be arriving by car. These improvements would primarily occur on Lincoln Street, South Street and Summer Street. The wayfinding signage program defined in the following strategy would also be an integral feature to these continuous multimodal paths. The paths should provide either a sidewalk or

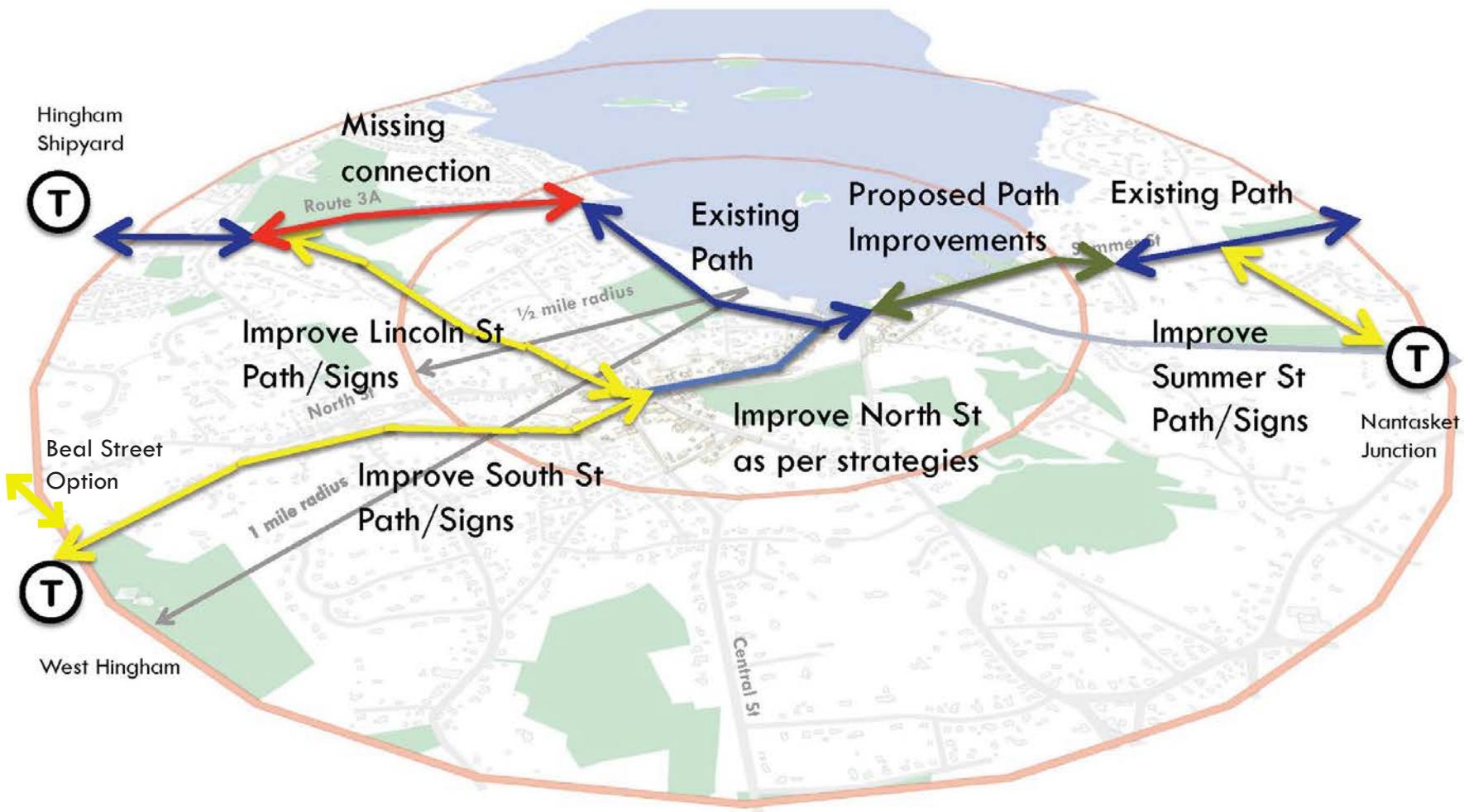
off-street path that is wide enough for travel in both directions on foot or bike and clearly marked and safe street crossing that provide a defined path from a transit arrival point to the Hingham Harbor and Downtown District.

