

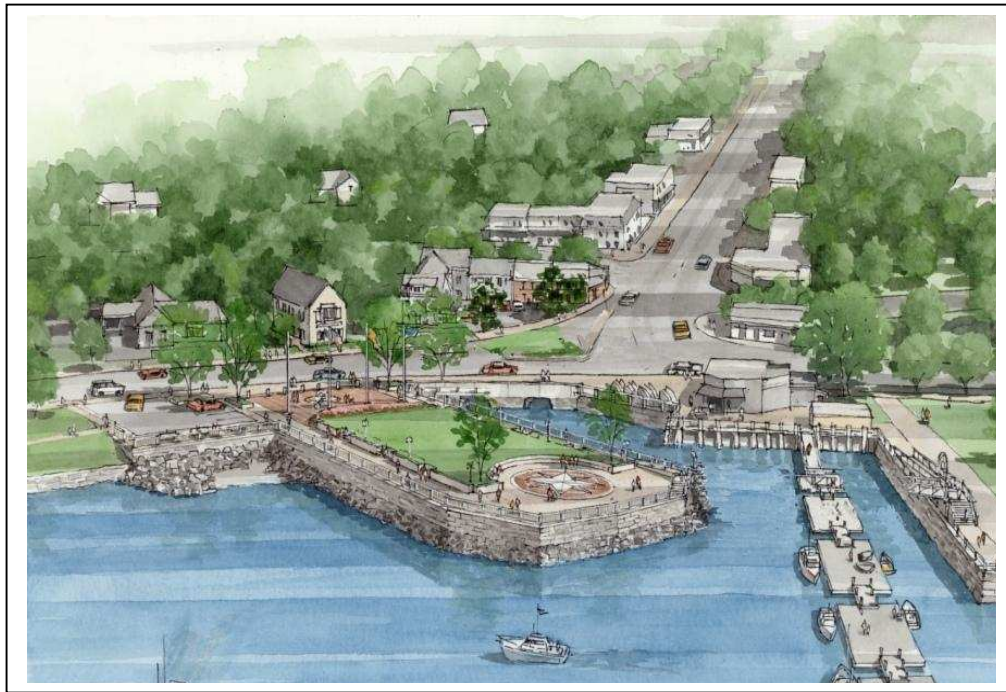
Master Plan for Hingham Harbor

Town of Hingham, Massachusetts

Harbor Development Committee

with funding provided by:

Community Preservation Committee



Whitney Wharf Park and Town Pier

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Master Plan Initiative

This master plan report is proposed by the Hingham Harbor Development Committee and represents an important first step towards identifying the future use of this important Town resource. The plan has taken the needs of the Town into account through advertised public meetings and a community workshop held by the Harbor Development Committee. Additional report information was gathered through more focused discussions and meetings with related Town agencies and committees. In October 2006 a public harbor walk and idea workshop were held at Town Hall to solicit comments from the citizenry of Hingham. The harbor walk and idea workshop greatly benefited the study process.

Although this is a harbor area master plan, the study and report are land-oriented. Additions to the master plan for the waterside issues of Hingham Harbor would address mooring and slip density, potential for future slips and moorings, a dredging plan (necessary for continued access), and other related issues.

The master plan initiative and goals include the following:

1. Improved safe, attractive and universal pedestrian access along the harbor.
2. Increased public recreation activities.
3. Visionary planning for future uses and improvements using sustainable and Low Impact Development (LID) techniques.

Harbor Area Existing Conditions

The study area extends approximately three-quarters of a mile from east to west along the southerly shoreline of Hingham Harbor and includes a mixture of Town-owned properties and privately held properties with active commercial establishments. State highway Route 3A and heavily traveled Summer Street define the southern boundary of the study area. Commercial businesses remain along the harbor and provide a mix of offices, marine services and automotive repair/gasoline sales. The Town-owned lands include the bathing beach and picnic grove, bandstand, "Iron Horse" Park, Town Pier, Whitney Wharf Park, P.O.W./M.I.A. memorial, Barnes Wharf/Lincoln Maritime Center, and Steamboat Wharf. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts controls the land at the rotary and Route 3A. The Trustees of the Bathing Beach control the westernmost portion of the harbor study area.

Brief History of the Harbor

Evidence exists of Massachusetts Indians inhabiting the harbor area prior to the arrival of the first Europeans in 1633. The English settlers who established the Town near the present day study area along North Street originally named the harbor "Bare Cove." Commercial fishing and regional transportation played an important role in establishing Hingham Harbor as a regional port of trade in the years between 1750 and 1850. Many businesses were established along the waterfront; this commercial activity transformed the harbor from its natural shoreline condition to a mixture of man-made quays and "finger" piers some of which are still in evidence today. Steam-powered boats in the 1800s and early 1900s provided regular passenger service to Boston from Hingham Harbor. With the decline of commercial fishing and passenger ferry service; the harbor today remains a unique recreational asset within the town, enjoyed by boaters, bathers, beach walkers and visitors to the waterfront.

The Harbor Development Committee

Originally formed in 1957 as the Dredging Committee, the Harbor Development Committee (HDC) was established in 1971 by Town Meeting Warrant Article as an advisory committee to the Selectmen with a mandate to "coordinate the planning and development of the tidal water areas within the Town borders." In addition to this master plan report and ongoing dredging related activities, the committee has been instrumental in the restoration of Whitney Wharf into a public park, the preservation of access to the Bouve property within the new Shipyard development, and working with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Public Access Board to improve conditions at the Town boat launching ramp. Public meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month at Town Hall.

For further information contact Sturt English (508) 243-8225 or view www.hingham-ma.gov