A diagram of these potential routes is outlined on the following page. The roadways shown in blue have existing sidewalks that are in good condition. The roadways in yellow have sidewalks and paths that may require some improvement to provide a clear, safe, and attractive route that is welcoming to visitors. The roadway segment highlighted in green will see multimodal path improvements as part of the Route 3A roadway investments. The roadway segment highlighted in red has no existing sidewalks or paths on either side of the street. Each of the arrival points highlighted is about 1 mile away from the district. A clear and safe route will help visitors travel this distance.

Support for the Strategy

The development and deployment of consistent wayfinding signage was suggested as an idea during this planning process. Stakeholders and participants in the process showed strong initial support for the strategy. 100% of the participants agreed that this was a strategy worth including in this district plan.





Potential Next Steps

Prioritizing the most critical locations to increase the uniformity and connectivity of the sidewalk network is the best next step. The priority may be based on encouraging non-vehicular visitors by identifying which multimodal route is most likely to receive the most use from visitors. In the district sidewalk improvements could be prioritized based on any vehicular crash or safety data that may be available. If a particular location has seen multiple crashes involving pedestrians or bicyclists it should be prioritized for improvements. Each year investments in improvements should be made as part of a consistent pedestrian and bicyclist improvement program.

Potential Funding Sources

The funding source most consistent with these types of improvements is MassDOT's Complete Streets program. A Complete Street is one that provides safe and accessible options for all travel modes - walking, biking, transit and vehicles – for people of all ages and abilities. In order to qualify for potential funding, Hingham must first create and adopt a Complete Streets policy and develop a prioritization plan. The Town Engineer is working on a draft policy for the town and working with the Traffic Committee and Board of Selectmen to seek approval of the policy. Once the policy is adopted, a townwide prioritization plan process would set the town up for implementation grant eligibility. The prioritization plan is a town-wide process, but the improvements outlined in and around the Hingham Harbor and Downtown district should be well represented in such an effort. Once these steps have been completed, the Town would qualify for a recurring grant program from the Complete Streets program to fund construction of these types of improvements.



10.3 Develop and deploy consistent wayfinding signage

A program of consistent signage would help strengthen the cohesion and functionality of the district. A district icon or logo could be created that could be a part of a signage and wayfinding program. If developed, such a graphic feature should be integrated consistently on all sign types for the district. In a district sign and wayfinding program, several sign types will exist and serve different purposes.

The types of signs that may be most appropriate for Hingham Harbor and Downtown are gateway signs, parking wayfinding signs, primary destination wayfinding signs, multimodal wayfinding signs, historic signs, individual building signs, and historic plaques and markers. Each of these sign types should have a consistent design that is unique and easily identifiable with consistent sign structure, sign layout, and sign font styles. In this consistent format, different sign types may provide variations on that overall consistent format and may be differentiated by size of size, or color of sign.

A nearby example of this type of district sign program can be found in Scituate Harbor. The Scituate Harbor business district was branded with “Sea Scituate” and a district specific logo. A signage program integrates this brand information and is located at district gateways and directs visitors to the primary public parking area at Cole Parkway where similarly branded signs communicate the parking regulations. An illustration of the consistent signs and the hierarchy of types from Scituate is to the right.

The gateway signs should be located at the key entry points to the district on Route 3A/Otis Street and Route 3A/Summer Street and potentially also on North Street near Lincoln Street,

South Street near Lafayette Lane, Central Street near Elm Street, and Main Street near Elm Street.

The parking wayfinding signs could be located near the gateway signage and would be located nearer to the district such that a visitor arriving by vehicle would see the gateway sign first and then the parking wayfinding sign. Similar locations would be effective for the parking signs. The district stakeholders would need to decide with the Town if parking wayfinding signs are directing parking to the Station Street parking lot only or also directing parking to the Merchants parking lot.

The primary destination wayfinding signs should be placed for pedestrians departing from the primary parking lot. This sign would show directional areas and could show distances measured in blocks to the key destinations or clusters of destinations (e.g. “Shops and Restaurants” or “Harborwalk”). The destination signs would be placed to be visible for a visitor parking and departing the parking lot on foot. More than one

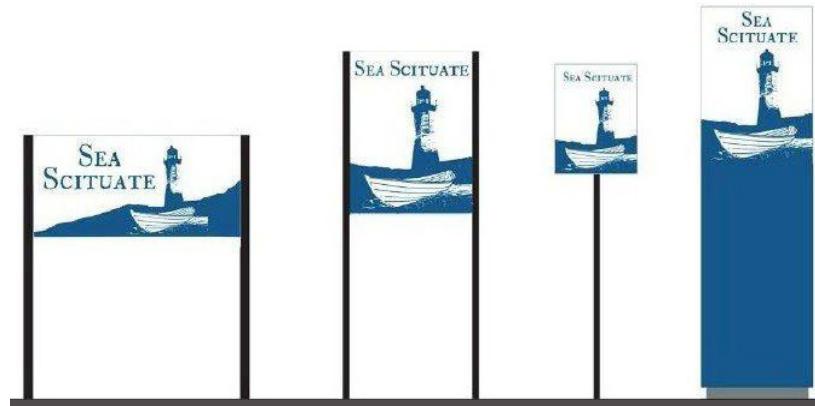


Photo: Scituate.wickedlocal.com

sign may be needed for both the Station Street parking lot and the Merchants parking lot.

The multimodal wayfinding signs would offer pedestrians and bicyclists both direction and distance markers at key locations along designated multimodal connection routes. These help to confirm that the visitor is on the correct path and how far they have to go, as well as, offer direction to follow the preferred route that is the safest for walking and biking. These signs may be at primary arrival points for visitors including Hingham Shipyard, and the West Hingham and Nantasket Junction commuter rail stops. From Hingham Shipyard the signs may direct visitors to Lincoln Street. From West Hingham they may direct visitors to South Street. From Nantasket Junction they may direct visitors to Summer Street. These signs are typically two-sided and offer different information on each side that would be helpful to guide visitors to the destination to or from the district depending on the direction of their travel.

The historic signs have been described in other strategies of this report and would offer a consistently formatted historic narrative and photographs about a variety of themes that reflect on the history and evolution of the district. As described with the historic sign strategy, any of the wayfinding information could be linked through a QR code to online maps and information, so that a visitor could scan the code and be directed to additional information as a part of their visit.

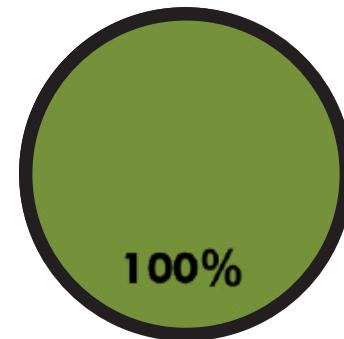
The individual building signs could be a consistent way to place building names and year built dates on structures that would both offer a unifying feature and additional information about the district and its structures.

Historic plaques and markers may not be a useful addition

throughout the district to signify historic structures and locations. This type of sign may not be branded to match the other district sign types, and instead may use the typical standards for historic plaques and markers. In many cases this is a bronze plaque, but may also have specific sign associated with different types of historic designations of a property.

Support for the Strategy

The development and deployment of consistent wayfinding signage was suggested as an idea during this planning process. Stakeholders and participants in the process showed strong initial support for the strategy. 100% of the participants agreed that this was a strategy worth including in this district plan.



Potential Next Steps

Define the branding information desired for the sign program. What is the district name? Is there a logo? What are the primary colors used for district signage?

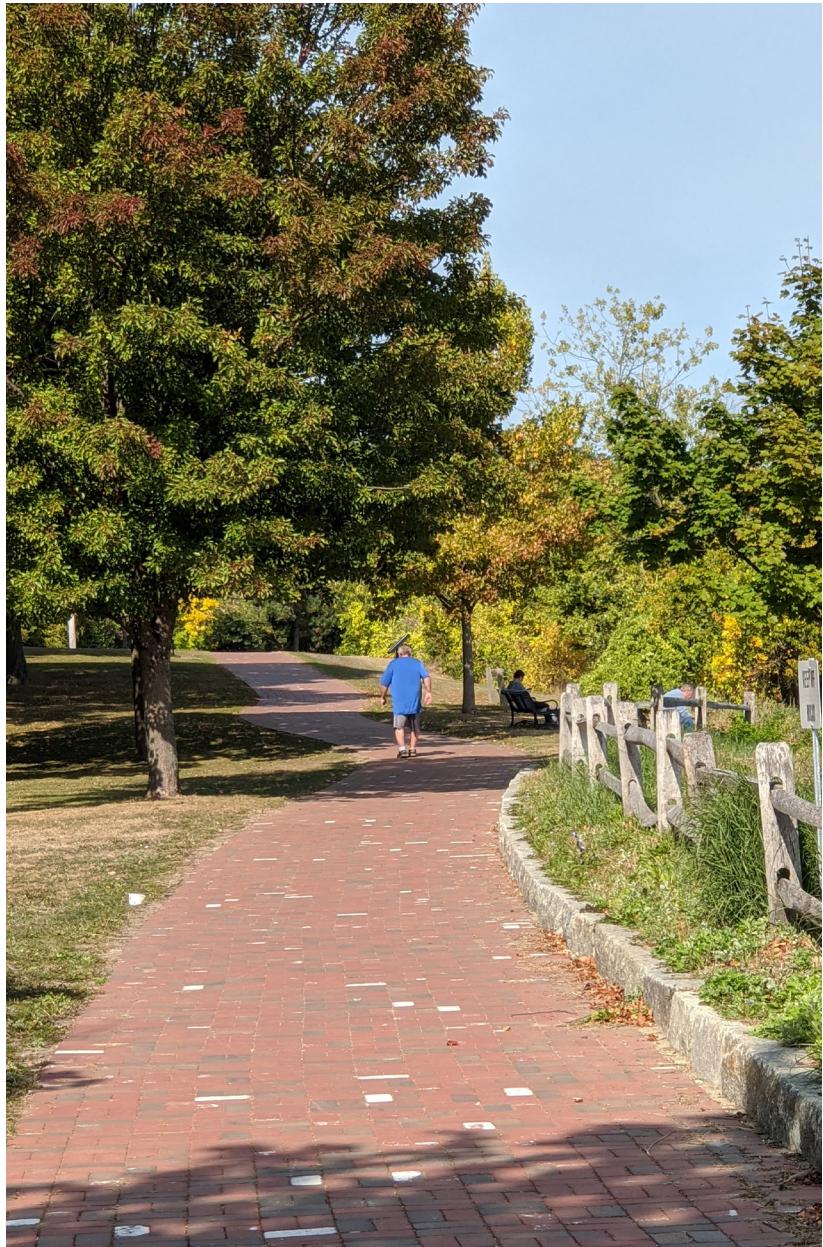
Define the specific locations for signs based on the guidance outlined. Acquire permissions and approvals for the sign locations. Less expensive temporary signs could be used to test the information and design for the sign program prior to

investment in the permanent signs.

Work with a graphic design consultant or volunteer to finalize the design of the sign types and program and work with a sign fabricator to produce and install the signs. Signs could be added incrementally, but should be added in such a way to complete the wayfinding along a specific route. For example, if a multimodal route would require four signs to effectively direct visitors, then all four of the signs should be installed in the same signage investment.

Potential Funding Sources

The Town of Hingham could be a potential resource for supporting this effort. If the Business Improvement District is established it could support the funding needs for a wayfinding program. The Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) is a grant program through the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development. The design of a wayfinding program would be an activity supported by this type of grant.



Hingham Harbor and Downtown Sustainable Vision Plan



Actions and Implementation

Actions and Implementation Summary Table

Topic	Goals	Strategies
Land use and zoning	1 Diversify activities and attractions	1 Develop a vacant storefront program
	2 Expand waterfront activity	2 Expand arts and cultural activity and events
	3 Elevate and emulate historic patterns	3 Identify all historic assets and destinations with information
	4 Continue and coordinate stewardship	1 Allow sit-down restaurants on waterfront by special permit
		2 Partner with water dependent users to maximize activity
		3 Additional design, programming and event opportunities
Resilience and sustainability	5 Strengthen vitality and sustainability	1 Explore district design guidelines and attach to overlay
	6 Strengthen resilience with improvements	2 Adjust zoning for several uses inconsistent with vision
		1 Form a coalition of partners that meet to advance district
		2 Further empower management through a BID
		3 Define additional events and programming to attract visitors
	5 Strengthen vitality and sustainability	1 Develop district parking guidelines for visitors, businesses
	6 Strengthen resilience with improvements	2 Add sustainability and resilience guidance and checklist
		3 Consider development incentives linked sustainability
	5 Strengthen vitality and sustainability	1 New amenities should be integrated with flood protection
	6 Strengthen resilience with improvements	2 Improvements should integrate stormwater enhancements
		3 Improvements should integrate locations for new landscape

Next Step	Potential Funding	Potential Lead/Partner
Define vacant storefront policy, explore Certified District designation	Town budget, staff time	CPD, HDA
Modify zoning to add artist uses, form cultural district partnership	Board, staff time	PB, CPD
Advance next sign location and content	Stakeholder and town budgets	HDA, HHC, TBB
Modify zoning to add special permit sit-down restaurants	Board, staff time	PB, CPD
Identify complementary programs and needed support	Partner organization and staff time	H, HDC, TBB, HMC, HHM
Explore feasibility of public water access recreation facility	Partner organization and staff time	H, HDC, TBB, HMC, HHM
Advance additional design guidelines	Board, staff time	PB, CPD
Modify zoning to update prohibited uses	Board, staff time	PB, CPD
Begin regular meetings of partners	Partner organization and staff time	HDC, HDA, HHS, HMC, MPC, RTF, TBB, CPD
Explore formation of a Business Improvement District (BID)	Massachusetts Downtown Initiative	HDA, HDC, CPD
Create a coordinated and shared calendar of events	Partner organization and staff time	HDC, HDA, HHS, HMC, TBB, HMC, HHM
Advance district parking guidelines for visitors and businesses	Board, partner, and staff time	PB, HDA, CPD
Advance sustainability and resilience checklist	Board and staff time	PB, CPD
Advance discussion of exact incentives and requirements	Board and staff time	PB, CPD
Integrate flood protection with each new investment	Coastal Resilience Grant	HDC, TBB, HPW, RTF
Identify locations that would benefit from stormwater enhancements	Coastal Pollutant Remediation Grant	HPW
Identify locations that would benefit from landscape enhancements	Urban Forestry Challenge Grant	HPW, STC

Actions and Implementation Summary Table

Topic	Goals	Strategies
Public realm and open space	7 Improve safety/decrease vehicle speed	1 Advance Route 3A improvements 2 Consider implementing short term Route 3A improvements
	8 Increase spaces devoted to people	1 Identify locations to remove parking to add outdoor amenity 2 Recalibrate parking requirements to promote new activity
	9 Integrate history, arts, and culture	1 Link historic assets through walking tour and wayfinding 2 Integrate public art into public realm improvements 3 Design simple, consistent features part of the district identity
	10 Elevate district identity and consistency	1 Continue streetscape character and features in district 2 Increase uniformity and connectivity of sidewalk network 3 Develop and deploy consistent wayfinding signage

Next Step	Potential Funding	Potential Lead/Partner
Support steps leading to implementation	Transportation Improvement Program	RTF, HED, HPW
Coordinate improvements with Hingham Public Works	Highway Maintenance Funding	RTF, HED, HPW
Prepare a survey to district business and property owners	Restaurant Revitalization Funding	PB, HDA, CPD
Explore zoning changes to reduce required minimum parking	Board, partner, and staff time	PB, HDA, CPD
Inventory all assets to be included in walking tour	Town budget, Cultural Facilities Fund	HDA, HHC, TBB
As a pilot, identify and define an art installation for an RFQ	Begin percent for art town fund	HCC, HDA, CPD
Establish a committee of stakeholders to explore district brand	Stakeholder or BID support	HDC, HDA, TBB, CPD
Refer future improvements to consistent features	Town budget	PB, HPW, CPD, HDA
Prioritize connectivity routes for improvements	MassDOT Complete Streets funds	HED, HTC, HPW, CPD
Define specific locations and types of signs for first phase	Massachusetts Downtown Initiative	HED, HTC, HPW, CPD, HDC, HDA, TBB

LEGEND:

CPD = Community Planning Department
H = Harbormaster
HCC = Hingham Cultural Council
HDA = Hingham Downtown Association
HDC = Harbor Development Committee
HED = Hingham Engineering Department
HHC = Hingham Historical Commission
HHS = Hingham Historical Society
HHM = Hingham Harbor Marina (HHM)

HMC = Hingham Maritime Center
HPW = Hingham Public Works
HTC = Hingham Traffic Committee (HTC)
MPC = Master Plan Committee
PB = Planning Board
RTF = Route 3A Task Force (RTF)
STC = Shade Tree Committee
TBB = Trustees of the Bathing Beach

